

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



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## Respecting Differences

Our world is embellished with different types of ideologies and beliefs. These ideologies and beliefs have guided different religious and political groups in their quest for truth and successful life. However, intolerance for others' ideologies and beliefs has given rise to clashes among the believers. This has not only made the world less peaceful but also paved the way for wars and destruction. The need of the time is to consider the differences in the ideologies and beliefs as something natural, and take advantage of the opportunities that these differences create.

It is important to note that it is determined by social and political circumstances that the ideologies formed in human societies by different groups should be different.

The problem is not at all to be different; even every individual human being is different from others. The difference in ideologies, in fact, may give rise to a variety of social groups with variety of social and cultural practices.

Nevertheless, the problem arises when the ideologies turn extreme; when only one's or a group's own ideology becomes true and all the other ideologies become false; and when it becomes the responsibility of the follower of one ideology to change ideas of the followers of other ideologies, forcefully.

At that point, such a follower becomes an extremist.

Extremism even convinces people to adopt hostility in the defense of their ideology or the defeat of the others. The circumstances show that it has persuaded its holders to take the responsibility of correcting others for they are absurd and must be led to the right direction. It is important to note that extremism cannot be related to a single ideology, as is mostly depicted in modern times.

Currently it has become a fad to link extremism with Islam and Muslims. However, it would be better to note that extremism itself is not an ideology; rather it is the frame of reference through which any religion or ideology is perceived that generates extremism.

If Muslims are extremists, there are certain Hindus, Sikhs and Christians as well, who are extremist.

In addition it is not very strange to experience extremist atheists in today's society. Even atheists, who do not believe in any religion, can turn belligerent and even fierce in defense of their ideology. Then there are many believers in modern political ideologies who are extremists.

Hence, it can be safely said that extremism is not the content of an ideology rather it is the conception of the content and its impacts over human psychology and behavior and eventually his responses.

It can be easily observed in today's world that how extremism has turned people violent and even terrorist.

The example of our own country Afghanistan can be discussed here without any hesitation.

The terrorists who have been fighting in Afghanistan are mostly the extremists who believe their religious beliefs to be final and the best, while believe others' as meaningless and worth destruction. Therefore, what they have been doing is evident from the series of their tyrannies wherein they kill innocent people through indiscriminate bombings and shootings.

Now realize the concept of suicide attack. A suicide attacker is basically a person who believes extremely in a particular ideology and in the falseness of others so much that he becomes ready to blow up himself in order to kill others. This is what extremism can teach people; therefore, it is necessary that human beings must stop being extremists and adopt moderation before it is too late.

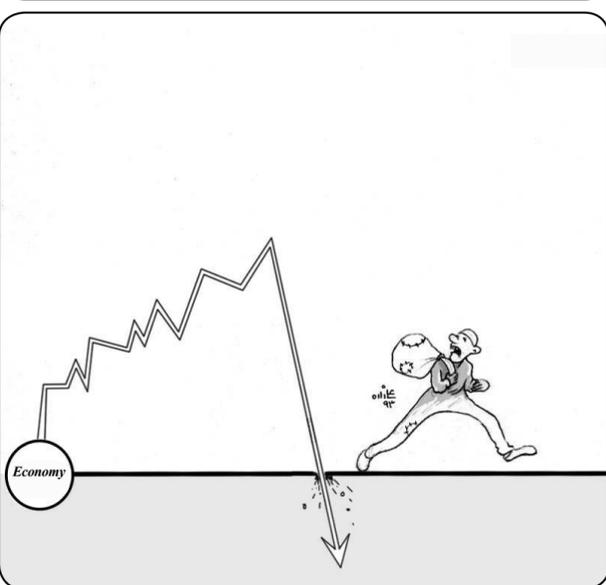
Moderate approach, in fact, is the best approach to adopt in pursuance of an ideology. Moderation teaches tolerance and cooperation. People with moderate ideology tend to accept others with all their differences and respect them as well.

It does not mean to forget one's own identity and mix up with others in order to lose oneself. It basically means valuing the heterogeneity and honoring the basic law of nature that people and groups of people are different and they have different perceptions, beliefs and practices.

The modern world is a world that has shrunk because of the advancement of science and technology. People are now closer to each other - as the distances have shrunk because of different means of communication and transportation, different religions and cultures have come closer to one another. It is the time when they have fully come to know about their differences and in certain cases that knowledge has led to conflicts and wars.

Therefore, it is better for all the human beings to adopt a moderate approach and try to understand each other instead of abhorring without any reason. Moderation would definitely lead them to find out the similarities among one another instead of finding out the differences and politicizing them.

They would be able afterwards to make further developments on the same line and at the end can bind into a single chain of humanity.



## Corruption and Politics of Transition Period

By Mohammad Hedayat

The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) has recently issued a report on corruption in Afghanistan. The report says that the Afghan government had considerable progress in countering corruption despite numerous challenges. This is a thorough and documented report and includes interesting information. This report also has a reference to the political roots of corruption and quotes Fukuyama as provided below:

"Sources of corruption are deeply political. Without a political strategy to tackle this problem, all other solutions will fail. Corruption in all forms - namely, appointments and privileges based on political affiliations, benefiting from public sources and stealing from it - enjoy support from figures that are within the existing political system and are usually powerful players." (Francis Fukuyama, What is political corruption. 2016)

Reference to Fukuyama's theory is very skillful. When Fukuyama refers to main roots of corruption in the realm of political concepts, he explains deep and exact matters. I am going to mention a number of points towards explaining intentions of Fukuyama and for promotion of the needed literature on corruption and ways to counter it. Therefore, the main question is why from the view point of Fukuyama sources of corruption are political and what is the fundamental relationship between corruption and politics? This writing is made to answer this question and aims to explain the relationship between corruption and politics.

Transition period and corruption

Many political scholars believe that transition periods involve corruption. The proof for this claim is that all countries experienced corruption in their transition periods. From this point of view, there is no way to avoid corruption. Some scholars such as Huntington, who introduced the theory of clash of civilizations, believe that corruption is not only indispensable but is necessary for the process of development of countries. In his famous book titled "Political Order in Changing Societies", Huntington has dealt with this issue and explained why corruption is indispensable in changing societies. Some political science scholars even count some advantages and positive effects for corruption. While counting positive effects for corruption seems exaggeration, however, this is true that corruption is an inevitable matter in countries that are in transition or in other words in the developing countries. Therefore, logical and reasonable confrontation with corruption and finding of solutions is an undeniable need.

Why corruption happens during transition times and why it is unavoidable? This is a serious and important question. Many answers are being offered for this question and if we want to deal with those, we would be wondering away from our main question. Therefore, I will briefly touch upon a few things that can offer answer to our question and are related to Fukuyama's theory. Main reasons for corruption during transition and the things that make it unavoidable can be the following:

### A. Change in Values:

Transition period means a time when a society prepares for renovation and acceptance of new culture and norms. When a society sees itself at the verge of a new way, it needs to welcome new norms. These new norms cannot shape at once, but they shape in a slow and gradual process. In such conditions, old traditions and new traditions, or in other words, old norms and new norms, find

contradictions. In such eras, many of the old traditions face rejection in the society and gradually become unacceptable. At the other hand, while new norms are not shaped, people feel a kind of freedom of action and do things that are not in line with any norm. One of these un-normative actions is corruption.

### B. Creation of Sources of Power and Wealth

In transition period new groups rise, and this is a direct result of the transition period and is unavoidable. Therefore, each of these new groups and people seek their interests and sources of power and wealth. In such circumstances a competition of ownership of power and wealth is created. For example when the new government was established in Afghanistan and a rather wide freedom was offered for all segments of the society, new groups were created in political, cultural, civil, and economic arenas. Since the new government provide for proper foundations for their activities, as it was newly established itself, many of the problems caused by these new groups were put on the shoulders of the Afghan government and society. All these groups were trying to absorb some of the resources that were supposed to be used by the government. The issue of corruption in NGOs is a good example of such conditions. However, this problem was not limited to the NGOs. It is possible that some of the politicians and wealthy people to make investments from their personal wealth to get to power, and after that they want to take back their money through corruption. In recent years, many such examples existed and many times such stories were told by the media. However, this has been only since one year that such cases are put on the table of courts and judicial organs.

### C. Creation of New Norms

Radical creation of new norms is another causes for corruption in government entities. In a country that is in transition, ideals such as democracy, freedom, equality, human rights, women's rights, etc. are introduced by some amateur politicians and very soon deceive the public. In such circumstances, those who come to powerful positions, find themselves unable to act according to their mottos and resort to corruption again to continue deceit of the public. Therefore, when new norms are not well defined and institutionalized in the society, they can cause corruption.

### D. Mutual Relationship Between Corruption and Political Instability

All said above were about characteristics of the transition period. In transition period, political instability is a common phenomenon. It is possible that the political and legal foundations are not strong enough, and the public opinion and people's understanding in such conditions is mixed with doubt and uncertainty. Even those who are having the smallest share of power and decision making do not believe in the process they create and always are in a condition of fear and uncertainty.

In such an atmosphere, even if one did not read Marx's book titled the Capital, he would naturally feel the importance of wealth and capital. This is because wealth is more important during transition and instability compared to conditions where stability and democracy are well established. Therefore, the deeper the instability becomes, the more continuous corruption will be. This might continue to an extent where it is difficult to identify which one of corruption and political instability has caused the other. (To Be Continued)

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## Energy, Economics, and the Environment

By Giulio Boccaletti

To secure a low-carbon future and begin to address the challenge of climate change, the world needs more investment in renewable energy. So how do we get there? No system of power production is perfect, and even "green" power projects, given their geographic footprint, must be managed carefully to mitigate "energy sprawl" and the associated effects on landscapes, rivers, and oceans.

Hydropower offers one of the clearest examples of how the location of renewable energy infrastructure can have unintended consequences. Dam-generated electricity is currently the planet's largest source of renewable energy, delivering about twice as much power as all other renewables combined.

Even with massive expansion in solar and wind power projects, most forecasts assume that meeting global climate mitigation goals will require at least a 50% increase in hydropower capacity by 2040.

Despite hydropower's promise, however, there are significant economic and ecological consequences to consider whenever dams are installed. Barriers that restrict the flow of water are particularly disruptive to inland fisheries, for example. More than six million tons of fish are harvested annually from river basins with projected hydropower development.

Without proper planning, these projects could jeopardize a key source of food and income generation for more than 100 million people.

Consequences like these are not always apparent when countries plan dams in isolation. In many parts of Asia, Latin America, and Sub-Saharan Africa, hydropower is an important source of energy and economic development. But free-flowing rivers are also essential to the health of communities, local economies, and ecosystems.

By some estimates, if the world completes all of the dam projects currently underway or planned without mitigation measures, the resulting infrastructure would disrupt 300,000 kilometers (186,411 miles) of free-flowing rivers - a length equivalent to seven trips around the planet.

There is a better way. By taking a system-scale approach - looking at dams in the context of an entire river basin, rather than on a project-by-project basis - we can better anticipate and balance the environmental, social, and economic effects of any single project, while at the same time ensuring that a community's energy needs are met. The Nature Conservancy has pioneered such a planning approach - what we call "Hydropower by Design" - to help countries realize the full value within their river basins.

Even one dam changes the physical attributes of a river basin. Multiplied through an entire watershed, the impact is magnified. Hydropower projects planned in isolation not only often cause more environmental damage than necessary; they often fail to achieve their maximum strategic potential and may even constrain future economic opportunities.

As a result, even dams that meet their power-generation goals may fail to maximize the long-term value of other water-management services such as flood control, navigation, and water storage. Our research shows that these services add an estimated \$770 billion annually to the global economy. Failure to design dams to their fullest potential, therefore, carries a significant cost.

In the past, some developers have been resistant to this sort of strategic planning, believing that it would cause delays and be expensive to implement. But, as the Conservancy's latest report - The Power of Rivers: A Business Case - demonstrates, accounting for environmental, social, and economic risks up front can minimize delays and budget overruns while reducing the possibility of lawsuits. More important, for developers and investors, employing a holistic or system-wide approach leverages economies of scale in dam construction.

The financial and development benefits of such planning enable the process to pay for itself. Our projections show that projects sited using a Hydropower by Design approach can meet their energy objectives, achieve a higher average rate of return, and reduce adverse effects on environmental resources. With nearly \$2 trillion of investment in hydropower anticipated between now and 2040, the benefits of smarter planning represent significant value.

System-scale hydropower planning does not require builders to embrace an entirely new process. Instead, governments and developers can integrate principles and tools into existing planning and regulatory processes. Similar principles are being applied to wind, solar, and other energy sources with large geographic footprints.

Completing the transition to a low-carbon future is perhaps the preeminent challenge of our time, and we won't succeed without expanding renewable-energy production. In the case of hydropower, if we plan carefully using a more holistic approach, we can meet global goals for clean energy while protecting some 100,000 kilometers of river that would otherwise be disrupted. But if we don't step back and see the whole picture, we will simply be trading one problem for another. (Courtesy Project Syndicate)

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