

ME peace: The road map is fundamentally flawed

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In a series of American initiatives to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflicts, the latest is the so-called road map to peace. The map is said to have been drawn up by the quartet of UN, EU, Russia and the US.

thrown at Arab leaders, who were not easily pliable, is nothing new. The European imperialists have used such languages against many Arab leaders during the days of their scheming and manoeuvring to occupy Arab lands after the defeat of Ottoman Turkey in the First World War.

which the occupiers carry out at will murder, search and arrests. They demolish houses and the existing Palestinian infrastructures, including the security infrastructure that was allowed them. They know that Arafat is in no position to offer a 100 per cent guarantee of non-violence so long as the occupation and colonisation of the territories continue and that he cannot demolish the so-called terrorist infrastructures without provoking a Palestinian civil war.

democracy, freedom and justice were "complicit in history's biggest fraud that resulted in the Israeli state being set up" by snatching away the Palestinian homeland as Mr. Naqvi, has pointed out (DS 2 Oct). They find Israel as the only democratic outpost in the Middle East and are now set to establish more, which would uphold their "values" and of course protect their "national interests".

tion to those who were evicted more than fifty years ago. Instead of seriously addressing any of them, the American peace plans keep insisting on guaranteeing security to Israel by a Palestinian non-entirety. The issues are left to the parties to negotiate knowing fully well the Israeli reluctance to negotiate them.

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possess weapons, no right to resist repression; their only right seems to be to submit meekly to occupation and all that goes with it and is forgotten as they were until the rise of Intefada.

America sees nothing in the frustration and despair of the Palestinians as a result of the continued brutal repression under occupation and denial of their right to freedom. America sees nothing in the imprisonment of Yasser Arafat, the leader of the Palestinian people. America vetoes resolutions asking Israel to desist from exiling or assassinating Arafat and condemning the construction of a so-called security wall through the Palestinian territories which amounts to further land grab and isolation of Palestinian communities from one another.

The UN Security Council resolution 242 could provide a solution a long time ago. Israel however rejects the UN's resolutions and its negotiating role, for which it is not punished as others are. Israel accepts only American mediation offers -- an America that sees no wrong in whatever Israel does and everything wrong in what the Palestinians do... A road map with hardly any clear direction and destination, drawn up by such an 'impartial' cartographer can only lead to nowhere.

America, the principal peace-maker-author of the road map, vetoed a resolution in the UN Security Council against the execution of the threat to Arafat, to block its passage. America has fully backed the Israeli demand to set aside Arafat. In his place should be found a pliable leader or set of leaders who would submit to coercion or be lured by bribery with some crumbs of power or lumps of money.

with exile or elimination for not doing what he is asked to do and is incapable of doing. Yasser Arafat ran into this predicament by agreeing to be such a municipal chairman in the hope of eventually being able to establish a mini-Palestinian state on the Gaza strip and the West Bank under the Oslo process. It serves well the Israeli purpose of continued occupation, colonization and eviction of Palestinians on the pretext that the Palestinian Authority fails to guarantee 100 per cent security to Israel.

than a democracy, few answers could probably be found.

The Palestinians are now pinning their hopes for a living space on the 20 per cent of their ancestral land that Israel lately occupied. Israel has not only occupied the land but has been colonising it with the not so concealed intention of driving away the Palestinians or submitting to virtual slavery those who refuse to leave. That is the grand design to establish Greater Israel on the so-called 'Promised Land' only for the Jews.

others are. Israel accepts only American mediation offers -- an America that sees no wrong in whatever Israel does and everything wrong in what the Palestinians do. America cries in pain when a young Palestinian woman sacrifices herself by detonating a bomb in Haifa in revenge for Israelis killing her brothers and cousins. America sees nothing in daily killings, arrests, humiliations, tortures, bombing and destruction of homes and refugee camps of the Palestinians, and even an attack on a third country, or sees in them Israel's exercise of the right to self-defence. Palestinians have no right to defence, no right to buy or

Lest we forget

Mohon Mia

A politician of exceptional qualities

ENAMUL HAQ

In remembering Yusuf Ali Chowdhury, popularly known as Mohon Mia, one is sure to be struck by the fact that since his death on 26 November 1971 at the age of 66 there has not appeared in our political scene another king maker totally devoid of any greed for office or profit.



Mohon Mia was born in an aristocrat zamindar family of Faridpur and became well-known for philanthropy and promotion of education among the Muslims who suffered many disadvantages due to their backwardness. Among many educational institutions he founded were Maizuddin High School and Halima Girls' School to commemorate his parents.

He was a democrat per se and never discriminated against people on social or religious grounds. In the 1940s he succeeded in keeping Faridpur free from communal disharmony although the rest of British India suffered worst kind of communal violence.

Another unique institution set up by Mohon Mia in 1945 was Baitul Aman on the outskirts of Faridpur town. For this multipurpose agricultural, industrial and educational project Mohon Mia donated large tract of land. The primary purpose of this pioneering project has been to train up students in technology and craft to stand on their own feet and set examples of self-supportive initiatives in income generation and social welfare.

Mohon Mia entered national politics under the leadership of Sher-e-Bangla A K Fazlul Huq as a member of the Krishak Praja Party. Following the election of 1937 Fazlul Huq formed the government in Bengal in coalition with the Muslim League. But when in 1941 Fazlul Huq severed his ties with the Muslim League Mohon Mia stayed on in the League and played a significant role in the party. From 1940 to 1957 he was the general secretary of the Faridpur Muslim League.

He demonstrated similar vision and initiative as a distinguished chairman of the Faridpur District Board for fifteen years. He initiated many projects to promote education, facilitate communication and provide health services to the people. The people of greater Faridpur remember him as an incorruptible person always ready to spend money from his own resources to advance a good cause of public welfare.

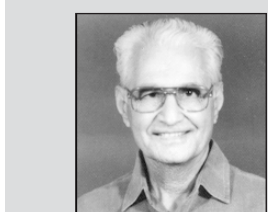
Mohon Mia did not see the formal birth of Bangladesh but the intensity of the liberation war convinced him beyond doubt that the emergence of an independent state was imminent. This was so specially after his ceaseless efforts failed to arrange transfer of power to the majority party Awami League following its landslide victory in the 1970s elections. It became clear to him that the military rulers of Pakistan were prepared to dismember their country rather than share power with the majority people of the eastern wing.

It was a very accessible and amiable person and never hesitated to help the needy. In fact, his open handedness in supporting worthy political and other causes at times put him in financial crisis. In running his zamindari he was most humane to the tenants and broke the tradition of other zamindars by allowing them to approach him as

I knew Mohon Mia well and used to meet him often in Karachi when he went there to attend the parliament sessions. He knew I was from Faridpur and had lived in the Halima Students' Home as a scholar. I wish we had many more dedicated and honest personalities like him to lift Bangladesh out of today's decadence.

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What should minorities do



M B NAQVI writes from Karachi

FOR minorities, including smaller sects of Islam, should not organise themselves communally. Instead of being protected, they may only help set up a cycle of revenge violence. Their best chance lies in the liberals in the given majority being mobilised for promoting tolerance and peaceful conditions. Counter violence, in the name of either defence (deterrence) or revenge is to step on a slippery slope, which is sure to promote even greater counter mobilisation by the majority.

no doubt more Shias have died in sectarian violence than Sunnis. Suppressing the Shias had not had any organisation for avenging their losses, what would be the situation? True, Shias would still have suffered losses, in the dead and maimed but the total on both sides, would have been less. By the same token, panic and losses among Shias would have been smaller.

as an undifferentiated mass of united people who will always make trouble). More schools of thought will come into being with time. Isn't this true of the Pakistani majority? Aren't there many opinions among Sunni majority about treating the minority sects among Muslims?

These are however might-have-beens of history. They have no direct relevance. India was partitioned, hopefully finally for the benefit of all its parts. Let us try and make Pakistan a success in terms of human freedoms and popular welfare. But Pakistan inherited the blight of a hollow militaristic mind that is moved by a shallow, indeed bogus, pan-Islamic sentiment. The result is the curse of military rule; power balance among political groups is heavily tilted in favour of the military. So it pre-empted democracy and thus subordinates human rights and popular welfare to its own needs and preferences.

human beings, qua human beings, over every other value. Guarantees for freedom, primarily of faith and opinions are implicit in humanistic value. In other words, it presupposes a democracy that does not discriminate in favour of any particular faith or opinion or against any religion or sect or parties. For ensuring social peace and solidarity for all Pakistanis, the basic requirement is to make Pakistan strong through unity of all truly secular approach is vitally needed.

ian distinctions. But can the JUI, JUP, JI or other MMA members do the same? Mufti Mahmud's idea of Islamic State was the enforcement of Shariah as defined by his Hanafi school of thought. For JUP enforcement of 500 fatwas, the Fatwa-i-Alamgiri, plus the acceptance of actual rites and practices of Indian Islam constituted the implementation of Nizam-i-Mustafa.

Advertisement for Dr. Rubaiul Murshed with text 'HAVE A NICE DAY' and a portrait of the doctor.

All health information to keep you up to date

Please get your Blood Pressure checked

High Blood pressure (hypertension) is indeed a 'silent slayer' or killer. As it is usually asymptomatic, it is sensible to check your blood pressure (BP) routinely. And if you have headaches, blurred vision, feel dizzy or sleep disturbances, a thorough screening is essential. Many young men and women are suffering from high blood pressure these days in Bangladesh (probably mostly in the cities) along with aged people. According to some medicine specialists, "only half of the affected have been identified; only half of the identified have been managed, and only half of those are satisfactorily treated."

Study reveals that high blood pressure speeds up the formation of fatty acids in the arteries, and puts the heart under additional damage. Our heart is the vehicle that drives us through existence. Chances of angina or heart attack add to three-fold in cases of hypertension (high BP) people.

What does BP mean?

Blood Pressure is the pressure of blood flow. Heart endlessly pumps blood through blood vessels to different parts of the body. The flow produces pressure against the vessel walls. Blood Pressure is a measure of this pressure. This value is affected by an innumerable of factors, the more important being the condition of one's heart and arteries. Arteries that are clogged affect the flow of blood circulation and limit the amount of blood to heart, following in strokes or heart attacks.

How is BP properly measured?

BP measurements are indicated by two numbers, e.g., 140/90 mmHg, 120/80 mmHg. The higher number is the systolic blood pressure (top value) and is the pressure in the arteries when the heart is pumping blood. The other number indicates the diastolic blood pressure (bottom value) and measures the lower pressure when the heart is at rest between beats.

But remember, one or two readings may not indicate the true blood pressure. By taking regular readings at a predetermined time each day, you will be alerted with any irregularities and early precautionary action can be taken against potential health problems. The World Health Organization has set a classification or standard by which blood pressure, whether systolic or diastolic, is compared. This helps to decide whether your pressure readings are considered high or low. Then again, for children the numbers are different; and special tables are obtainable with child specialists.

Did you know?

No BP drugs or medicine can help (a hypertensive) if not accompanied by healthy eating habits and regular exercise. Don't forget, if you would like some more advice, pop into your local clinic/health centre/hospital and talk to the doctor.

PLAIN WORDS

Muslims are divided in over a hundred sects. Each sect believes it is the true and the only Islam there is. In matters of faith no compromise is possible. Think of the consequences of religious leaders making politics the means of acquiring more support, influence, money and eventually power...But once sectarian passions flare up, the next steps will be Somalia or Bosnia. Do we want that?

the Muslims would surely have been far greater, even if many Hindus might also have suffered. In Pakistan, this temptation for defensive communal mobilisation is pointless for religious minorities like Hindus and Christians; they are too far to register on the majority's radar. Sectarian minorities have occupied the place of religious minorities. Majority community takes out its accumulated spleen on the sectarian communities.

discriminated against. Undivided India would have offered more opportunities for development. Despite the short sightedness of Congress leadership and its hatred for Qaid-i-Azam, there were many schools of thought, among them, i.e. leftists of various hues who were genuinely non-communals who were keen to eradicate the poverty of all Indians, Hindus and Muslims alike. Moreover, there were many Hindus who shared a lot of cultural traits with Punjabi and Urdu speaking Muslims, as was the case in Bengal and Bihar.

part of the larger phenomenon of intolerance, especially over religious matters. It won't go away until people learn to be tolerant of differing views and faiths of other communities, groups or parties. Rationalist attitude of tolerance of the other viewpoint and resolving differences through reasonable argumentation is needed. Religious intolerance against Hindus, Christians, Parsis and others is a kin of sectarianism and all such phenomena stand or fall together. So, if sectarianism is to be exterminated, people will need a society and state that tolerate all faiths, views and groups. In other words, State should promote a tolerant and democratic society.

ulema's 22 demands before Khwaja Nazimuddin in early 1950s, these have gone wrong. Each time a constitution was made in 1954, 1956, 1962, 1973, or 1979 in the case of abortive one of 19th December 1971 by General Yahya Khan -- major ulema had expressed satisfaction over its Islamic provisions adequately. Even in 1971 case, Yahya Khan shared the details of his constitution to the then JI chief, who termed it was adequately Islamic. The same was true in the case of 1973 Constitution. Maulanas Mufti Mahmud, Shah Ahmed Noorani and JI's Professor Ghafoor Ahmad signed it. Even so, they agreed with Zia that scope for more Islamisation exists.

Moreover, further efforts to Islamise Pakistan will stoke the fires of sectarianism among Muslims even, if non-Muslims get ignored. The ulema have achieved one thing: the undifferentiated Muslim of Sir Syed, Iqbal and Jinnah has been killed. For them a Muslim was either a Deobandi kind of Sunni or a Bareilvi type of Sunni or sympathiser of JI or a Shia or Ahmadi or Bohra or Agha Khani or Zikri or Ahle Hadis. This sectarianism is a natural product of the efforts to capture power by orthodox leaders.

Historically too, it is about time to assess what the Muslim community lost and gained from the partition of the Sub-continent, the result of excessive communal frenzy on both sides, involving world's largest ethnic cleansing to date. The Muslims thinking they would never get a fair deal from the Hindu majority forced the issue. As is peculiar to all communalisms, the Muslim League had taken the vast body of Hindus as one undifferentiated unit that would, for all time to come, take just one (hostile and unfair) view and oppress the Muslims. Like any majority Hindu comprised many schools and had their full share of communalists (who took the Muslims

Opportunities for Muslims would have been incomparably greater in an undivided India; without their substantial support no government could run in Delhi. The very Hindus, who frightened the Muslim League so much had to be politically divided, and this would have needed their votes. How long could the communalist politicians deny benefits to the voter? Only thing that would have made for fair play and justice for all was democracy. And there could be no chance for a non-democratic government in India then and now.

There are prerequisites of social peace and harmony: a pluralist society cannot be achieved unless it is embedded in human rights that are truly respected -- of all men and women, Muslims or non-Muslims. Only in such a society can Shias, Sunnis, Ahle Haddis, Daudi Bohras, Aga Khanis, Zikris, and Ahmadis can happily co-exist and make progress together. Such a society, to repeat, has to recognise the supremacy of and respect for,

An Islamic dispensation obviously presupposes two things: All Muslims must have no differences over what is Islam or on its rights and obligations for different Muslims and of course non-Muslims. Well, there happens to be no homogenised, simple Muslims; what is to be found, and thanks to ulema as a class, a Sunni Muslim, a Shia Muslim, an Ahmadi or Zikri Muslim. Iqbal, Jinnah or Sir Syed could ignore sectarian



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