

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



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Inquisitiveness Promotes Vigilance

Throughout most part of human history, contemplation has been treated as a crime. Same has been the reaction to being inquisitive. It seems as if contemplation and inquisitiveness are considered against the social setup.

However, there have always been few people who have never understood this view or they have intentionally ignored it.

They are the same who have a fire of restlessness and curiosity in their hearts, which keeps on burning and compelling such people to show the same to the world. Such people will never let the blind beliefs dominate their minds and they never let them to pollute their conscious endeavors. They, as a matter of fact, believe that such beliefs create misunderstandings in the mind and hatred in the hearts.

Those who have blind beliefs are actually deprived of the awareness of the life. They are the ones who themselves have locked their minds and do not know that their minds are locked and the keys are with themselves. Nothing is able to change such people as they are not open to any view or any discussion.

Even education cannot change such people. If such people even go to educational institutions, there is no chance that they would improve as they take with themselves their dogmatic beliefs. They have already decided everything for themselves and made final decisions. For them, it would be better even not to go the institutions, as they have already filled their minds and there is no empty space to learn new ideas or concepts. Education must support in understanding new things and when there is not such a chance, there is no need of education as well.

It is also important to note that the type of education the educational institutions are disseminating in our society is also debatable. The educational institutions have become the factories, where robots are generated who, themselves, cannot think anything, but act as per the commands that are fed into them. There is no room for doubt and questions in our educational institutes. Those who commit the crime of asking too many questions are punished in the severest manner.

Such institutions can only produce students who get education to negate education, and unfortunately such people are the most suitable for our society and most educated for our so-called education scholars. However, they are those puppets who play in the act based on education but themselves do not know the purpose of their act.

This is really weird that our youth is being kept away from better and thought-generating education system. The endeavors are being made to keep the young and capable minds away from the food that can nourish them and make them discover the world, universe and their mysteries. True education can even reduce hatred in the hearts of the youngsters and teach them the lessons of love and brotherhood for the fellow beings.

In fact, there are certain people who strive to keep such education away from youngsters because they know that it would generate so many views and perspectives which can even unveil the realities that they want to keep hidden.

We should teach our youngster not to emphasize on a single perspective and try to learn how to live with different ideas and thoughts. They need to know that others can differ from what they think and what they feel and they need to realize that others can be right as well.

They even need to go deeper and assume that there are many ideas that have not been thought yet and with open minds they can have the opportunity to discover such thoughts. They also require to understand that whatever has already been thought for them can be wrong; this way they can come to know about the mistakes in the history and know the real truth.

Unfortunately, in our society the blind beliefs and careless claims have been given free hand.

However, it has to be comprehended that the moment a person lets blind belief enter his mind, the next moment the possibilities of having better understanding and gaining knowledge run away from him. And, this phenomenon is totally against the requisites of education. Our youth have to be emancipated from following the forced beliefs. They have to be given the freedom of free thinking.

Only those youngsters have the right of getting education who understand that they can doubt and challenge what is already known and who want to differentiate between what is right and what is wrong through their own minds. The educational institutions must first of all develop an attitude of learning, which requires a questioning nature.

They should not be the places where the students are spoon fed. It has to be understood that if the educational institutions are able to generate an attitude of learning the rest will follow itself. Then the teachers do not have to force or punish the students to learn; they will learn themselves as they would be thirsty to do so.



Ambiguous Outlook for Peace in Afghanistan

By Mohammad Eshaq Arifi

Peace will come to fruition in Afghanistan if the effective factors are committed to their human responsibilities. It is an unmistakable fact that there will be no peace unless the lofty ambition for peace and its fruit are pursued persistently. Therefore, the real perspectives on effective factors and elements of peace need to be evaluated to gain an outlook for peace.

The anti-government armed militants, which are counted the main issue for war and peace across the country, are the deciding factor in making peace. In addition to having destructive power, the Taliban and their ilk own considerable social, religious and ethnic bases in the country which have created the core of war and peace in Afghanistan. Hence, reading and evaluating peace in the minds and deeds of such groups will be the basic needs for creating peace in the country. This will further unravel the grounds and tactic for peace and enlighten the outlook for peace and stability in the country.

The political backgrounds, ideological and intellectual status and practical approach of warring parties have unfolded the fact that warring parties have never revealed their tendency towards peace. So, the plan for peace should be considered in accordance with their background. First, financial restrictions should be imposed on regional and international backers of these parties and their war machine is to be undermined and their leadership should be abolished so that the warring parties yield to peace talks. Otherwise, peace will be no more than an empty slogan which will pave the ground for big political and economic game. Second, the wide and serious regional interference in the issue of war and peace in Afghanistan is an effective point. Pakistan will be one of the most effective countries in the region which had wide and effective interference in Afghanistan's issue. Terrorist groups such as al-Qaeda, the Taliban and ISIL orchestrate their attacks across the border against Afghanistan. On the one hand, Pakistan is part of the regional and nuclear powers with considerable population, and on the other hand, it is considered one of the strategic allies of the US. With such a strong capacity, Pakistan is one of the most effective countries which will be able to manipulate the issue of war and peace in the country. However, peace has been veiled in secrecy for this country and no tangible

step was taken in this regard. To use Ashraf Ghani's words, there is much confusion in Pakistan's foreign and security policy and its demands and objectives remain a mystery. That is why Afghan government was not able to include Pakistan's demands in the peace agenda so as to address them legally. Since the outlook for peace and peaceful steps to be taken by Pakistan is not clear, there is no sense of hope for peace and stability.

Regarding this issue, international authorities mainly the US have key role in initiating the peace process. On the one hand, the US and its foreign allies gain the strong support and macro-management of Afghanistan's political structure, had the responsibility of equipping and advising the administrative, military and economic powers and all the government activities were dependent on their supports, on the other hand, Pakistan which supports war is also one of the strategic allies of the US and gained its 15 billion dollars within a decade and half. Moreover, Arabic countries which support anti-government armed forces financially are also close to the US.

The US pursues the war strategy and its war plan was implemented in Afghanistan. Now four thousand American soldiers have been equipped to advise and train Afghan forces. However, the fact is that the strategy of war will not lead to peace. How long will war continue? The militant fighters gain wide social status and supported widely which will enable them to fight for long years.

The hope for peace will be met if the US and its allies focus on the peace strategy, rather than strategy of war, and seek peaceful solution. The peace agenda needs to be designed and the US needs to urge its Pakistani and Arabic allies to pursue peace and stability with genuine intention. Otherwise, the same trend will continue unabated. The US has recently declared that it will change its strategy towards Afghanistan and will adjust this strategy with regional approach. No doubt, if this policy is based on "the principle of peace", hope and desire for peace will be revived.

However, if peace is pursued on "the principle of war", the ambition for peace will not come to fruition despite more troops being sent to Afghanistan.

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All the UAE's Men: Gulf Crisis Opens Door to Power Shift in Palestine

By James M. Dorsey

With attention in the Middle East focused on the Gulf crisis, the United Arab Emirates is elsewhere seeking to reshape the region in ways that could alter its power dynamics. The UAE's latest effort concentrates on clipping the wings of Hamas and installing its own man in the Gaza Strip in a move that would likely strengthen cooperation with Israel, potentially facilitate an Israeli-Palestinian peace agreement, and take the Jewish state's increasingly close ties to the Gulf state out of the shadows.

The UAE effort involves a carrot and stick approach in which Israel and Palestine Authority (PA) President Mahmoud Abbas play bad cop while Egypt is the good cop in a pincer move that is intended to weaken Hamas, the Qatar-backed Islamist group and Muslim Brotherhood offshoot that controls Gaza.

A lowering of public sector salaries in Gaza by Mr. Abbas and reduced electricity supplies by Israel at the Palestinian leader's behest drove Hamas into the arms of the UAE and Egypt as the International Red Cross and other international agencies warned of an impending calamity.

Hamas was conspicuously absent from a list of demands presented to Qatar two weeks into the five-week-old Saudi-UAE-led campaign to force Qatar to halt its support of militants and Islamists. Saudi Foreign Minister Adel al Jubeir had initially included Hamas at the beginning of the Gulf crisis among the groups the campaign was targeting.

Hamas' exemption coincided with a series of meetings in Cairo between Hamas, Egyptian intelligence and Mohammed Dahlan, a UAE-backed, Abu Dhabi-based controversial former Palestinian security chief and arch rival of Mr. Abbas who is manoeuvring to succeed the Palestinian leader.

Mr. Dahlan, who is believed to be close to UAE Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed as well as Israeli Defense Minister Avigdor Lieberman, is alleged to have played a role in other covert UAE operations, including a failed effort to boost the country's human rights image at the expense of that of Qatar. Mr. Dahlan went into exile in the UAE in 2007 after Hamas defeated his US-backed efforts to thwart the group's control in Gaza. Mr. Dahlan has since been indicted by the PA on corruption charges.

The deal being hammered out in Cairo would allow Mr. Dahlan to return to Gaza in a power sharing agreement with Hamas that would undermine the position of Mr. Abbas and loosen the Israeli-Egyptian blockade of Gaza that has choked the impoverished strip.

Egypt and the UAE have already moved to alleviate the economic crisis in Gaza in a bid to sweeten the deal. Egypt has begun to send diesel fuel at market prices, but without taxes imposed by the PA, and has signalled that it would open the crucial Rafah border crossing between Gaza and the Sinai.

Associates of Mr. Dahlan were reported to be preparing the border station for re-opening with a \$5 million donation from the UAE. Egypt reportedly is supplying barb wires, surveillance cameras and other equipment to enhance border security. The UAE, moreover, has earmarked \$150 million to build a power station and has hinted that it would fund construction of a port. "If the plan does come to fruition, it could make an Israeli-Egyptian dream come true... It will ensure a fine profit for all sides, except for Abbas and Palestinian aspirations to establish a state," said prominent Israeli columnist Zvi Bar'el.

Mr. Bar'el argued that the deal would widen the gap between Gaza and the PA-controlled West Bank, halt ties between Hamas

and Islamist insurgents in Sinai where an Islamic State-affiliate this week claimed responsibility for the killing of 23 Egyptian soldiers, allow Egypt to lift the blockade of Gaza and flood it with Egyptian goods, empower a Palestinian leader that Israel believes it can do business with, ease pressure on Israel that has repeatedly been condemned for the blockade, and roll back the influence of Qatar and Turkey, Hamas and Gaza's main supporters.

The effort to weaken Hamas and return Mr. Dahlan to Palestine is part of a six-year, UAE-driven, Saudi-backed effort to roll back the achievements of the 2011 popular Arab revolts that toppled autocratic leaders in Egypt, Libya, Yemen and Tunisia and reshape the Middle East and North Africa in the two Gulf states' mould.

The campaign included support for the 2013 military coup in Egypt that removed Mohammed Morsi, a Muslim Brother and the country's first and only democratically elected president from office, and brought general-turned-president Abdel Fattah Al Sisi to power. It has culminated in the Saudi-UAE-led boycott of Qatar that has so far failed to force the Gulf state onto its knees.

Along the way, the UAE has supported forces in Libya opposed to the internationally recognized Islamist government and joined Saudi Arabia in a disastrous military intervention in Yemen even though the kingdom and the emirates differ on what a future Yemen should like and what Yemeni forces the alliance should align itself with.

In the process, the UAE, Saudi Arabia and Israel have found common ground in their opposition to Iran and Islamist forces. Pilots from Israel and the UAE flew side-by-side in March in an exercise with the air forces of the United States, Italy and Greece. The UAE has bought military equipment from Israel worth hundreds of millions of dollars and allowed Israel to open in 2015 a diplomatic mission in Abu Dhabi that is accredited to the International Renewable Energy Agency rather than the Emirates.

Turkey, which has backed Qatar in its dispute with Saudi Arabia and the UAE and has sent troops to the Gulf state, has suggested that the UAE funded last year's failed coup aimed at overthrowing Islamist President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, a watershed event in modern Turkish history.

Hamas appeared in May to want include Gaza in efforts to rewrite the political map of the Middle East when it adopted a new statement of principles that for the first time accepted a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The document endorsed "the establishment of a fully sovereign and independent Palestinian state, with Jerusalem as its capital along the lines of June 4, 1967," a reference to Israel's borders on the eve of the war in which the Jewish state captured the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

The UAE-driven, Saudi-backed effort to reshape the Middle East has so far had mixed success. Its main success story is Egypt. Military intervention has driven Yemen to the edge of the abyss; Libya is in the throes of a civil war and jihadist insurgency; Syria has been wracked by civil, jihadist and regional proxy wars; and Qatar has so far refused to bend to the UAE and Saudi Arabia's will. A UAE-Egypt engineered power sharing agreement in Gaza between Hamas and Mr. Dahlan would constitute a welcome second success.

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