

In the Name of God, the Most Merciful, the Most Kind



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## Challenges of Nation Building in Afghanistan

It is necessary to know that nation-building has many important aspects. Firstly, it is about building a political entity which corresponds to a given territory, based on some generally accepted rules, norms, and principles, and a common citizenship. Secondly, it is also about building institutions which symbolize the political entity - institutions such as a bureaucracy, an economy, the judiciary, universities, a civil service, and civil society organizations. Nation-building is therefore about building the tangible and intangible threads that hold a political entity together and gives it a sense of purpose. The critical question is why has the task of nation-building been so difficult in Afghanistan, and the fruits so patchy, despite our enormous human and natural resources? I would like to suggest that we should look for the answer in the following critical areas.

### The Challenge of History

The historical legacies of Ethnical rule creates some challenges for nation-building in Afghanistan. Ethnical rule divided Afghanistan not only based on ethnicity but also based on the religion of different ethnicities of the people of Afghanistan with different land tenure systems, local government administration, educational systems, and judicial systems. Under these conditions, it was easy for prejudice and fear to thrive.

### The Challenge of Socio-Economic Inequalities

One of the most important aspects of nation-building is the building of a common citizenship. But how can we have a common citizenship when the person in a certain part of the country has a radically different quality of life from the person in other parts of Afghanistan due to ethnic identity? Or when the woman in one part of the country is more likely to die than the woman in other certain parts due to ethnic identity? Through the development of the economy and equal opportunities for all, or through the development of social welfare safety nets, mature nations try to establish a base-line of social and economic rights which all members of the national community must enjoy.

### The Constitutional Challenge

Since its independence, the Afghanistan has been facing the challenge of crafting a constitutional arrangement that has the backing of an overwhelming majority of Afghans. In most constitutions of Afghanistan the rights of ethnic groups have been neglected. As a result, it has been one of the main causes of ethnic conflicts in the country and has acted as one of the main barriers to nation building in Afghanistan. However, the new Constitution of Afghanistan, has been developed considering this issue and it has clearly considered this issue in Art. 6: The state is obliged to create a prosperous and progressive society based on social justice, protection of human dignity, protection of human rights, realization of democracy, and to ensure national unity and equality among all ethnic groups and tribes and to provide for balanced development in all areas of the country. However, most provisions of this article has not been translated to action yet.

### The Challenge of Building Institutions for Democracy and Development

One of the critical challenges of nation building in Afghanistan is the challenge of institution building. Whether nations are able to manage their political and social disputes peacefully, without lapsing into conflict, or sustain economic growth without creating huge inequalities, critically depend on the quality of the relevant national institutions. As a rule, there are three important components to institution building: setting the rules; hiring persons with the technical expertise and moral competence to interpret the rules or implement the goals of the organizations; and ensuring that the institutions inspire public confidence by being transparent, fair and consistent. Afghanistan, in this regard, needs to create or strengthen institutions that may help achieve the national goals of democratic governance and sustainable development.

### The Leadership Challenge

As the research and our leadership experience show, the trouble with Afghanistan is the failure of leadership. Leadership is a critical factor in nation-building and it should be understood in two important but related ways. Firstly, there are the personal qualities of integrity, honesty, commitment, and competence of individual leaders at the top. Secondly, there are the collective qualities of common vision, focus, and desire for development of the elites as a whole.

As a result, if we are to succeed in nation-building, we must have a leadership that is committed to the rule of law and has a demonstrable sense of fairplay and democratic tolerance; a leadership with ability and integrity; above all else, we must have a leadership that can see beyond the ostentatious pomp of office.

### Conclusion

I cannot conclude this article without touching on the current situation of Afghanistan. No nation can exist in isolation and nation-building must take account of the international context of the country in question. The external dimensions of our nation-building agenda, in the framework of concentric circles of interest and influence, must necessarily take account of our responsibilities and obligations in the Asia, and in the world as a whole since the challenges facing the international system defy purely national solutions. I would like to end my article by reiterating that nations are built by men and women who have the will and vision to accomplish greatness, not for themselves, their immediate families and friends, but for their country.



## Moderating Saudi Islam: Government Proposes Tightening Fundraising Rules

By James M. Dorsey

A Saudi draft law could constitute a first indication that Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's vow to return the kingdom to a moderate form of Islam will some reshaping of the kingdom's global funding for Sunni Muslim ultra-conservative educational and cultural facilities as well as militants.

The law, if adopted, would at the very least tighten rules governing the raising of funds in the kingdom that often flowed to militants in campaigns of which it was not always clear whether the government had tacitly approved them. Tighter rules would make it more difficult for the government to put a distance between itself and militant fundraising. To be sure, analysts have long assumed that fundraising, particularly with the help of members of Saudi Arabia's government-aligned, ultra-conservative religious establishment, could not occur without the knowledge of a regime that maintains tight political control. It remains unclear how tighter fundraising rules would affect Saudi Arabia's ideological war with Iran. The kingdom has for decades invested billions of dollars in globally propagating Sunni Muslim ultra-conservatism as an anti-dote to the Islamic republic's revolutionary zeal.

The bulk of the funds flowed to non-violent groups, but in some cases also to ones that attacked Shiites and/or Iranian targets. That has largely not changed since the rise in 2015 of King Salman and his powerful son, Prince Mohammed.

Saudi Arabia, in the latest suggestion that tightened fundraising may target militancy rather than supremacist, sectarian and intolerant strands of ultra-conservatism, plans to open a Salafi missionary centre in the Yemeni province of Al Mahrah on the border with Oman and the kingdom. The plan harks back to the creation of an anti-Shiite Salafi mission near the Houthi stronghold of Saada that sparked a military confrontation in 2011 with the Yemeni government, one of several wars in the region. The centre was closed in 2014 as part of an agreement to end the fighting. Prince Mohammed's use of ultra-conservative Sunni Islam in his controversial war with the Houthis was also evident in the appointment as governor of Saada of Hadi Tirshan al-Wa'ili, a member of a tribe hostile to the Shiites sect, and a follower of Saudi-backed Islamic scholar Uthman Mujalli. Mr. Mujalli reportedly serves as an advisor to Abd Rabbu Mansour Hadi, the exiled, kingdom-backed Yemeni president.

Writing in Al-Monitor, Brookings fellow and former CIA official Bruce Riedel argued that continued government support of ultra-conservatism served not only Saudi Arabia's regional ambitions but also as a pacifier for a religious establishment that, despite public endorsement of Prince Mohammed's social reforms, is deeply uncomfortable with changes like a loosening of restrictions on women and greater entertainment opportunities.

"After three years on the throne, King Salman bin Abdul-Aziz Al Saud and his son Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman are pursuing the most aggressively sectarian and anti-Iran policy in modern Saudi history. The Wahhabi clerical establishment is an enthusiastic partner, which is good internal politics for the royals... it's a way to keep the mainstream Wahhabi establishment and the Al Sheikhs content that their core interests are safe," Mr. Riedel said, referring to the descendants of 18th century preacher Mohammed ibn Abdul Wahhab, who constitute the ruling Al Sauds' religious counterpart.

If adopted, fundraisers would have to be authorized before launching a campaign. Failure to obtain authorization would result in a jail

sentence of up to two years and, in the case of foreigners, deportation. Fundraisers would only be allowed to accept donations from Saudi nationals and institutions.

The stipulation that the fundraisers themselves too would have to be Saudi nationals would effectively block foreign individuals and groups from Pakistan and elsewhere that have been supported for decades by Saudi Arabia from independently seeking financial support in the kingdom. A litmus test of the impact of the law, once adopted, will be how Saudi Arabia deals with people like Pakistani cleric Maulana Ali Muhammad Abu Turab. Mr. Abu Turab was identified last May as a specially designated terrorist by the US Treasury at the very moment that he was in the kingdom to raise funds for his militant madrassas or religious seminaries that dot the border between the Pakistani province of Balochistan and Afghanistan.

A member of Pakistan's Council of Islamic Ideology that oversees whether legislation is in line with Islamic law, Mr. Abu Turab is a leader of Ahl-i-Hadith, a Pakistani Wahhabi group supported by the kingdom for decades, and a board member of Pakistan's Saudi-backed Paigham TV.

He also heads the Saudi-funded Movement for the Protection of the Two Holy Cities (Tehrike Tahafaz Haramain Sharifain) whose secretary general Maulana Fazlur Rehman Khalil has also been designated by the Treasury.

Similarly, Pakistani militants reported over the last 18 months that funds from Saudi Arabia were pouring into militant madrassas in Balochistan against the backdrop of indications that the kingdom may want to try to destabilize Iran by stirring unrest among the Islamic republic's ethnic minorities, including the Baloch.

Saudi efforts to more tightly control fundraising may also serve Prince Mohammed's unconventional effort to fill depleted government coffers at a time of economic recession. Prince Mohammed launched in November what amounted to a power and asset grab packaged as an anti-corruption campaign after the kingdom's elite had failed to respond to a request to make patriotic contributions to help shore up government finances. Saudi Finance Minister Mohammed Al-Jadaan said last week that authorities had received a total of roughly \$100 billion in out-of-court settlements from around 350 people accused in the purge. As a result, tougher fundraising rules could potentially mean that donations would increasingly favour domestic rather than foreign causes.

It is, however, with no indication that Saudi Arabia is willing to reduce tension with Iran, unlikely that the kingdom would halt funding of its ideological war with the Islamic republic. Nor is there an apparent Islamically-packaged alternative to the propagation of ultra-conservatism as its primary soft power tool.

In short, tighter fundraising rules are certain to enhance control of the causes for which money is solicited and who will be allowed to raise funds. It may well also result in support for advocacy of interfaith dialogue and greater tolerance as recently propagated by the World Muslim League, a government-controlled non-governmental vehicle that for decades funded the global spread of ultra-conservatism. The rules, however, are unlikely to mean an end to funding of ultra-conservatism and sectarianism that serves Saudi Arabia's existential battle with Iran.

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## No Trust between Kabul and Islamabad: The consequences

By Hujjatullah Zia

Terrorist attacks have inflicted heavy casualties upon Afghan and Pakistani nations. The Taliban and Haqqani network carried out large-scale attacks in Afghanistan within the last years, which generated a tension between Afghan-Pak officials. With escalated militancy, a blame game ushered in between Kabul and Islamabad. Afghan and Pakistani nations bore the brunt of casualties as a result of terrorist attacks and suicide bombings. The Taliban, Haqqani network, the self-styled Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and many other terrorist networks tried to sow the seeds of fear and disappointment in Afghanistan and Pakistan through violence and bloodshed. For instance, sectarianism prevails in Pakistan and large number of ethnic groups are killed there in cold blood.

The widespread sectarian violence in that country curtails the freedoms of ethnic minorities and poses threat to dignitaries, who are killed on the grounds of their race, color, creed, political orientation, etc. With the death of SP Chaudhry Aslam in Karachi and ANP leader Bashir Bilour in Peshawar in 2016, Pakistan's then director general of the Intelligence Bureau, Aftab Sultan, said that TTP was responsible for major terror incidents in Pakistan adding that the group had been realigning with Lashkar-i-Jhangvi and Sipah-i-Sahaba.

Likewise, the attack on Bacha Khan University was claimed by TTP Geedar group's commander Aurangzaib alias Khalifa Umar Ameer Naray, who was also involved in attacks on Peshawar's Army Public School in December 2014 and Air Force's Badabher camp in September 2015. After all, Shiite ethnic minorities were killed in Pakistan every once in a while. Radical militants target the Shiite group in mourning proceedings, street, etc. They are showed no iota of mercy and even women and children are gunned down in streets.

Similarly, Afghans suffer severely in the wake of deadly attacks carried out by the Taliban and ISIL group. The spate of recent attacks which killed and wounded hundreds of people, mostly civilians, has increased the sufferings of the public and triggered a strong sense of fear and hatred. The recent attacks reveal that the Taliban and the ISIL group show no respect to civilians' life.

In the past three years, the ISIL loyalists carried out systematic attacks against ethnic minority groups in Afghanistan with the intention of fomenting sectarian violence. They sliced the throats of children and spilled the blood of men and women to spread fear and disappointment and confirm its presence in the country.

With the deadly and systematic attacks in Afghanistan and Pakistan, a

sense of mistrust resurfaced between the two countries which played a destructive role and failed to mitigate insurgency. Furthermore, the trust deficit was one of the reasons behind the peace stalemate. The mistrust between Islamabad on one side and Kabul and Washington on the other side - especially when Mullah Akhtar Mansour was killed by the US drone attack in Baluchistan - Quadrilateral Coordination Group (QCG) comprising of Afghanistan, Pakistan, China, and the US could not nudge the Taliban to negotiating table. Hence, trust deficit led to a horrible consequence.

Meanwhile, the harsh rhetoric between Afghan-Pak officials let militant fighters fish in the troubled waters. With the resurgence of mistrust, the militants seek to compound the issue through carrying out deadlier attacks. As the Afghan, The US and other Intelligence Agencies evidence show many of these attacks have been planned in Pakistan and even by the ISI support. As a result, Pakistan can make specific measures not to counter these terrorist groups, especially the Haqqni network, if it wants to restore the trust among the two countries. However, it is thought that the continuation of the blame game will aggravate the challenges more than ever before and will leave no room for mutual bonhomie. If this game does not stop here and now, the peace stalemate will not be brokered at all. Thus, it will be the two nations to suffer casualties. To view the fatalities of the two nations, who are targeted by common enemies, both Pakistan and Afghanistan need to campaign against terrorist networks in the strongest possible way.

The two countries will have to protect the rights and liberty of nations and form a civil society where all could exercise their rights and dignity without a sense of fear. To strengthen democracy and advocate the rights of people, especially women and children, combating terrorism is the first precondition. If militants and the roots of militancy are not eliminated, there will be no end to the sufferings of Afghan-Pak nations and fatalities will continue unabated. It is self-explanatory that the Taliban outfit has constantly held out against peace process and continued shedding the blood of combatants and non-combatants. The struggles made by Kabul and Islamabad to bring the Taliban to peace table were proved abortive. Now Pakistan and Afghanistan, along with its international allies, will have to intensify their attacks against militants and their hideouts so as to put an end to the civilian casualties. If the militants are not rooted out from Afghan-Pak soils, peace will remain elusive.

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