



Analysis on the Decline in the Political Influence of the United States and its Aftermath

A. Introduction.

As, the unexpected to many, results of the US presidential elections emerged on the 9th of November 2016, a barrage of opinions ensued across the world from politicians, intellectuals etc. The division within US, more so in the general masses as compared to the elite, has never been so evident.

Even though, as far as ideology is concerned, the new administration in the US shall be equally, if not more, capitalistic in its policies, but from the results of the elections, it is evident that the US masses have rejected the status quo forces and there is a decline in the confidence in capitalism. These results also indicate that the public opinion within US is against internationalism.

As the US President-elect Donald Trump fills in the positions within his team, we can study the opinions of the newly appointed team members that they have held for years. We can foresee a change in the styles of the new administration in implementing capitalism as well as a specific focus on some key issues, one of those being radical Islamist terrorism or in simple words Islam.

This situation gives us an opportunity to discuss the public opinion within western societies with regards to current regimes and liberal capitalism, the impact of this public opinion on the styles that Western rulers, especially US, are adopting, the need of an alternative for the world and that the people who have the power in Pakistan are best positioned to bring that alternative on the map.

B. Downward trend in the confidence in Liberal Capitalism and US political influence

After the collapse of the USSR, the United States became the sole superpower and the leading state of the world. It had the power to define a new world order that helped to increase its influence and political hegemony exponentially throughout the world. This was the time when thinkers like Francis Fukuyama gave this judgment that “Western Liberalism” is here to stay. In his essay titled “The End of History?” written in 1989, he said:

“What we may be witnessing is not just the end of the Cold War, or the passing of a particular period of postwar history, but the end of history as such: that is, the end point of mankind's ideological evolution and the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government. This is not to say that there will no longer be events to fill the pages of Foreign Affairs' yearly summaries of international relations, for the victory of liberalism has occurred primarily in the realm of ideas or consciousness and is as yet incomplete in the real or material world. But there are powerful reasons for believing that it is the ideal that will govern the material world in the long run.”

After getting free from the communist Russia, US reigned the world politics during the 90s and it gained influence in the Asian and African countries which were formerly under the influence of Britain and France. This era built the arrogance in US that fueled the idea of going for war in Afghanistan and more importantly the war in Iraq. It was these wars in Afghanistan and Iraq that historians might mark to be the turning point for the demise of US aspirations to reign the 21st century as the leading state. Due to various reasons, including lying and manipulating intelligence to claim Iraq's possession of WMDs, the huge number of Human casualties, heinous Human Rights violations of prisoners, and not being able to stabilize both Afghanistan and Iraq to this date, United States' political influence considerably declined. The financial cost of this war

was estimated to be \$1.77 trillion that is more than double the cost of Vietnam War and if the long-term costs are included it shoots up to \$6 trillion making it the most expensive war for the United States ever. If we compare how US was able to create a coalition of willing support in Gulf War 1 to how the ISAF coalition depleted in support to US over the years to how in Syria, US has not been able to muster support through international consensus, we can very well see the weakness in US' ability to exercise its political plans. Instead, it is relying more and more on so called "local partners". So it attempts at using Pakistan to increase operations in the northern belt, Afghan forces to deal with Taliban in Afghanistan. In Syria, it has given a green signal to Iran and Russia to do its dirty work and in Iraq it's the Turkish forces, the Kurds and the weak Iraqi forces. This policy shows nothing but weakness that the US is facing.

This decline in political influence was followed by the economic crisis that hit the world especially the leading capitalist nations like the United States and Europe in late 2007 to 2009. This resulted into widespread unemployment and major income level drop for the masses in the US. Although the government claimed to have brought the US out of recession but as late as 2014, and early 2015, a majority of Americans still believed that the nation remained in a recession. The income inequality became a major issue in the United States and gave rise to movements like Occupy Wall Street and even in the recent US election campaigns, this issue was mentioned by most of the candidates. This issue of inequality got connected with the money corruption of the leaders in United States highlighting the fact that these political leaderships are actually there in the government to represent the 1% and not the masses. The slogan of "We are the 99%" raised in Occupy Wall Street movement spread to the extent that Bernie Sanders used the related statistics by using the following phrase in 2015 during his presidential campaign "Now is the time to create a government which represents all Americans and not just the 1%". These protests and riots spread throughout the Europe including Britain, Spain, and Greece etc. Then came the surprise result of Brexit where the masses rejected the notions of liberal capitalism in the starkest manner. This wave of rejecting liberal economic policies is spreading across Europe. In France, the far-right National Front is likely to enter the second round of next year's presidential election. In Austria, the xenophobic Freedom Party nearly captured the presidency. And nationalist parties are gathering steam in Holland, Germany, Belgium, Denmark, Hungary and beyond.

Inequality between the classes is the most expected result of Capitalism. These protests and riots, specifically highlighting this attribute of Capitalism, as well as the results of Brexit referendum, give us a reason to believe that the confidence in liberal capitalism is shaken as far as masses in the West are concerned. People in the West are facing economic insecurity, unemployment, wage stagnation and widening inequality. Although this doesn't mean that the masses will get an alternative to Capitalism from the nationalistic political parties but this expression of rejection within the West does have an impact on the government policies in general and specifically on the foreign policy.

C. Different school of thoughts within the US with respect to Foreign policy and their impact

With respect to foreign policy, US thinkers and politicians are classified by different labels based on their political ideas. For instance, there is a camp that is labelled as neoconservatives, by adding a qualifier we can call them neoconservatives interventionists, who advocate spread of US influence across the world with excessively aggressive direct intervention i.e. with or without the role of international institutions and law. Another camp is labeled as Liberal internationalists (also characterized as liberal interventionists) that hold a foreign policy doctrine that argues that liberal states should intervene in other sovereign states in order to pursue liberal objectives. Such intervention can include both military invasion and humanitarian aid but contrary to neocons, Liberal Interventionists care about international legitimacy. When the two come into conflict, the liberal interventionist comes up with some fig-leaf of legitimacy – a UN Resolution

twisted behind recognition, a NATO sanction, an Arab League invitation – that serves as a green light to go to war. Both of these views are in contrast to the isolationist, realist, or non-interventionist foreign policy doctrines. Non-interventionism is a foreign policy doctrine characterized by the absence of interference by a state or states in the external affairs of another state without its consent, or in its internal affairs with or without its consent. Non-interventionism is distinct from and often confused with isolationism. Then there is a newly emerging, unstructured school of thought called the alternative right, more commonly known as the alt-right, that came onto the US national political scene in 2015. People ascribing to the alt-right express to be concerned due to threats to western culture from mass immigration and by non-straight relationships. Alt-right is also associated with white nationalism, Islamophobia and antifeminism. They want their own communities, populated by their own people, and governed by their own values. People carrying these views often challenge holocaust and Jews as well as political correctness. The sympathizers as well as the critics of alt-right at times mention that Donald Trump's voters mainly belong to this school of thought.

The decline in political influence and the economic crisis had a resounding impact on the public opinion both within US and across the world. It further aggravated by the regular body bags reaching back home as well as high suicide rates within the military. This decline is under discussion in the thinkers within US. The masses in general and a few key politicians started to question the interventionist mindset and the majority held view as far as the masses are concerned within US shifted to that of non-interventionism.

- In February 2011, Robert Gates, the then Defense Secretary, told the West Point Academy cadets that United States should never fight another war like Iraq and Afghanistan. He said, "In my opinion, any future defense secretary who advises the president to again send a big American land army into Asia or into the Middle East or Africa should 'have his head examined'..." In other words, what he wanted to say was, that an intervention like Afghanistan and Iraq is madness.
- In December 2013, the Pew Research Center reported that their newest poll, "American's Place in the World 2013," had revealed that 52 percent of respondents in the national poll said that the United States "should mind its own business internationally and let other countries get along the best they can on their own." This was the most people to answer that question this way in the history of the question, one which pollsters began asking in 1964. Only about a third of respondents felt this way a decade ago.
- A July 2014 poll of "battleground voters" across the United States found "77 percent in favor of full withdrawal from Afghanistan by the end of 2016; only 15 percent and 17 percent interested in more involvement in Syria and Ukraine, respectively; and 67 percent agreeing with the statement that, 'U.S. military actions should be limited to direct threats to our national security.'"
- During the presidency of Barack Obama, some members of the United States federal government, including President Obama and Secretary of State John Kerry, considered intervening militarily in the Syrian Civil War. A poll from late April 2013 found that 62% of Americans thought that the "United States has no responsibility to do something about the fighting in Syria between government forces and antigovernment groups," with only twenty-five percent disagreeing with that statement.

It can be said that the public opinion within the US based on the non-interventionism as well as influential emergence of alt-right within the US will have an effect on the policy making under this new administration of Donald Trump. Furthermore, the hatred against the colonialism in general and hatred against US in specific, spread across the world, will make it much more difficult for the US to go for military human intervention on a considerable scale like it did in Afghanistan and Iraq. But at the same time, the induction of neoconservatives within the Trump

administration will push US to intervene in conflicts like that of Syria where US is failing miserably and if US shows this foolishness, it might very well be the end of US as the world knows it.

D. The death of International Law is Imminent

In the last two decades, the UN and the so-called international law have been undermined left right and center. The neocons' policies of bypassing the UN for Iraq war in 2003 proved to be one of the nails in its coffin but the final nails were hammered by the awareness within the Muslims, the response that Mujahedeen gave to the US invasions and the penetration of Islam's political aspect within the Ummah. These aspects made it difficult for the US to exercise its will through the existing international law which it had defined for its own benefit to begin with. Had it not been the resolve of the Iraqi Muslims in not accepting US occupation, the bypassing of the UN to invade Iraq might have been ignored but instead it became a pain in the neck. As if the humiliation of Iraq was not enough, the Brave Muslims of Syria took a stand that unfurled the mask of western imperialism completely and made the UN completely ineffective.

Where is the United Nations when US meets Russia and makes a plan to kill Muslims indiscriminately? Where is the United Nations when Russia bombs the children on the so called World Children Day? Where is the United Nations when Hizb of Shaitan, the Iranian supported militias fight those who are not surrendering to American Imperialism? Where is the United Nations and the international law when France, US, Jordan, Turkey, Iran, Russia use their fighter jets to bomb Muslims across Syria and they specifically target hospitals and bakeries? And where is the United Nations when the Muslims of Palestine and Kashmir are being killed by the Jewish entity and Hindu state even though the UN resolutions were passed decades ago? Why is this the case that the UN and international law only come into equations for the treacherous Muslim rulers as an excuse for inaction when the Muslim armies are called by the oppressed Muslims to rescue them from the oppressors? Robert Kagan, a known neoconservative, in his book *"Superpowers don't get to retire: what our tired country still owes the world"* starts by saying *"Almost 70 years ago, a new world order was born from the rubble of World War II, built by and around the power of the United States. Today that world order shows signs of cracking, and perhaps even collapsing."*

The global situation is changing and new trends are emerging. We can see that in all effective senses, the international law and order, maintained by the United Nations, is dead. It's time that an alternative is presented to this world to rescue it from the curse of this rotten world order.

E. Few points as conclusion from the discussion above.

1. Liberalism is on decline, not just in the US but it has become a global phenomenon.
2. America stands divided. Even after the elections concluded, a movement emerged with protests across the US with one slogan "Not my President". This rejection is not just a rejection of a Personality rather it is an expression of a deeper divide in the ideas carried by masses.
3. There will be a push from the neocon interventionists to directly intervene as the threat of re-emergence of a new rival in the form of Khilafah [Caliphate] or China, is more imminent as compared to the time when neocons were in the government during Bush Jr's terms.
4. There will be a pull from the nationalist masses, who voted Donald Trump in, to get the US back on track domestically, that will make it difficult for the new administration to go with the neoconservative interventionist agenda
5. The hatred against US and Colonialism due to the awareness within Muslims in general as well as the Islamophobia that the Trump's team is known for shall make it all the more difficult for the US to exercise its political and military muscle in the Muslim world. This will

make things difficult for its so-called “local allies” (read: puppet regimes) to implement its instructions.

6. As mentioned above the neocons undermine the international institutions which are already gone very weak even during the government of so-called liberal internationalists. The United Nations and other such organizations that were working as tools and the guarantor of the International law and order will further weaken as a result of United States’ overall weakness and the revival of neocons in US government.

F. Rise of an alternative Ideology is a pre-requisite to the collapse of an existing ideology

For any ideology to collapse, it is inevitable that an alternative is available for the masses to compare and opt. Even though these points allude to the weakness of the US, the torch bearer of Capitalism, still we cannot say that these are enough for the fall of the capitalist ideology. These points do highlight the opportunity that exists, more than before, for the rise of an alternative ideology, led by a strong state, to save the humanity from the evils of Capitalism. History is a witness to this phenomenon. It was the rise of the Caliphate that challenged and brought a fall to the then leading state, the Roman Empire. It was the Khilafah that influenced European renaissance that led to the revolutions and new ideology. It was the capitalist states of Britain and France that played a role in the destruction of Caliphate. Then it was the USSR that challenged the Capitalist states by adopting Communism as an ideology; and then it was the United States that led the Cold War and fall of Communism giving liberal capitalism as the alternative. In the very similar way, once such a state is established today, it can present its solutions in a challenging manner and build definitive cracks in the wall of Capitalism that is already shaken. **Such a state must present the solutions covering economics, politics and legal aspects of a society and there is no available ideology other than Islam that could provide such comprehensive solutions as an alternative to Capitalism.** Following are a few examples to give a glimpse of solutions based on Islamic Ideology for the economic, legal and political aspects.

Islam’s economic solutions: Islam insists on the currency being backed by gold or silver. Implementation of this law shall end steep inflation and the need of interest in the economy. Islam adopts distribution of wealth as the main solution to the economic problem and categorizes needs into basic needs and luxuries separately. These fundamentals of Islamic economics do away with the extreme inequality created by capitalism. Islam prohibits exploitation of people through stopping privatization of public nature resources (especially the energy resources). Islam introduces a unique system of taxation that only allows the government to tax under strict conditions and only the wealthy and those able to pay. Islam absolutely prohibits interest. Khilafah can support the less privileged nations through interest free loans unlike the capitalist IMFs and World Banks of the current times that give loans to make the weaker states subservient.

Islam’s legal solutions - Justice: The injustice in capitalism stems from its very basic tenet i.e. Democracy where the power to legislate is with the elite. Islam provides true justice by restricting the power to legislate for the Creator only and provides an enlightened way of extracting laws from the sources i.e. Ijtihad. The three step process consisting of studying the reality, studying the divine sources for relevant address of the Legislator, and extracting a rule and giving judgment. This is an alternative to the shallow way of legislation, based on the weak principle of compromise, offered by secular democracy with no importance to study and prone to vested interests. It will only be this Islamic system where men and women will have their rights secured and people will live in harmony without conflicts due to their race, religion, ethnicity or color.

Islam’s political solutions: It is Islam that defined politics to be “taking care of the affairs of the people”. In Islam, the rulers are “burdened” with the responsibility of ruling and not “gifted” like in the Democratic system. Politics in Islam is a duty and not a career or a business. Even after so-

called coming out of Dark Ages, the West has still not been able to establish true Rule of Law for even now the rulers are given immunity. It is Islam that puts even a ruler under the rule of law with an equal status compared to any other citizen. Similarly, the accountability of the ruler is a duty in Islam rather than a matter of choice with a robust multi-layered accountability structure where The Qadi Madhalim, The Majlis-e-Ummah, The political parties and the Ummah in general fulfils the obligation of accountability of the ruler through *Amr bil Ma'aruf wa Nahi unil munkir* (calling for the good and forbidding the evil).

G. Pakistan is appropriate for this position:

Such a state can emerge from any strong Muslim country. Let us here consider Pakistan as an appropriate option for this. Pakistan is the 6th largest population of the world with immense resources and deep rooted Islamic Aqeedah. It is the strongest Muslim country with 8th largest Army of the world and the only Muslim state with Nuclear Arsenal. It has the experience of challenging and collapsing a superpower of its time i.e. the USSR. With agriculture as its backbone, Pakistan has all those ingredients available that are required for becoming the starting point for the Khilafah on the method of Prophethood, carrying the Islamic ideology to the world. The enemy very well understands this and has expressed deep concerns on this in multiple statements within last few years. Following are a few selected quotes from a long list that highlight Pakistan as a threat once Khilafah is established.

- In an interview in March 2009, David Kilcullen, advisor to the US CENTCOM commander, said, *"Pakistan has 173 million people, 100 nuclear weapons, an army bigger than the US Army...We're now reaching the point (of)...an extremist takeover -- that would dwarf everything we've seen in the war on terror today."*
- An article published in the *New Yorker* on 16 November 2009 stated, *"The principal fear is mutiny—that extremists inside the Pakistani military might stage a coup...A senior Obama Administration official brought up Hizb ut-Tahrir...whose goal is to establish the Caliphate (Khilafah)"*.
- As for the Hindu state, a senior official from the Indian intelligence agency, RAW, said in the same article, *"Our worries are about the nuclear weapons in Pakistan. Not because we are worried about the mullahs taking over the country; we're worried about those senior officers in the Pakistan Army who are Caliphates ... Some of the men we are watching have notions of leading an Islamic army."*
- A 50 minutes long audio of Hilary Clinton addressing a fund-raising event in February 2016 surfaced in September 2016 where she mentioned, *"Pakistan is running full speed to develop tactical nukes in their continuing hostility with India."* she said. *"But we live in fear that they're going to have a coup, that jihadists are going to take over the government, they're going to get access to nuclear weapons, and you'll have suicide nuclear bombers. So, this could not be a more threatening scenario."*

It is not just these glaring statements that highlight the potential of re-establishment of the Khilafah in Pakistan rather the response to the call for establishment of a Caliphate within Pakistan provides a direct sensation that the masses are ready for such a change. The collective expression within Pakistan is overwhelmingly Islamic to the extent that various liberals have voiced hopelessness as far as the fulfilment of liberal agenda is concerned. The last piece of the puzzle is to convince those that have the power and authority to bring change in Pakistan. While discussing the possibility of revolution in Pakistan in his book *"Pakistan: A Hard Country"*, Anatol Lieven mentions, *"Unlike in Africa and elsewhere, military coups in Pakistan have always been carried out by the army as a whole, on the orders of its chief of staff and commanding generals – never by junior officers."* He further mentions, *"The only thing that can destroy this discipline and unity is if enough Pakistani soldiers are faced with moral and emotional pressures powerful enough to crack their*

discipline, and that would mean very powerful pressures indeed. In fact, they would have to be put in a position where their duty to defend Pakistan and their conscience and honor as Muslims clashed directly with their obedience to their commanders. As far as I can see, the only thing that could bring that about as far as the army as a whole is concerned (rather than just some of its Pathan elements) is if the US were to invade part of Pakistan, and the army command failed to give orders to resist this.”

This highlights the importance of the work within those who matter. This was what happened in Osama Bin Laden’s case and we very well remember what the state of affairs was at that time. And something similar is going on at the Line of Control [LOC] as we speak where India is regularly escalating and the leadership’s response is not satisfactory for the sincere soldiers of Pak Army. That was America and this is the Hindu state and submission in front of a Hindu state cannot be justified with the argument that we cannot fight a superpower. The responsibility that the sincere officers within Pak Army have towards the Ummah makes it incumbent upon them to not to go for adventurism i.e. before supporting any call for the establishment of an ideological state, they need to be convinced in the ability of those that are making the call. Furthermore, the vision that is being presented should also have clarity. It is the responsibility of the Da’awah carriers that they prepare themselves as a capable leadership and present this idea with extreme clarity and influence the most influential people of the Ummah.

Allah (swt) revealed,

﴿وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَيَسْتَخْلِفَنَّهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ كَمَا اسْتَخْلَفَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ وَلَيُمَكِّنَنَّ لَهُمْ دِينَهُمُ الَّذِي ارْتَضَى لَهُمْ وَلَيُبَدِّلَنَّهُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ خَوْفِهِمْ أَمْنًا يَعْبُدُونَنِي لَا يُشْرِكُونَ بِي شَيْئًا﴾

“Allah has promised those among you who believe, and do righteous good deeds, that He will certainly grant them succession to (the present rulers) in the earth, as He granted it to those before them, and that He will grant them the authority to practice their religion, that which He has chosen for them. And He will surely give them in exchange a safe security after their fear provided they worship Me and do not associate anything in worship with Me.” [Surah an-Nur 24: 55]

**Written for the Central Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir by
Engineer Taimoor, Pakistan**