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CATCHING THE SYRIA CHEMICAL WEAPON CRIMINAL

This is your time “to catch the criminal”...

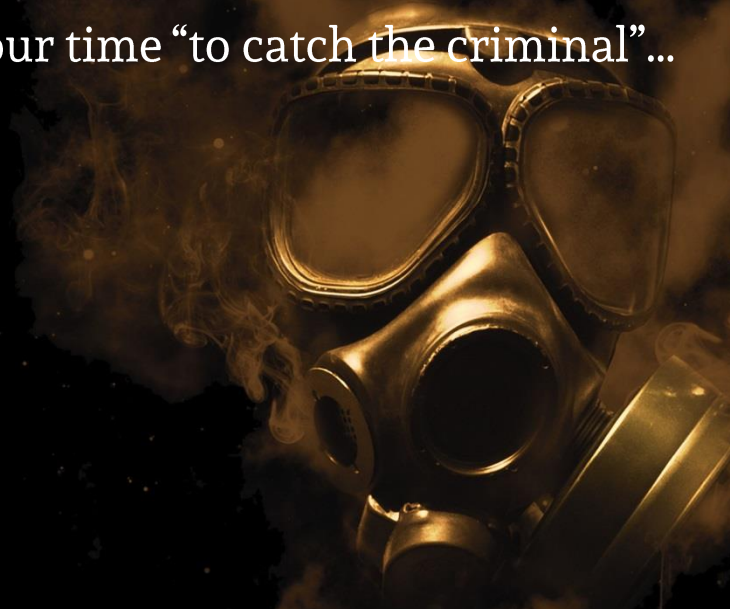


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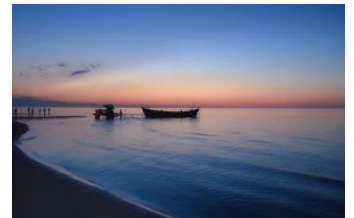
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CATCHING THE SYRIA CHEMICAL WEAPON CRIMINAL

Felix KAIZA

In the late 1960s and early 70s, the *Sunday News* newspaper published in Tanzania, East Africa, had a weekly column titled: “**Catch the Criminal.**” All it did was to narrate a story around a crime. The reader was supposed to follow it very critically and “**catch the criminal before Inspector Carter does it.**”

My memory clicked this column live as I followed accusations, denials and widespread reactions surrounding what has turned out to be charges leveled against the Turkish Government alleging the use a chemical weapon christened (nothing to do with religion) **White Phosphorus** on the Syrian population.

This is your time “to catch the criminal ...”

As you start reading this critique, keep at the back of your mind the fact that in an extremely rare event, foreign affairs committee chairs in France, Germany, the United Kingdom (UK), the European Union (EU) and the US House of **Representatives issue a joint**

statement condemning Turkey’s incursion into Syria as a military aggression and a violation of international law. In essence, this is a statement of the NATO military alliance, of which Turkey is a strategic member. A stage has reached where they wouldn’t mind washing their linen in public.

Here we go.

It is October 16, 2019. More than 150 countries are celebrating the global World Food Day designated for solutions related to hunger and poverty. To the residents of war-torn northern Syria, however, it is a sad day to remember. Their menu of the day reads like “**blasts served with white phosphorus.**” **And Turkish forces are alleged to be the hostesses** (nothing to do with gender). Call them attendants, if it so pleases you. That is, to take a leaf from the famous French invitation courtesy.

Kurdish Red Crescent says six people have been admitted to hospital in Syria's Hasakah Province with mysterious burns from 'unknown weapons' and that it was working with international partners to establish the truth.

Global defense and security editors are put on alert. International chemical weapons inspectors likewise. **The children are high on their agenda**; they constitute a major concern. A picture caption quotes Kurdish officials as accusing Turkey of **'using unconventional weapons'**.

The Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) confirms its awareness of the incident and the fact that it was focusing on related information about "...possible use of chemical weapons".

A day after the incident, Turkey's Permanent Representative to OPCW presents a contribution of Euro 30,000 to the organisation, stressing on its significant role in the field of disarmament and international security and the fact it is the central actor in the chemical non-proliferation regime.

Former commander of the UK's chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear regiment, Hamish de Bretton-Gordon, does not like to miscalculate words. Don't worry too much about the name. It is still possible to find "de-Bretton" in the UK. In Tanzania, we have it live in the world's famous Selous Game reserve. Selous was a British (not French) World War soldier. The expert was quoted as saying: **"The most likely culprit is white phosphorus ...a horrific weapon ...repeatedly used in Syrian civil war..."** The question that begs for an answer is, therefore: **"Used by whom?"**

The incident is alleged to have taken place in or around the border town of Ras al-Ayn but there are few confirmed details about what happened and whether civilians were deliberately targeted. Kurdish officials allege that this time it was used a few hours before the ceasefire of the civil war was announced.

White phosphorus is routinely held by militaries around the world and is used legally in combat as a smokescreen in daytime and as an incendiary to light up an area at night. But it is illegal to use it against civilians, because it causes serious and exceptionally painful burns on contact with skin. Informed knowledge also has it that White Phosphorous is most commonly used to tip artillery shells, whose fire can often be inaccurate.

A number of suspicious cases have been documented attracting calls on international organisations to mount investigations. **"The burns types I am seeing here are very different to (from) those I would expect to have been caused by anything else than an incendiary chemical like white phosphorus,"** one medical doctor was quoted as telling a newspaper. **"The chemical reacts to the moisture in the skin in a way that intensifies its burning, so that water cannot put it out."**

Turkey says the accusations are false. In the words of Turkish Defense Minister Hulusi Akar, "It is a fact known by everyone that there are no chemical weapons in the inventory of the Turkish armed forces."

The minister's strong denial notwithstanding, it has been revealed that Britain issued more than 70 export licenses over the past two decades for military products sold to Turkey containing white phosphorous. A ban on these licenses was imposed a day before the incident –October 15.

Turkey signed the Chemical Weapons Convention on 14th January 1993, followed by its ratification and accession on 12th May, 1997. The Convention bans the use of such weapons in civilian areas – the breach of which constitutes a war crime

It is against this background that the whole world should throw its weight behind the demand of four US Congress women for a full and thorough investigation into the matter. There is every indication for some level of reluctance for a thorough investigation due to far reaching implications because what happened is one of the most atrocious and disturbing acts a government or military can take.

What made the UK delay in joining the ban on selling chemical weapons that could be used in Syria to Turkey? UK did this a day before the attack. Was this by accident or design?

Between the UK and Turkey, which country is saying the truth? Turkey denies any link with chemical weapons. The UK is talking of issuing and withdrawing related export licenses to Turkey. Which export business was being licen sed?

Who can rule out the possibility of the aircraft used in the chemical attack being of US origin?

The US Special Representative for Syria Engagement, Ambassador James Jeffrey, with whom the demand has been lodged, is on record for having told members of the House of Foreign Affairs Committee that he was just looking into these allegations. Does this sum up to seriousness?

How many angels are on the payroll of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OCPW)? With a Euro 30,000 capacity building contribution from Turkey, one day after the attack, how can its experts escape from finding themselves simply “monitoring the situation”?

As Representative Ilhan Omar and other Representatives — Karen Bass, Chair of the Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights and International Organizations, Juan Vargas, and Sheila Jackson Lee – demand, there is need for “a full, impartial and multi-lateral investigations into the allegations of chemical weapons use by Turkey in Syria.”

Felix Kaiza is a Tanzanian journalist with more than 50 years of experience currently working as an independent media consultant. Learned in agriculture, journalism, political science and international relations, his main fields of consultancy, besides the media, are good governance, nature conservation, tourism and investment.



WHAT WAS THE 2019 KUALA LUMPUR MUSLIM SUMMIT

Dr Azly RAHMAN

How meaningful was the recently concluded 2019 Kuala Lumpur Summit which had only key leaders of Iran, Turkey, Qatar, and Malaysia as key participants, with the other forty over countries not interested in what they see as Malaysia trying to create a new Muslim bloc, stealing the thunder from Saudi Arabia? That country with a monopoly of the Islamic historical-legacy and the OIC (Organization of Islamic countries) is angry at the gathering of the “triple-nation-alliance of Turkey-Iran-Qatar,” being hosted by Mahathir’s Malaysia to perhaps challenge the hegemony of the Saudis.

But Iran and Turkey are troubled democracies, aren’t they? And Qatar is a supporter of Assad’s Syria. *Essentially, the issues in the Muslim world are perennial and the word “ummah” is merely a nice thing to utter for religion to be used for global political ends.*

One needs to have a mastery of Complexity Theory of International Relations it could seem, to understand the Muslim world of today.

Is this summit, the fifth in the series of Muslim-improvement-plan summits, yet another time and money-waster for Malaysian, in which the speakers were merely bringing in stale and outdated proposals devoid of a good understanding of international affairs, let alone globalization, a process that has been happening for thousands of years – and one that pertains to Islam and its declining influence since the fall of the Ottoman Empire?

I recall the narratives on meaninglessness put forth as a philosophical argument by the Nobel Laureate French-Algerian philosopher Albert Camus whose analysis of the myth of Sisyphus speaks to the modern man, concerning the issue of depthlessness.

In this case, what was the KL Summit about? An ego trip of a few leaders, all guilty of overstaying their welcome and all having major issues with the people they govern, namely the issue of the fear of relinquishing power, while the people are forced to roll the rock up on the hill, daily, like the Camusian hero, Sisyphus.

What was the Muslim Summit about, or rather, what was there to summit about?

Muslim democracy?

Is there a “Muslim country” today worthy of being spoken of as a model democracy?

Real Muslim leaders don't cling on to power as long as they can. As long as they can use the ideological state apparatuses to even avoid prosecution. That's not democracy in Islam, is it? Today's “Islamic countries” are essentially images of decadence, degeneration, and dictatorship. So, in the KL Muslim Summit, what will, for example, Turkey's Erdogan say about Islam, world peace, and torture in his own country? What about Iran and its problem with theocracy and the extreme moral policing it has engineered, in the name of the “Islamic republic”? And of course what about the image of Malaysia's 94-year-old Mahathir Mohamad who returned to power after iron-gripping the country for 22-years in his first tenure, and now refusing to leave office to give a chance for the younger leaders to shape the nation, in his second tenure? What would Prophet Muhammad say about these leaders?

In Malaysia, there is the issue of ignorance. Malays need not fear the civilizational legacy of Indian and China, of which Southeast Asia benefitted as a crossroads. Malays need not feel small by the monumentalism and ancientness of the Chinese and Indian civilizations. Learn from them.



When there is too much obsession with Arabic culture mistaken as Islamic culture as standard bearer of religiosity and piety, and the adoption of the disabling and violent strands of “Wahabbi jihadism”, Malay culture — or any for that matter — will be destroyed. Reclaim authenticity now.

• *The problem with the Muslim leaders is that they have created huge problems for their people and the religion. A brand of sane democracy is possible in ‘Muslim countries’ if religion is separated from the state. Learn from Thomas Jefferson’s USA.*

In this sense and in the context of the KL summit, what can Malaysia learn from Turkey and Iran what she has not learned from Saudi Arabia and Pakistan? Ayatollahs and dictators won't teach us about true democracy in Islam, would they? Besides, how do you reconcile the Malaysian government's stand on the Syiahs' in Malaysia when Iran is invited to the summit?



China is fighting terrorism, not Islam, I believe. From the time of Admiral Zheng He (Cheng Ho) the eunuch of the Ming Dynasty Islam is a respected religion. Not Wahabbism. There are “jihadists” amongst the Uyghurs in Xinjiang. In Kashgar, 1990-2016 was a period of attacks. And chaos. China’s fighting Uyghur jihadists, not Xinjiang Muslims who are living in peace and prosperity.

Leaders and their well-fed scholars cannot continue to do research with confirmed biases as methodology. There are perspectives to consider, especially in today’s cybernetic environment of fake news and post-truth.

There are good Palestinians. And then there is Hamas who fires rockets into Israel. There are good Americans. And then there is Donald Trump,

What should be have been discussed?

Before the summit, I wrote that The Muslim Summit in Malaysia should discuss how to stop leaders from staying in power way too long. These leaders should champion Islam by releasing it from State bondage. They should learn from the Lutheran-Protestant Reformation Period and engineer a total philosophical change to stop the religion moving backwards spirally downwards ideologically..

The idea of an Islamic “ummah” is never clear nor possible, yet used liberally and abused as wrong but useful rallying propaganda today, to heal that sense of loss of empire, that nostalgia of a glory tainted too with the abuse of power and many a sultanic narcissism plagued with internal chaos as well. This is perhaps especially after the collapse of the last “Islamic Empire” the Uthmaniyyah. Muslims don’t need to belong to an “ummah’ of “we vs them”. Each Muslim is an individual to flourish naturally, learning from the immense experience of the cultures of one another, from whatever cultural philosophies people of nations spring out from.

In Malaysia, the followers of Syiism are persecuted and the ideology vilified. A leader of an NGO, suspected of spreading this ideology has gone missing for several years. There is also a pastor whose whereabouts are not known. Both are allegedly kidnapped by the government, in an attempt to curb the spread of both Syiism and Christianity. Today, Malaysia is plagued with the ideology of Wahabbi-ism.

Iran, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Syria – these are failing Muslim countries Malaysians cannot learn from.

Islamic World Summit in Malaysia seems like a climb of Camus’ Sisyphean hill, where we roll the rock of life up, t have it roll down at the end of the day, daily, while dictators and despots use religion to practice the lessons of Machiavelli.

In the summit, would they talk about the so-called “Uyghur concentration camps”? Or will there also be talk about China fighting Uyghur-Muslim poverty and terrorism in Xinjiang.

Today, Muslims want to be free from the fear of Islam-rationalized terrorism. Of jihad as a struggle, marinated with terror and marketed as a global product.

Poverty is the root cause of terrorism. Neocolonialism and the global-corporate-oligopolitic ideology is another one. Lack of education, miseducation and strict theological and indoctrination education are too. **In essence, the problem is poverty of basic needs, knowledge, and an understanding of religion.**

The KL Muslim Summit should discuss how Muslim leaders terrorize their own people, how to depose them, democratically preferably. But in “Islamic countries” today, you can’t get rid of impeachable leaders. Bad democracy installed via abuse of religion. In this respect, I’d say: **get the two-term-limit for the prime ministership installed fast, Malaysians.**

There is a proposal to buy and trade with Muslims only. Imagine a world with “Muslim-only trading and technology”. We’d be camel riders on the Silk Road again. Hello Genghiz Khan!

The KL Muslim Summit is like a **“Muslim Brexit”** for Malay-Muslims, essentially. It is an exit from reality. What Muslim countries need to talk about now is less of concern for the “ummah” but more for the advancement of “humanity”. We have major world issues to address that are blind to religion, race, color, creed, and national origin. Did the Quran not speak about Man as having been created of different race and nation, so that we may learn to care for one another?

That is a clear enough statement of cosmopolitanism, rather than ethnocentrism.

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Development and Masters degrees in six fields of study: Education, International Affairs, Peace Studies, Communication,

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Writing. He has written more than 350

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USA, Greece, and Montenegro.



Felix KAIZA

IF I WERE PRESIDENT ERDOGAN, I WOULD ...

It doesn't taste nice to be targeted at an adult; definitely not to a head of state for that matter. But, as we hold in Africa: "If what would come is already there, how do you prevent it? You had better understand and appreciate the fact that since it has arrived, it won't easily go back." On the same vein, another saying runs: "What have fallen are the breasts".

Both thought-provoking and self-searching indigenous African wise sayings bear one important message. That is, the meaning of Divine Providence in a man's life and how best man can take it up or respond to it in order to plot the way forward.

This entry into the Politurco in-depth info orbit is not meant to serve as the Sermons on the Mount we read across in the Judaism, Christianity and Islam Holy Scriptures. No. It's just a mirror cast on the most

current world events – all of which taking place with the Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and his government occupying the centre stage.

Like a conceptual drone, it (this article) 'flies' from London to Washington, Brussels, Tripoli, Islamabad, Athens, Rome, Tel Aviv and Moscow; with Ankara at the centre and the hidden Damascus formula in the background. And for a job to be well done, it cannot avoid Istanbul, Jerusalem and Sochi and claim to have been to Turkey, Israel and Russia.

At the climax of the 75th North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) anniversary celebrations in London, United Kingdom, French President Macron Emmanuel laments: "When I look at Turkey, they are fighting against those who fight with us. Who is the enemy? ... Regarding the issue of designating Kurdish

fighters (as) terrorists, there could be no possible consensus.”

President Erdogan registers his concerns as well, translating into a threat (as a strategic member) to veto NATO's efforts to boost defenses within the Baltic States and Poland, should they not designate the Kurdish fighters in Syria as terrorists.

Parallel to the London NATO celebrations, the US Senate in Washington votes (18-4) to sanction Turkey's acquisition of Russian S-400 missile series and the Syrian war. Driving the point home, Senator Jim Risch says: “Now's the time for the Senate to come together and take this opportunity to change Turkey's behaviour.

“This is not some minor dustup with this country. This is a drift by this country, Turkey, to go in an entirely different direction than what they have in the past. They've thumbed their nose at us, and they've thumbed their nose at their other NATO allies.”

Oppression breeds reaction. Turkey hits back. Global tabloids scream: “Turkey blasts US Senate sanctions.” By any chances, the “change of behaviour” message is not a ‘polite’ (diplomatic) way of country-to-country communication. Sovereignty is non-negotiable. Ankara describes this move as “a new manifestation of disrespect for our sovereign decisions regarding our national security... These initiatives do not have any function other than to harm Turkish-US relations.”

There is need for President Erdogan and his Turkish Government to decide whether they belong to the outdated Warsaw Pact or the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). The Berlin Wall – the symbol of the Cold War– has fallen. But, about three decades on, the spillovers are still there. In these circumstances, is it right for Turkey to literally dive on the rock? Does Turkey want to run Rolls Royce jet engines on diesel fuel? Does Turkey really want Russian missiles running on US systems compatibility? There is no ‘positive’ or ‘negative’ neutrality.

Another dimension on stage is what we can call the new term European Union Commission, which is now managed by a new team, and, for the first time, under a woman President, Ursula von der Leyen. She has already categorically promised Brussels “honest conversations” with Ankara.

Ankara is not new to President Leyen and her team; nor is President Erdogan. Does her statement imply anything to the contrary having been happening in the past conversations? Turkey is candidate country of the EU. But, full membership negotiations have long been put on hold. Why?

This is the time for President Erdogan to revisit the EU membership terms and conditions. These are very clearly defined in the Copenhagen Criteria. The rules are self-explanatory. The applying country must fulfill four main rules hinged on democratic governance, human rights, functioning market economy and adherence to obligations and intent of the EU.

According to The Economist Intelligence Unit research, Turkey is the fifth country in the world, behind Venezuela, Argentina, Iran and Brazil, where people are most miserable. There have also been records in the most recent past suggesting that about a quarter of the Turkish people would be happy to live somewhere else. What message does this send to the powers that be?

Other sources targeting global authoritarians and media personnel jailers place President Erdogan in the second place after China's Xi Jinping. At one time, figures read like 176 journalists imprisoned; 200 media companies closed and many of their staffs facing terror-related charges; 7,257 academics dismissed; 1,539 lawyers prosecuted; 580 arrested 103 on long jail terms. On this alone, Ankara would not get a Brussels entry visa, discussions about EU membership put aside.

The Watkin's (Mind, Body and Spirit) Magazine, in its 2019 list of 100 spiritually influential living people, who could change the world, puts the Catholic Church leader, Pope Francis, as number one. South African Bishop Desmond Tutu is ranked 5th and a Turkish Muslim Scholar living in self-exile in Pennsylvania State of the United States, Fethullah Gulen, takes the 26th slot.

Now, with which eye does President Erdogan see Gulen to the extent of classifying him as the Number One enemy of the Turkish people – the person who could be behind the so-called failed 2016 Coup? Who is the enemy of Turkey? Is it the likes of Pope Francis, Oprah Winfrey, Dalai Lama, Eckhart Tolle and Desmond Tutu? Can Lucifer be part of an undertaking or a programme for sending people to heaven? Who is Turkey's Lucifer?

If I were President Erdogan, I would start thinking of the 2023 presidential elections. In the wake of my disintegrating ruling party, where would I get the votes from? It is good to see it coming.

In polygamous Africa, a woman is advised to throw away the stick with which the husband canes your co-wife. You never know. You might be the next victim. If I were President Erdogan, I would 'throw' away all anti-democracy practices in Turkey, besides synchronizing my foreign policy, ready for the future. Or is it too late? For, it is said he who wins Istanbul wins Turkey. And Istanbul is already out of the AKP's hands! It's gone! Is it now the turn of the Palace?

A portrait of Felix Kaiza, a man with a mustache, wearing a dark suit, white shirt, and patterned tie. He is looking slightly to the left of the camera with a serious expression.

Felix Kaiza



REVEALED PERSPECTIVES FOR RUSSIA AND TURKEY BY THE NEW STATUS OF THE CASPIAN SEA

Arif Asalioglu

Turkey, which has been sliding into a process of transformation with reference to economy, civil society, and political actors, deals with crises especially due to the fact that it cannot provide a solution to the structural problems emerging with its immediate neighbors and as a result, it misses the global changes and opportunities. The most obvious example is the change of status in the Caspian region, which concerns Turkey closely, with regards to both political relations and energy resources through Caucasia and Central Asian Republics.

The Caspian Region ranks second in the world in terms of energy resources. The region was the focal point of both the countries that have a coast on the sea and global powers because of the great potential it has. Uncertainty of status in the region and long-lasting

disagreements made way to some international problems.

“The Caspian Sea belongs only to the countries in the Caspian region”

The presidents of five countries that have a coast on the Caspian Sea, namely Russia, Iran, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, and Turkmenistan, signed a treaty, which has been plugged away at since 1996, on 12 August in order to determine the legal status of the natural gas and oil-rich region. It was a matter of debate whether the Caspian is actually a sea or a lake. Given the special status of the Caspian Sea law agreement in 1982, the UN will not be applied and the depth of water will be determined by the lake principle. There were constant disputes between the countries that have a coast on the sea since this status had not been determined before.



The countries which do not have a coast on the Caspian Sea will not be able to have military troops deployed there according to the agreement reached by the leaders of the countries that have a coast on the Caspian Sea. According to the statement of President of Iran Hassan Rouhani, "Caspian Sea belongs only to the countries in the Caspian region."

The bottom of the Caspian Sea and the subsoil will be shared according to the grounds such as territorial waters, fishing grounds, and the use of resources according to the agreement. The agreement, which was signed a few months ago on 19 September in the lower wing of the Russian parliament, Duma, and in the upper wing in the Federation Council on 25 September, was officially accepted by Russia and came into force on 1 October 2019 together with the approval of the Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Russia has the highest amount of reserves in the global energy markets with regards to the transnational distribution of natural gas which plays a major role for the Caspian region to rise to prominence. Russia, which holds 25% of the total Caspian natural gas reserves with a total of 3 trillion cubic meters, is followed by Kazakhstan with 2.9 trillion cubic meters. Azerbaijan is the third with 1.4 trillion cubic meters of natural gas reserves although it has the shortest coastline in the region.

The resources of the Caspian region acts as an alternative for the EU countries which rely upon natural gas for many of their fields from industries to healthcare. EU countries, which depend heavily on Russia with regards to its energy, will boost their investments to the alternative routes that are capable of using Caspian reserves. In this respect, the energy lines including Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, and Kazakhstan will gain importance. Although the new projects in prospect are considered as an alternative, Russia will be able to continue to be the power without an alternative for tens of years with regards to its natural gas resources with its current reserves.

Therefore, this discussion is now over and significant acquisitions are acquired towards the international initiatives of the coastal states of the Caspian Sea. For example, the Turkmenistan-Azerbaijan natural gas pipeline project, which was previously opposed by Russia, might be implementable as long as the desired environmental standards are met. Moscow had asserted environmental concerns about the pipeline which will offer an alternative to Russia and would deliver Turkmenistan's natural gas to Europe through Azerbaijan.

The Don and Volga Rivers, which connect the Caspian Sea with the Azov Sea and the Black Sea, were artificially connected in order to create a channel and the potential for the resources to be delivered to the international market was increased. Although these rivers are subjected to Russia's inland waterway regime, the very fact that they are being used for transportation makes it quite beneficial also for Russia.

European countries, which depend heavily on energy in Russia, will increase investment in alternative routes that can use Caspian reserves. In this respect, the energy lines including Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan will gain importance. Even though the new projects considered are alternative, Russia will continue to be an alternative power for decades with its existing reserves in terms of natural gas resources.

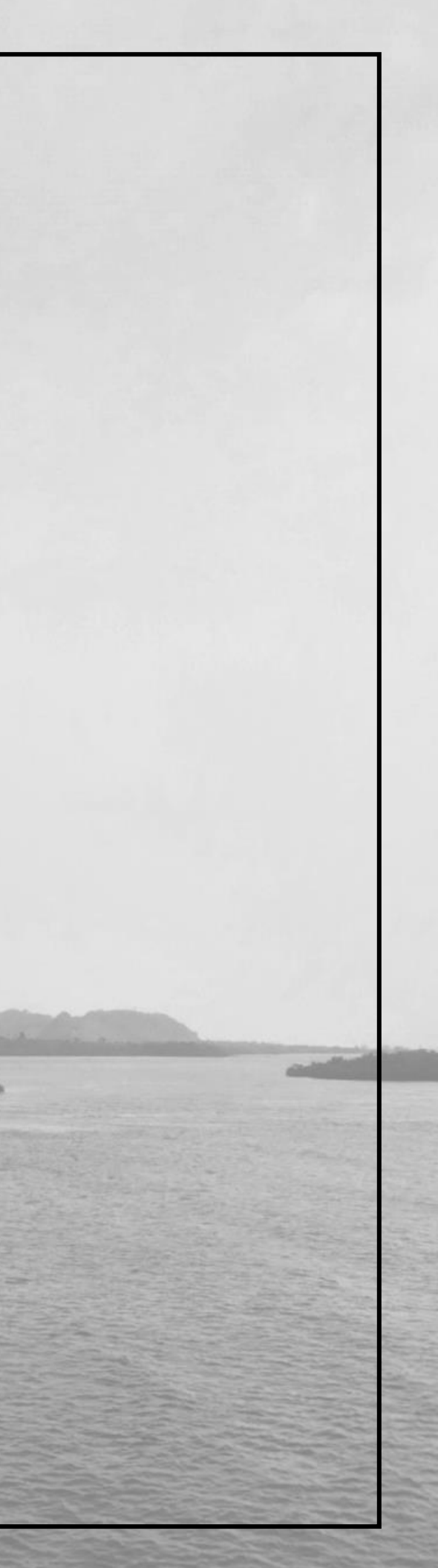
The Caspian region is also rich in oil reserves. Approximately 65% of the total of 48.2 billion barrels of oil reserves belong to Kazakhstan. In terms of oil reserves, Kazakhstan is followed by Azerbaijan (8.5 billion barrels) and Russia (6.1 billion barrels). Considering these figures, it is an undoubted fact that Central Asia and the Caspian region will be the Middle East of the 21st Century.

Turkey can turn the Caspian potential

The new developments in the Caspian region from the point of Turkey is quite important considering the increasing function of the natural resources on the economies of the countries and influential foreign policies. The fact that Turkey being the cheapest route for the exportation of the region's oil and natural gas resources to Europe might have significant contributions for Turkey's objective to be an energy center together with the politics developed with the countries of the Caspian region.

Turkey might take a more active role in the transportation of the resources in the Caspian region in case the country manages to maintain a certain level of relations with the EU. The countries in the Caspian region might redirect the positive approaches of Turkey to Europe's security needs towards the energy supply. The position gained by Turkey about the security of the energy supply, which has become a critical issue for the European countries in recent years, might be used more effectively for Turkey's EU membership process.





Turkey might turn real projects such as Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) oil pipeline and Trans-Anatolian Natural Gas Pipeline (TANAP) into more profitable projects by giving confidence to the Western countries with regards to communication and bureaucracy. Turkey, which is currently suffering from economic constriction at present, will have the chance to improve its image by becoming a center that provides the delivery of the reserves in the Caspian region to the world market and also will get in return for the energy transmission.

This status will also result in mutual economic development and cooperation between Turkey and the Middle Eastern and Transcaucasian countries which are culturally and historically linked with Turkey. Without a doubt, serious duties await Turkey in this historical responsibility. On one hand, Turkey must establish an environment of trust regarding its relationships with other Turkish nations, and on the other hand, it should produce projects by taking into account the geographical barriers between the new republics. The Turkish world cannot display any kind of integrity due to the diplomatic mistakes in recent history.

• *Turkey, which cannot use the advantage of its geographical position despite being adjacent to an energy-rich region, will be an influential country towards providing solutions to the problems if it might be able to use the opportunity offered by the Caspian region in recent years and manages to keep the transfer of a strategic value such as energy under control. Otherwise, it will swiftly continue to be Middle Easternized just like it has been doing like for the last five years.*

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and a Russia expert based in Moscow.



Felix KAIZA

IS SYRIA WAR HEADING TO THE MEDITERRANEAN?

Before the world recovers from memories of the Syria war, it looks, with a relatively low margin of error, that the Damascus story is set for a new theatre. This time round, it is destination Tripoli, putting the peace of Libya and other Mediterranean and North African countries at risk and with very possible spillovers.

A fully developed recipe for adding salt to the Syrian war world wounds is ready at table. All ingredients for a repeat are not only there; they are ripe as well. Consider the following flow of facts.

About eight years down the end of four decades of the Muammar Gaddafi rule, Libya is yet to take even a peep into what could be expressed as the crudest form of democracy. Gaddafi's ghost is still haunting the country's politics, economy and the people, to say.

Internally, the Libya conflict thrives on the fertile confrontation field between forces of the UN-recognized Government of National Accord (GNA) and military commander Khalifa Haftar.

On the ground, the Daesh/ISIS terror group is effectively on its marks, more set than before, and ready to go, as they express it in the world of athletics. Some of the participants (the militants), who carried out the attack on Libya's second biggest city, Benghazi, have confirmed links with al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), al-Shabaab in Somalia, and Boko Haram in Nigeria. What a ferociously dangerous 'explosive' mix!

With what can be expressed as "situation rent", in respect of the politics of the Mediterranean, North and sub-Saharan Africa, Libya is the next natural attraction of competitors, the likes of the key players in the Syrian crisis.

The Russians are there. Claims of keeping aloof of colonization malpractices notwithstanding, Russia is already on record for raising its military presence in Libya – even to the extent of mercenary level! Who would be comfortable with news of the country siding with Khalifa Haftar – that military commander fighting the UN-recognized government? Where and how has Russia established a dividing line in Libya between it

its interests and those of the United Nations world body of which it is a member?

There have been media reports hinting on Russian troops having been in control of an airport in Libya. GNA spokesman Col. Mohammed Kanunu was quoted as releasing information about the neutralization (killing?) of eight mercenaries from Russian private security company Wagner during operations.

There have been claims of Russia printing Libyan dinars worth billions of US dollars to circulate parallel to those of the Libya Central Bank to help Haftar's forces out of Tripoli deadlock.

In the practice of law, it is held: "Qui tacet consentire videtur"—meaning he who keeps quiet seems to have consented. In the absence of a word to the contrary from Russia on the subject matter, should the world go by this tenet of the learned friends?

Along the lines of the rules of the (war) game, the presence of Russia on the side of Haftar led to a rethink of the US stance. When Haftar began operations, President Donald Trump expressed his support, only to learn later that Russia had beaten him to it and stood better maneuvering chances in world politics. He thus changed the course.

That is the Trump. Then, he knew, Russia had eaten into the US cake in the Middle East and North African (MENA) countries that support Haftar. These are Egypt, the UAE, and Saudi Arabia. But all the same, the game was set with the US having to go back to the drawing boards.

Policies and practices of both countries are on each other's necks in the struggle for a share in the politics of Libya as a gateway to the Middle East, the Mediterranean and North Africa. Propensity for their military involvement cannot be ruled out translating into a replay of their Syria experience.

While Libya remains the US and Russian influence closely contested launch pad, it pays for the rest of the world to think beyond the flow of events. The point at

issue is not Libyan democracy. It is the oil and gas that is within the Mediterranean region. And this is one of the big factors for the entry of the Syrian war common denominator, Ankara, in the scene.

Ankara, of course, has its own other long lasting agenda in the area. But the way the UN-recognized Libyan government has played into the hands of Turkey raises another interesting entry on the Syrian war replay menu.

Last month (November) Turkey and the internationally recognized government of Libya signed an accord defining their boundaries and a deal on expanded security and military cooperation, a step Turkey said was for protecting its rights. This is not the first time Turkey is saying so. The same reason it gave for the military incursion into Syria and the anti-NATO group step of acquiring the Russian S-400 missiles.

Athens, a set-and-hold sworn enemy of Ankara, as we say in the subbing media world, called the accord absurd because it ignored the presence of Crete between the coasts of Turkey and Libya. Angered Greece warned and went on to expel the Libyan ambassador to Athens "for failing to provide clarifications..."

Libyan Foreign Minister Mohamed Siyala told Reuters news agency that Greece's decision was not acceptable, and that Libya would have reciprocated if Greece had diplomatic representation in the country.

"It is Greece's right to go to the International Court of Justice and to the legal channels to remove any

confusion. But to take the stand of expelling the ambassador, summoning him and escalating the situation, this is unacceptable to the Libyan government,” Siyala said.

Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu also condemned the move. “Expelling an ambassador just because of the (agreement) that we signed is not a mature behaviour in diplomacy. This is outrageous,” he was quoted as telling the media in Rome.

In the words of Greek Prime Minister Kyriako’s Mitsotakis, “Turkey’s attempt to abolish the maritime borders of islands like Crete, Rhodes, Karpathos and Kastelorizo with tricks such as void bilateral memorandums of understanding will not produce internationally legal results.... (Ankara) cannot challenge the sovereign rights of our islands, which are enshrined in international law and particularly by the Law of the Sea.”

He classifies Turkish actions as “provocative...” The US State Department called it calls the Turkish move “unhelpful and provocative”, adding it risked “raising tensions in the eastern Mediterranean at a sensitive time”.

Athens accuses Ankara, which refuses to recognise the maritime convention, of raising groundless claims against Greece by deliberately disputing the continental shelves of its islands.

A look back into history reveals that since 1967, Greece and Turkey have come to the brink of war five times. Now, Greece has contemplated on holding joint military exercises with other NATO allies like France and Italy.

Of late, Turkey, whose defense minister said military action cannot be ruled out in the Mediterranean, revealed latest locally-made armed drone, equipped with the smart technology, having been successfully tested in the northwestern part of the country. Designed for strategic military tasks, the raider, unmanned Combat Aerial Vehicle, stayed in the

air for 16 minutes after completing a fully-automatic taxi and takeoff and successfully implemented its first fully-automatic landing at the Corlu Airport Base Command.

Foreign Economic Relations Board (DEIK) revealed that it had signed a cooperation deal on information sharing with Afghanistan’s National Procurement Authority as part of a business meeting organized by DEIK’s Turkey-Afghanistan Business Council. The target, among others, is to increase the annual bilateral trade focusing on, among others, energy and security fields. Accessing information and security are the two critical points for increasing Afghan-Turkish relationships.

One has to re-read Plato’s The Republic, in which it is written: “There can be no good government until philosophers are kings and the kings, philosophers.” The story reads like Turkey (Erdogan) trying to act as both kings and philosophers – the product of which is explosive.

A professor of international law and an MP in the ruling party Angelos Syrigos observes: “Athens is very worried because it sees a Turkey now led by a man who is determined to play as hard abroad as he does at home.”

He goes on to blame Erdogan’s “... gunboat diplomacy and ... Ankara’s aggression to a great degree... to ... both Washington and Moscow endorsing its invasion of Syria.”

In this circumstance, what is there to prevent the War of the Gulf of Antalya? In case of doubt, why not take it from the Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mevlüt Çavusoglu, who said plans were at hand to speed up its collaboration with Britain for the building of a new generation of fighter jet engines for the Turkish air force.

Felix Kaiza



RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN POLITICS AND MORALS-1

Yuksel Cayiroglu

The meaning of politics, which is perceived as the principle, perception, ability, or art of ruling human communities, regulating state affairs, and maintaining public order throughout the first periods, has changed a lot and suffered a semantic restriction during the modern periods. The most radical and blazing alteration about the concept of politics happened after it was disconnected from morals and metaphysics. The reason for the politics, which had been viewed as a valuable and commendable acquirement and activity capable of providing justice, preventing injustices, and maintaining public order, to have a bad reputation among the majority of people at present is the fact that it has been drifting apart from moral values.

Dirty Politics of Today

Today, politics is mostly associated by most people with negative imagery and meanings such as **lies, deception, hypocrisy, manipulation, propaganda, popularity, and conflict**. Some even refer to the meaning of politics as “dirty” and express their longing for a “clean” one. Almost every single day, the disclosures, lies, and corruption about the politicians are widely publicized on websites, newspapers, and television and this intensifies the image of dirty politics even more.

The surveys suggest that politicians are accepted as “the least trustworthy people”. Because when politics is the main subject, most people start thinking about perceptions such as “keep a foot in both camps”, “delude the people”, “gild the pill in the squares”, “somehow eliminate or discredit the opposition”, “deceive people with false promises or be a hope monger”. Politics virtually turned into acrobatics. Even today’s modern state structures do not view the politicians worthy of being respected and put bureaucracy before them.

The attitudes and behaviors of the politicians, their relationships with each other, or the objectives they would like to achieve through politics cause politics to be perceived as “dirty”. To put it more explicitly, politics cannot go beyond being only a disposable tool in the eyes of the politicians towards acquiring, protecting, and keeping the power. Therefore, politics became a field where people look after their own personal or denominational interests instead of an occupation where the source of the countries are distributed fairly, injustices prevented, people are ruled peacefully, and public interests are ensured.

To make it more clear, going into politics, especially in the countries where the law is not adopted in full and democracy is not well developed, became a haven for seizing posts, gaining reputation, sitting pretty, living in luxury, providing employment for followers, benefiting any state opportunities, and partisanship. In this respect, the wheels of today’s politics are turning around interests. Islamic Scholar Said Nursi described today’s politics, **which turns around interests, as a “monster” and provided the following judgment about it: “The modern politics has so much lie, deceit, and evil in itself that it turned out to be conducive of the devils.”**

The most important objective of the politicians today is gaining power after obtaining popularity in the public eye and later using the power and the sources of the country for their own interests, and this indicates how politics jumped its track. Just as the objective of

many politicians is illegitimate and inhumane, their ways and methods in order to achieve this goal are illegitimate too. Politicians see all methods permissible since they move away from the principles and rules of religion and morals

Unfortunately, today’s politics has no coefficient, principle, or red lines to limit, bind, and discipline the politicians. Concepts such as companionship, loyalty, and fidelity lose their meanings in a place where power is worshipped and interests are sacralized; shamelessness and lubricity take the place of a stance of principles. **It is quite obvious that it is impossible to mention moral qualities such as honesty, righteousness, and trust in an environment where people can be bought and they could easily sell out each other.**

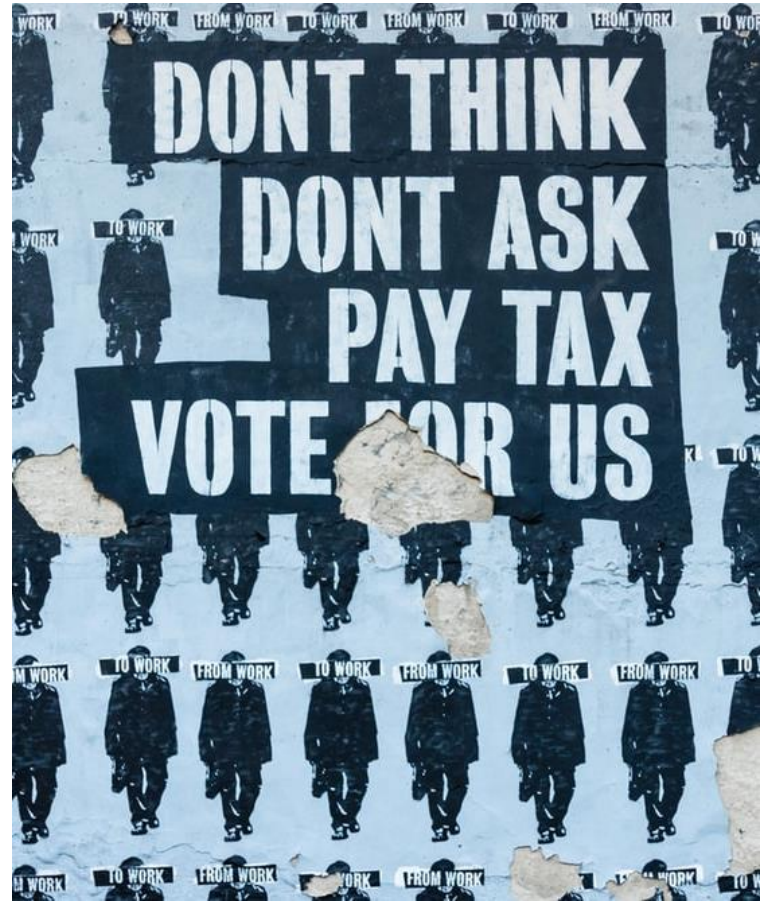
Due to the fact that politics is accepted to have its own principles and rules today, many actions and behaviors that are perceived as immoral and not approved by the individuals or society are seen as “possible”, and they are even accepted as a necessity of politics. For example, politicians saying “white” for something in the past and saying “black” to the exact same thing today; disgracing somebody yesterday and praising the same individual today; being a hypocrite and constantly fighting with the opposition seem like ordinary things for the people.

On the other hand, today’s politics embraces a monopolist and collectivist logic. Anybody who might have a chance to listen to the politicians will think that they possess all of the world’s goodness and virtues;

the evil, mischief, and fraud belong only to their oppositions.

• *The religion of Islam promotes reconciliation, peace, compromise, unity, and solidarity; but politics, on the contrary, choose discourses and actions that promote separatism, discrimination, and polarization. Because such a method makes it easy for politicians to rule people. The high levels of stress imposed on society in every electoral period; all public venues from neighborhood cafes to debates on television hosting political conflicts and quarrels are different reflections of the polarizing and discriminating nature of today's politics.*

This polarizing manner of politics somehow manages to turn people into partisans, and also militarize, radicalize, and over-politicize them. The people lose their emotions such as mercy, justice, and fairness due to the fact that they support their favorite political parties and their leaders blindly and unconditionally and ignore their mistakes. The people, who are addicted to prejudice this way, might favor reprobate individuals in their favorite party rather than the good people working for other parties. Islamic Scholar Said Nursi said, "I have abandoned the aftermath of political life by saying "I take refuge in the name of Allah from the accursed Satan and politics" after I witnessed a religious scholar vilifying another scholar who adopted an opposite view and mentioning the name of an unbeliever respectfully who adopted his own views." This sets an example of how prejudice might make the people overlook atrocities and recreancies by even trying to cover up some infamous crimes that take place inside the families, institutions, or the community itself just to leave the parties they support unharmed.



Politicians constantly try to attract people with different propaganda tactics and also by using the power of media and never allow people to think with a clear state of mind. The people watch the news the politicians want them to hear, not the realities by dint of the politics-oriented media; thus they lose touch with reality.

• *And expecting this calamitous situation to change is futile while the only concern of the politicians is the "votes" and as long as the concern of the people sticks to their "hunger". Whenever the superior values and principles are remembered and cared about above these facts, only then the real commence for the change will happen.*

In addition to all of the aforesaid, the politicians might legitimize all kinds of luxuries, gaudiness, and wastage under the wings of “Reputation does not allow any retrench.” phrase after they come to power and secure their posts. They manage to find a religious cover-up for all kinds of bribery, thievery, and corruption in order to fill their pockets and safe boxes. They manage to consider all kinds of tyranny and bullying necessities of politics in order to suppress possible objections and resistance. They might even silence those who oppose with methods such as blackmail, threatening, and intimidation. The politicians might take hold of legislation and judiciary in favor of their own interests due to the fact that the majority of them think that being strong equals to being justified. They might see it normal to intervene in the lives of the citizens, restrict freedoms, and even resort to violating the people’s rights.

All of the above represents a general description of the political understanding and logic of the politicians today. These negative aspects explained above are the reason why some **Westerners see politics as the most vulgar form of intellectual activity or some individuals**

like Said Nursi or Muhammad Abduh to seek refuge in Allah from politics. Now, let’s take a look at how today’s political science and Machiavellian thought break politics away from morals.

Modern Political Science

Politics, which was seen as a matter of religion, morals, and philosophy and subjected to different opinions in classical times, has become an independent science on its own in the last century. Scholars, who were engaged in religion, morals, and philosophy, focused on the ethical judgments and normative statements that politics should possess and worked on the description of the ideal politics. In other words, they tried to direct and limit statesmen with the values and principles they presented regarding the nature and quality of politics.

Politics was redefined and reshaped according to John Locke and David Hume’s empiricism and Auguste Comte’s positivism after being accepted as a science. Just like the other sciences, politics was also isolated from values and judgments that was regarded as subjective in nature; thus it was subjected to be described with objective, consistent, and verifiable facts. **Political scientists put the theories, utopias, opinions, and beliefs aside and predicated the facts upon politics; they carried out their analyses and syntheses through observable behaviors. Therefore, the metaphysical explanations, beliefs, and moral principles on how to perform practical politics were explicitly rejected.**

Significant steps were taken towards changing politics into a scientific discipline in modern times and important data was put forward in order to define social events. But on the other hand, the studies conducted in order to examine the existing political systems, and define the attitude and behaviors of the politicians were more likely about legitimizing the status quo. These did not have any efforts towards identifying or solving the problems about the way the

politicians performed politics, neither did they have any objectives as such.

As a result, politics was isolated from religion and morals in modern times. Religion and politics or morals or politics were tried to be separated from each other with regards to their sources, natures, and objectives. It was asserted that politics had its own principles and rules different than religion and morals. Therefore, the idea that suggested these should not be mixed together and each of them should be left to their competent ones became prominent. As a matter of fact, it is also possible to state that politics generally overrode religion and morals and subjugated them under control.

Machiavelli's Political Theory

In fact, scientification and separation from metaphysics of the notion of politics started with Machiavelli who died in 1527. In his book titled "The Prince", he focused on realpolitik and developed a sense of politics that knew no boundaries outside of success and power, put the purpose and existence of state above everything else, legitimated all means for achieving the goals, transformed individuals and societies into a tool of the political power, and he paved the way for the emergence of realistic political theory and modern state with these ideas. The following statement of Machiavelli is a succinct summary of Machiavellism which sees all means legitimate for achieving results: "Everyone sees how you appear, few touch what you are; and these few dare not oppose the opinion of many, who have the majesty of the state do defend them; and in the actions of all men, and

especially of princes, where there is no court to appeal to, one looks to the end." (The Prince, p. 72)

According to Machiavelli, the head of state cannot limit himself to some moral and religious principles such as honesty, loyalty, fidelity, and generosity. On the contrary, he does whatever is necessary under the current circumstances. Briefly stated by Machiavelli, the head of state must bear a spirit that is accustomed to fluctuating according to the winds of fortune and change of conditions. If the moral principles are convenient towards achieving political goals and carrying out state affairs; he benefits from them, but if they are not; he rejects them. As can be understood from the following statement of Machiavelli, the religious and moral principles do not have any actual value; these can only act as a tool at most in order to reach the goals or protect the power: "This has to be understood: that a prince, and especially a new prince, cannot observe all those things for which men are held good, since he is often under a necessity, to maintain his state, of acting against faith, against charity, against humanity, against religion." (The Prince, p. 70)

If the head of state must resort to force, cheating, killing those who harm, neutralizing opponents, carrying out evil and persecution, he should not avoid doing these binding to any moral concerns. Machiavelli says the following: "Nonetheless, he should be slow to believe and to move, nor should he make himself feared, and he should proceed in a temperate mode with prudence and humanity so that too much confidence does not make him incautious and too much diffidence does not render him intolerable." (The Prince, p. 66)

A prudent lord, therefore, cannot observe faith, nor should he, when such observance turns against him, and the causes that made him promise have been eliminated. And if all men were good, this teaching would not be good; but because they are wicked and do not observe faith with you, you also do not have to observe it with them. Nor does a prince ever lack legitimate causes to color his failure to observe faith.

One could give infinite modern examples of this, and show how many peace treaties and promises have been rendered invalid and vain through the infidelity of princes, and the one who has known best how to use the fox has come out best” (p. 70-71)

According to Machiavelli, the important thing for the head of state is to show himself to the people as an honest and moral person; not practically be like that. He must try to gain fame by creating a highly intelligent and skillful great person image with every single action he carries out, and establish a reputation by undertaking large enterprises; giving rare examples of goodwill he performs in the eyes of the people. (p 89-91) However, in order for the head of state to receive the love and trust of the people, even though he could manage to show that he has superior moral virtues; he should actually do the contrary. For example, Machiavelli explains that the ruler must be like a fox in order to recognize the traps in front of him, and be like a lion just to scare the wolves away; but on the other hand, he states that he must conceal this nature of his thoroughly, hide his thoughts and appear to his people differently. (p. 69-70)

In other words, the ruler should look as if he is good, but not act like one. For example, it would not be right for him to remain true to his word in a place where his interests require him to lie. He explains this idea with the following words: “Nay, I dare say this, that by having them and always observing them, they are harmful; and by appearing to have them, they are useful, as it is to appear merciful, faithful, humane, honest, and religious, and to be so; but to remain with a spirit built so that, if you need not to be those things, you are able and know how to change to the contrary.” (p. 71)

Machiavelli also pointed out that it is also important for the head of state to show himself as a religious person: “And nothing is more necessary to appear to

have than all religion. Men in general judge more by their eyes than by their hands, because seeing is given to everyone, touching to few. Everyone sees how you appear, few touch what you are; and these few dare not oppose the opinion of many, who have the majesty of the state to defend them.” (p. 70-71)

Machiavelli, who claims that man has an inherently bad and selfish nature, thought that a non-pragmatist and non-selfish head of state could not perform successful politics. He states: “For it is so far from how one lives to how one should live that he who lets go of what is done for what should be done learns his ruin rather than his preservation. For a man who wants to make a profession of good in all regards must come to ruin among so many who are not good. Hence it is necessary to a prince, if he wants to maintain himself, to learn to be able not to be good, and to use this and not use it according to necessity.” (p. 61)

If we observe the following words of Machiavelli, it seems like the cruel political motto “reinforcing power by destroying artificial enemies”, which is embraced and resorted to frequently by many dictators who have lived in the near future or still living, is inherited from him: “ Therefore many judge that a wise prince, when he has the opportunity for it, should astutely nourish some enmity so that when he has crushed it, his greatness emerges the more from it.” (p. 85)

Machiavelli created a new “mind of the state” that has its own realities with his approaches. And the rulers part is not to limit himself with any kind of religious or moral rules except “the exalted interests of the state”. Because it is above all values and principles. Its limitation to a number of moral standards would damage his power and the exalted interests of the state.

Without a doubt, there have been theoreticians who objected to the strict application of the methods in science to be replicated in social sciences and also the isolation of politics from morality. As we come closer to our present day, studies on the relationship between politics, religion, morality, and law have started to increase. Seeing how politics is identified with power and interest, degenerated, and detached from moral principles day by day, some researchers have started to search for clean politics again, and once again began to focus on the relationship between politics and morality.

To be continued.

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