



The Ugliness of American Political Manoeuvring in full display over North Korea

The New York Times reported on 10 August 2017:

President Trump escalated his war of words with North Korea on Thursday by declaring that his provocative threat to rain down “fire and fury” might not have been harsh enough, as nuclear tensions between the two nations continued to crackle.

Rejecting critics at home and abroad who condemned his earlier warning as reckless saber-rattling, Mr. Trump said North Korea and its volatile leader, Kim Jong-un, have pushed the United States and the rest of the world for too long.

“Frankly, the people who were questioning that statement, was it too tough? Maybe it wasn’t tough enough,” he told reporters at his golf club in Bedminster, N.J. “They’ve been doing this to our country for a long time, for many years, and it’s about time that somebody stuck up for the people of this country and for the people of other countries. So if anything, maybe that statement wasn’t tough enough.”

Mr. Trump noted that North Korea, which has made significant progress toward developing long-range nuclear weapons, responded to his original warning by threatening to launch a missile strike toward the Pacific island of Guam, an American territory and strategic base. “If he does something in Guam, it will be an event the likes of which nobody has seen before, what will happen in North Korea,” he said.

Asked if that was a dare, Mr. Trump said: “It’s not a dare. It’s a statement. Has nothing to do with dare. That’s a statement. He’s not going to go around threatening Guam and he’s not going to threaten the United States and he’s not going to threaten Japan, and he’s not going to threaten South Korea. No, that’s not a dare, as you say. That is a statement of fact.”

Despite the attempts of others in the administration to calibrate and contextualise the bombastic statements of US President Donald Trump, it is quite clear the United States of America is fully committed to intensifying the conflict over North Korea. The US portrays itself as only taking legitimate and reasonable defensive steps in reaction to North Korean aggression. But the reality is that it is the US that waged war on the Korean peninsula after the close of World War II, resulting in its partition into North and South, and it is the US that has continued to threaten the North ever since with a vast military presence in and around South Korea. Officially, the Korean War never ended, but remains only in ceasefire. And various American military provocations over the years have resulted in North Korea aggressively militarising itself, to the extent of developing nuclear and ballistic missile technology. America is secretly delighted with North Korean militarisation, portraying it as further justification for American intervention in the region.

Careful study reveals that American aggression in Korea, as with its aggression in Vietnam 50 years ago, is part of American grand strategy directed against the rise of China. Korea provides America with the perfect excuse to strongly militarise directly on the Chinese border. The crisis also serves to keep the Chinese leadership preoccupied and engaged in this issue, distracting them from more important matters. China has had to undertake further mobilisation on the Korean border in response to the intensification of the issue from the American side. So American threats and actions against North Korea are in fact a form of political manoeuvring in pursuit of a grander aim.

Political manoeuvring is an inherent part of statecraft recognised by Islam also. The oft-quoted treaty of Hudaibya, so crucial to the stability and strength of the nascent Islamic State, was arrived at through political manoeuvring and not through war. Prior to this, Medina had suffered siege by the ‘Ahzab’, the alliance between the Qur’aish of Mecca, to the south, and the Jews of Khaybar, to the north. The novel tactic of digging the ‘khandaq’, the trench, was completely undermined when the allies succeeded in also co-opting the Jewish tribe of Bani Quraidha of Medina. The alliance was only broken by political manoeuvring by Rasool Allah (s.a.w.) through Nu’aym ibn Mas’ud, who had recently accepted Islam but had not yet revealed

this to his own people. He skilfully managed to sow dissent between the allies, leading ultimately, to the initial protagonists fleeing for their lives during a harsh night-time storm. The subsequent actions of Rasool Allah (saw) leading up to the treaty of Hudaibya can be seen as a direct strategic response to the events of the Battle of al-Ahzab. Aware of renewed interaction between Khybar and Mecca, the Prophet (saw) sought to break this dangerous alliance by politically neutralising the Qur'aish, through publicly declaring his intention to peacefully visit the Kaaba in Mecca in order to make Haj. They denied him (saw) the Haj that year, but naively offered as compensation something far superior strategically – the treaty of Hudaibya. With this in hand, the Prophet (saw) returned to Medina and immediately attacked and subdued Khaybar, thus eliminating the northern component of the erstwhile Ahzab. With the principal Qur'aishi ally eliminated, it took only two years before Mecca itself fell, foolishly triggered by the Qur'aish themselves when they violated the terms of the Hudaibya Treaty, desperate to find some way to block Medina's meteoric rise.

The events of al-Ahzab and Hudaibya make clear that political manoeuvring is an essential and noble component of statecraft, in fact superior to warfare as it produces results without bloodshed.

However, the difference between the political manoeuvring in Islam and that of the West is that the righteous Islamic State is not permitted to contradict the Shar'a in its speech or action. For example, it is not permitted to issue untruthful statements during the time of peace, which is when political manoeuvring is primarily used. Similarly, it is not permitted to call for values or actions that contradict Islam. The Prophet (saw) declared that he would visit Mecca peacefully, and he (saw) remained completely true to his word on this, despite numerous provocations that even forced him to take a pledge of fighting from his companions; he (saw) concluded a treaty and remained completely sincere to fulfilling its terms, until the Qur'aish themselves violated it; the Prophet (saw) did not respond to al-Ahzab by creating an alliance of his own, as it is not permitted for the Islamic State to ally in that fashion with non-Islamic powers.

This is in contrast to the West, which depends heavily on deceit whether in war or in peace, and supports values and actions that openly contradict the West's own stated principles and norms. The West calls for non-interference in the sovereign affairs of others but cannot bear to tolerate governments that choose to stand independently of it. The West claims to act in defence only but actually instigates numerous conflicts throughout the world so that it can find an excuse to intervene wherever it wishes. The West claims to stand for human rights but thinks nothing of taking the world to the brink of thermonuclear war in support of its own interests. The West claims to hold international law sacrosanct but they not only manipulate its provisions according to their own wishes but are the first to contravene it when it suits their purposes so to do.

The West's hypocrisy is intrinsic to its false ideology of Capitalist secular liberalism and its atheistic political values of freedom and democracy. By adopting freedom, the West creates personalities that care only for themselves and not for others. The natural consequence of this is that, in practice, ruling becomes oligarchic and foreign policy becomes imperialistic. The world will never be able to escape imperialist hegemony as long as the Capitalist West dominates the world.

With the permission of Allah (swt), we will soon witness the re-establishment of the righteous Islamic Khilafah State (Caliphate) on the method of the Prophet (saw), and its conduct domestically and internationally will manifest what Allah has already made clear in the Qur'an. Allah (swt) says:

﴿وَقُلْ جَاءَ الْحَقُّ وَزَهَقَ الْبَاطِلُ إِنَّ الْبَاطِلَ كَانَ زَهُوقًا﴾

And say: "Truth (i.e. Islamic Monotheism or this Qur'an or Jihad against polytheists) has come and Batil (falsehood, i.e. Satan or polytheism, etc.) has vanished. Surely! Batil is ever bound to vanish." [Qur'an 17:81]

Written for the Central Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir by

Faiq Najah