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Masters, not Friends. Khilafah, not Alliances.

Our alliance with any strong state, even one marginally stronger, is a sure way for disappointment and the worsening of our situation. Subsequent to his strong alliance with the US, General Ayub Khan famously lamented “friends, not masters.” However, hoping for friends, justice and equity through alliance is naivety.

Alliances are exploited to further strengthen the marginally stronger state, at the cost of the weaker state. This can be seen in the case of India's alliance with Bangladesh and even Sri Lanka. It will be seen in any future alliance with Pakistan if normalization reaches its inevitable conclusion. India will always leverage its advantage to further elevate its strength and dominance. So, what of a much stronger state, as is the case of the US alliance with Pakistan or potential strong embraces of Russia and China?

There is much to learn from the hard lessons of alliance with the US. Washington repeatedly abandoned in our history at critical points, including the division of Pakistan into two. Washington has repeatedly exploited Pakistan to achieve US interests at great costs to our own. Militarily, the US exploited our intelligence to end the Soviet Russian occupation of Afghanistan. More recently, the US used our military assets to establish its own occupation of Afghanistan. It then used our forces to secure its forces from the Afghan resistance. And now it is using our intelligence to herd the resistance into talks to provide political cover for its forces, which it could not achieve through sixteen years of war.

Economically, the Washington Consensus, as implemented by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank and the US Treasury Department, ensures Pakistan will never emerge from an ever deeper debt trap. Pakistan pays interest on loans so that it is never able to pay back principles and has to take more loans. Pakistan is given conditions on loans, such as privatization, which deprive the state of revenues from large revenues generators such as energy, minerals, large-scale construction and telecommunication. Then conditions are imposed to increase taxation to the level that it chokes industry and agriculture. Culturally, Washington oversees the continual erosion of our Islamic values that have defined us as a people since the time of the Khilafah Rashida (Righteous Caliphate), eating away at our very identity.

As for alliance with China, its far from a game changer, its more of the same game. Already China has leveraged interest on loans, ownership of key resources and increasing the dominance of Chinese know-how, labour and goods in local markets.

The real game changer is looking outside of alliances with other states, even those that are marginally stronger. It is about fully benefitting of the fact that the current Muslim states are in origin part of a single Ummah. RasulAllah (saaw) established a single state for the Ummah, with a single currency,

treasury and armed forces. It had a shared purpose in the world and no borders between its regions. It was the basis for the Khilafah Rashida that expanded to cover three continents. And it was the basis of the Khilafah which in later times was the world's leading state for six centuries. It is time we became our own masters. It is time for Khilafah, not alliances!

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