

**AFGHAN CRISIS INTROSPECTION: NEED
OF THE HOUR**

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The blessings and bounties Allah has bestowed upon His people and especially the Believers are simply innumerable, countless. The month of Ramazan is one such special blessing, in which man fasts continuously for a whole month and strengthens his relation with God, Allah Almighty. Through hunger, thirst, discomfort, and self-control, he tries to acquire spiritual and moral power that enables him to be a better human being and obedient servant of his Lord. This not only makes him sensitive to others' grief and miseries but also makes him experience them himself. This, in turn, awakens and reinforces in each individual a sense of being part of 'one Ummah' and enables him to establish his link with Allah's guidance and illumine his life with its light.

While the blessings and bounties of fasting are countless, five aspects give a distinct status to this act of obedience and Allah's favor:

- Recourse to Allah: Fasting establishes man's link with Allah and trains him to submit before the Will of Allah and seek His pleasure alone.
- Control of the Self and its Urges: Essentially, man has two urges: food and comfort for physical growth, and sex and marital bond for continuation of progeny. Fasting makes them both subservient to the Will of Allah, prevents man from becoming slave to the Self and trains him to make his self conform to the Will of Allah. This is righteousness, pure and simple.
- Fasting makes man appreciate the sufferings of those who face hunger and thirst and thus establishes the mutual relationship of collective well-being and social support. On the one hand it arouses feelings of equality, and on the other it rekindles fervor of brotherhood, sacrifice, cooperation, and willingness to give to others their rights in the resources of life.
- In spite of its being very secretive and private act of worship, fasting unites the entire Muslim Ummah and colors it in the same color. Muslims all over the world start fasting after seeing the same and one moon and celebrate Eid on seeing the same moon. This sacred month has an aroma of its own. For complete one month, the whole Muslim society wears a certain and special look and become a live example of "this Brotherhood of yours is a single Brotherhood." (al-Anbiya 21:92 and al-Muminun 23:52)
- Along with Faith and Belief, fasting makes introspection and accountability effective and functional, at both individual and collective levels. This is for the reason that the very essence of this worship is that it is not about hunger and prayer rites to be carried out thoughtlessly, rather all acts and affairs of life – from worship to eating to sleeping and waking up, and the rest – in a way that fills the whole life with

meaning and substance, and everybody does their duty with the spirit of Faith and introspection.

Ramazan and Introspection

Ramazan comes each year to nourish these feelings and sentiments, to remind the Muslim Ummah of its destiny and mission, and to stimulate it to struggle for the realization of its mission. It comes each year to awaken those who are fast asleep and to give impetus to those who are striving in this pursuit. Yet, the atmosphere and the circumstances in which the Ummah has welcomed Ramazan and is availing of its blessings this year are exceptional and extraordinary. This also provides a rare opportunity for return to Allah, personal training and introspection, concern for unity in the ranks of Ummah along with accountability at both individual and collective levels. Here, in the backdrop of the global situation, we want to focus on those aspects of self-accountability inattention to which during the meditation and worship of this month could be disastrous, since fasting is for attainment of righteousness – by every Muslim, man and woman, at the individual level, and by the Ummah at the collective level – and righteousness is the source of our strength. And this all is to make the Word of Allah reign supreme,

"to glorify Him for giving you guidance, so that you become grateful."

(Al-Baqarah 2:185)

The task to which the expression and demonstration of Allah's glorification is calling the Ummah, in the perspective of guidance, distinction between the right and the wrong, and righteousness, is the struggle for making Allah's Word reign supreme, establishing his Will and Deen, and domination of the Truth over the Falsehood.

Fasting, righteousness, and Jihad provide the way to the supremacy and rule of Allah's Word. And severing or weakening of the relationship of prayer, fasting, Hajj, and Zakat with Faith and accountability is a cause of Ummah's weakness, helplessness, and subjugation, as has been warned in a Hadith (tradition) of the Prophet (pbuh):

"The way the people at the dining table invite each other to whatever is on it, so would be the (enemy) regimes pounce upon you (considering you an easy prey). When a person asked, "Would this be for our being less in numbers?", the Prophet (pbuh) said, "No, you would be in large numbers rather, but you would not be more than wild weed and bushes in worth. Your awe would be no more in the hearts of your enemies and you would be taken by the disease of greed." When asked to elaborate what this meant, the Holy Prophet said, "Love of the world and fear of death."

(Intikhab-e-Hadith, Maulana Abdul Ghaffar Hassan, p. 310)

Self-Accountability: A Responsibility

Today, while America and its allies have invaded Afghanistan in the name of 'war on terror' and are killing innocent people in the holy month of Ramazan, the condition of the Muslim world is that of paralysis, some are frightened and some are huddled in silence, some are shivering and some are begging for mercy from the enemy and offering their support. Some are even helping the oppressors and thus have stained their hands with the blood of their fellow Muslims. These are the ones who are dreaming to rule over the corpses of the oppressed. Can there be any subtler moment for introspection and self-accountability?

The people of Pakistan should start accountability with themselves. In the wider perspective of Afghanistan and Ummah, self-accountability and introspection is our responsibility. Along with this, this is the need of the hour at the global level as well. It is only through accountability at these three levels that the present crisis could be faced and overcome, a way out could be found, and a struggle for better future is made possible.

After the horrible event of Sept. 11 in America, Pakistani leadership not only ignored the requirements of justice and truth, international law and conventions, Muslim unity and duties towards the Muslim cause, and even the real and long-term interests of the country under the pressure and warning of a 'superpower', it violated them all. Being disloyal to these conventions and demands, it knelt down and took such an abrupt U-turn in its foreign policy that friends became foes; and whose friendship had never been reliable and at whose hands the country had repeatedly suffered injuries, it decided to cling to them and to revert to the disgrace of making rounds of the same cursed areas. Its feat was that it took the 'bold' and 'wise' step of begging for some dollars from those who had rejected it, of opening and paving the way for ceaseless bombing and ruthless killing of its oppressed fellow Muslim brethren in the line of its 'duty'.

It does not behoove either an individual or a nation that has Faith, dignity and self-respect to take a critical decision under pressure without knowing and analyzing the realities, without taking own people and friendly nations. This becomes more crucially important when the decision to be taken is of long-term effects on the future of the nation, on the friendly neighboring countries, on the Muslim world and on the entire humanity. While the real intentions and condition of the heart are known to Allah alone, but decision on national matters are not taken in the dark of the night and under foreign pressure or warnings. What General Musharraf and his comrades did in the night of Sept. 14, 2001, whose results have come to fore during these 10 subsequent weeks and nobody knows what is still to come in the days ahead, needs an aboveboard and genuine accountability. Though official sources and courtier-cum-writer types are trying their level best to prove that the government took the right decision, facts cannot be suppressed. Propaganda cannot create confusion about facts for long.

Whether in the individual or in the collective life, only those decisions stand the test of time that are taken in an independent and open environment, after taking into consideration all pros and cons, with due deliberations and consultation, and by taking the nation into confidence. No individual can claim absolute wisdom and a handful of individuals cannot be allowed to play with the fate of the nation on the basis of their insistence on "trust us". This is the verdict of history as well as our own experience. Whenever decisions are taken with hard-headedness and strong-handedness, they at last prove harmful and disastrous. Whether it was SEATO or CENTO in 1954, or the Tashkent Agreement of 1966, military's step of March 25, 1971 in East Pakistan or the surrender of Dec. 16, Lahore Declaration of February 1999 or the decision of withdrawal from Kargil on July 4, or the order of dismissal of the Chief of Army Staff on Oct. 12, 1999 – are all examples to learn lesson from.

An Examination of the Government's Decision

Under Pressure: This decision has been taken under pressure and warning of a superpower, not in an open environment or on the basis of its pros and cons. No matter how hard the official circles try, all facts have come to fore now in quite an unambiguous way: that after the events of Sept. 11 the US establishment had decided to avail of the opportunity for its own strategic interests, that this was to start with targeting Osama bin Laden, al-Qaeda and Afghanistan, and finally suppressing the movement for Islamic revival (that is labeled differently, sometimes as 'political Islam' and at others 'Islamic fundamentalism', at times 'militant Islam' and at others 'Jihadi movement'), and that the forces opposed to this movement are to be propped up.

The real episode has neither been properly investigated to this date, nor are there any signs of this to be done in the future. According to the demands of justice and fairplay, and law, neither the perpetrators have been identified nor has any attempt been made to think how they would be brought to justice, nor is there any indication of doing so in the future. Osama bin Laden was declared guilty of the act, within half an hour of the collapse of the World Trade Center in New York, and then an atmosphere of 'war on terror' was created with the help of propaganda and with the use of force and coercion. Colin Powell has now clearly said that "we had given the ultimatum to Pakistan on Sept. 13 to side with us, or we would declare you are terrorist state and arrayed against you." General Pervez sought a 24-hour respite, but before it could end, President Bush woke him up in the night of Sept. 14 and asked for his reply to the ultimatum. The General performed a 'feat' in that he changed the direction and surrendered. If there is any agreed upon part of the definition of terrorism, it is about "the use or threat of use of force for political ends". This applies quite aptly to President Bush's threat to General Pervez and extracting what he wanted to extract for his own ends.

President Bush threatened "Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists", the world was divided into Whites and Blacks and told to either accept the conditions for living in the 21st century

or be prepared to return to the Stone Age. It is not that all surrendered before this threat. The majority of the world's 189 countries refused to accept the veracity of only these two options, and many even from amongst those who showed willingness for participation in the 'war on terror' did not offer unconditional support. The Prime Minister of Belgium refused to bow before pressure and declared it a political bullying. Quite many members of the British Parliament openly opposed it. Indonesia, Malaysia, Egypt, Syria, Iran and even Saudi Arabia refuse to allow use of their land and air space. With all sorts of bullying and pressures and threats, hardly 45 could prepare themselves to join the coalition wholly or partly. Many of these had to face stiff resistance from their own people. Australia and Japan had to make amendments in their constitutions and laws, while Schroeder's government in Germany risked its rule. It had to stage a drama of vote of confidence and the government could barely manage to remain in power with a margin of a few votes.

Before us too, these two were not the only options. But we surrendered to America on Sept. 14 before any consultation and without information of any kind and without evidence. The so-called consultation was undertaken only afterwards, when the decision had already been taken. General Musharraf is on record that he had not been shown any evidence or information by that time. Then, the information (that is insufficient, and is based more on assumptions and suspicions than on facts) that has so far been apparently provided has come only later on for perfunctory work. The adage 'more loyal than the king' fits on us, if the General sees the video of his Sept. 19 address, he would himself see that his face is saying all – that the decision had been taken under pressure, not in a free and open environment.

Against the National Sentiment: This decision was taken against the will of the people and does not enjoy the approval of the nation. The claim that only 10 or 15 percent are opposing it, is not based on reality. In spite of an all-out effort by the government machinery to bring people out in its support on the so-called Solidarity Day on Sept. 27, none other than school children and government servants could be brought in the support of the government. In stark contrast to this, an overwhelming majority of people has expressed its sentiments against the government's policy by peacefully observing popular strikes and organizing massive rallies and processions. The results of a Gallup survey on Oct. 15, after America had started its attacks on Afghanistan, show that an overwhelming majority of 83 percent Pakistanis expressed solidarity with Taliban and condemned the attacks. Public opinion polls around the world depict quite similar situation, even the ratio of the Muslims in Britain is almost the same. This is also the response of the Muslims of Turkey, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and even India. If a referendum is held in Pakistan, then more than 80 percent would be found opposed to America and disturbed, perturbed and disgusted over Musharraf's cooperation to it.

No doubt that this policy is devoid of public support and the leaders who have supported the government for certain reasons, a large number of their own people are not with them on this

issue. This is because the decision runs contrary to the collective conscience of the nation and historic traditions of the Muslim Ummah and the demands of Faith. Not only in Pakistan but in the whole world, this fact has come to fore that those governments who sided with America on their own accord or under coercion are facing the situation where their own people are perturbed over their policy and disown it. I recently had an opportunity of participating in an international conference in Oxford (Nov. 9-11, 2001) where a former US ambassador and a former Under Secretary of State were also in the attendance. Both acknowledged the sentiment of the rest of the delegates that whether it was Cairo or Islamabad, governments and 'street opinion' were opposed to each other. This situation is a manifest example of complete divergence of the policies of the leaderships and the masses in the Muslim world, and a clear proof of the gulf between these leaderships and the people.

Collaboration in Oppression and Terror: We adopted such a position that is contrary to the demands of justice and truth and tantamount to siding openly with oppression and colonial terrorism. America was the victim on Sept. 11, and the whole world sympathized with it and vehemently condemned the suicidal attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. But instead of identifying the real culprits and taking steps to hold them accountable according to the framework of constitution, law, ethics and morality and international conventions, America declared a new global war without any justification. Unleashing international terrorism, it thus started a yet another colonial era and thus played once again the role of an oppressive colonial power. We have already shown with facts and evidence (see, Tarjuman al-Qur'an, November 2001) that whatever America is doing in name of 'war on terror' is a manifest oppression, open aggression, and the most abominable form of terrorism that it is committing by violating with impunity its own constitution and law, the UN Charter, Universal Declaration of Human Rights and by tearing apart international law and conventions, and ethics and norms. Realization of its own political ends and objectives is the goal of this new war. Under the pretext of the Sept. 11 events, it wants to consolidate its grip over the poor and weak countries of the world and control even further their resources.

This bloody game is being uncovered every day and the intelligentsia and those who feel strongly on issues of right and wrong have been protesting on the killing of truth and justice and on opening a new chapter of cruelty and aggression. The matter is no more restricted to Muslims only; there is a wave of rage against it in America, though relatively less, in Europe and the rest of world, including the Muslim world. Only recently, a historic demonstration was held in London on Nov. 18 in which 100,000 people participated despite acute cold and declared this war a war for interests. Former minister of Britain Tony Benn, members of the British Parliament, editors and columnists of newspapers, Dr. Chandra Muzaffar from Malaysia and hundreds of distinguished figures were among the demonstrators and exposed the American designs. Quite many from the intelligentsia and media, even the relatives of those who perished in the World Trade Center, have said that bombardment on the poor people of Afghanistan is brutal and that the blood of our dear

ones should not be bartered away for this revengeful exercise and war mercantilism. Tony Benn has thus given expression to this global sentiment:

“Initially these operations were described as a crusade, but we are now told that this is not a ‘holy war’ against Islam, although the Archbishop of Canterbury, on his visit to the Middle East, has pronounced it to be a ‘just war’ that good Christians can and should support.

Osama bin Laden has been named as the man behind the atrocity in New York but there is no question of him being brought to trial because the United States is opposed to any international war crimes tribunal which would have the authority to try US citizens. In any case, ex-president Clinton and President Bush have already ordered that he be assassinated on sight.

It is easy to see why the US does not want Bin Laden brought to court. In his own defense he would, no doubt, point out that he was armed and financed by the CIA as a freedom fighter (or terrorist) to oust the Russians when they invaded Afghanistan.

Apart from a UN Security Council resolution condemning terrorism, the procedure for dealing with threats to peace under the UN charter has been set aside. By invoking Article 5, NATO did not absolve itself from the responsibilities laid down in the NATO Treaty to abide by the provisions of the UN Charter...

As winter approaches with the possibility that hundreds of thousands of people may starve or freeze to death, we are being reassured that this is a just war that we must and can win.

Perhaps we should be asking ourselves whether by our silence we may be acquiescing in the perpetration of crimes against humanity in that those who have already suffered so much are now suffering even more because their land is urgently needed for a pipeline to get Caspian oil to the US market.”

(Tony Benn, The Guardian, London, Nov. 12, 2001)

The daily Mirror’s legendary international correspondent Sir John Pilger, who has authored many books and has been associated with the BBC, writes:

“The war against terrorism is a fraud. After three weeks bombing, not a single terrorist implicated in the attacks on America has been caught or killed in Afghanistan. Instead one of the poorest, most stricken nations has been terrorized by the most powerful – to the point where American pilots have run out of dubious

'military' targets and are now destroying mud houses, a hospital, Red Cross warehouses, Lorries carrying refugees.

None of those directly involved in the September 11 atrocity was Afghani. Most were Saudis, who apparently did their planning and training in Germany and the United States. The camps which the Taliban allowed bin Laden to use were emptied weeks ago. Moreover, the Taliban itself is a creation of the Americans and the British. In the 1990s the tribal army that produced them was funded by the CIA and trained by the SAS to fight the Russians.

The hypocrisy does not stop there. When the Taliban took Kabul in 1996, Washington said nothing. Why? Because Taliban leaders were soon on their way to Houston, Texas to be entertained by executives of the oil company, Unocal.

With secret US government approval, the company offered them a generous cut of the profits of the oil and gas pumped through a pipeline that the Americans wanted to build from Soviet control Asia through Afghanistan.

A US diplomat said, "The Taliban will probably develop like the Saudis did." He explained that Afghanistan would become an American oil colony, there would be huge profits for the West, no democracy and the legal presentation of women. "We can live with that", he said.

Although the deal fell through, it remains an urgent priority of the administration of George W. Bush, which is steeped in the oil industry. Bush's concealed agenda is to exploit the oil and gas reserves in the Caspian basin, the greatest source of untapped fossil fuel on earth and enough, according to one estimate, to meet America's voracious energy needs for a generation. Only if the pipeline runs through Afghanistan can the Americans hope to control it.

The tragedy of the Iraqis, and the Palestinians, and the Afghans is a truth that is the very opposite of their caricatures in much of the Western media.

Far from being the terrorists of the world, the overwhelming majority of the Islamic peoples of the Middle East and South Asia have been its victims – victims largely of the West's exploitation of precious natural resources in or near their countries.

There is no war on terrorism. If there was, the Royal Marines and the SAS would be storming the beaches of Florida where more CIA funded terrorists, ex-Latin American dictators and torturers are given refuge than anywhere on earth.

There is, however, a continuing war of the powerful against the powerless, with new excuses, new hidden agendas, new lies. Before another child dies violently, or quietly from starvation, before new fanatics are created in both the east and the west, it is time for the people of Britain to make their voices heard and to stop this fraudulent war and to demand the kind of bold, imaginative non-violent initiative that require real political courage.”

(The Mirror, Oct. 29, 2001)

Though a host of Western intellectuals has held this cruel war as an open aggression and colonial terrorism, we would present only two excerpts. We, however, want to present the letter of Ms Amundson, wife of a former military officer who died in the World Trade Center that has been published after the start of the bombing on Oct. 7 and represents the voice of the aggrieved humanity – in the East and in the West. But this voice is neither touching the chords of Bush’s heart nor is it causing the pangs of conscience to General Musharraf!

“On Sept. 11, as the world looked on in horror and disbelief, my husband, Craig Scott Amundson, of the US Army, lost his life in the line of duty at the Pentagon. Losing my 28-year-old husband and father of our two young children is a terrible and painful experience. His death is also part of an immense national loss, and I am comforted by knowing so many share my grief. But because I have lost Craig as part of this historic tragedy, my anguish is compounded exponentially by fear that his death will be used to justify new violence against other innocent victims.

I have heard angry rhetoric by some Americans, including many of the nation’s leaders, who advise a heavy dose of revenge and punishment to those leaders. I would like to make clear that my family and I take no comfort in their words of rage. If they choose to respond to this incomprehensible brutality by perpetuating violence against other innocent human beings, they may not do so in the name of justice for my husband.

Such rhetoric and acts of revenge only amplify our family’s suffering, deny us the dignity of remembering our loved one in a way that would have made him proud, and mock his vision of America as a peacemaker in the world community.

Craig would not have wanted a violent response to avenge his death. And I cannot see how good can come out of it. We cannot solve violence with violence. Revenge is a self-penetrating cycle.

I ask the nation’s leaders not to take the path that leads to more widespread hatreds – that makes my husband’s death just one more in an unending spiral of killing. I call on them to find the courage to respond to this incomprehensible

tragedy by breaking the cycle of violence. I call on them to focus on working for justice and peace around the globe.” **(International Herald Tribune, Oct. 13, 2001)**

This is a manifest reality that this war is an open aggression and brutality and whatever has taken place in Afghanistan has proved that the real objective is to subject the Afghan people to tyranny, to remove Taliban from power, and to frighten the countries and nations of the world that they should side with America or they would meet the same fate. So far, more than 5,000 air attacks have been carried out on Afghanistan and over 500,000 bombs have been dropped. In addition to the carpet bombing, mini-atomic bomb called Daisy Cutter from the American arsenal has been used quite unabashedly. This 15,000-pound bomb bursts some three feet above the ground and making a fire-ball of its aluminum and other chemical materials of 10,000 Fahrenheit. This cloud of fire burns to ashes everything that comes into its range of one mile. Those, humans or other things that do not come within this range but are affected by its heat become cancer patients or lose their hearing. These are the gifts of civilization that America has given to the Afghan people. We have not only supported them in this brutality, rather we have provided them airspace and land routes as well. The Western media have repeatedly said that combat helicopters have flown from our airports and have used Pakistani territory and their own cantonment area. The reality is that our role in this war is tantamount to participating in sin and transgression, to cooperating in cruelty and aggression.

The British newspapers of Nov. 21 and 22 have reported that in addition to the innumerable civilians the figure of Taliban martyrs is between 5,000 and 10,000 including 1,000 Pakistani, Arab and other volunteers. The Northern Alliance’s soldiers who could not occupy an inch during the 4-year battle have now captured more than half of Afghanistan with the support of American bombardment and guidance of American experts; they are provoking hatred and revenge and butchering thousands of people. They are mutilating dead bodies and disgracing the coffin-less corpses of their country fellow Muslims on the roads and fields. About Kunduz, not only the Northern Alliance leadership but also the US Secretary of Defense is asking for surrender or be ready for death. Even surrender provides no guarantee for life, and even war hostages are not taken. What to talk of Islam, which is a system of sublime teachings and noble values, what is happening is an open violation of the Western war conventions and the Geneva Convention. This is such level of cruelty and revenge that General Pervez could not help but cry out, though he may still not be repenting on what he has himself done, he is requesting Tony Blair and Colin Powell for having mercy and honorable exit of these besieged people.

National Interests or American Interests: General Pervez has tried to draw support for his policy by repeating the trite slogan of ‘national interest’. This is the slogan that every ruling clique has raised to justify its every right or wrong step. The question is who is to determine what constitutes this ‘national interest’ and whether the nation has any say in this or whoever has the chance be allowed to play own game in the name of ‘national interest’?

It is said that we took the decision to safeguard our nuclear installations, to sustain the Kashmir movement, and to avert a complete disaster. But the question is whether there was any real threat of American attack on Pakistan? The fact of the matter is that America got its objective with just a warning and creating an atmosphere of fear and scare. Cuba is located very close to America and has been on the receiving end of its warnings and threats. But America has never been able to harm its tiny neighbor. Attack on Pakistan was not easy, either. Though India could have been used for this purpose, but neither we were not that weak and helpless nor was India too foolish and too short-sighted to have readied itself for suicide. As for the plea of 'international isolation', but we should note that the majority of the countries of the world have not sided with America and a movement against its aggression is getting stronger in every country. The problem is that we have never thought of mobilizing world opinion and like-minded countries. The entire Arab world, all the Third World countries, even many European countries are opposed to American terrorism and its policy of confrontation. We isolated ourselves from the world. We have ourselves cut off our relations with all these, even with our own people, and with our friends in Afghanistan. Now we are gaining solace being given medals for valor and bravery, those who were abusing you till yesterday, were not ready even for a photo session with you, were about to expel you not just from the Commonwealth but from the category of the civilized world, because of your uniform, have taken you in embrace and are patting you on the back. This is certainly a game of interests, not of real love. Still, their attitude is that, in your own words, you were assured of limited and brief war, but this assertion of yours was refuted the very next day. Rebuffed, you could do little and so coined the excuse 'as long as may be necessary'. Another matter was about the protection of population from bombardment and targeted bombing. But all have seen with their eyes what were targeted – civilians, hospitals, mosques, schools, warehouses of the Red Cross, UN buildings, and al-Jazeera television station.

Yet another assertion that was made with quite fanfare was that we were given assurances that such a broad-based and representative government would come into power in Afghanistan that the Northern Alliance, which is hostile towards Pakistan and friendly to Russia, would not be allowed to take advantage of the situation. But fears and apprehensions came true. President Bush and General Pervez were announcing on Nov. 10 in a joint press conference that Northern Alliance would not be allowed to enter Kabul, but the green signal to the Alliance for its march ahead was already given on Nov. 6, they were marching ahead in the shade of American planes and with the guidance of American military experts.

It is an unfortunate reality that what Pakistan had achieved in 22 years was blown into air in just 22 hours because of the Himalayan blunder of bowing before America. What Russia could not achieve despite all its political and military maneuvers from 1920 to 1989, America achieved it with the invasion of Oct. 7. Russian role in Afghanistan would be of great importance now. The threat hovering over the horizon are that there would be more than one areas of influence in Afghanistan – part of it would be under the Russian influence, part under Iran's while America would have

influence in the rest of the country. Pakistan's dream of strategic depth would be shattered and the Western border for which it had nothing to worry about would once again become a source of trouble. Pakistan's national security policy would have to take care of both eastern and western borders. To protect Pakistan from the anarchy Afghanistan is striding to would itself be a new cause of headache.

Another matter was about reparation for the wrongs of the past, but after seeing the response on the issue of F-16 Pakistan has realized how it is going to be compensated for the wrongs against it. Also, what was achieved after dreaming about financial assistance and debt write-off? All castles were built in the air. What we could get was assistance of a few million dollars, tidings of a package of one billion dollars, and the World Bank snub not to expect of it a relief of \$2.5 billion. This was coupled with sky-rocketing prices in the country, increase in unemployment, decline in investment, obstacles in whatever was being exported, and cancellation of orders for which the economy is likely to suffer a setback of \$2-2.2 billion. The budget deficit is also increasing, as is the deficit in the balance of payments. It seems that the nation has to face hard times as a result of the 'bold' decisions of its 'courageous' leadership.

As for the safety of the nuclear assets is concerned, if what the American newspapers are saying and especially what the famous journalist Heist has reported in the New Yorker are to be believed, all arrangements to have them in access and take them under control have been made in the name of their enhanced protection. The job of the forces that are busy in Afghanistan for now is not limited to that country!

Much has been said about Kashmir, but the reality is that some Jihadi organizations were banned and their accounts frozen on orders from America. Contrast this with the position that Lebanon took. Despite all sorts of American pressures, Lebanon simply refused to ban Hezbollah and freeze its accounts. What American Secretary of Defense, National Security Adviser, and British Defense Secretary – all of them – have said on terrorism against India is vague and ambiguous – and appalling and alarming. Indian oppression and brutality has increased manifold in Kashmir these days. The killings of the innocent people and Mujahideen and destruction of town and villages are all on the rise. All indications are of imposing foreign solutions, be it the issue of Kashmir or the conflict in Palestine. Is it how strategic interests are protected? Is it what is being called 'national interest'?

Taliban have their strengths and weaknesses. If compared with them, we were stronger in all respects. Yet, they refuse to budge under pressure and decided to struggle and even offer sacrifices for upholding their dignity and traditions. Of course, they had to bear huge losses and had to retreat from many areas after facing the invasion and ruthless bombing of the world's sole superpower, and God knows whether they would be able to maintain their control over the four or five provinces that are still under their command, but what is praiseworthy is that they held dignity and faith superior to their life, world and its comforts. The dangers they faced and the difficulties

and ordeals they stood up to were more disturbing than the ones we had, yet they opted for facing the challenge, albeit limited, and exposed the oppressor and its oppression, savagery, and lack of regard of all human norms.

Making a Mockery of Islamic Teachings

It is said that the government's decision is in accordance with the Islamic directives and historical tradition. While some arguments are oft-repeated, these include the peace treaty of Hudaibiya and the Madinah Accord, but some far-fetched logic has also been resorted to, this includes the principle of the lesser of the two evils. This would be an injustice to Islam and Muslim Ummah if the attempt to justify a wicked decision is made in the name of Islam is allowed to go unchallenged. Such an attempt should be checked and exposed.

Witness to the Truth: Islam has made this Ummah a witness to the Truth and it is its duty to establish the rule of justice and fairplay, and in no case abandon the cause of justice and fairplay, whether the matter is between friends or foes. Quran's command is:

“And when you judge among people, you judge with justice” **(al-Nisa 4:58)**

In this case, we openly abandon the way of justice, cooperated with the aggressor and the cruel, deserted our friends and joined the camp of those who were attacking them. Thus we have invited the wrath of Allah Almighty.

Status of Nation State: Islam does not negate the identities for an individual or for a country. It not only maintained some of these distinctions but rather gave them more meaning and credence. It has, however, made all identities subservient to one superior identity, i.e. of Faith and righteousness:

“O mankind! We created you from a single pair of a man and a woman, and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know each other. Verily the most honored of you in the sight of Allah is he who is the most righteous of you.”

(Al-Hujurat 49:13)

The modern nation state is a new political entity, but patriotism in its moral and ideological moorings is an Islamic value. If the Ummah is divided into countries, then conformity and regard of the rights of country and Ummah is both possible and necessary. This is because Ummah has an ideological unity intact in spite of this new entity and the collective conscience of the Muslim people and similar heartthrobs in these times of servility are a proof of this fact. Quran has clearly told us:

“And verily this Brotherhood of yours is a single Brotherhood, and I am your Lord and Cherisher, so fear Me.”
(al-Muminun 23:52)

This is the reason that on the matter of Jihad, all schools of thought agree that if non-Muslims attack an Islamic part of the globe then it is the responsibility of the Muslims living in other parts to come to their aid and support just as they come to the support of their own people. Shah Waliullah says in his exegesis of Muatta that if non-Muslims set out for Islamic countries and war between Muslim and non-Muslims is subsequently erupted, then Jihad becomes obligatory. And if non-Muslims have more power than Muslims of these countries, so they fear defeat, then Jihad becomes obligatory on all Muslims of world, turn by turn, though they may not be called for Jihad.
(Ref. Mas'al-e-Khilafat, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad)

Unfortunately, Pakistani leadership ignored all these commands of Quran and Sunnah, and moving further in transgression, it rather violated these instructions and joined the camp to American attackers.

Madinah Accord: The example of the accord of Madinah has been cited to justify our alliance with America. In his address of Sept. 19, General Pervez reminded the history of six years preceding the accord. But, had he studied the accord and had had a glance over the history of the six years; he would not have made such wild remarks. The Madinah Accord is in fact provides an outline of the Constitution of the first Islamic state in Madinah with its two halves on Muslim and Jew tribes. In it, the Holy Prophet (pbuh) has been recognized as the ruler of the state and final say in all decisions. Is this the status of our commitments with America or of Bush's coalition? Who is to order and decide? We are just like courtiers and servants to do the bidding of our masters. Did the Muslims have such a position in the Madinah Accord? It can be argued that the real goal of the accord was the protection against the Quraish and some respite. If this is accepted just for the sake of its being an argument, the question is what we are to fight against? India is a member of this coalition but is committing brutalities against Muslims in Kashmir. Was there any such coalition partner in the Madinah accord? Is Afghanistan's position is that of Quraish against whom we have allied ourselves with America?

The history of the six years is oft-repeated, but do the General and his religious guides not know the role for these six years of the Jews signed this accord? Did the Battle of Qainuqa not take place in Shawal of 2H? Soon after the Battle of Badar, Banu Qainuqa made a declaration of war, siege continued for 15 days and the Jews were banished on the recommendation of their own ally, Abdullah bin Ubei. Then, tensions with Banu Nuzair started in 3H and resulted in the Battle of Nuzair in 4H. At last, Banu Nuzair, too, had to leave Madinah. During these very six years, Banu Quraiza, the third biggest Jew tribe, also backed out from their agreement, and sword had to decide on their issue. A superficial and self-justifying reading of history is dangerous, and the General has committed this dangerous folly.

Peace Treaty of Hudaibiya: The treaty of Hudaibiya too is one of the historical events that is used by those who capitulate for justifying their lack of courage and wrong policies. Whether it is the Tashkent Declaration or Camp David and Oslo Accords, Kargil or surrender of Sept. 14, the treaty of Hudaibiya is used for justification. This is despite the fact that this is the treaty that Quran had declared as prelude to Clear Victory, and it did prove to be the key to victory. On the occasion, the Holy Prophet (pbuh) had come to Makkah for Umrah and instead of removing the obstacle with sword he signed a treaty to avail of the blessing of Umrah a year later. What does it have to do with one's falling into the American trap and offering one's shoulder in support of allegations against a Muslim country that have not been established by facts and the principle of justice? Above all, the Holy Prophet (pbuh) said that he was signing the treaty under Allah's command. Who can claim today to have received revelation? On what basis can it be called a victory for Islam and a step for some success and dignity for Pakistan?

Prudence is no doubt an important principle of Shariah and guiding rule for policy-making. But there is a huge difference between prudence and foolhardiness, between prudence and cowardice. Prudence is all about unflinching faith and understanding, patience and steadfastness, courage and determination, single-mindedness and ceaseless struggle for the supremacy of Allah's Word. What did we do in name of prudence since Sept. 14? Our prudence is such that we are suffering reverses at every turn. What we considered as guarantee has been outright denied but we are renewing our pledge to continue 'on the same wages'. This is not prudence. This does not have anything to do with national prestige, independence or security. To call it prudence is to bring prudence to ridicule.

The logic of bigger and lesser evils: The last argument revolves around the logic of the lesser of the two evils. But the point to ponder is that all the doings of the government were seen from the high pedestal of the Madinah Accord and Treaty of Hudaibiya, but suddenly has come the reversion to seeking justification in the name of the lesser evil! If the government's decision were the demand of prudence and national interest, then why this necessity of expounding the logic of the lesser evil? And if it were the lesser evil, then why to refer to the Accord and the Treaty for justification? It is easy to call others charged with emotions, but it is not easy to act prudently.

Even if we accept the principle of the lesser of the two evils and that recourse to it has to be made in certain cases, yet it cannot be refuted that this principle is adopted when there is no third way out. We have already told that other option was available and it was adopted not by one but by more than one hundred countries. Egypt, Iran and Saudi Arabia did not adopt the way we adopted. The Indian factor does not apply here. Geographically, our position was strategic as it still is. India has not common borders with Afghanistan. It could not have played any role, no matter how hard it might have tried. And had it done anything to provoke us into war, it would have faced humiliation. Rather, the whole chessboard of the global war would have changed and China, Europe and Muslim countries would have adopted quite different course of action. In the light of

these ground realities, yielding to Bush's pressure for either be with him or be counted with the terrorists and to adopt subsequently the way of retreat in the name of the lesser evil is untenable according to the principle of the Shariah.

Before concluding this discussion, it seems necessary to remind those who talk of the Accord of Madinah and the Treaty of Hudaibiya of the end of agreements with non-Muslim powers in the history. What these powers have done from the times of the Holy Prophet to this date, and what the Western nations of modern times have done since colonial domination till today with Muslims, rather with all non-Western nations and especially the ones of the Third World, cannot be ignored. To ignore it and to be bitten repeatedly from the same whole cannot be called prudence. To turn a blind eye towards what America has done to us and others during the last 50 years is to indulge in self-illusion and may even be suicidal.

New Leadership, New Strategy

We are against cutting off our ties with the world and do not approve of any kind of isolationism. Good and bad elements are present everywhere in the world. Those who have raised voice against American terrorism in Afghanistan include many non-Muslims along with the Muslims, and not only eastern but also the western intellectuals, politicians and people. We value it highly. Yet, not to understand the game the US leadership is playing and the schemes the Jews, the Christians and the Hindus have always weaved throughout history and to seek refuge in the Madinah Accord or the Treaty of Hudaibiya at every reversal is not the way of wisdom and realism. The Quran that has taught the lesson of prudence, friendship, peace and well-wish for humanity and has taught us to value good people from amongst the people of the Scriptures, the same Quran has this eternal instruction in it that we should keep our eyes open, not take non-believers as our friends as against the believers, to understand the schemes of the enemy, and to play our role in the war between the truth and falsehood according to the spirit of Deen.

“O Believers! Take not for friends who are unbelievers, rather than the believers.”

(Al-Nisa 4:144)

And,

“Never will the Jews or the Christians be satisfied with you unless you follow their way.”

(Al-Baqarah 2:120)

Allah Almighty has forewarned the Ummah and its leaderships till the Last Day that they should keep their eyes open, establish a sincere relationship with Allah and for the sake of His pleasure alone, deal with all but in the light of Allah and His Prophet's guidance. We decide on friendship and enmity, alliance and deserting, peace and war, cooperation or no-cooperation according the teachings of Allah's Deen and in the interest of Muslim Ummah, and that we remain alert to foil

the schemes and conspiracies of our enemies. Allah has not left us in the dark; He has bestowed upon us His Guidance for all conditions. If we ignore His guidance and are carried away by our own urges or by the temptations of others, it is our fault and we would have to face the consequences for this.

By surrendering to America on Sept. 14, General Pervez and his comrades have put the country on a very dangerous path. And the nation would have to pay its price for many years to come. The assurances and hopes for which he gambled are like bubbles and many of these bubbles have already been burst during the last few weeks. The march he has plunged the nation in, is becoming ever dangerous. Even if there are some temporary and partial benefits, the weight of losses and rot is so huge and their situation is so complex that this would have to be declared as the most unfortunate and disastrous act in Pakistan's 54-year history. After the 16th Dec. 1971, this is the darkest decision in our history. After the calamity of Dec. 16, Pakistan and Bangladesh had started a new era of friendship and cooperation; but a thought of the effects this decision would have on our independence, our security, economy, nuclear capability, Kashmir freedom movement and Kashmir's accession to Pakistan, and on our relations with the countries of the region sends shivers to the depths of our soul. Seeking Allah's protection, we pray for a new strategy and a new leadership to understand these stark dangers and to face them squarely. This is the message to which we call the people of the country for action.
