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Thought for the Month

And verily the Hour will come:
 There can be no doubt
 About it, or about (the fact)
 That Allah will raise up
 All who are in the graves.
 Yet there is among men
 Such a one as disputes
 About Allah, without knowledge,
 Without guidance, and without
 A Book of Enlightenment,
 (Disdainfully) bending his side,
 In order to lead (men) astray
 From the Path of Allah:
 For him there is disgrace
 In this life, and on the Day
 Of Judgment We shall
 Make him taste the chastisement
 Of burning (Fire).

Al-Quran- 22: 7-9

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FOCUS

Listen carefully, brothers, to the point I am making. It is essential to understand that to remain in possession of, or to be deprived of, the greatest gift of Allah – for which you are so overwhelmed with gratitude – depends primarily on knowledge. Without knowledge, you cannot truly receive His gift of Islam. If your knowledge is so little that you receive only a small portion of it, then you will constantly run the risk of losing even that part of the magnificent gift which you have received unless you remain vigilant in your fight against ignorance.

A person who is totally unaware of the difference between Islam and Kufr (rejection of God's guidance and ingratitude) and the incongruity between Islam and *Shirk* (taking gods besides God) is like someone walking along a track in complete darkness. Most likely his steps will wander aside or on to another path without him being aware of what is happening. Maybe he will be deceived by the sweet words of the Devil, 'You have lost your way in the darkness. Come, let me lead you to your destination.' The poor traveller, not being able to see with his own eyes which is the right path, will grasp the Devil's hand and be led astray. He faces these dangers because he himself does not possess any light and is therefore unable to observe the road signs. If he had light, he would neither lose his way nor be led astray.

The example shows that your greatest danger lies in your ignorance of Islamic teachings and in your unawareness of what the Qur'an teaches and what guidance has been given by the Prophet, blessings and peace be on him. But if you are blessed with the light of knowledge you will be able to see plainly the clear path of Islam at every step of your lives. You will also be able to identify and avoid the false paths of Kufr, *Shirk* and immorality which may cross it. And, whenever a false guide meets you on the way, a few words with him will quickly establish that he is not a guide who should be followed.

Brothers! On this knowledge, whose absolute necessity I stress once again, depends whether you and your children are true Muslims and remain true Muslims. It is therefore hardly a trivial matter to be neglected. You do not neglect cultivating your land, irrigating and protecting your crops, supplying fodder to your cattle or doing whatever else is essential to the well-being of your trades and professions. Because you know that if you do you will starve to death and so lose the precious gift of life. Why then should you be negligent in acquiring that knowledge on which depends whether you become Muslims and remain Muslims? Does such negligence not entail the danger of losing an even more precious gift – your Iman (faith)? Is not Iman more precious than life itself? Most of your time and labour is spent on things which sustain your physical existence in this life. Why can you not spend even a tenth part of your time and energy on things which are necessary to protect your Iman, which only can sustain your being in the present life and in the life to come?

From *Let Us Be Muslim* by Sayyid Abul A'la Mawdudi, pp. 50-52.

Activities of the IOS Headquarters

GC Meet

The 60th meeting of the Governing Council (G.C.) was held on 05.08.2016 at 10:30 a.m. in the Conference Hall of the IOS, 162, Jogabai Main Road, Jamia Nagar, New Delhi-110025. The following were present:

1. Dr. M. Manzoor Alam in the Chair
2. Prof. Z.M. Khan Secretary General
3. Prof. M. A. Wani Asstt. Secretary General
4. Prof. Ishtiyaque Danish Finance Secretary
5. Dr. Major Zahid Husain Member
6. Prof. Mohsin Usmani
7. Prof. Manzoor Ahmad
8. Mr. Mohammad Alam
9. Prof. (Ms.) Haseena Hashia
10. Prof. Shamim A. Ansari
11. Prof. Eqbal Hussain
12. Prof. Sanghasen Singh
13. Ml. Ateeq A. Bastavi
14. Dr. Kaleem Alam
15. Mr. V. B. Rawat
16. Mr. Jameel A. Milansar

The programme started with recitation of verses from the Holy Qur'an. Thereafter condolence resolutions were adopted for the departed souls who were related with the IOS in one or another way.

Before taking up the main agenda items and starting the business, Dr. M. Manzoor Alam, Chairman, IOS welcomed the members and special invitees. He emphasised that we should work with full wisdom and vigour for the betterment of the Muslim community, the nation and humanity.

While considering the follow-up report the GC took the following decisions:

- The National Seminar on **“Importance of Inter-Religious Understanding: Its Implications for Mankind”** will be organised at Bodhgaya (Bihar) by the IOS in collaboration with the Department

of Buddhist Studies and Directorate of Distance Education of Magadh University, Bodhgaya on **September 24-25, 2016.**

- The National Seminar on **“Minority Rights and Constitutional Safeguards: The Role of State”** will be organised by the IOS at **Kolkata on October 22-23, 2016.**
- The International Seminar on **“The Legacy of Muhammad Hamidullah and its Contemporary Relevance”** will

The GC “Resolved to apply for Special Assistance by the Islamic Development Bank, Jeddah (KSA) for Capacity Building and Infrastructure Development of the Institute of Objective Studies (IOS), New Delhi and authorises the Administrative Officer of the IOS to sign all documents in this regard.”

The progress report of the revision of the Research Themes was presented before the G.C. The GC felt that the progress of the revision is very slow and hence the Chairman, IOS requested the members of the G.C. and

special invitees to add the themes & sub-themes in their subjects.

The matter in regard to organise the 30th

Anniversary Celebration

Programmes of the IOS was discussed in length and after deliberations it was unanimously resolved to hold only the **Inaugural Session at New Delhi on November 05, 2016.**



A view of the G.C. meeting

be organised by the IOS on **February 18-19, 2017 at New Delhi.**

The GC considered the 30th Annual Report of the IOS (along with its Executive Summary) for the year 2015-2016 and recommended to the General Assembly (G.A.) of the IOS for its approval.

The Audited Financial Report of the Institute for the year 2014-2015 (assessment year 2015-2016) was considered and recommended to the General Assembly (G.A.) of the Institute of Objective Studies (IOS) for its approval.

Further, the different Chapters of the IOS in various parts of the country (i.e at Aligarh, Calicut, Chennai, Kolkata and Patna) would organise the programmes marking the 30th Anniversary of the IOS.

After going through the progress report (wherein it was mentioned that two manuscripts entitled *“Women Empowerment: Paradigms and Strategies”* and *“Indo-ASEAN Relations: A Historical Contemporary Perspective (Trade & Investment)”* were sent to Press for printing, while the manuscript entitled *“Islamic Finance and Venture Capital”* was being revised as per expert’s opinion), the G.C. members and special invitees

expressed their satisfaction. However, for remaining volumes, it was desired that reminders should be sent and strongly followed so that these volumes may also be completed.

The G.C. members and special invitees expressed their satisfaction on completion of various projects.

The progress report of the project, 14 Centuries of a Glorious Legacy was presented before the members of Governing Council with the information by Prof. Mohsin Usmani (Project Director) that about 400 personalities on various disciplines have been identified till now and that the identification of other personalities is going on and it is expected that this project will be completed by the end of 2017. The members of G.C. and special invitees expressed their satisfaction.

After going through the progress report of the project, Allah hi ka Kalima buland hai, the members expressed their satisfaction. Further, taking in view the necessity and importance of this project it was emphasised that all efforts should be made to complete it at the earliest.

Two text books on “*Introduction to Sociology: An Islamic Perspective*” and “*Sociology in Islamic Perspective - Selected Readings*” written by Prof. A.R. Momin have been sent to Press for printing.

The book entitled “*Muslim Women’s Rights enshrined in the Holy Qur’an and the Indian Constitution*” written by Dr. Suraiya Tabassum Rehman is in the final stage. The same will be sent to Press for printing at the earliest.

The Chairman, IOS requested the members and special invitees to come forward for writing the text books on various subjects namely History, Political Science, Education, Economics and Law.

The progress report of the translation of IOS books as well as the translation, review and editing of IIT books was considered by the G.C.

members, who expressed their satisfaction.

In regard to the programmes organised by the IOS Headquarters during April, 2016 to July, 2016 a detailed report was presented before the Governing Council, which expressed its satisfaction on the same.

The report of the progress of work done in IOS Data Bank (from April, 2016 to July, 2016) was presented before the Governing Council, which expressed its satisfaction.

The report about the hits of IOS Website was presented and noted with appreciation.

The Chairman, IOS desired that the members of IOS should write at least two articles either in English or in Urdu every year to be uploaded on the IOS website under “*Current Affairs*” / “*Nuqta-e-Nazar*”.

In the end the Secretary General of the IOS, acknowledging the full cooperation and active support by all the members of the Governing Council (G.C.) and special invitees, thanked them.

The meeting concluded at 2:45 p.m. with *dua* by Prof. Mohsin Usmani.

GA Meet

The 30th Annual meeting of the General Assembly (G.A.) was held on 6&7.8.2016 at 10:30 a.m. in the Auditorium of the IOS, 162, Jogabai Main Road, Jamia Nagar, New Delhi-110025. Fifty six members and special invitees attended the meeting.

The meeting started with the recitation of verses from the Holy Qur’an by Prof. Mohsin Usmani. Thereafter condolence resolutions were adopted.

Before taking up the main agenda items and starting the business, Dr. M. Manzoor Alam, Chairman, IOS welcomed the members.

Then, Prof. Z. M. Khan, Secretary General of the IOS, on the occasion of 30th Annual Meeting of the General Assembly (G.A.) of the Institute of Objective Studies (IOS), presented in brief the performance of the Institute for the last 30 years since its inception.

Thereafter the main agenda of the meeting was taken up. Minutes of the previous meeting were confirmed.

The Follow-up Report (Action taken Report) on the last G.A. meeting dated 06.9.2015 was presented before the General Assembly (G.A.). The same was considered and after deliberations, got approved.

The 30th Annual Report of the IOS (along with its Executive Summary) for the year 2015-2016 was presented before the General Assembly (G.A.) of the Institute. The same was considered by the General Assembly (G.A.) of the IOS and approved.

The Audited Financial Report of the Institute for the year 2014-2015 (assessment year 2015-2016) was considered and approved by the General Assembly (G.A.) of the Institute of Objective Studies (IOS).

The following two books were released on the occasion

1. “*Fikr-e-Islami ka Irtaqa*” written by Dr. Ziauddin Falahi
2. “*Daee-e-Aazam ki Alamgir Nabuwat*” written by Prof. Tauqir Alam Falahi

Both the books were released jointly by Prof. Mohsin Usmani and Maulana. Ateeq Ahmad Bastavi.

The Chairman, IOS informed that:

- A short-term course on modern education and *Shariah* laws will be prepared for imparting it to madrasa students through distance mode. For this purpose a committee will be formed to examine the practical aspects and also the feasibility of this course.
- With a view to giving a fillip to the Qur’anic studies, all such centres where the emphasis is more on the

teaching of Qur'an, will be approached in connection with a national seminar, proposed to be organised in 2017.

- The syllabi taught in schools run and managed by the Muslims will be reviewed for the sake of its improvement.
- A lecture series on "Islamophobia" will be organised in various important cities of the country with a view to counter the derogatory and negative outlook against Islam and Muslims.

At the conclusion of agenda items of the General Assembly (G.A.), Prof.

Arshi Khan delivered a lecture on "*Republic of Turkey in the midst of crisis - Military coup or terrorism in uniform: An Overview*", which was followed by a lively discussion. The Secretary General of the IOS, congratulated Prof. Arshi Khan for delivering such a nice lecture.

The meeting was adjourned for *Zohar Salat* and lunch at 1:00 p.m.

At 2:30 p.m. a Workshop of the Members of IOS was organised to critically analyse the performance of the IOS during the last 30 years and prepare a blueprint for the next 10 years. A number of members participated in the workshop and presented their evaluative remarks. It was decided that on the basis of all the evaluative remarks the blueprint for the next 10 years will be prepared.

Then the meeting was adjourned at 4:00 p.m. for the next day (i.e. Sunday, the 7th August, 2016)

On **Sunday, the 7th August, 2016**, four parallel sessions of Symposium were organised at 11:30 a.m.

The first Symposium was on "*Islamic Studies in Contemporary Situation*"; the second was on "*Education in Contemporary Situation*"; the third was on "*History in Contemporary Situation*"; and the fourth was on "*Law in Contemporary Situation*".

All the present members of G.A. and special invitees participated in the symposium on the theme of their specialisation. All the four symposiums were concluded at 1:00 p.m.

After that a combined session of

The meeting got concluded at 2:30 p.m. with *dua*.

IOS Lecture on "Republic of Turkey in the midst of crisis-Military coup or terrorism in uniform: An Overview"

The Institute of Objective Studies organised a lecture on "Republic of Turkey in the midst of crisis-Military coup or terrorism in uniform: An Overview" on the occasion of the 30th Annual Meeting of its General Assembly at its conference hall on August 6, 2016. Delivering the lecture, Prof. Arshi Khan of the Department of Political Science, AMU, Aligarh



L-R: Prof. Z.M. Khan, Dr. M. Manzoor Alam, Prof. Arshi Khan and Prof. M. Afzal Wani

observed that the Republic of Turkey took its rebirth in a decisive form on July 15, 2016 to re-engage itself in nation-building process and restructuring the Turkish state for greater security, stability, development and peace. He said that the Turkish people witnessed a new kind of terrorism on the night of July 15 in different parts of the country when attempts were made to

capture or kill the Turkish president Recep Tayyip Erdogan and damage the state.

About one percent of the Turkish army was involved in the destructive attempt to overthrow the government, but the active, sincere and historic stand of the common people in the streets saved the republic from falling into an unending turmoil and chaos. He held that despite the success of the terrorists to capture power for a few hours through self-proclamation, the Turkish president appealed to the people to save the nation from the

the members and special invitees was organised and major decisions taken in all the four symposiums were presented, which was followed by a discussion.

Lastly the Chairman IOS gave his concluding remarks about the decisions taken in all the four symposiums.

In the end, the Secretary General of the IOS, acknowledging the full cooperation and active support by the members of General Assembly (G.A.) and special invitees, extended thanks to all of them.

plotters. People succeeded in restoring democracy, peace, stability and unity in the country. He held that this new type of terrorism cost the country men and material. He referred to the president's accusation of "mastermind" and "pawns", for the damage. But the Erdogan bashing of the West continued, he said.

Commenting on the age-old relations between India and Turkey, Prof. Khan said that it was Maulana Mohammad Ali Jauhar who led Indians' protest against the abolition of the Caliphate in 1923 and condemnation of the British action. Some political observers were of the opinion that Erdogan himself staged the coup in order to purge the armed forces, judiciary and the bureaucracy of the elements inimical to him who owed allegiance to the exiled leader, preacher and his ex-political ally, Fethullah Gulen, has been residing in the US. With a chain of schools he was spreading his ideas across the country. He held that the country had already experienced military coups in 1960, 1971 and 1980. The damage to the security establishment could be gauged from the fact that the police headquarters at the capital city of Ankara responsible for internal security was completely destroyed.

He said that the exemplary valour displayed by the people to save the country from instability was noteworthy. Turkey had some problem on its border with Syria where Islamic State's (IS) strong presence was causing concern. Similarly, its forces were engaged in skirmishes with Kurd rebels. Military confrontation with the Kurds had become a regular feature in Turkey. Despite all this, Turkey was recognised as a powerful and developing country, an important member of the NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organisation). Turkey housed NATO's 2.5 percent nuclear arms stockpiles. Relations between Russia and Turkey worsened following the shooting down of a Russian aircraft by the Turkish army. But with regret

expressed by Erdogan for the incident, relations between the two countries again normalised.

Prof. Khan also pointed to a conspiracy theory which said that the secretary to an influential army commander was behind the coup attempt who used to update his boss with every information. Erdogan had also made up his mind to take action against some of his partymen. It was also rumoured that the US army general Campbell was actively behind the abortive bid to overthrow Erdogan. He was said to be planning the coup for the last eight months and had definite information of whatever happened there on July 15, 2016 beforehand. Referring to the system of governance in Turkey, he said that modern Turkey was not an Islamic republic but a secular state where every community enjoyed religious freedom. This was perhaps due to Turkey's trade relationship with Europe. Germany being the largest trading partner of Turkey, half of its trade was done with Europe. According to Prof. Khan, Turkey had become more assertive after the failed coup. During cold war, Turkey assumed special interest among European countries as it worked as a shield against Communist onslaughts on Europe. He foresaw perceptible policy shift in several West Asian countries after the unsuccessful military coup. The notable feature of the coup, he said, was that all political parties of Turkey stood solidly behind Erdogan during the crisis.

Prof. Khan explained that the stability of Turkey mattered to the European countries most. Turkey had relations with Balkans, Caucasia, Macedonia, Caspian Sea area, etc., he concluded.

Earlier, the Asstt. Secretary General, IOS, Prof. M. Afzal Wani read out a message from the Turkish ambassador to India, Burak Akcapar, which read: "Turkish nation stands firmly behind its democratically

elected President, Parliament and Government. On the night of July 15th they have written a new chapter in history by facing tanks and aircraft and stopping a coup attempt. The coup plotters unleashed terror upon the Turkish people. They martyred over 200 citizens, mostly civilians, whose only weapon was their commitment to democratic Turkey, their courage and their faith.....I thank the Institute of Objective Studies and Mohammad Manzoor Alam Sahab for organising this important event. I send all organisers and participants my profound respect and warmest greetings and heartfelt gratitude for strong solidarity with Turkey".

In his presidential remarks, Chairman, IOS Dr. M. Manzoor Alam, while praising the democratic system of Turkey, said that the country was inhabited by many ethnic groups of Europe in complete harmony and in the spirit of brotherhood. People of German and Russian origin constituted a sizeable population among them, he added.

IOS organises "Consultative Meeting on New Education Policy"

The Institute of Objective Studies organised a Consultative Meeting on New Education Policy on August 9, 2016 at Nehru House, Jamia Millia Islamia. Initiating the discussion, the Secretary General, IOS, Prof. ZM Khan, highlighted the main points in the new education policy and said that the Preamble to the Indian Constitution spoke of secularism which could only be achieved through the process of secularisation. Education was a means of socialisation, though it had always been a state subject. Basic education required a lot of thinking as that was the very foundation on which the development of the faculties of children rested. He explained that higher education did not require much to be done as the students in higher portals of knowledge were left to fend for themselves. But what constituted a threat to education was the nationalist

agenda of right-wingers who, if not stopped, would inflict an irreparable damage on our polity. He said that the IOS was engaged in debating issues like education and social backwardness of the marginalised sections. The Institute had also taken care of regional identities and aspirations of people by undertaking their case studies. He said that the silver lining in an atmosphere of dependency was that the people in general were very tolerant.

The Vice-Chancellor of the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), Prof. M. Aslam, opined that the new education policy was not accessible to the majority of children. Besides, the quality of education was lacking. And an element of employability had been added to the proposed education policy. He warned that the information communication technology revolution had come to stay, leaving children at the mercy of IT. What was needed was a vision for the new education policy in order to make it more inclusive. Holding training of teachers as an important component of education, he said that the new education policy had not attached much importance to it. We must move ahead only after creating a vision for education that could be made available to all segments of society.

He also pleaded for making optimum utilisation of open and distance learning. Emphasising the need for more and more schools for the education of Muslim minorities, he said that they must be made productive members of society. Referring to the

Sachar Committee Report, he said that the main reason behind the backwardness of Muslims was lack of proper education among them. He asked the community leaders to take serious note of an army of unemployed that had been produced by unproductive education.

Prof. Shoaib Abdullah of the Faculty of Education, JMI, held that the new education policy was found wanting on several counts. While the Kothari Commission Report was comprehensive, the proposed education policy did not clearly spell out the purpose of education. All

main player. Thus education was being made subservient to the industry, he added.

Founder-director of the Institute of Harmony and Peace Studies, Dr. MD Thomas expressed concern that the new education policy did not address real concerns of life. It was not based on ground realities nor did it teach something serious. He said that education should conform to the values that formed part of the Preamble to the Constitution. Education was the collaborative effort of all communities, he noted.

National convener of the RTE Forum, Ambarish Rai, held that the new education policy was the third such policy after 1966. Commenting on the Kothari Commission Report, he said that it was all-pervading as it laid stress on national integration, which was so vital for the country's unity and integrity. He favoured a public-funded education system in which the government would have to play the socialisation role. Referring to the second education policy which was rolled out in 1986, he said that the period during the end of the eighties and beginning of the nineties saw a big bang in Indian economy. The second education policy which was reviewed in 1992, contained common school system and had provision for special groups. In 1993 the Supreme Court of India asked the government to provide education to the children who attained of age 14 years.

This finally led to the legal entitlement to education by way of the enactment of the Right to Education. The new law, he said, came into effect



L-R: Prof. M. Ishtiaq V.C. Magadh University, Prof. Z.M. Khan Secretary General, IOS, Dr. M. Manzoor Alam Chairman, IOS and Dr. M. Aslam, V.C. IGNU

previous education policies had sections like education of women and girl child, but the current policy lacked it. Similarly, no separate sections on Scheduled Castes and Muslims had been provided. The new education policy eclipsed the role of the government in the standardisation and spread of education in keeping with the changing times. The new policy was destined to lead to fall in the standard of education. Introduction of skill development and employability at such a tender age was a retrograde step. The new education policy, he said, was aimed at outsourcing in which the private sector would be the

on April 1, 2010. Terming the new education policy as futile since it was completely detached from society, he observed that such education failed to provide equal opportunities to all. Painting a grim picture of education, he said that education was not meant for providing only employment. In that respect the new education policy had faultlines. He took the government to task for making half-hearted commitment to education. While India did not have enough funds for education, the budget earmarked for it too was not fully utilised. Though the new education policy was unveiled in 2013, nothing substantial could come out till today. He regretted that the rate of drop-outs after class 8 had gone up to 60 per cent.

The new education policy was feared to create a child-labour pool. This policy also negated the contribution of minorities to our national ethos. Education was something greater than mere legal entitlement. Under the new education policy, teachers were supposed to do everything except the work related to education. He said that multinational companies were being invited to take part in a three trillion dollar education business. Nearly 92 percent of teachers would be trained by the private sector.

Almost one lakh government schools had closed and unless political mobilisation was made, more and more schools in rural areas would face closure. This had been necessitated by the merger of small schools with large ones. He warned that if the government withdrew from the scene schools run for the minorities and the Scheduled Castes would close as foreign companies were coming to construct low-cost schools.

Naaz Khair, an independent education activist, observed that the new education policy was IT-based. From teaching to governance and management, everything would be done by the IT, minimising, or rather ending the manual work. Commenting on the new education policy, she said

that it focused on life skills, vocational skills and employability.

This was preparatory to create a market economy in the education sector. She suggested that composite schools be opened in the areas dominated by tribals for better schooling of their children. Under the proposed policy, she said, teachers would play the role of a facilitator only. New education policy started with the references of Patanjali, Aryabhata, Charaka, Sushrta, etc. and suddenly came down to Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya and Mahatma Gandhi. In the policy, there was much stress on the teaching of Sanskrit and yoga. She pointed out that the new education policy was not inclusive.

The Secretary, Jamat-i-Islami Hind, Maulana Naeem Falahi, expressed concern that the coaching institutions, schools run and managed by multinational corporations and Saraswati Shishu Mandirs had mushroomed of late. The government had hastily drafted the new education policy which did not reflect true aspirations of the people. The ruling party at the Centre wanted the people to accept a particular ideology reflected in yoga, surya namaskar and Sanskrit. He said that the new policy was against our culture and identity. It saffronised the minds of our children on one hand and sent them to schools run by multinationals on the other, he added.

Assistant Prof., Deptt. of Education, JMI, Dr. Muzammil Husain Qasmi, alleged that the new education policy was being made market-friendly. This would make matters worse, especially for girl students, 90 to 100 percent of whom desisted from going to school located in another village. While madarsa education had been omitted, IT found a place in it. He opined that the IT-driven programmes would fail the very purpose of education.

President, Tasmia Educational Society, Syed Farooque held that

education had three components – art of expression, art of earning and the art of living. Unless all these three components were joined together, the very purpose of education was doomed to failure. Educational institutions should impart education without regard to caste and creed. Religion must not be used to discriminate against people, he said.

The Chairman of the IOS, Dr. Mohammad Manzoor Alam, in his presidential remarks announced the setting up of a three-member committee comprising Secretary General, IOS, Prof. ZM Khan, Vice-Chancellor of the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), Prof. M. Aslam, and National Convener of the RTE Forum, Ambarish Rai to take the suggestions from stakeholders till August 11 and meet on August 12 next to incorporate them in the representation to be forwarded to the Union Minister for Human Resource Development for consideration.

He informed that all the Members of Parliament belonging to secular parties would be sent copies of the suggestions in order to sensitise them on the educational plight of the minorities and other deprived sections of society. He regretted the tendency among MPs to first endorse such suggestions at individual level but take the party line later. He also announced that four large programmes, each in a big city in the north, south, east and west, would be organised in which young men, school teachers and intellectuals would be invited to participate and deliberate on the threat posed by the new education policy. He said that besides minds, pens needed to come together to give shape to new ideas. He warned that the present government might interfere with the Preamble to the Constitution by unilaterally foisting the new education policy.

Earlier, the meeting began after the recitation of a Quranic verse by Hafiz Nazeerul Hasan. Dr Nakhat Husain

Nadvi conducted the proceedings. The meeting was attended by a good number of academicians, social activists, university teachers and prominent citizens.

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The West's enormous air power destroyed Saddam's formidable army in less than two months. Over a decade later he was overthrown and Iraq was occupied by the US. Taking a lesson from the earlier British occupation of Iraq, the US decided to raise a weak Iraqi army. The result has been disastrous. The Islamic State in Iraq and Syria emerged mainly because of the weak Iraqi army and partisan sheite politics. For about or over a year the Americans, the Russians, the Iraqi and Syrian governments are bombing from the air but to no avail. ISIS is alive and kicking. People say and condemn that ISIS is an evil but no one is eager to know why and how this 'powerful evil' has emerged. The wrong American as well as Iraqi-Syrian policies are much to be blamed.

OPINION

Air Strikes are no Solution
by Ishtiyaque Danish

The views expressed in the article do not necessarily reflect the editorial policy of the Newsletter (editor)

The world changed drastically after the fall of Berlin Wall in 1989. A year later Soviet Union disintegrated. The US-led West celebrated the fall of Communism as a resounding triumph of Capitalism. A section of American intelligentsia began dreaming about making 21st century as American century. Soon it became the cornerstone of the US foreign policy.

The American joy was short-lived. In 2001 some terrorists highjacked passenger planes and hit a few targets including the twin World Trade Towers, the symbol of Capitalism. The US blamed it on Osama bin Ladin who was then in Afghanistan. Kabul was then ruled by Taliban and their government was probably recognized only by Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. Washington ordered Kabul to surrender Osama bin Ladin but the later asked for evidence. The Americans were outraged; they decided to bomb Afghanistan to ashes. They needed Pakistani support and when Islamabad suggested to opt for covert operation rather than attack Afghanistan, it was snubbed and ordered to fall in line. Seeing the American fury, Islamabad reluctantly allowed the former to use its space as well as land to attack its ally in Afghanistan. Soon the fragile Taliban regime was bombed out of existence as the so called Taliban army which

hardly had any air defence system realized that they were no match to the American air power.

The Americans got NATO as well as anti-Taliban forces on their side for a ground attack. All came and they quickly occupied Kabul and other big cities. But Taliban started gorilla warfare in which they were expert and countless hills of Afghanistan helped them a lot in their endeavours.

America under Bush Junior was a hard-headed country. They thought, after the fall of Taliban, that an invasion and occupation of Iraq will be in order. Except the British, then ruled by foolish and talkative Blair, no other significant country supported the US. Saddam was weak and his army was easily defeated.

As Afghanistan and Iraq had weak armies, the US occupied the two countries easily because of its superior military might. But an army can defeat an army; it can not necessarily conquer the country and its people. Both in Afghanistan and Iraq 'people' started gorilla warfare and soon it became a headache for the Americans. The Americans also realized, not gradually but quite soon, that occupying a country with weak army was easy but maintaining the occupation was difficult and costly.

Taking American army out of Afghanistan and Iraq was among those important factors that led to emergence and victory of Barak Obama in America. The gorillas in Iraq and Afghanistan were making America bleed economically, so Obama took the decision to gradually withdraw American ground forces from the two countries. He did not want America to go the Soviet Union way and there is no denying the fact that for the time being his decisions and actions have arrested the American decline.

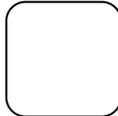
Bombing the opposition from the air has never solved any problems. It only brings temporary relief. In 1920 the Iraqis revolted against the British occupation of their country. Britain's Royal Air Force bombed the unarmed protesters and 'won the battle'. But neither the bombing nor their subsequent imperial policies succeeded in suppressing the rise of Iraqi military. First the pro-British Hashemite monarchy was overthrown in 1958 and within a decade Saddam Hussein acquired enormous power. Saddam's conflict with the US-led West is a well-known story.

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