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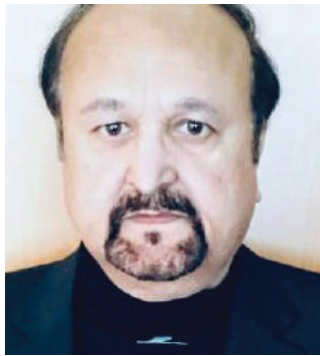


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Editorial



Dr. Busharat Elahi Jamil

Unfortunately, the practical politics in Pakistan is waning as unethical and non-democratic practices are damaging the democratic norms and means in the name of this “very true democracy”. Infect, politics is ideologically defined as practice to serve others morally, socially, economically and economically selflessly regardless one’s caste, creed, race and religious beliefs. Unfortunately, the domino effect of a political culture developed up in the shadow of true democracy is certainly far reaching and positive but right after the demise of Mr. Jinnah, the true democracy could not flourish in Pakistan and a certain elite political class emerged and hijacked and exploited the political powers. Gradually an intentional attempt was made to impose such a political system in the country restricting the masses to voting only. As a result, the general masses remained unaware and deprived of political training. Contemporarily democracy in Pakistan is not the only tool to exploit the unaware and illiterate public. The religious/Islamist political mafia stands equally responsible for grave circumstances. Political entities having no ideology confine themselves to the power seeking. This is the key reason that more than 90% population of Pakistan is entirely ignorant of the definition as well as the benefits of true democracy. In the contemporary Pakistan, the political elite is showing its muscles using the parliamentarians as a tool to get economic and political benefits. By moving the no-confidence motion against Imran Khan, opposition’s unnatural collation is trying to destabilize the PTI’s regime, allegedly to end the accountability process and to bind country’s accountability and judicial institutions. Horse trading is at its peaks, Mian Javed Latif of PML-N on national media confessed the horse trading. Opposition is also claiming the support of 272 members as well, apparently, they are using Constitution and a certain legal process subjecting to their personal drives and objec-

tives. Floor crossing or the horse trading is not a new subject for PML-N and PPP, in the past these accumulations have also allegedly found involved in such practices shaping the political astute and the standards of the opposition parties. The role of Molana Fazl-ur-Rehman (JUI) in the guise of religion makes his position dubious both religiously and politically for his support for the corrupt politicians. Furthermore, a valid question is still out there that how the opposition parties, dipped in allegations without clearance and proper justification fighting for their survival, can serve the country progressively? That is the reason that such politicians pursue their personal agenda because they don’t have a political one, which leads them to switch their sides whenever they find a chance to mark their worth for the personal gains. Thus, the loyalty always remain vulnerable as the strings are not attached to a cause or agenda. There’s no assurance that the fugitive PTI’s members of Parliament in future will ever remain loyal to the opposition? What will be the future of this unnatural collation of the opposition parties? How the PPP and PML-N, after failing administratively in their respective provinces, can play their role in the uplift of the Country? Against the odds, if the opposition succeeds the future of the country may be more perilous. In fact, the recent gloomy political scenario in Pakistan is hazardous for the integrity and security of Pakistan. Besides, due to Pakistan’s clear stance on Russia and Ukraine problems Country cannot afford such political moves and unpredictability. Establishment and media should play their effective and positive role in these circumstances to contain any political misadventure. The politicians should also evade the opportunistic politics. This is the time that matured, sincere and earnest politicians should come forward for the political stability and also to condemn the opportunistic political culture in Pakistan.

Pakistan's Khan urges Islamic nations to mediate in Ukraine war

Pakistani leader asks Muslim-majority nations to help end Russia's war in Ukraine, appealing also to China to join the effort.



Pakistan's prime minister has urged foreign ministers from Muslim-majority nations to help end Russia's war in Ukraine, appealing also to China's top diplomat to join the effort. Imran Khan spoke on Tuesday at the start of a two-day gathering in Islamabad of the 57-member Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), which for the first time saw the attendance of China's foreign minister, Wang Yi, as a special guest. The war in Ukraine "could have great consequences for the world," Khan warned and added that the rest of the planet is "already suffering" with surging prices of oil, gas and wheat from a region known as the breadbasket of the world. He urged the ministers to "mediate, try to bring about a ceasefire and an end to the conflict". The OIC meeting in Islamabad has an ambitious agenda that seeks approval for more than 100 declarations, including aid for financially strapped Afghanistan and support for the Palestinians, and the people living in the disputed region of Kashmir. "We have failed both the Palestinians and the people of Kash-

mir. I am sad to say that we have been able to make no impact at all," he said. "We (Muslims) are 1.5 billion people and yet our voice to stop this blatant injustice is insignificant." Khan has tried to position himself on the international stage, but his insistence on continuing with a visit to Moscow last month as Russian troops invaded Ukraine perplexed even his most ardent admirers. He was also one of the few world leaders to attend the opening of the Beijing Winter Olympics when others boycotted in protest at China's human rights record. However, Wang's attendance at the OIC conference underscored China's increasing influence among OIC countries – as well as the Islamic organisation's readiness to overlook charges of widespread attacks by Chinese authorities on the country's minority Muslim Uighurs. Khan, who has made fighting Islamophobia a top priority, has refused to condemn China over allegations of abuse against the Uighurs. Pakistan has signed a multi-billion dollar road and energy project that will link its Arabian Sea port of Gwadar

to China in the north. In his speech at the conference, the Chinese foreign minister said China supports Russia and Ukraine continuing peace talks for the sake of a ceasefire, an end to the war and peace. "We need to prevent humanitarian disasters and prevent the spill-over of the Ukrainian crisis from affecting or harming the legitimate rights and interests of other regions and countries," he said. Wang said after the outbreak of coronavirus, Beijing provided 1.3 billion doses of COVID-19 vaccines and a large amount of supplies to fight the virus to 50 Islamic countries. Later, Wang met with Khan, according to a government statement. It said the "two sides discussed the situation in Ukraine and reiterated the imperative need for an immediate cessation of hostilities and continued efforts for a solution through sustained dialogue and diplomacy". Pakistan's Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi met separately with his Chinese counterpart, the ministry said. The two "discussed the situation in Ukraine and reiterated the need for a solution through sustained dialogue and diplomacy," it said. Michael Kugelman, deputy director of the Asia Program at the US-based Wilson Center, tweeted that it was "rather ironic" to see Wang at the conference. "It's also a reminder of the high value that the OIC states place on their commercial relations with Beijing," Kugelman said. Khan has long campaigned against growing anti-Muslim sentiment, and takes credit for the United Nations move last week to adopt an International Day to Combat Islamophobia. Khan is hosting the OIC conference whilst scrambling to fight a no-confidence vote in the National Assembly as early as next week, with the opposition accusing him of mismanaging the economy and foreign policy.

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<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/3/23/pakistan-imran-khan-islamic-nations-oic-ukraine-war>

Kashmir's Nasira gets Nari Shakti award for invention on bio-degradation of plastic

President Kovind presented Nari Shakti Puraskar to Nasira Akhter for grassroot innovation in environmental conservation. Hailing from Kulgam, Jammu and Kashmir, she developed a herb that converts polythene to ashes, thereby making polythene biodegradable. (She is an Ahmadi)



Peace, Not War

By Richard Falk

MAKE PEACE



NOT WAR

Russia launched its massive invasion of Ukraine on February 24 flagrantly violating the most fundamental norm of international law – the prohibition of recourse to international force except in exercising the right of self-defense against a prior armed attack. Yes, there were a series of irresponsible provocations by Nato that aroused understandable security concerns in Moscow, including the relentless expansion of the Cold War Nato alliance after the Cold War was over, the threat from the Soviet Union had disappeared, and promises were made by Western leaders of no further Nato expansion. Such geopolitical behavior amounted to imprudent statecraft by the West, especially given the Russian anxiety about being surrounded by hostile forces. Such eminent figures as George Kennan, Jack Matlock (respected former US ambassador to Russia), and Henry Kissinger issued warnings to this effect, but they went unheeded in Washington.

The Ukraine War is best interpreted as a two-level war. In the active combat zones of Ukraine, it is a devastating war between Russia and Ukraine producing an increasingly severe humanitarian crisis that includes massive civilian displacement refugee flows and internal movements away from embattled cities and throughout the country.

This primary war phenomenon interacts with an ongoing secondary proxy war pitting Russia against the United States, with Russia trying to impose its will on Ukraine and the US pursuing several geopolitical objectives. These include revitalizing and strengthening

Nato and mobilizing unity in Europe by inflaming anti-Russian sentiments, which as during the Cold War rested on fear and loathing of Russia, then the Soviet Union. There is no military engagement at this point in the proxy war, although its indirect confrontations are at risk of escalating dangerously, even putting inhibitions on nuclear threats and risks to their greatest test since the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962. Perhaps, it should be appreciated that the fog of war is denser in the secret sessions of proxy war advisors and leaders than even what is hovering over the Ukrainian battlefields. Strategic objectives in this two-level war are confusing, being neither coherent nor consistent, and because there are no current images of death and destruction, the very real negative effects of the proxy war tend to be ignored, such as prolonging the killing, delaying a ceasefire.

On the surface, Russia is seeking to reestablish its sphere of influence over its 'near abroad' in Ukraine and the US is seeking to blunt this Russian mission at a high cost to Ukrainians. It is doing this by sending weapons and other forms of assistance to help the Ukrainians resist more effectively.

Excerpted: 'Make Peace, Not War, in Ukraine'.

Courtesy: Counterpunch.org

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/946084-peace-not-war>

Pakistan is the 3rd Largest Source of Foreign Doctors in America

Pakistan is the third biggest source of foreign doctors who make up a third of all practicing physicians in the United States, according to OECD. Vast majority of Muslim doctors in America are of Pakistani origin.

Foreign Doctors in America:

About 30% of the 800,000 doctors, or about 240,000 doctors, currently practicing in America are of foreign origin, according to Catholic Health Association of the United States. Predictions vary, but according to the American Association of Medical Colleges, by 2025 the U.S. will be short about 160,000 physicians. This gap will most likely be filled by more foreign doctors.

Pakistani Doctors in United States:

As of 2013, there are over 12,000 Pakistani doctors, or about 5% of all foreign physicians and surgeons, in practice in the United States. Pakistan is the third largest source of foreign-trained doctors. India tops with 22%, or 52,800 doctors. It is followed by the Philippines with 6%, or 14,400 foreign-trained doctors. India and Pakistan also rank as the top two sources of foreign doctors in the United Kingdom.

Dow Medical University of Health Sciences: There are 3,100 graduates of Karachi's Dow University of Health Sciences, contributing the largest pool of doctors among the 12,000 Pakistani doctors in the United States. About 1,900 are from Lahore's King Edward Medical College and the rest from Karachi's Agha Khan University, Lahore's Allama Iqbal Medical College and other medical colleges in Pakistan, according to Dr. Humayun Chaudhry, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Federation of State Medical Boards in the



United States.

Doctor Shortages:

India has six doctors for 10,000 people and Pakistan has eight. The comparable figure for the United States is 25 doctors per 10,000. And yet, the United States continues to import thousands of doctors from these two South Asian nations. Predictions vary, but according to the American Association of Medical Colleges, by 2025 the U.S. will be short about 160,000 physicians. This shortfall will most likely be filled by foreign doctors from countries like India and Pakistan.

Summary:

Pakistani doctors make up the third largest source of practicing physicians and surgeons in the United States. And more are coming to make up the continuing shortages in spite of the fact that Pakistan has only eight doctors per 10,000 people, only a third of the 25 doctors per 10,000 in the United States. Will this change after President-elect Donald Trump takes office on January 20, 2017? Only time will tell.

<http://www.riazhaq.com/2016/12/pakistan-is-3rd-largest-source-of.html>

Pakistan wants peaceful, close ties with neighbours: COAS

Iranian air chief lauds professionalism of Pakistan's armed forces in a meeting with Gen Qamar at GHQ, says ISPR



Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Qamar Javed Bajwa said on Wednesday that Pakistan wanted peaceful and close ties with its neighbours, the military said. According to Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), the COAS expressed these views during a meeting with Commander Islamic Republic of Iran Air Force Brigadier General Pilot Hamid Vahedi at GHQ in Rawalpindi. During the meeting, the military's media wing said, matters of mutual interest, regional security situation and bilateral cooperation between the two countries were discussed. The army chief said that Pakistan wanted peaceful and close ties with its neighbours and stressed on the need for collective efforts towards regional stability. Both sides, according to ISPR, agreed to enhance cooperation in the defence and security fields. According to the statement, the visiting dignitary acknowledged the professionalism of Pakistan's armed forces and vowed to enhance cooperation in various fields. He also appreciated Pakistan's role in the Afghan situation and effective border management measures. Earlier this month,

the army chief termed the Pakistan-Iran frontier as a border of peace and friendship in a meeting with the Iranian interior minister. According to ISPR, Iranian Interior Minister Ahmad Vahidi along with a delegation visited the General Headquarters in Rawalpindi and discussed bilateral matters including security issues. The geostrategic environment particularly regional security situation and bilateral cooperation in defence and security domains were discussed during the meeting, the ISPR said. The Pak-Iran border security mechanism including border markets also came under discussion, it added. The Iranian minister, while acknowledging stability in Afghanistan as collective regional responsibility, appreciated Pakistan's efforts for peace and stability, particularly humanitarian assistance being rendered to mitigate challenges faced by the people of Afghanistan.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2346045/pakistan-wants-peaceful-close-ties-with-neighbours-coas>

23rd March not only as Pakistan Day

By: Badaruddin Kalhoro, Bureau Chief Lahore International London



Very few individuals have significantly changed the course of history. There are still few modifications to the world map. Hardly anyone can be recognized as the creator of a nation. Muhammad Ali Jinnah did all three. Hailed as a "great leader" (Quaid-e-Azam) of Pakistan, Jinnah de facto promoted that country to statehood through the force of his indomitable will. The Lahore Resolution commonly known as the Pakistan Resolution was an official political declaration adopted by the Muslim League at its three-day joint session on 22-24 March 1940, calling for greater autonomy of Muslims in British India. This is widely understood as the need for a separate Muslim country, Pakistan. The resolution was presented by A. K. Fazlul Huq. March 22, 1940 to March 24, 1940, the All India Muslim League held its annual session at Minto Park, Lahore. This session turned out to be history. The session took place from 22 March to 24 March 1940, at Minto Park (now Iqbal Park), Lahore. Welcome speech delivered by Nawab Sir Shah Nawaz Mamdot. In his speech, Jinnah recounted the contemporary situation, emphasizing that India's problem is no longer cross-community, but clearly international. He criticized Congress and Muslim nationalists, and espoused the two-state theory and the reasons for the need for separate Muslim homelands. According to Stanley Wolpert, this was the moment when Jinnah, the former Ambassador of Hindu-Muslim Unity, completely made himself the great leader of Pakistan. Quaid e azan said that, "Hindus and Muslims belong to two different religions, philosophy, social and literary customs. They are not detained nor banned and, really, they belong Two different civilizations are mainly based on ideas and designs. Conflict. Their

concepts of life and life are different. It is clear that Hindus and Muslims have inspiration Different historical sources. They have different heroes, different heroes and different stages. Often, one person's hero is the other's enemy, and likewise, their victories and defeats overlap. To bring together two such nations under one state, one in the minority and the other in the majority, must lead to growing discontent and ultimately the destruction of any fabric that may be built for the government of 'such a country'. The background to the Pakistan Resolution is the introduction of provincial autonomy on the subcontinent in 1937 through the Government of India Act of 1935. Elections in 1937 brought the Congress a majority in six provinces, in which the governments were formed. This led to political, social, economic and cultural oppression of Muslims in the Congress-ruled provinces. Congress rejected the Muslim League's offer to form coalition ministries. employment and education policies and opportunities. Congressional ministries instituted the Wardha education program aimed at de-Muslimizing Muslim youth and children. over the departments of Congress that showed that a 'Raj Congress' had been established. He was betrayed by the behavior and demeanor of the congressmen. Many of them behaved as if they were a ruling caste, as if they were the owners of the land."

Muslims, who are in the minority in the independent entities and areas, must be consulted and their interests protected by the constitution. Since the current constitution does not protect the interests of Muslims, it is not at all acceptable to Indian Muslims. Muslims in India cannot accept the British government's proposed amendments to the current constitu-

tion until the entire constitutional plan is revised from the ground up. Doing the common will for the realization of Pakistan was a duty that the Muslim League championed from the moment it was founded. This goal was achieved after 7 years in the form of the Lahore Resolution. This resolution radically changed the direction of South Asian politics. The adoption of the Pakistan Resolution shattered Indian dreams of a consolidated (Akhand) Bharat. The Indians' concern shook the rubble from which the edifice of Pakistan could be constructed. The resolution draws attention to the following important points of the text. First, the content uses the phrase "independent states" instead of "independent state". The presence of "s" with the word state in the original text becomes significant in the context of East Pakistan's 1971 secession to Bangladesh. It has been argued that the original intent was to form many individual states in the areas where Muslims are in the majority rather than a single state for the Muslims of India. The fact that the resolution was tabled by a Bengali nationalist, Fazalul Haq, reinforces the argument that according to the resolution, East Pakistan should never be part of Pakistan.

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Five students from India identified as victims of fatal crash on Highway 401 near Trenton, Ont.



Ontario Provincial Police have identified the five victims of a fatal crash on Highway 401 between Belleville and Trenton early Saturday morning. The crash happened at 3:45 a.m. on the highway between Aikins Road and Saint Hilaire Road. It involved a tractor-trailer and a passenger van. Five occupants of the van were killed and two others were taken to hospital with serious injuries. The driver of the tractor-trailer was not hurt. In an update Sunday, police identified the victims as students from India who were attending schools in Montreal and the GTA. Jaspinder Singh, 21, Karanpal Singh, 22, Mohit Chouhan, 23, Pawan Kumar, 23, and Harpreet Singh, 24, were pronounced dead at the scene. "It's a tragedy. Nobody wants to respond to that call for service, but we're there, we're working," said OPP Const. Maggie Pickett on Saturday. West-bound lanes of Highway 401 were closed between Wallbridge Loyalist Road and Glen Miller Road for the investigation for about 10 hours on Saturday. There is no word yet on what caused the crash and the OPP investigation is ongoing. No charges have been laid.

<https://ottawa.ctvnews.ca/five-students-from-india-identified-as-victims-of-fatal-crash-on-highway-401-near-trenton-ont-1.5816839>

Blasphemy convict Junaid Hafeez engages Aasia Bibi's lawyer for high court appeal

By: Asher John

A new hope has emerged for Pakistani university lecturer Junaid Hafeez, who was sentenced to death on blasphemy allegations two years ago, after a leading human rights advocate announced on Saturday that he has been appointed Hafeez's lawyer for his appeal in the high court. In a Twitter post, lawyer Saif Ul Malook shared that he had met Hafeez in Multan's Central Prison and had found him in "good health and spirits". Advocate Saif has successfully overturned a number of convictions for "blasphemy", including that of Pakistan's most high-profile blasphemy accused Aasia Bibi in 2018. He most recently oversaw the acquittal of a Christian couple, Shagufta Kausar and Shafqat Emmanuel, who had been sentenced to death on a blasphemy charge. Saif was also the special prosecutor in the assassination case of Punjab governor Salmaan Taseer, who was gunned down by his police bodyguard Mumtaz Qadri for supporting Aasia Bibi in 2011. Qadri's execution became the launchpad of the hardline group, Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP). Blasphemy is a deeply emotive topic in Muslim-majority Pakistan and is legally punishable by death. While no one has ever been executed for the offence, dozens of people accused of blaspheming have been killed by vigilantes. Junaid Hafeez's case was declared "extremely sensitive" after his lawyer and prominent human rights activist Rashid Rehman was killed in 2014 by unidentified men for defending the academic. Talking to Kross Konnection, Advocate Saif said that he had been hired by Junaid Hafeez to challenge the death sentence handed to him on Dec 21, 2019. "The appeal was filed in the Lahore



[Junaid Hafeez was formerly a visiting faculty member of the Department of English Literature of the Bahauddin Zakariya University (BZU), Multan]

High Court's Multan Bench within the 7-day deadline after the conviction but it is yet to be heard by the court. It's likely that it will be taken up in a couple of months which will give me sufficient time to prepare my arguments," he said. Speaking in a weekly show on legal awareness, Advocate Saif discussed the obstacles in the course of law in blasphemy cases.

THE JUNAID HAFEEZ BLASPHEMY CASE

Junaid Hafeez, a lecturer at the Bahauddin Zakariya University in Multan, was accused of disrespecting Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and the Holy Quran verbally and on Facebook in 2013. A trial court in Multan sentenced him to death in 2019 after a lengthy trial. He has remained in solitary confinement since 2014, after his lawyer, Rehman was murdered. The attack came after Rehman had been threatened in open court by religious leaders and lawyers associated with the prosecution. According to a report, the lawyer who represented Hafeez during the trial described the atmosphere in court hearings as "intimidat-



ing". He said the "police's failure to apprehend those who shot Rehman dead signaled impunity for other would-be vigilantes". Hafeez's conviction had drawn widespread condemnation from international and local human rights organisations, including Amnesty International and Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP). While Amnesty termed Hafeez's conviction a "travesty", the HRCP said it was "dismayed by the verdict". "HRCP believes that the blasphemy laws are heavily misused," it said in a statement. "In five years, at least eight judges have heard Mr Hafeez's case, making a fair trial virtually impossible. Meanwhile, he has undergone six years' imprisonment in solitary confinement," the HRCP stated. Over 90 people have been killed in connection with blasphemy accusations in Pakistan since 1985, according to rights activists and media reports. The murdered include those accused of the crime, people acquitted by the courts, their lawyers, family members and judges connected to their cases.

<https://krosskonnektion.pk/2022/03/blasphemy-convict-junaid-hafeez-engages-aasia-bibis-lawyer-for-high-court-appeal/>

Lindsey Graham Calls for Russians to Assassinate Putin



Sen. Lindsey Graham (R., S.C.) said Thursday night that Russian President Vladimir Putin should be assassinated by his own people, suggesting it would be the only way to end the crisis precipitated by the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Mr. Graham first made the assertion during an appearance on Sean Hannity's show on Fox News. He then repeated the comment on Twitter, referencing both the betrayer of Julius Caesar and the architect of an unsuccessful 1944 plot to kill Adolf Hitler. "Is there a Brutus in Russia? Is there a more successful Colonel Stauffenberg in the Russian military?" he asked. "The only way this ends is for somebody in Russia to take this guy out. You would be doing your country - and the world - a great service." In a subsequent tweet he added: "The only people who can fix this are the Russian people. Easy to say, hard to do. Unless you want to live in darkness for the rest of your life, be isolated from the rest of the world in abject poverty, and live in darkness you need to step up to the plate." Mr. Graham served more than three decades as a lawyer in the U.S. Air Force, on active duty and then in the reserves. He is seen as an influential voice within the Republican Party on military and foreign-policy issues.

<https://www.wsj.com/livecoverage/russia-ukraine-latest-news-2022-03-03/card/lindsey-graham-calls-for-putin-to-be-assassinated-rhc631IXIWaRKxyv4HPu>

The Biden administration says the U.S. will accept 100,000 refugees from Ukraine.

By: Michael D. Shear



BRUSSELS — The United States will accept 100,000 Ukrainian refugees into the country and will donate \$1 billion to help European countries deal with the surge of migrants fleeing Russia's invasion, the White House said on Thursday. More than three million Ukrainians have poured into Poland and other countries as the forces of President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia have bombarded civilian areas in cities across Ukraine. United States officials have repeatedly said they expect that most Ukrainian refugees will want to stay in Europe, close to their homes. But President Biden, who is in Brussels for three back-to-back summits with allies, is expected to announce that the administration will accept 100,000 refugees who want to come to America. It is not clear what legal path those refugees will take. Officials said some might be welcomed under the United States' formal refugee program. Others may be given visas or be granted "humanitarian parole," a form of entry often given to people fleeing violence

or war in countries around the world. A senior administration official said special efforts were being made to expand and develop new programs with a focus on welcoming Ukrainians who have family members in the United States. The announcement by Mr. Biden would significantly increase the United States' role in dealing with the unfolding humanitarian crisis caused by the war in Ukraine, which has displaced millions of people in a matter of weeks. Last September, Mr. Biden capped total refugee admissions from around the world to 125,000 for the fiscal year ending in September. But the administration has not taken in anywhere close to that number, and has already worked around the cap by bringing tens of thousands of Afghan refugees into the United States after the end of the war there.

<https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/03/24/world/russia-ukraine-war?>



McDonald's, Coca-Cola and Starbucks temporarily stop sales in Russia.

Pressure has been ramping up on the American brands to pull out of Russia.

By: Julie Creswell

After days of silence and seeming reluctance to take a stance while facing rising pressure to respond to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, several iconic American food and beverage companies said on Tuesday that they were pausing operations in Russia. McDonald's, which has been in Russia for three decades, was first to say it would temporarily close its 850 restaurants in the country, including those it owns and those owned by franchisees. Starbucks soon followed, saying the 130 restaurants it has in Russia, which are owned and operated by the Kuwaiti conglomerate Alshaya Group, would also immediately close. Coca-Cola followed suit. And late in the day, PepsiCo, whose Pepsi drink has been sold in Russia since the early 1970s, said it would suspend soda sales, including 7Up. But it said it would continue its operations that manufacture milk, dairy products and baby formula and food, partly as a humanitarian effort but also to keep its 20,000 manufacturing and 40,000 farm workers employed. McDonald's opened its first restaurant in Russia in 1990, in Pushkin Square in Moscow, and became a symbol of Western culture to the Russian people. "For 66 years, we have operated with the belief that communities are made better when there's a McDonald's nearby," Chris Kempczinski, the company's chief executive, said in a statement. He noted that the company employed 62,000 people in the country, worked with hundreds of local Russian suppliers and partners, and served millions of Russian customers each day. Investors, as well as social media users, have ramped up pressure on businesses to pull out of Russia, especially fast-food chains, which have been criticized



for lagging behind other companies with decisions about their Russia operations. "Companies doing business in Russia need to seriously consider whether it's worth the risk," Thomas P. DiNapoli, the head of the New York State pension fund, one of the world's largest and most influential investors, said in a statement. "I commend the companies that are taking the right steps and suspending their operations in Russia." McDonald's said it would continue to pay salaries for McDonald's employees in Russia, as it has for its employees in Ukraine. Starbucks said its licensing partner in Russia would provide "support" to the nearly 2,000 employees in Russia. McDonald's will feel a financial impact from the move. Although the Russian operations make up only 3 percent of its operating income, they make up 9 percent of its revenue.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/08/business/mcdonalds-russia.html>

Biden Warns China of ‘Consequences’ if It Aids Russia in Ukraine War

By: David E. Sanger and Edward Wong

WASHINGTON — President Biden warned President Xi Jinping of China on Friday of “implications and consequences” if Beijing decides to give material aid to Russia to support its war in Ukraine, the White House said. During a nearly two-hour video call, Mr. Biden laid out for Mr. Xi the punishments the United States and its allies had imposed on Russia after it invaded Ukraine last month, said a senior U.S. official, who spoke to reporters on the condition of anonymity to more freely discuss the diplomatic exchange. And he made the case, officials said, that China would pay a similarly heavy price if it backed President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia in the fight, less than two months after Mr. Putin and Mr. Xi declared a partnership in facing off against the United States and the West. “He made clear what the implications and consequences would be if China provides material support to Russia as it conducts brutal attacks against Ukrainian cities and civilians,” Jen Psaki, the White House press secretary, told reporters on Friday afternoon. She declined to say how Mr. Xi responded or give details on the costs the United States has threatened to impose on Beijing. The call was the culmination of an effort to cut off Russian appeals to China for help, as its invasion plan runs into trouble. Mr. Biden’s national security adviser issued a similar warning to his Chinese counterpart in Rome earlier in the week, setting up the video call on Friday between the two leaders. In conversations this week, administration officials said they were concerned Beijing would try to appease both sides, publicly urging calm while quietly fueling the Russian effort and nurturing its relationship



with Mr. Putin. Some of them pointed to how China had dealt with North Korea — calling for it to rein in its nuclear weapons program, but providing energy and other support to make up for United Nations sanctions. The measures against Russia have also mainly taken the form of sanctions, but on a scale that appeared to surprise Mr. Putin, blocking him from even accessing much of the foreign reserves he had amassed in an effort to “sanctions-proof” the Russian economy. The effects have rippled outward, bringing the ruble to new lows and forcing credit agencies to warn that the Russian Federation was on the brink of default on its sovereign debt. In its public messages, the White House is implying that the United States could impose what are called “secondary sanctions” on China, the world’s second-largest economy. Of course, unlike Russia, China’s size and economic reach mean penalties against it could reverberate in a much bigger way across the global economy, and various governments and companies could lobby heavily against such sanctions. The conversation took place at a key moment in the war, just as Russia is seeking to take Kyiv, the Ukrainian capital, and expand control of the southern coast. But the Russian military is reeling from high casualties — 7,000 or more



Russian soldiers killed, according to a conservative American intelligence estimate — and the discovery of critical gaps in its prowess. U.S. officials have warned that Mr. Putin is hoping to secure economic help, military hardware and rations for troops from China. American officials have leaked those findings, perhaps to both embarrass Mr. Putin and put China's leadership on the spot. U.S. and European officials see China's role in the conflict as critical, and decisions by Mr. Xi could push the war in different directions — perhaps toward a cease-fire or more robust diplomatic talks, or toward renewed momentum by the Russian forces in their deadly offensive. Mr. Xi, who has built a bond with Mr. Putin over years, gave no indication he would help seek a diplomatic solution, according to an official Chinese readout of the call. That summary emphasized the friction between China and the United States over Taiwan before addressing Ukraine. It said Mr. Xi pointed out that “the situation in Ukraine has developed to this point, which China does not want to see.” He reiterated standard talking points that China would provide humanitarian aid and that Russia and Ukraine should hold peace talks. Mr. Xi did not suggest any role China could play in ending the war, and instead said the United States and NATO should talk to Russia to resolve the crisis. Mr. Xi also used a phrase he and other Chinese officials have previously employed when blaming troubles on the United States: “Let he who tied the bell on the tiger take it off.” Tensions between the United States and China have grown since the invasion because of Beijing's persistent alignment

with Moscow, even as the Russian military kills thousands of Ukrainian civilians. On Thursday, Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken delivered his strongest public warning yet to China, saying the United States “will not hesitate to impose costs” if China gives military aid or other support to Russia. He and other officials say China's strategy is to keep up a pretense of neutrality while siding with Russia. Jake Sullivan, Mr. Biden's national security adviser, gave similar warnings to Yang Jiechi, a top Chinese foreign affairs official, when the two met in Rome on Monday. U.S. officials told reporters a day before those talks that Russia had asked China for military and economic aid after it began its war, and a Pentagon official said there were indications China was leaning toward obliging Russia on military support. China could be held responsible for violating international law if it gives military aid to Russia, according to two prominent law professors, Oona A. Hathaway of Yale and Ryan Goodman of New York University. Washington is also watching for any signs China might try to help Russia blunt the effect of the sanctions imposed by the United States and its European and Asian allies. Large Chinese companies will likely avoid overtly violating those sanctions for fear of jeopardizing their global commerce. “China does not want its struggling economy to be hit by sanctions, and the Biden administration is mindful of the economic fallout of imposing them,” said Daniel R. Russel, a former assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific affairs. China analysts doubt Mr. Xi will distance himself from Mr. Putin. The two have met 38 times as national leaders and developed a bond that is highly personal. They share a major strategic interest in trying to weaken American power. At their last meeting, just two weeks before Mr. Putin's invasion, they issued a 5,000-word statement that said their partnership had “no limits” and that they

intended to stand together against U.S.-led democratic nations. For weeks, Chinese officials have blamed the United States for the war and echoed Mr. Putin in criticizing NATO, while expressing concern for the humanitarian crisis. Chinese diplomats and state media organizations have amplified Kremlin propaganda and a conspiracy theory about Pentagon-funded bioweapons labs in Ukraine. On Wednesday, Xue Hanqin, the Chinese judge at the International Court of Justice, sided with the Russian judge in dissenting from a ruling that Russia must immediately end its war in Ukraine. The vote was 13 to 2. Hours before the call on Friday, a Chinese foreign ministry spokesman, Zhao Lijian, kept up a combative tone. Asked by a reporter about China's views on civilian casualties in Ukraine, he said, "As the culprit of the Ukraine crisis, why does the U.S. keep smearing China instead of reflecting on the security predicament in Europe caused by the eastward expansion of U.S.-led NATO?" China's refusal to condemn Russia's atrocities and its endorsement of Russia's views on NATO have made European nations more suspicious of Beijing. Leaders of nations in the European Union, one of China's largest trading partners, talk about China in increasingly hostile tones, a situation that could worsen if Mr. Xi continues his support of Mr. Putin. "China has a strategic opportunity to tie itself to the global order, which has fueled its economic growth," said Alina Polyakova, the president of the Center for European Policy Analysis in Washington. "Or it could make an ideological decision to align itself with Russia. "In the end the Russian economy is not the golden goose for China's growth," she said. "It is Western countries." But Kevin Rudd, the former Australian prime minister and the current president of the Asia Society in New York, said that "China saw today's call as an opportunity to not only wash Beijing's hands of responsibility for ending

Putin's blitzkrieg in Ukraine, but to also continue to paint the United States as responsible for Russia's actions in the first place." He noted that when Mr. Xi told Mr. Biden to "Let he who tied the bell on the tiger take it off," he was referring to the United States. "But the fact is that China is the only power capable of getting Putin to withdraw," Mr. Rudd said, "and it is unwilling to do so." Starting in November, American officials began sharing intelligence about Russia's troop buildup around Ukraine with Chinese officials and urged them to ask Mr. Putin not to invade, but were repeatedly rebuffed, U.S. officials have said. A Western intelligence report said senior Chinese officials asked senior Russian officials in early February to delay an invasion of Ukraine until after the Winter Olympics in Beijing, U.S. and European officials have said. On Friday, Taiwan's defense ministry confirmed reports that a Chinese aircraft carrier, the Shandong, sailed through the Taiwan Strait just hours before Mr. Biden and Mr. Xi spoke. Taiwan remains the most sensitive and intractable issue between China and the United States. Mr. Putin's invasion of Ukraine has underscored questions over whether China would try to invade the democratic island, which is claimed by Beijing but has never been under Communist Party rule. The Taiwanese defense ministry declined to comment on reports that a U.S.-guided missile destroyer shadowed the carrier for part of its route. The United States provides defensive equipment to Taiwan and maintains "strategic ambiguity," meaning it leaves open whether it would send its military to defend Taiwan if China tries to invade. A U.S. official said Mr. Biden reiterated to Mr. Xi on the call that the United States abided by the "One China" policy, which acknowledges but does not endorse Beijing's insistence that Taiwan and China are part of the same country. <https://www.nytimes/2022/03/18/world/europe/biden-xi-russia-china.html>

Surging U.S. Inflation Raises Stakes as War Pushes Up Prices

By: Jeanna Smialek

Prices climbed at the fastest pace in decades in the month leading up to the war in Ukraine, underlining the high stakes facing the United States — along with many developed economies — as the conflict promises to drive costs higher. The Consumer Price Index rose by 7.9 percent through February, the fastest pace of annual inflation in 40 years. Rising food and rent costs contributed to the big increase, the Bureau of Labor Statistics said, as did a nascent surge in gas prices that will become more pronounced in the March inflation report. The February report caught only the start of the surge in gas prices that came in response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine late last month. Economists expect inflation to pick up even more in March because prices at the pump have since jumped to record-breaking highs. The average price for a gallon of gas was \$4.32 on Thursday, according to AAA. Rapidly climbing costs are hitting consumers in the pocketbook, causing confidence to fall and stretching household budgets. Rising wages and savings amassed during the pandemic have helped many families continue spending despite rising prices, but the burden is falling most intensely on lower-income households, which devote a big chunk of their budgets to daily necessities that are now swiftly becoming more expensive. The price burst presents a challenge for President Biden, especially given that November's mid-term elections are fast approaching. Democrats will need to battle to retain control of Congress at a time when voters are feeling the squeeze of higher expenses. On Thursday, Mr. Biden acknowledged the pain consumers are feeling from rapid inflation but pointed a

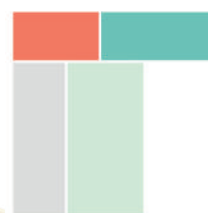
finger at President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia, blaming his invasion of Ukraine for fueling higher gas prices. Democrats tweeted about the report on Thursday using the hashtag #PutinPriceHike. "Today's inflation report is a reminder that Americans' budgets are being stretched by price increases and families are starting to feel the impacts of Putin's price hike," Mr. Biden said in a statement. "As I have said from the start, there will be costs at home as we impose crippling sanctions in response to Putin's unprovoked war, but Americans can know this: The costs we are imposing on Putin and his cronies are far more devastating than the costs we are facing." The Ukraine invasion is poised to compound a stubborn inflation problem. Cost increases had been running fast for a year and accelerating for months, posing a problem for the Federal Reserve, which is in charge of achieving price stability. The central bank has signaled it will raise interest rates by a quarter percentage point at its meeting next week, probably the first in a series of moves meant to increase the cost of borrowing and spending money and slow down the economy. By reducing consumption and slowing the labor market, the Fed is able to take some pressure



off inflation over time. Broadening price pressures and high gas costs could become a serious issue for central bank policymakers if they help convince consumers that the run-up in prices will last. If people begin expecting inflation, they may change their behavior in ways that make it more permanent: accepting price increases more readily, and asking for bigger raises to keep up. "It was another bad report," said Laura Rosner-Warburton, senior economist at MacroPolicy Perspectives. "Inflation was already way too high before the invasion of Ukraine." While the February report caught only a few days of post-invasion gas prices, the increase in fuel accounted for about a third of the price index increase, the government said. Omair Sharif, founder of Inflation Insights, said he expected inflation to pick up to 8.3 percent in March as pump prices surge. Treasury Secretary Janet L. Yellen on Thursday predicted more inflation ahead as a result of Russia's invasion and the economic sanctions Western countries have placed on Mr. Putin's regime. "We've seen a very meaningful increase in gas prices," Ms. Yellen said on CNBC. "And my guess is that next month we'll see a further evidence of an impact on U.S. inflation of Putin's war on Ukraine." The gas shock is just the latest instance in which what can go wrong seems to be going wrong when it comes to prices. Fast inflation began to kick in early last year, and many forecasters initially predicted that it would fade by the end of 2021 as the economy reopened from the pandemic and conditions returned to normal. Instead, turmoil in supply chains collided with strong consumer demand for goods, and price gains accelerated. Now, it is hard to guess how quickly and how much prices will moderate in 2022 as conflict abroad threatens to keep shipping routes tangled and parts scarce. Ukraine is an important producer of neon, which could keep computer chips in short supply, perpetuating the shortages that have plagued automakers. Higher energy costs could ricochet through other industries. Even without further supply chain troubles, there are signs that inflation is widening beyond a few pandemic-affected sectors, an indication that they could last as the latest virus surge fades from view. Rent of primary residences, for instance, climbed by 0.6 percent from the prior month — the fastest monthly pace of growth since 1999. Price gains have been rapid around much of the world, causing many central banks to scale back how much help they are providing to their economies. The European Central Bank on Thursday decided to speed up its exit from its bond-buying program as it tries to counter rising inflation. Europe's push to end its energy dependence on Russia promises to raise costs at a time when inflation is already nearly triple the central bank's target. In the United States, there are still reasons to think price gains will slow this year. Beginning in March, the data will be compared to relatively high readings from last year, which should mechanically start to bring down the year-over-year measure. But it is unclear when inflation will recede to the Fed's 2 percent inflation goal. The central bank defines that target using a separate inflation index, but one that is also up considerably. Rapid price increases have caused some people to adjust their lifestyles. Timothy Gutbrod, who formerly worked as a stage actor, has been a driving instructor in Albany, N.Y., since March 2020, and the job pays him a little more than \$30,000 per year. As higher gas prices have made his commute and everyday purchases more expensive, he has eaten out less. For someone who was a longtime Manhattanite, that's a real loss, Mr. Gutbrod, 61, said. He used to enjoy three restaurant brunches or dinners each week. Now it's more like one every two weeks. "I used to go on relaxing drives," he said, but now joy rides are unaffordable. "I'm on a shoestring budget,

and I work pretty hard. For anyone who doesn't make a lot of money, you have to be intelligent and start cutting corners." As it disturbs everyday lives, inflation is likely to dog Democrats and the administration as they fight to retain control of Congress in November. Despite plentiful jobs and quickly rising wages, consumer confidence has fallen to its lowest level since the summer of 2011, when the economy was clambering back from the global financial crisis and Congress was bickering over lifting the nation's debt ceiling. That probably at least partly reflects the reality that pay is not quite keeping up with inflation for the typical worker, and that consumers are paying more at the pump, which tends to be a very salient cost for Americans. In February, the cost of food rose, which is also difficult for consumers on tight budgets. Over the past year, grocery prices have increased by 8.6 percent, the largest yearly jump since the period ending in April 1981. Fresh fruit and dairy products became notably more expensive last month. The White House has emphasized that it is trying to offset rising costs to the degree that it can. "We've taken steps to address bottlenecks in the supply chain, to reduce those bottlenecks," Jen Psaki, the White House press secretary, said this week. But those changes have mostly helped around the edges, and as prices have shown little sign of moderating on their own, Fed officials have coalesced around the view that they will need to use their policies to cool off demand and keep today's rapid inflation from becoming entrenched. That may limit the central bank's room to react to any slowdown in growth prompted by uncertainty and high gas prices. "They need to stay on track," said Ms. Rosner-Warburton. "They don't have as much leeway to respond to these risks, given how elevated inflation is."

<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/10/business/economy/cpi-inflation-february-2022.html>



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Pakistan's Imran Khan is fighting for his political life

By: Abid Hussain

Pakistan's Prime Minister Imran Khan is facing arguably the biggest challenge of his political career, as the opposition seeks to remove him from office in a vote of no confidence. The country's lawmakers will convene on Thursday to begin debating the motion as Mr Khan's future appears to be hanging by a thread. A vote is due by Monday. In recent days there has been a flurry of activity - and what some argue were tactics straight out of Machiavelli's playbook - which resulted in several Khan allies deserting his Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party, tilting the scales firmly in the opposition's favour. A simple majority of 172 in the 342-seat National Assembly against the former cricket legend would cut short his tenure as PM. On Wednesday, the magic number was breached when his main coalition ally, the MQM, joined the opposition. It means on paper the opposition now commands 175 votes to the government's 164. Imran Khan, elected in July 2018 vowing to tackle corruption and fix the economy, isn't going quietly. He hosted a massive rally on Sunday in Islamabad to show he remains wildly popular with his supporters. Thundering against his arch-rivals - three-time premier Nawaz Sharif and Asif Zardari, husband of the murdered PM Benazir Bhutto - Mr Khan also waved a letter at the adoring crowd, alleging it contained evidence of a "foreign conspiracy" in cahoots with "corrupt thieves" aiming to topple his government. He has yet to reveal the letter's contents, despite repeated promises. Adding to the drama, his address to the nation on Wednesday was postponed without explanation.

Rift with the military?

Imran Khan's government does not need to



look far to find its troubles. It has lost public support over rocketing inflation and ballooning foreign debt. "For instance, from January 2020 to March 2022, India's food inflation has been about 7% whereas Pakistan's has been around 23%," explains Uzair Younus, director of the Pakistan Initiative at the Washington-based Atlantic Council. But an increasingly fractious relationship with the military - considered by many the architect of his political success, although both sides deny this - is why some analysts believe the writing is on the wall for him. To many observers, the genesis of the current crisis can be traced back to October when Mr Khan refused to sign off on the appointment of a new chief of Pakistan's powerful ISI intelligence agency. Analyst Arifa Noor believes that while in Pakistan conflict is "inherent" in the relationship between civilians and the military - which has directly ruled the country for almost half of its existence - the issue of replacing intelligence chief General Faiz Hameed caused a rift.

Singapore-based researcher Abdul Basit agrees, adding that the standoff was due to Mr Khan's "ego" and "rigidity" which brought an issue into the public domain which was always discussed behind closed doors. "Imran Khan crossed the military's red line, and while he eventually accepted the appointment of the

person the military wanted, it was downhill for him from then on," he says. The military and Mr Khan deny there's been any falling out.

Third time unlucky?

There have been only two previous instances in Pakistan's political history when sitting prime ministers faced a vote of no confidence, and both times Benazir Bhutto, in 1989, and Shaukat Aziz, in 2006, emerged unscathed. But the current parliamentary calculus clearly points towards a heavy defeat for Mr Khan, even if his own party dissidents take no part. The government is seeking a Supreme Court ruling that would not only bar dissident PTI members from voting under an anti-defection law, but also disqualify them from parliament for life. Meanwhile, the PM and his cabinet members are putting on a brave face, meeting allies and saying they're confident of victory. Uzair Younus believes Imran Khan may have missed his chance to offer concessions to his allies, and even if he "miraculously manages to ride out the storm", he will be in a very precarious position. "I think he must call early elections. If somehow, he survives, the longer he stays in power, the more pressure there will be on him to fix the economy," he says. For Abdul Basit, too, the chances of Mr Khan surviving are nearly non-existent, and his prospects poor, if by a miracle he does somehow scrape through. "Life will be terribly difficult and under current circumstances, legislation will be a nightmare, which is why I foresee elections in the next six months or so," he says.

Do the opposition have a plan?

As his rivals jostle to get rid of him, Mr Khan may feel he deserves more credit for what he's done in office. Despite the challenges of the pandemic, the PTI did a reasonable job in providing aid to the poor, observers believe. Pakistan's Covid statistics also bear scrutiny - a country of 220 million people recorded just 1.5 million cases and 30,000 deaths, a stag-

geringly low number compared with the devastation in neighbouring India last year. For analyst Arifa Noor, however, the government's signature universal healthcare programme - launched in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab provinces - was its biggest success. "In terms of attracting the electorate for the upcoming polls, this could be their big slogan. Some people may not have experienced Covid-related tragedy but a programme like a health card could have big ramifications for present and future," she says. What, then, could the opposition offer, if they do manage to topple the government in a country where no prime minister has ever completed a full five-year term? Could this hastily cobbled-together coalition provide solutions to Pakistan's deep structural, economic and societal issues? "The opposition seems opportunistic," says Arifa Noor. "Unfortunately, in our country, because our rules of transitions are not set, every time somebody is in power, those outside think it is fair to destabilise them."

Abdul Basit believes the only plan the opposition has is to topple the government but they have not done any homework about what might happen next - nor do they appear concerned about that. "Pakistan is heading towards a prolonged period of political instability, for at least a year and a half," he says.

Uzair Younus also thinks the opposition has no plan beyond removing Imran Khan.

"They will be forced to take unpopular decisions and for which they will suffer a political cost, which will be a challenge for them," he says. "However, no matter who wins, ultimately, the losers will be Pakistani citizens. The entire next election cycle will continue to be volatile, deeply polarising and we won't have any level of stability until after the elections."

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-60932864>

‘Allegations of US involvement in no-trust motion against PM Imran are baseless’: State Dept

State Department spokesperson says US respect the constitutional process in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: Reacting to reports about the US involvement in a no-trust motion against Prime Minister Imran Khan in the backdrop of a “threat letter” revealed by the premier, the US State Department on Wednesday categorically rejected any kind of role in the matter. A day earlier, pressed by the Opposition and various other quarters, PM Imran Khan shared the contents of the secret letter in his meeting with senior journalists. The memo has been the talk of the town since March 27 when the premier informed a public meeting that his government had received threats from abroad. The journalists were informed that the letter is the word-for-word transcript of an official conversation between the diplomats of Pakistan and another powerful country sent to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Federal Minister Asad Umar told the journalists that Pakistan has been given a message that “everything would be forgiven” if the no-confidence motion against Imran Khan succeeds, but its failure would entail serious consequences for Pakistan. Responding to a question asked by Geo News regarding the ‘threat letter,’ the US State Department said: “Allegations of US involvement in the no-trust motion and ‘threat letter’ to PM Imran Khan are baseless.” The US government is monitoring the political situation in Pakistan and supports the rule of law in the country, the State Department said. Regarding the question of a no-trust motion against Prime Minister Imran Khan, the US State Department said that they respect the constitutional process in Pakistan.

‘Money has been pouring in from abroad’

The premier, during the Islamabad rally on

Sunday, had flashed a letter before the public, saying that he has “written evidence” that “money has been pouring in from abroad,” while “some of our people are being used to topple the government.” He had said that for months, “plotting and planning is being carried out to influence the foreign policy of Pakistan from outside.” However, the political parties rejected the claims and demanded the PM present the letter before the parliament.

‘Threat letter’: A diplomat’s view

Meanwhile, Former high commissioner to India Abdul Basit said that state officials issuing such threats to diplomats is completely unheard of. “Incidents where state officials tell diplomats that they would sever ties if a country’s government is not sent packing has never been heard before,” he said. Speaking during Geo News programme ‘Aaj Shahzaib Khanzada Ke Saath’, Basit, who was also the former ambassador of Pakistan to Germany, said that “sensitive issues of foreign policies should not be discussed in public.” He said that the memo the prime minister has been referring to most probably carries the minutes of the meeting between US officials and a Pakistani diplomat, adding that along with the minutes, the letter might also include the assessment of the diplomat regarding the future.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/latest/946141-allegations-of-us-involvement-in-the-no-trust-motion-are-baseless-washington>

Karim Khan: the ‘very modern British barrister’ heading ICC’s Russia inquiry

International criminal court prosecutor has launched investigation into alleged war crimes in Ukraine



By: Haroon Siddique

While Boris Johnson and his cabinet scramble to deliver measures that will give Vladimir Putin pause for thought in his assault on Ukraine, another – lesser known – Briton is poised to have a potentially more significant impact. Less than nine months into his tenure as the international criminal court (ICC) prosecutor, Karim Khan, a senior English barrister, announced this week that he had launched an investigation into the situation in Ukraine as there was “a reasonable basis” to believe that both alleged war crimes and crimes against humanity had been committed there. There is no guarantee charges will be brought against Putin and his acolytes but some cling to the hope that the prospect of potentially having to stand trial in the future and of being arrested in countries signed up to the ICC may make some of them think again. Prof Philippe Sands QC, who has known Khan since teaching him international law at King’s College London, said his former student had a tough job, but added: “All the signs are that he will have the capacity to be an independent, fearless and pragmatic prosecutor. “He’s had an extremely impressive career as an advocate,” said Sands. “He’s got huge experience and brings to that job real knowledge and experience of what it means to prepare, conduct and litigate an international criminal trial.” Reading law at King’s, Khan showed an early interest in international justice and human rights, something he has partly credited to his background of voluntary work with the Ahmadiyya Muslim community, a persecuted sect of Islam, of which he is a member. The community moved its headquarters to the UK in the



1980s after the Pakistani government passed a law forbidding Ahmadis from calling themselves Muslims and curbing their religious practices. Khan said his experience with them “helped me gravitate to this area [of human rights]”. He was called to the bar in 1992 and cut his teeth with the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS). In his first published interview after becoming ICC prosecutor, he told Counsel magazine that seeing the horrors of the Balkans war on television made him aspire to work at the international criminal tribunal for former Yugoslavia, a goal he would eventually realise. It proved the catalyst for him to advocate in a series of domestic and international criminal courts including the ICC itself, the international criminal tribunal for Rwanda, the extraordinary chambers in the courts of Cambodia and the special tribunal for Lebanon. His was not just a prosecutor, acting also as victims’ counsel and defence

counsel. Last year, the Legal 500 described him as the “go-to lawyer” in international criminal law. In England, he was made a QC in 2012 and was appointed as a part-time judge in 2018. Khan was sworn into office as ICC prosecutor in June last year, having been elected the previous February. He had not originally been on the shortlist and was added partly at the insistence of the Kenyan government. Khan had acted as defence counsel for the Kenyan vice-president, William Ruto, when he was charged with crimes against humanity following post-election violence in 2007 that led to 1,200 people being killed. The charges were dropped in 2016 by the ICC after what was described as “troubling incidence of witness interference and intolerable political meddling”. One key witness was killed in December 2014. Before the ICC election, Khan addressed this in an open letter detailing how he did all possible to prevent intimidation by ensuring the individual was put under witness protection and then seeking an inquiry. His suitability for the ICC role was also questioned by some, given that he defended Charles Taylor, the former Liberian president who was convicted of war crimes at special court for Sierra Leone. But even those accused of the most heinous crimes have the right to be represented, while Khan’s experience both as a prosecutor and defence counsel is not without advantages. Sands said there had never been any suggestion of inappropriate behaviour by his former student and the concerns about his election were more that he might be UK-centric – Khan’s predecessors were from the Gambia and Argentina respectively. However, Sands said Khan would do everything to avoid this and was well placed to do so given his personal background and vast international experience. He described Khan, who has studied and lectured on Islamic law and is a worldwide ambassador of the African Bar Association, as “a very modern British barrister”. Having launched the investi-

gation, Khan’s job now, with the help of a large team, will be to gather sufficient evidence to persuade judges to issue warrants of arrest or summonses to appear. Evidence-gathering generally involves a mission to the country concerned, as well as collecting video and photographic evidence. With the ICC’s record on securing convictions a source of criticism, Sands said a key consideration for Khan would be who he chose to target. “I think he’s going to have a policy decision of whether he just goes for low-hanging fruit, low-level perpetrators, or whether he goes higher up,” said Sands. “I think the ICC has aimed too high [in the past] and it needs to build a track record.”

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At the Bottom of an Icy Sea, One of History's Great Wrecks Is Found

Explorers and researchers, battling freezing temperatures, have located *Endurance*, Ernest Shackleton's ship that sank in the Antarctic in 1915.

By: Henry Fountain



The wreck of *Endurance* has been found in the Antarctic, 106 years after the historic ship was crushed in pack ice and sank during an expedition by the explorer Ernest Shackleton. A team of adventurers, marine archaeologists and technicians located the wreck at the bottom of the Weddell Sea, east of the Antarctic Peninsula, using undersea drones. Battling sea ice and freezing temperatures, the team had been searching for more than two weeks in a 150-square-mile area around where the ship went down in 1915. *Endurance*, a 144-foot, three-masted wooden ship, holds a revered place in polar history because it spawned one of the greatest survival stories in the annals of exploration. Its location, nearly 10,000 feet down in waters that are among the iciest on Earth, placed it among the most celebrated shipwrecks that had not been found. The discovery of the wreck was announced Wednesday in a statement by the search expedition, *Endurance22*. "We have made polar history with the discovery of *Endurance*, and

successfully completed the world's most challenging shipwreck search," said John Shears, the expedition's leader. The first images of the ship since those taken by Shackleton's photographer, Frank Hurley, revealed parts of the vessel in astonishing detail. An image of the stern showed the name "ENDURANCE" above a five-pointed star, a holdover from before Shackleton bought the ship, when it was named *Polaris*. Another showed the rear deck and the ship's wheel. A video provided by the expedition's organizer, the Falklands Maritime Heritage Trust, showed the bow and portions of the deck and hull. Mensun Bound, the expedition's exploration director and a marine archaeologist who has discovered many shipwrecks, said *Endurance* was the finest he had ever seen. It is upright, clear of the seabed and "in a brilliant state of preservation," he said. The ship was found about four miles south of the last location recorded by Shackleton's captain and navigator, Frank Worsley. The search had been conducted over

a wide area to account for errors in Worsley's navigation equipment. Endurance's relatively pristine appearance was not unexpected, given the cold water and the lack of wood-eating marine organisms in the Weddell Sea that have ravaged shipwrecks elsewhere. Mr. Bound also described the wreck as "intact." Although Hurley's photographs before the sinking had shown major damage to, and the collapse of, the ship's mast and rigging, and there had been damage to the hull, Mr. Bound had expected most of the ship to be in one piece. The expedition video showed what appeared to be broken masts and damage to the decks. The hunt for the wreck, which cost more than \$10 million, provided by a donor who wished to remain anonymous, was conducted from a South African icebreaker that left Cape Town in early February. Aside from a few technical glitches involving the two submersibles, and part of a day spent icebound when operations were suspended, the search proceeded relatively smoothly. The battery-powered submersibles combed the seafloor twice a day, for about six hours at a time. They used sonar to scan a swath of the smooth seabed, looking for anything that rose above it. Once the wreck was located several days ago, the equipment was swapped for high-resolution cameras and other instruments to make detailed images and scans. Under the terms of the Antarctic Treaty, the six-decade-old pact intended to protect the region, the wreck is considered a historical monument. The submersibles did not touch it; the images and scans will be used as the basis for educational materials and museum exhibits. A documentary is planned, as well. Shackleton left England aboard Endurance with a crew of 27 in 1914, bound for a bay on the Weddell Sea that was meant to be the starting point for an attempt by him and a small party to be the first to cross Antarctica. This was close to the end of what has become known as the heroic age of Antarctic exploration, which

included treks by the Norwegian Roald Amundsen, who in 1911 was the first to reach the pole, and by Robert Falcon Scott, a Briton who died after reaching it a month later. Shackleton never made it to the pole or beyond, but his leadership in rescuing all his crew and his exploits, which included an 800-mile open-boat journey across the treacherous Southern Ocean to the island of South Georgia, made him a hero in Britain. Shackleton was tripped up by the Weddell's notoriously thick, long-lasting sea ice, which results from a circular current that keeps much ice within it. In early January 1915 Endurance became stuck less than 100 miles from its destination and drifted with the ice for more than 10 months as the ice slowly crushed it. As the ship became damaged, the crew set up camp on the ice and lived on the ice until it broke up five months after the ship sank. The Weddell Sea still remains far icier than other Antarctic waters, though in recent years ice conditions have been lighter than usual. That was the situation this year, and it helped the expedition reach the search site more easily and remain there safely. The icebreaker, Agulhas II, left the search area on Tuesday for the 11-day voyage back to Cape Town. In addition to the expedition team, several ice researchers were on board, including Stefanie Arndt of the Alfred Wegener Institute in Germany. Dr. Arndt, who studies how Antarctic sea ice may change as the world warms because of human-caused emissions of greenhouse gases, and others spent much time out on the ice drilling cores. On Monday she said on Twitter that they had collected 630 samples from 17 locations, which she called "an incredible number."

<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/09/climate/endurance-wreck-found-shackleton.html>

Celebrating women: Five Pakistani female filmmakers creating magic behind the camera

By: Soomal Haleem

Lights, camera, action! Did you imagine hearing that in a man's voice? I sure did and that is a problem. Behind almost every other film in Pakistan, there's usually a man in the director's chair calling the shots. Given that filmmaking is largely a male-dominated occupation — not unlike many other fields — it's imperative to recognise the female bosses out there breaking barriers and smashing stereotypes to own space in the film industry. These women are launching amazing projects into the world courtesy their brilliant minds. In the spirit of amplifying the voices of some incredibly inspiring women, we've curated a list of Pakistani female filmmakers who are — for a lack of better phrasing — absolutely killing it.

Haya Fatima Iqbal, documentary filmmaker

Haya Fatima Iqbal is an Academy and two-time Emmy award winning documentary filmmaker. She is a co-founder of the Documentary Association of Pakistan and has covered a range of subjects through her documentary work ranging from gender, militancy, conflict, climate change, water scarcity and social justice. Her work has been featured on HBO Documentary, Redfish, BBC, Al Jazeera, Channel 4 UK, VICE, National Geographic Society, CNN and the Thomson Reuters Foundation among other media organisations. Iqbal's work is all about building trust with collaborators and as a woman documentary filmmaker in Pakistan, she feels that people are willing to trust women more readily. "This trust has always helped me tell visual stories with greater nuance and I can't be thankful enough for it to people who I have filmed with over the years," she said. Iqbal shed light on the other side of the coin as well,

talking about issues that female filmmakers face in the male-dominated workplace. "On the flip side, I know that every shoot that I go to as a woman I have to work extra hard in many ways to be taken seriously, to ensure that I am heard by (often mostly male) crew members and collaborators alike, to ensure that I always take steps to keep myself and those associated with me safe, and to ensure that my absolutely crazy love for our work as documentary filmmakers is not seen just as a mere means to pass time," she said. Her advice for female filmmakers is to push back and break barriers within the filmmaking community by experimenting with traditionally male-dominated sectors of film work such as cinematography, sound recording and engineering and editing.

Sabin Agha, investigative journalist turned documentary filmmaker

Sabin Agha is an investigative journalist turned documentary filmmaker who has produced several internationally acclaimed documentaries on political violence, crime, social and healthcare issues as well as gender and conflict issues. Some of her work includes Lawless Oceans for National Geographic, EVERY LAST CHILD for Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation/Image Nation and Liyari Kahani, a Pakistani documentary.

According to Agha, the idea of women in filmmaking is still somewhat alien globally and Pakistan is no exception to this. Family and society often expects women to juggle different roles in life — an expectation that becomes challenging since filmmaking requires full time presence in the field. The pressure of this expectation not only hampers the quality of work, it also discourages

women to pursue their dreams. When Agha embarked upon her filmmaking journey, one of the most challenging aspects was to find an established female crew and this remains a challenge. "Even though several universities now have functioning media studies departments with female students pursuing documentary filmmaking, we do not see girls practising their skills in the field." On the flip side, Agha (like Iqbal) pointed out the advantage she has as a female filmmaker when it comes to accessing deeply conservative communities, presenting stories about trauma and bringing forth larger issues through the depiction of an individual's personal story. "[Being] a woman filmmaker enables me to connect and communicate with female protagonists effectively. My presence as a woman offers [a] safe space to female protagonists, which makes them appear more relaxed on camera despite an otherwise all-male crew," she said. She spoke of how the "male-dominated macho hierarchy" in films often misses out on certain nuances while building narratives, things easily caught by the female perspective. For instance, sequences of women doing household chores are often not shown because they are considered banal and insignificant. Agha made an effort to unlearn this quickly, developing a more critical eye for gender politics. "I strive to focus more on female characters who are inspirational, headstrong and leaders in the films," she said. "As a woman filmmaker, I try to challenge this bias of the boundaries of femininity through nuanced storytelling." She invites all aspiring women filmmakers to join her in breaking the cycle of bias within the industry. "Let's support each other in the field of filmmaking by not only introducing more gender diversity but also by helping more women voice their inspirational stories. Let's bring home some more Oscars together."

Tazeen Bari, documentary director, producer and cinematographer

Tazeen Bari is a documentary director, producer and cinematographer. Some of her notable work includes films *Letters From Death Row*, *Vote For X* and *Qandeel* — a documentary on social media star Qandeel Baloch released by *The Guardian* which won the Leslie J Sacks Grand Prize Award. She is also a co-founder of the Documentary Association of Pakistan and is currently working on her first fiction feature film. Bari fell in love with documentary film when she realised the medium brought together her creative passions, her desire for exploration and her concerns as a human being, feminist and citizen of Pakistan. She made her first documentary in 2009 and has never looked back since. "The stories we consume play a part in defining our understanding of the world and storytellers are not empty objective vessels but rather people who make choices about the way narratives unfold," she said. "There is something terribly wrong with an equation where stories about women are told predominantly by men instead of women themselves. This is our struggle, to not only tell our stories but to make sure there is equal representation of women in film crews and in executive decision-making positions." Her advice for aspiring filmmakers is to "just go out and shoot". "Filmmaking is a craft learnt only through doing," she said. "Let your heart guide you, your curiosity push you forward and your imagination inspire you."

Hira Nabi, filmmaker and multimedia artist

Hira Nabi is a filmmaker and artist working with moving images and text. Through her work, she thinks through vulnerable ecologies, conditions of labor, memories and temporality. She was the 2020 Prince Claus Fund Next Generation laureate and a media arts award grantee from Edith-Russ-Hause in 2021. She attended Berlinale Talents in 2021 and her films have been shown at Sundance Film Festival, Copenhagen International Doc-

umentary Festival, DokuFest and AFI Docs. Nabi has been creating "filmic experiments" since 2007 which is when she first started studying film at college. "At school there were still a lot of women in my classes but in the current Pakistani industry, it feels very sparse," she commented on the lack of female representation in filmmaking. "There may be female directors, producers and a few editors but there remain very few women in the cinematic or media infrastructure. There isn't an equitable gender balance when it comes to sound technicians. I don't know any female location sound recordists or working as gaffers — hardly any camera assistants, and just a handful of cinematographers." Nabi explained that this meant female filmmakers are always working with men, many of whom are wary of taking direction from women, insisting upon following gendered hierarchies. She feels the status quo needs to be shaken up. "It feels quite necessary to have apprenticeships, workshops and grants made available to try to change this disparity," she said. For the filmmaker, while the past cannot be changed, there is still hope for the future. "We can't change the history of public-facing cinema which has been dominated by men — passing over the work of pioneering, avant-garde female filmmakers whose practices have been lesser-known and more obscure, or perhaps surfaces decades later — but we can think about how to shift these imbalances, and strive for more inclusivity of all kinds in our current work and for the future."

Gulzar Nayani, documentary filmmaker and video producer

Gulzar Nayani is a Karachi-based documentary filmmaker and video producer currently associated with Soch Videos. Calling filmmaking her refuge, she said viewing the world through a camera lens has enabled her to make better sense out of it. "It liberates me from the reservations I had for self-expression

and helps [me] connect better," she explained. Nayani owes her growth as a filmmaker to her first independent project, No More Backseaters, screened at Capri Cinema under Goethe-Institut Pakistan's Sunday Matinee Initiative. She says the project's screening was one of the happiest days of her life, a fruition of all the effort the filmmaker poured into No More Backseaters over two and a half years. Her work as a filmmaker finally began to make sense to her family at the time as well. "This project opened new doors for me — I was selected for Goethe's Film Talents II fellowship and the short documentary I made during this training, Azaadi, won at the Generation Equality Film Festival 2021. It was screened at the Generation Equality Forum [in] Paris organised by UN Women," she shared. Nayani notes that there has been a profound increase in female representation in the field over the years. "Before, I felt the need to over-deliver to compensate for being a woman in a male-dominated field. This happened at conscious and subconscious level and I gave in," she recalled. On the field, the filmmaker has been at the receiving end of mansplaining multiple times. "The most recent one happened around this Women's Day," she said, sharing her latest experience. "I was offered unsolicited help by a stranger for setting up my tripod, who didn't stop there and later condescendingly told me I was doing my job wrong. I responded by telling him to step aside and stop touching or moving my frame." Nayani believes attitudes would change for the better if we "keep challenging the misogyny within and around ourselves". To the budding female filmmakers she said, "Don't let others inflict their doubts upon you. Believe in your vision and tell the stories you want to tell."

<https://images.dawn.com/news/1189810/celebrating-women-five-pakistani-female-filmmakers-creating-magic-behind-the-camera>

CIA black site detainee served as training prop to teach interrogators torture techniques

Newly declassified documents reveal Ammar al-Baluchi was repeatedly slammed against a wall while naked until all trainees received 'certification'

A detainee at a secret CIA detention site in Afghanistan was used as a living prop to teach trainee interrogators, who lined up to take turns at knocking his head against a plywood wall, leaving him with brain damage, according to a US government report. The details of the torture of Ammar al-Baluchi are in a 2008 report by the CIA's inspector general, newly declassified as part of a court filing by his lawyers aimed at getting him an independent medical examination. Baluchi, a 44-year-old Kuwaiti, is one of five defendants before a military tribunal on Guantánamo Bay charged with participation in the 9/11 plot, but the case has been in pre-trial hearings for 10 years, mired in a dispute over legal admissibility of testimony obtained after torture. According to the inspector general's report, the CIA was aware that the 2003 rendition of the detainee, Ammar al-Baluchi, from Pakistani custody to the "black site" north of Kabul was conducted "extra-legally," because at the time he was in Pakistani jurisdiction and no longer represented a terrorist threat. The report said that interrogators at the site, known both as Cobalt and the Salt Pit, went beyond the CIA's guidelines in torturing Baluchi, using two techniques without approval: using a stick behind his knees in stress position that involved leaning back while kneeling, and dousing with ice-cold water. The technique of "walling" was approved by the "enhanced interrogation technique" guidelines sent by CIA headquarters. It involved placing the detainee's heels against a specially designed plywood wall "which had flexibility to it" and putting a rolled up towel around the detainee's neck. "The interrogators would then grab the ends of the towel in front of and below the detainees face and shove [Baluchi] backwards into the wall, never letting go of the towel," the report said. One of the interrogators (identified only by a code) said the goal was to "bounce" the detainee off the wall. The report noted that Baluchi was "naked for the proceedings." There was no time limit for the "walling" sessions but "typically a session did not last for more than two hours at a time." They went on for so long because Baluchi was being used as a teaching prop. One former trainee told investigators "all the interrogation students lined up to 'wall' Ammar so that [the instructor] could certify them on their ability to use the technique." The report said that: "In the case of 'walling' in particular the [Office of the Inspector General] had difficulty determining whether the session was designed to elicit information from Ammar or to ensure that all interrogator trainees received their certification." The fact that interrogators lined up to "wall" Ammar suggested that "certification was key," the report concluded. A neuro-psychologist carried out an MRI of Baluchi's head in late 2018 and found "abnormalities indicating moderate to severe brain damage" in parts of his brain, affecting memory formation and retrieval as well as behavioral regulation. The specialist found that the "abnormalities observed were consistent with traumatic brain injury." The inspector general's report also concluded that Baluchi's treatment did not yield any useful intelligence. It noted that the interrogators at Cobalt "focused more on whether Ammar was 'compliant' than on the quality of the information he was providing." It called the CIA's logic in justifying the detention "fuzzy and circular." "Ammar fabricated the information he provided when undergoing EITs," it said. "He later admitted to his interrogators/debriefers that he was terrified and lied to get agency officers to stop the measures ... Ammar also explained that he was afraid to

tell a lie and was afraid to tell the truth because he did not know how either would be received.” The interrogators were convinced that Baluchi knew more than he was saying because he was a nephew of the self-proclaimed mastermind of the 9/11 attacks, Khaled Sheikh Mohammed. Baluchi spent more than three years in CIA custody, moved between a total of six “black sites” before being transferred in 2006 to Guantánamo Bay, where he is still awaiting trial. Alka Pradhan, one of his lawyers said: “If the CIA had not hidden their own conclusions about the illegality of Ammar’s torture for this long, the US government would not have been able to bring charges against Ammar because we now know that the torture inflicted on Ammar led to lasting brain damage in the form of a traumatic brain injury and other debilitating illnesses that cannot be treated at Guantánamo Bay.” ... we have a small favour to ask. Millions are turning to the Guardian for open, independent, quality news every day, and readers in 180 countries around the world now support us financially. We believe everyone deserves access to information that’s grounded in science and truth, and analysis rooted in authority and integrity. That’s why we made a different choice: to keep our reporting open for all readers, regardless of where they live or what they can afford to pay. This means more people can be better informed, united, and inspired to take meaningful action. In these perilous times, a truth-seeking global news organisation like the Guardian is essential. We have no shareholders or billionaire owner, meaning our journalism is free from commercial and political influence – this makes us different. When it’s never been more important, our independence allows us to fearlessly investigate, challenge and expose those in power.

https://www.theguardian.com/law/2022/mar/14/cia-black-site-detainee-training-prop-torture-techniques?CMP=Share_iOSApp_Other

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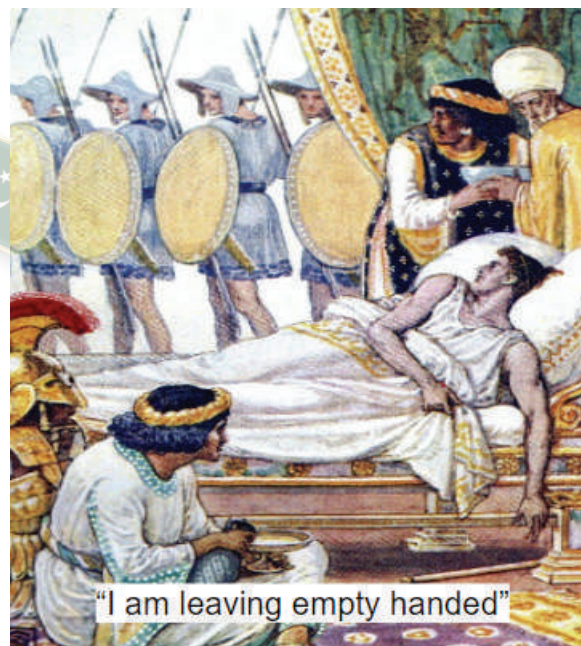
Three Strange Wishes

By: Masood Ashraf



The idea of death and dying is a well-established concept that has captivated human minds for centuries. Civilizations across time attempted to understand or rationalize the concept. Among these groups were the ancient Hebrews, Egyptians and Chinese that all had various beliefs about death and dying.

Throughout time, minds baffled at ways to find immortality and attempted ways to bring materialistic riches to the afterlife. The ancient Egyptians in the BC era induced many bodies to become preserved in mummified states, thinking that the preservation of the body will ensure the safekeeping of the physical self and the soul for the world after. Organs were safely stored in canopic jars to conserve the viscera in futile pursuits to refrain them from dying and losing their physical purpose. Intricate gold necklaces, embezzled gemmed stones and baroque items intended for kings and queens were placed next to coffins. Extraordinary and uniquely considerable measures were taken to create pathways between this world and the hereafter where the Egyptians could bring their life and their worldly possessions to the new life after. Evidently all in vain, as death and dying is a concept that has been understood and believed to be inevitable, avoidable, and inflexible; much to the contradiction of what most ancient civilizations believed was possible. One of the most notable figures in history, Alexander the Great, was an iconic figure who historically is known for creating an incredibly large empire that stretched from Macedonia to Egypt and other places. Not only did he manage to conquer thousands of cities of the ancient world, but he is also known for spreading scientific thought throughout his empire that ranged from science to mathematics. Many rulers from the



ancient world often surrounded themselves with the highest and most valuable of items, and expected to be buried with ornate materialistic items to highlight their importance and divinity. Alexander the Great too earned much wealth, and like most leaders was expected to be buried with vast relics of his travels and journey to draw attention to his victorious achievements and greatness. However, in his final days, the great leader who ruled over the ancient world requested three wishes he asked to be fulfilled upon his demise. The wishes instructed to his generals were (1) That only his physicians carry his body (2) That the path leading to his grave be ornate with precious metals and gems and (3) that both his hands be open and kept dangling out of his coffin. When the generals asked Alexander the Great about these strange requests, the ruler replied that (1) He wants to prove that by making physicians carry his dead body, that people understand no doctor can beat death. Death is an inevitable thing that will eventually have its way, and no physician of any sort can match this ultimate ending. (2) He desired that his pathway to his

grave be ornate with treasures to show people that although he spent most of his lifetime chasing the riches of the world, he has to leave them all behind with the Earth and (3) He would like both his hands open and out of the coffin to explain that he will be leaving this world empty-handed, just as he was born. In essence it is important to understand that the main idea of these requests from this great conquistador was that although he had achieved an incredible amount of success on Earth, he was subject to a mortal life and his achievements would do him no good in the life after death. Evidently it is the nature of humans to be greedy and uncontended with material possessions. The Holy Prophet (saw) is reported to have said "Anas bin Malik reported: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said, "If the son of Adam had a valley full of gold, he would want to have two valleys. Nothing fills his mouth but the dust of the grave, yet Allah will relent to whoever repents to Him" (Bukhari, Muslim 6075, 1048). Explaining this further, man is never happy with the wealth he has, rather strives to seek more after having received what should be content. However, it is important to understand that Allah the Almighty is the forgiver of sins and has the capacity to overlook greedy actions through repenting and prayers. Allah the Almighty instructs us to be giving rather than greedy, and has encouraged us to live in content with what we have been given. The Holy Quran says "And spend out of that with which We have provided you before death comes upon one of you and he says, 'My Lord! if only Thou wouldst grant me respite for a little while, then I would give alms and be among the righteous'" (63:11). The Holy Quran continues to say "And Allah will not grant respite to a soul when its appointed time has come; and Allah is Well-Aware of what you do" (63:12). Ultimately it is important to understand that the only real monetary value that will transfer to the hereafter is in the form

of good deeds and our efforts to attain righteousness. No coins, gems, bills, stacks of gold or elixir of life can bargain with death. Only the weight of good things done in life will have any real value. However, it is the nature of human beings to want to attain more in worldly means. Competitiveness and materialistic value often are prioritized as what is considered success in this life, and shadow the true need for humility and humbleness. The Holy Quran says that "Mutual rivalry in seeking worldly increase, diverts you from God, till you reach the graves" (102:2-3). Man chases wealth and immortality all his life, but when it comes time near death, in distress begs for another chance to go back and do things differently that he had. This is the nature of man. Only those who understand the true meaning behind life and what will really matter in the end are content with passing on to the next life in peace. If we all strive to establish a basic foundation of righteousness, it will become more difficult for Satan to enter our lives and divert us from Allah. Individually, we should try to self-reflect and become Amin, or trusty and devoted. Man's only allegiance is to God, and wholeheartedly making efforts to become trusty reflects the character God wishes to see in us. Regardless of background, all people including politicians, lawmakers, business owners, doctors, community members and leaders should hold the quality of Amin true to their heart. Corruption, deviance and maleficence are qualities that will betray us when it comes to time to depart from this life. Rather, good intentions, a kind heart and the willingness to do better are what will keep us tall and firm. It is important for us as people not to mistake this life as the reward for our deeds. Life can be good, and it has the potential to be blissful with Allah's mercy and our prayers. However, for the ultimate goal of having a good life in the hereafter, righteousness and integrity are key elements that will shine over all else.

Betrayed in Afghanistan

By: Rafia Zakaria



IT turns out, to the surprise of no one, that the Afghan Taliban haven't changed after all. Last week, they announced that they were going to ban girls from going to school. Then they added that Afghan women would now not be permitted to travel outside the country without the presence or permission of a male relative. With these two edicts, all the progress that Afghan women may have made over the past two decades were wiped out. Today, Afghan women stand at one of the most heartbreaking crossroads in history. Their country has not only been devastated by the US occupation and the ruin it has left behind, but now, half the population has also effectively been left out, erased and silenced. Afghan women cannot participate in the rebuilding of the country that is so urgently required. Who has betrayed Afghan women most egregiously?

If the Taliban have heaped this latest burden of cruelties, American and other aid agencies have abandoned aid programmes worth hundreds of millions of dollars without so much as an explanation.

Today, Afghan women stand at one of the most heartbreaking crossroads in history.

Writing in the Washington Post, Prof Mohsin Amin, a policy analyst from Afghanistan, presented an apt summation of the situation that the Americans left behind, saying that it would be the equivalent of dissolving the Federal Reserve Bank of the US and then telling everyone that their weekly cash withdrawal limit was less than \$400. Amin estimates that at the time the US stopped at least 75 per cent of the Afghan government's spending that came from foreign aid. Not only did the US freeze over \$9 billion in assets held by the central bank in Afghanistan, they also told international aid agencies, such as

the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and similar institutions, that they had to immediately stop their operations in Afghanistan. The consequences of all this have been disastrous, and unsurprisingly, Afghan women have borne the brunt. The sudden cut in funding to health programmes for women has been felt most acutely, with sharp drops in the number of women who can access health-care facilities during pregnancy and for childbirth. It is likely that many women and children are no longer alive precisely because of the sudden cessation of healthcare programmes (and funding) that had been operative for years. When the lives of women are throttled from all sides, they are left with very few options. When the Americans arrived, in the style of swashbuckling heroes, to free Afghan women from all that had made their lives miserable, too many believed them. There has been criticism that some Afghans, seen as 'secular', were able to position themselves as cultural facilitators who advised on many projects and made considerable money. The problem was that, during the American occupation, many of these projects did not factor into the equation the cultural reality of the Afghans and tried to address the latter's needs in light of what they wanted them to be. In this sense, none of the programmes attempted to make compromises between religious teachings and women's empowerment. While it is unknown whether any attempts in this regard would have made any kind of real difference, it was worth a try. At the very least, forward-looking minds would have had 20 years to counter the wrong Taliban interpretation of women's rights in Islam with a progressive view that allowed women to do what they wanted with their lives. Instead, it was imagined that the ordinary Afghan woman's context could, as in some select areas of Kabul, be transformed into one that was in synch with a buzzing Western metropolis. The Taliban have made their own calcula-

tions. After an initial period of attempting to be palatable to the international community, they have decided that there is nothing in it. The international community could have taken advantage of the Taliban's original pliability by obtaining some concessions regarding women's rights, but it appears that this priority was on nobody's mind. It is entirely possible that if a charter of demands were drawn up which would unfreeze Afghanistan's reserve currency and aid flows to programmes for women, then girls schools and health clinics could have been kept open. None of this happened. The Taliban have now made different calculations, not least an accurate one regarding the world's attention. A new war has begun, which involves higher stakes and different calculations. Instead of a proxy war in Afghanistan, the great powers are now thumbing their nose at each other directly. This does not bode well for any Afghan — least of all for the Afghan women who stand betrayed by everyone and were held hostage, first by the Taliban and their idiocy and then by a US/Nato invasion that used them as pawns for their own strategic objectives. Now, they are back to being used as pawns by the Taliban again, except this second time they have to contend with not just the Taliban's rabid desire to control women but also the despair that comes from having known some small bit of freedom. It is not that Afghan women will not survive this, or that they will not persevere. They will, being as they are women who have probably endured the most out of all the women alive today. We may not be able to directly help them, but we can recognise the strength of their spirit and the longevity of their endurance. It is not enough, but it is better than the betrayals, the sum of nothing that has been their lot so far.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1682523>

Opinion:

How the coming deal with Iran helps Russia

By: Hugh Hewitt

Neville Chamberlain was a good man, though vain, and when he died, Winston Churchill — who replaced Chamberlain as British prime minister — eulogized him in the House of Commons. It was a gracious address that gave voice to the fact that Chamberlain was a man of good intentions. But, as Churchill noted: “It fell to Neville Chamberlain in one of the supreme crises of the world to be contradicted by events, to be disappointed in his hopes, and to be deceived and cheated by a wicked man.” President Biden came to mind as I reviewed Churchill’s eulogy. Appeasement springs from the genuine desire to avoid war. But, as its comprehensive failure in the 1930s should have proved, it’s impossible to rely on the word of tyrants. Hitler was a tyrant. Stalin was a tyrant. President Xi Jinping of China, who oversees a vast set of concentration camps carrying out the genocide of the Uyghurs — while continuing the destruction of Tibetan culture and the repression of Hong Kong — is a tyrant. Vladimir Putin is an evil tyrant. Iran’s Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has a long record of mayhem and hatred — another tyrant. That tyrants can be talented in their cruelties doesn’t make them less evil, or more reliable — just more dangerous. But Biden won’t let the facts about Xi, Putin and Khamenei stand in the way of a new “deal” with Iran, even as Iran launched missiles into Iraq’s Kurdistan region. The religious zealots of Tehran are in league with Putin and Russia’s state-owned Rosatom nuclear agency, which will build two of the reactors Iran will be allowed to construct under the deal. Rosatom will bank \$10 billion on that part of the “deal.” We don’t know what Putin’s cut is, but there is always a cut for the tyrant. Xi of



China refuses to condemn Putin’s atrocities in Ukraine, abstains on a United Nations Security Council resolution condemning the invasion and may yet supply weaponry to the beleaguered Russian military, despite U.S. warnings to the contrary. The trio has other junior partners around the globe, such as Kim Jong Un in North Korea and Nicolás Maduro in Venezuela. The answer for the West is not to make them stronger. The looming nuclear “deal” with Iran is “mind-boggling,” said Sen. Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) on my radio show Thursday. “It’ll have absolutely nothing to do with all of Iran’s collateral activities supporting terrorism all over the Middle East.” That’s because the deal will likely lift sanctions on Iran, remove terrorist designations on individuals and organizations, and clears a path for sales of Iranian oil — which would bankroll Iran’s missile development and terrorist proxies around the globe. “President Trump was right to get out of that deal,” McConnell added. “And look, you know, [a new deal] unsettles our Sunni Arab allies like the Emiratis and the Saudis. They see us cozying up to Iran once again, so it has an adverse impact on our allies, the Sunni Arab states, and Israel’s not going to be too keen on this,

either.” McConnell also blamed Biden for signaling to Putin that the invasion of Ukraine would not be met with the stiff Western response that has in fact occurred. But he said the seeds of the invasion go back to Kabul: “What gave Putin a green light was our precipitous withdrawal from Afghanistan last August. It was a bold display of cowardice and an indication that America was in retreat.” Of course, it was Donald Trump who agreed to the original timetable for and terms of the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Afghanistan. But both he and former secretary of state Mike Pompeo have repeatedly asserted since then that the Taliban’s violations of that original accord should have rendered it null and void for Team Biden. But it did not. Biden ignored the Taliban’s violations of the agreement; Trump would have punished the Taliban the way he punished Iran’s Gen. Qasem Soleimani in 2020, as he plotted with Iran’s proxies in Iraq. The sanctions Trump imposed on Iran are crushing its economy. Biden is about to remove them. Chamberlain declared “peace for our time” when he returned to England with the meaningless “Munich Agreement” in September 1938. A year later the world had plunged into a cataclysmic war. The new version of appeasement is belatedly arming Ukraine while empowering Putin (and paying him indirectly) in the deal taking shape with Iran in Vienna. Ukraine can persevere with our help. China can be deterred with commitments to military preparedness and especially expansion of our Navy. Iran should remain a pariah until it ceases its outsourcing of terrorism to the Houthis, Hezbollah and Hamas. The United States and its allies can invest in the weapons of war so as to deter it. Appeasement did not work for Chamberlain. And it will not work for Biden.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2022/03/19/iran-nuclear-deal-helps-russia/>

U.N. Agencies Warn of Rising Rates of Famine in War-Torn Yemen



The United Nations warns acute cases of hunger in Yemen have reached an unprecedented level, with over 160,000 people likely to experience famine over the second half of this year. The U.N. says more than 17 million people in Yemen are currently in need of food assistance, with persistent high levels of acute malnutrition among children under the age of 5. The stark warning came ahead of a donor’s conference on Yemen planned for Wednesday. Yemen is suffering the world’s worst humanitarian crisis, seven years after the Saudi-led coalition launched its war and blockade of Yemen backed by arms sales and technical assistance from the United States and allies including France and the United Kingdom.

https://www.democracynow.org/2022/3/15/headlines/un_agencies_warn_of_rising_rates_of_famine_in_war_torn_yemen

Let's remember Madeleine Albright for who she really was

The former US Secretary of State, who once publicly admitted that she thinks the deaths of half a million Iraqi children were 'worth it', was no force for 'democracy and human rights'.

Often, after the demise of political figures, their troubling histories are whitewashed in the name of respecting their memories and the feelings of their families. The passing of former United States Secretary of State Madeleine Albright on Wednesday has been no exception. Western media responded to the news of her death with a plethora of obituaries eulogising her achievements. Countless statements have been released, by governments, institutions and public figures, celebrating the "trailblazing" politician for being the first woman to hold the office of Secretary of State and for receiving the Presidential Medal of Freedom. Former President Bill Clinton, under whom Albright served as America's top diplomat, referred to her as "a passionate force for freedom, democracy, and human rights". President Joe Biden, meanwhile, proclaimed she "was always a force for goodness, grace, and decency – and for freedom". For me as an Iraqi, however, the memory of Albright will forever be tainted by the stringent sanctions she helped place on my country at a time when it was already devastated by years of war. Millions of innocent Iraqis suffered terribly and hundreds of thousands died because of the sanctions which, in the end, achieved almost none of Washington's policy objectives. As we remember Albright's life and achievements, we must also remember those innocent Iraqi lives lost because of her policy decisions. The most prominent memory of Albright that I have in my mind is from an interview she gave to CBS 60 Minutes in 1996. In that now-iconic interview, veteran journalist Lesley Stahl questioned Albright – then the US ambassador to the United Nations – on the catastrophic effect

the rigorous US sanctions imposed after Iraq's invasion of Kuwait had on the Iraqi population. "We have heard that half a million [Iraqi] children have died. I mean, that is more children than died in Hiroshima," asked Stahl, "And, you know, is the price worth it?" "I think that is a very hard choice," Albright answered, "but the price, we think, the price is worth it." With this response, Albright showed that she sees innocent Iraqi children as nothing more than disposable fodder in a conflict between the US administration and the Iraqi leadership. She demonstrated, with no room left for any doubt, that she had no humanity – that she cannot and shall never be described as "a force for goodness, grace, and decency". I remember sanctions era Iraq very well. It was almost impossible to maintain contact with family members and friends in the country, as telephone services remained very limited. When I visited Iraq, to my shock I saw even the most basic products – like milk – could not be found in local markets. The people were hungry and hopeless. Indeed, the US imposed sanctions on Iraq to punish Saddam Hussein's regime, but it was innocent civilians, not the regime officials who suffered. The sanctions pushed the already struggling masses into deeper poverty, but only marginally affected the rich, widening the wealth gap in the country. As poor Iraqis struggled to put food on their tables, President Hussein and his inner circle maintained their lavish lifestyles. Despite crippling sanctions, the president managed to build 80 to 100 luxury palaces during his tenure. By 2003, it is estimated that nearly 1.5 million Iraqis, primarily children, had died as a direct consequence of sanctions. And this devastating toll

was hardly surprising, or unexpected. The sanctions, implemented in August 1990 by the UN Security Council Resolution 661, included a total financial and trade embargo. Not only was Iraq barred from exporting oil (its main income source) on the world market for several years, but it was also prevented from importing products from abroad. This ban included healthcare equipment and medications, which translated into immeasurable suffering for common Iraqis, but placed no immediate pressure on Hussein's regime. "Requested radiotherapy equipment, chemotherapy drugs and analgesics are consistently blocked by United States and British advisers [to the Sanctions Committee at the UN]," explained Professor Karol Sikora, then chief of the cancer programme of the World Health Organization, in a 1999 article published in the British Medical Journal. "There seems to be a rather ludicrous notion that such agents could be converted into chemical or other weapons." According to UNICEF, the UN Children's Fund, the death rate of children below five crossed 4,000 a month due to the lack of food and basic medications caused by the sanctions – that is up to 200 babies and toddlers dying avoidable deaths a day. Several UN officials resigned over the years in protest at this disastrous, ineffective and murderous sanctions policy, but Albright, the "passionate force for freedom, democracy and human rights", thought it was all "worth it". To make matters worse, 13 years after the sanctions were first implemented to pressure the Iraqi regime, the US opted to invade the oil-rich country anyway under the pretence that Hussein managed to amass weapons of mass destruction despite the embargo. The years of suffering were for nothing – the sanctions had achieved nothing other than devastating millions of Iraqis who had no say over the actions of those ruling over them. So, before you write or repost articles about Albright and how wonderful it is to see women pushing boundaries and breaking glass ceilings in politics, take a minute to learn what she chose to

do with the power she had – how she supported the devastation and suffering of my people. Today, with sanctions imposed on Venezuela still causing thousands of deaths among the country's poorest, and demands for more stringent sanctions on Russia getting louder, we cannot afford to whitewash Albright's mistakes.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2022/3/25/lets-remember-madeleine-albright-as-who-she-really-was>

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Crise en Ukraine : Y-a-t-il que des réfugiés européens-compatibles ?

By: Dr Idrissa KONE



Le 24 février 2022, l'armée russe a attaqué l'Ukraine déclenchant une guerre avec son lot de morts, de blessés, de désolation, de destructions et surtout de réfugiés. En effet plus de 2.5 millions ont fui la guerre et ont trouvé refuge dans les pays européens limitrophes et ailleurs en Europe de l'ouest. Pour faciliter leur intégration, L'Europe a décidé d'activer un dispositif provisoire, la protection temporaire, qui commence à être délivré pour ceux qui le demandent. Il donne une autorisation provisoire pour des séjours de 6 mois, renouvelables sur 3 ans. Cette action de générosité est louable et ne peut être que souhaitée car les civils sont les premières victimes collatérales des conflits et payent le plus lourd tribut. Mais lors de l'évacuation de ces réfugiés, l'on a pu constater la politique de deux poids, deux mesures qui est le plus souvent le propre des gouvernements occidentaux. En effet bon nombre de ressortissants non-européens se sont vus refuser l'accès aux trains d'évacuations pire la traversée des frontières leur était purement interdite. Des comportements de racisme avérés ont été publiés sur les réseaux sociaux. Des témoignages cités dans certains articles de presse sont révélateurs de ce type de comportement de racisme ordinaire d'une violence inouïe bien que l'Etat polonais et Ukrainien incriminé ont fait un démenti. « Ils ne laissent pas passer les Africains. Les Noirs qui n'ont pas de passeports européens ne passent pas... Ils nous refoulent juste parce qu'on est noirs ! », explique à France 24, Michael, un étudiant nigérian. Dans le journal africain Jeune Afrique, il est écrit : Walid affirme aussi avoir dû faire face au racisme des policiers et soldats ukrainiens. « Ils nous empêchaient de



monter dans le train. Les regards étaient hostiles. Certains nous ont frappés. Ils nous répétaient : Ne montez pas ! » Dans ce même journal il est encore écrit : Langton Tapiwa, l'étudiant zimbabwéen, confirme : « Toutes les femmes et les enfants étaient montés à bord du train, mais on continuait de nous empêcher d'y accéder, alors qu'il y avait de la place. Ils nous disaient : "Retournez dans vos pays à pied". Très vite les états africains à travers l'Union Africaine ont dénoncé cette attitude scabreuse qui viole le statut des réfugiés. Ainsi Le chef de l'État sénégalais Macky Sall, président en exercice de l'UA, et le président de la Commission de l'UA, Moussa Faki Mahamat ont rappelé en des termes claires et sans équivoque cette déclaration postée sur le site de l'Union Africaine : « toute personne a le droit de franchir les frontières internationales pendant un conflit et, à ce titre, devrait bénéficier des mêmes droits de traverser la frontière pour se mettre à l'abri du conflit en Ukraine, quelle que soit sa nationalité ou son identité raciale. Les rapports selon lesquels les Africains sont l'objet d'un traitement différent inacceptable seraient choquants et racistes et violeraient le droit international. » Mais fort est de constater les instances européennes aux plus hauts niveaux ont fait preuve d'une indifférence la plus totale.

L'Islam, 1500 ans de cela avait éradiqué ce type de comportement. Le Saint Coran dit : « Et parmi Ses Signes est la création des cieux et de la terre, et la diversité de vos langues et de vos teints. Assurément il y a des signes pour ceux qui possèdent la connaissance. » (Chapitre 30 verset 23). « O vous qui croyez qu'un peuple ne raille pas un autre peuple qui pourrait bien valoir mieux que lui, et que les femmes ne se moquent pas d'autres femmes, qui pourraient bien être meilleures qu'elles. Et ne vous diffamez pas les uns les autres, et ne vous donnez pas entre vous des sobriquets par sarcasme... » (Chapitre 49 verset 12.). « O hommes, Nous vous avons créés d'un male et d'une femelle ; et Nous vous avons fait de vous des clans et des tribus afin que vous puissiez vous reconnaître... » (Chapitre 49, verset 14.). L'Islam dit que Dieu a certes créé des différences de couleurs, d'origine etc. etc. entre les différents peuples mais n'ordonne en aucun cas que les plus forts discriminent les plus faibles. Le Saint Prophète Mohammad avait averti le monde lors de son sermon d'Adieu en disant : « O peuple votre Seigneur est Un, et votre père est Un. Un arabe n'est pas supérieur à un non arabe et un non arabe n'est pas supérieur à un arabe. Un blanc n'est pas supérieur à un noir et un noir n'est pas supérieur à un blanc. » (Tirmidhi). Il renchérit encore : « Dieu ne regarde ni vos apparences ni vos biens mais, Il regarde vos cœurs et vos actions. » (Mouslim). Durant les premières heures de l'Islam, les musulmans avec à sa tête le Saint Prophète Mohammad (paix et bénédictions d'Allah sur lui) furent des réfugiés fuyant la Mecque après 13 ans de persécution inimaginable ; ils ont été accueillis à bras ouvert par les habitants de Médine qui étaient en majorité pauvre. Leur attitude qui doit servir de leçon face à la crise des réfugiés d'aujourd'hui a été hautement par le Saint Coran en ces termes: « Et pour ceux qui avaient établi domicile dans cette ville avant eux et avaient accepté la Foi qui aiment ceux

qui sont venus à eux pour chercher refuge, et ils ne trouvent dans leurs poitrines aucune envie pour ce qui est accordé aux Réfugiés mais ils donnent préférences aux autres sur eux-mêmes, bien qu'ils soient eux-mêmes dans l'indigence. Et quiconque est débarrassé de la convoitise de sa propre âme ; ce sont ceux-là qui prospéreront. » (Chapitre 59, verset 10). En décembre 2012 Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, cinquième successeur du Messie Promis et chef spirituel de la Communauté Islamique Ahmadiyya, a une visite au Parlement européen à Bruxelles, où il a prononcé un discours historique sur la paix mondiale et en a profité pour aborder le sujet des réfugiés et leurs traitements. Il a dit en substance : « Les hommes de toutes ethnies, religions et nationalités se sont installés et se côtoient dans de grands pays. En effet, une forte population d'immigrants existe dans de nombreux pays... Certes il y a eu bien de tentatives pour limiter l'immigration, bien de restrictions ont été mises en place, mais il existe toujours divers moyens par lesquels le citoyen d'un pays peut émigrer..., nous constatons que des lois internationales soutiennent ceux qui sont contraints d'émigrer pour des raisons valables. D'autre part nous constatons également que l'immigration en masse exacerbe les tensions et l'anxiété dans certains pays. Les États doivent mettre en place des politiques visant à établir et à protéger le respect mutuel, proscrivant ainsi toute atteinte aux sentiments d'autrui. Les immigrants doivent avoir la volonté de s'intégrer dans la population locale ; cette dernière quant à elle doit ouvrir son cœur et faire preuve de tolérance. Toutes les fois qu'un citoyen est réprimé en raison de sa foi ou de ses convictions, il y aura une réaction négative qui nuira à la paix. L'Islam insiste sur la nécessité d'être juste et équitable en toute situation. Il affirme qu'aucun groupe ne doit recevoir de traitement préférentiel ou être indûment favorisé. ... » (La crise mondiale et le chemin vers la paix, pp127.)

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