

WORLD TIMES INSTITUTE

Battle for Karachi

It may not be mission impossible but is certainly a massive challenge to transform a battered megalopolis. It's not just the matter of fixing the basic civic infrastructure; it's also about the politics of it. While the trillion-rupee package announced by the prime minister last week marked the most serious move yet to address the chronic problems of the country's financial hub it has also intensified the battle for Karachi.

For the first time it seemed that all the stakeholders had joined hands in an effort to salvage the country's economic lifeline. Yet the political tussle between the federal and provincial government remains a major problem in the implementation of this ambitious project. Hours after the announcement of the package, the two sides were engaged in a bitter war of words over the ownership of the plan.

More than a conflict between the federal and provincial authorities, this wrangling underscores the battle between the PPP that rules Sindh and the PTI that sees itself as the sole representative of the city and thus wants to take credit for the Karachi transformation package.

It manifests the new political dynamics that emerged in the 2018 elections. The PTI, which hardly had any representation in the national and provincial legislative bodies from Karachi in the past, swept most of the seats in the city. It created a unique situation in which a party that is in power at the centre politically dominated the provincial seat of power. So the conflict was inherent in the new political matrix.

In the past, Karachi had been represented by the MQM, whose political base is restricted to urban Sindh. The party's overwhelming representation from Karachi and other Sindh cities would make it critical to any coalition government in the centre as well as in the province. It was the reason for the MQM being part of almost every government at the centre and in Sindh province for nearly three decades.

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With its disintegration, chiefly as a consequence of the crackdown by the security forces, the MQM lost its electoral support base in urban Sindh. The fast-changing demography of Karachi also contributed to the shrinking political space for the group that exclusively represented the Urdu-speaking population. The 2018 elections provided an ideal situation for the PTI, which claimed to have appeal across the ethnic divide.

With the split in MQM ranks and with a sympathetic security establishment behind it, the PTI unsurprisingly swept most of the seats in Karachi and emerged as the second largest party in the Sindh Assembly. Its electoral victory in the country's largest city put the party on a strong footing in provincial politics. This completely changed the political dynamics of the troubled province.

Being the government at the centre gave the party a heady sense of power. Karachi has huge representation in the federal cabinet, and the president also belongs to the city. The statements from the federal ministers and the PTI's provincial leadership are a clear manifestation of the power syndrome at play.

The MQM also being part of the coalition at the centre has enhanced the PTI's political clout in the city. This also explains the demand by some PTI lawmakers for imposition of federal rule in the province. But anyone with even a little political sense knows that such a move would invite a serious political backlash.

Meanwhile, with the PPP having lost its position as one of the major national parties and virtually reduced to rural Sindh, matters have become more difficult for the provincial government. Although it still enjoys autonomy under the 18th Amendment, its lack of effective control over Karachi has weakened its authority.

The situation has become more complex with the virtual collapse of even basic civic facilities in Karachi. The havoc wreaked by the recent torrential rains has further eroded whatever support base the party has in the urban areas. The Sindh government faces a serious dilemma: while it badly needs federal help to deal with the worsening urban crisis, it is also apprehensive of the increasing role of the federal government in the affairs of the city.

This predicament is reflected in the statements of the PPP leaders claiming that the provincial government is the major stakeholder in the efforts to transform Karachi. The ongoing stand-off between the provincial and federal ministers over their

respective shares of resources in the project is part of political one-upmanship. What makes the Karachi situation more complex is the absence of an elected city administration that is fully responsible for providing basic civic amenities.

A large chunk of the financial package is allocated for cleaning the city, improving public transport and developing infrastructure. But for managing a city of over 20 million people, there is need for an empowered city government. It's not clear when the local government elections would be held in the province. But whenever that happens, there is no likelihood of any one political party getting control of the city.

While the PTI has been able to sweep the general elections, the dynamics of the local government are completely different. Despite its overwhelming representation from the city in parliament, it does not seem to have the kind of grassroots-level organisation required for success in local-level elections. It was evident in the last local government polls when the party failed to make any significant inroads. Interestingly, despite its erosion, the MQM still has the grassroots base that could allow it to maintain a significant presence at least in local politics.

Notwithstanding the war of words between the two parties, the project is most likely to go ahead with the security establishment assuming the role of arbiter. It's also not in the interest of any party that the plan to uplift the city be derailed because of infighting. Yet complete implementation on the transformation plan require the two sides to act more prudently by putting aside their vested interests. This is a rare opportunity to fix things in the country's economic engine.

By: Zahid Hussain

Source: DAWN

The writer is an author and journalist.

Diriliş: Osmanlı

On August 21, President Erdogan announced that his country had achieved a milestone by discovering the largest natural gas reserves (320 billion cubic meters) in Turkish history. Any hopes that the discovery might relieve tensions between Turkey and Greece were stymied when both countries resumed military pressure tactics. Greece believes Turkey is illegally drilling in the Mediterranean, while Turkey asserts that the area is very much under its economic jurisdiction.

Suffice to say, along the 600-kilometre stretch of the Mediterranean, Turkey has now become a regional magnate. It soon also seeks to become an energy hub through the Trans-Anatolian pipeline, which connects the Shah Deniz gas field in Azerbaijan to Europe. The production of the recent discovery is anticipated to start by 2023 — which will mark the centennial birth of modern Turkey.

Every nation has a treasure cache of stories and narratives which are abstracted and referenced time and again. Illustrations can be seen in how the British build on their threads of royalty even today, while Koreans like to revisit their campaign of independence from Japan. For the Turks, Ottoman history has become the most popular recurrent theme, especially in the past decade.

The aftermath of the Arab Spring in 2011 witnessed a time lapse during which Western powers somewhat lost interest in the region. This provided Turkey vantage to be more regionally assertive — evidence of which can be realised from the Turkish military's extensive global footprint — the scale of which has not been since the days of the Ottoman empire.

Turkey is no newcomer in Middle Eastern geo-politics. After all, the Ottoman empire, ruled the region for 500 years. At the moment, Turkey is engaged in battles extending from Libya to Syria. In Syria, Turkey continues to safeguard the north-western areas still under its control where it is also carrying out rapid reconstruction. In northern Iraq, it is battling the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) which it holds accountable for carrying out terrorism in Turkey. President Erdogan has even offered safe haven to Yemen's President Hadi. In Libya, President Erdogan signed a deal with the UN-backed GNA government. Last year, in exchange for military support, Turkey and the General National Council demarcated maritime

boundaries and the latter accorded Turkey drilling rights in waters off Greek islands.

Turkey was finally recovering from its 2018-2019 currency crisis when Covid-19 struck. The pandemic brought a halt to Turkey's tourist industry and disrupted exports of its automobiles and other manufactured goods. The Turkish lira has lost about a fifth of its value against the dollar this year which although makes Turkish goods more attractive, does not balance out the cost of its imports. The IMF forecasts that the Turkish economy will contract by 5% in 2020, while the World Bank has set a benchmark for a 3.8% fall. At present, Turkey's unemployment rate is at over 13%.

Much has been scripted about President Erdogan's ambitions to revive Turkey's Ottoman days. His strong stance on issues pertaining to the Muslim world (such as Palestine and Kashmir) have already made him the most popular leader in the Muslim world. Despite a faltering economy, Turkey is slowly but surely, extending its influence beyond the Middle East. It has already paved ways into Africa. Here it has a military base in Mogadishu, Somalia and has promised to restore the Ottoman time buildings on the Sudanese island of Suakin. In South Asia, it is ready to work on CPEC projects in Pakistan. Ankara has also planned to launch its national space programme shortly. The world might very well see a cosmos version of Dirilis: Osmanlı (Resurrection of the Ottomans) in the near future.

By: Arhama Siddiq

Source: The Express Tribune

Competitions that will shape KTP

The Karachi Transformation Plan (KTP) is an impressive allocation of financial resources and top-line political will in favour of a transformed Karachi.

But very much like Pakistan's Covid-19 miracle, it may not be achievable without divine intervention. This does not mean Pakistanis should not be optimistic about its chances for success. It does mean that we should all be prepared for what is coming.

Let's first acknowledge the laudable aspects of the KTP. Rs1,100 billion is not small change, it is over \$6.5 billion. This is a remarkable financial envelope to commit to one city in the midst of a long-term economic crisis and a global system still reeling from Covid-19. The image of CM Murad Ali Shah sitting with PM Imran Khan to announce the KTP is also quite significant. Unity of purpose is vital to all major national projects. Perhaps most significant is that the KTP is the most publicly visible and high stakes adoption of the NCOC model of national coordination and coherence, since the original NCOC was conceived earlier this year.

Pakistani experiments or innovation in governance are rare. Rarer still are attempts to apply the lessons from such innovations to other problems. The whole-of-national-power approach to the KTP that combines federal government will, with provincial government authority, with the military's discipline and prestige is an important development. Pakistan needs more experimentation and innovation in how it attempts to tackle problems, not less. PM Khan, CM Shah, Army Chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa, DG ISI Lieutenant General Faiz Hameed and Planning Minister Asad Umar should be congratulated for the ambition and responsiveness that the KTP represents.

Every act of ambition is defined by the odds stacked up against it. The KTP is audacious because of the kinds of challenge that the pursuit of 'transformation' now creates for the Pakistani system. To understand these challenges we must examine the politics that has produced present-day Karachi. This politics is shaped by seven contests or competitions. The KTP will need all of these competitions to be managed carefully, gently, and wisely.

The first is PTI v PPP. This is a more substantive competition than the accusations and counter accusations between party leaders. The PPP was once the PTI, in

almost every way. The PPP voter in Punjab has ditched the red, black and green 'teer' in favour of the Naraa-e-Tabdeeli. The burden of dashed hopes among the non-Sindh PPP voter is intergenerational and is tainted with the relative recent memory of the 2008-2013. Knowing that there is little the PPP can do to reclaim Punjab, the PPP is happy to recede into the depths of its Sindhi heartland. There, the PTI knows it can't grow beyond the DHAs, Cliftons and small sprinklings in Gulshan, Nazimabad and FB Area. The resulting stalemate is foundational.

The PPP may want to fix Karachi, but it will not do so at any cost to its ability to market itself as the ultimate protector and defender of the abandoned Sindhi of the rural areas of that province. Never mind that everyone outside Sindh (and in the DHAs and Cantts, especially) believes that it is the PPP that has abandoned the Sindhi. What matters is what the Sindhi believes. And though she may be convinced to be sceptical about the PPP sometimes, she doesn't believe the PTI or its backers one bit.

The second is the system v the Mohajir. The dismantling of Altaf Hussain's MQM, though long overdue, has created a major political vacuum in Karachi. There is no alternative political centre of gravity to take charge of the political representation of the city's largest and most important ethnic group. The Farooq Sattar national press conference meltdowns, the Mustafa Kamal-led PSP's limited success, and the continued constraints faced by the younger, educated MQM stalwarts (like Haider Abbas Rizvi, Faisal Subzwari, Khawaja Izhar ul Hassan etc) combined to bury the chances of a legacy post Altaf MQM.

Karachi's Mohajir is a political orphan. The midst of a 21st century global pandemic is no time for a long-drawn out paternity testing exercise for a city of Karachi's size. Beware of the kind of disorganized crime and extreme narratives that emerge from the wreckage of such cities.

The third is the FBR v the trader. Karachi is the beating heart of the Pakistani economy. Pakistan's perennial problem of taxing mid to high range individuals and business is rooted (partly) in every major so-called reform being attempted during a down cycle: when the cost and relative burden of documentation and taxation pinches a lot more than when business is booming. A broken and dysfunctional Karachi is a twin fiscal problem. How do you extract revenue out of an already

bleeding carcass, and how do you pay for the expensive things that you need to stop the bleeding, all at the same time?

The fourth is the provinces v the federation. This is a natural and important tension that helps shape the federal system of governance in the country. The challenge is how this competition (for resources and political credit) is contained to the domain of boardroom meetings and election campaigns. In short, how does the system prevent the contamination of day to day governance with this competition?

Where this matters most is in administrative issues that are the executive domain of the province, but where the federation believes it has a role to play. Remember the fight over the posting of AD Khowaja as IG Sindh? It doesn't help matters that the tenth NFC has been recently formed, or that this government has brought with it an alarmingly high number of kite flyers in the public domain: as five decade-old settled debates about presidential versus parliamentary and central versus federal re-emerge out of the blue. It is easy to allocate funds from the PSDP, ADPs, or multilateral projects on paper. A little harder to ensure timely releases, especially across discordant administrative domains.

The fifth is the city v the village. There is a reason why so much noise comes out of the Lahore Metro or the Peshawar BRT. They represent decades overdue investment in urban infrastructure. But they are extraordinary. Pakistani governance is framed on the colonial blueprint of extracting revenue and maintenance of public order: in villages. There is no constitutional or legal framework for modern urban management. The municipal corporations across the country are a wasteland of fourth tier bureaucratic talent, fifth tier financing, and the mass rent seeking that comes with such low standards and stakes. The KTP is a bypass for the city versus the village competition. A lot rides on this bypass. Perhaps too much?

The sixth is competence v status quo. Pakistan suffers from a massive vacuum of technical, non-entrenched skills in the public sector. When housing and urban development is dealt with by the same people that manage livestock, finance, climate change, planning, roads and highways, and filing systems: you get what you have. Federal and provincial civil servants are heroes for tolerating the working conditions they are saddled with. But their heroism does not entitle them to a monopoly over public service. If the KTP is restricted to being owned and operated

by the bureaucracy, failure is a predestined and guaranteed outcome. To deliver the KTP will require the insertion of urban planners, architects, engineers, startup gurus, technologists and environmentalists from outside the bureaucracy.

Finally, the seventh vital competition is civil society versus the mafias. Karachi's many governance vacuums have been filled by criminal gangs and mafias that extract a high economic, social and political price on the city. Brave citizens have taken on these mafias and gangs at great personal cost. The ghosts of Hakim Said, Parveen Rehman, or Sabeen Mehmud may or may not haunt their murderers. But they should not be ignored as the national rescue of Karachi begins. A city that cannot protect its heroes will fall victim to its villains.

May Allah bless the heroes, and vanquish the villains.

By: Mosharraf Zaidi

Source: The News

Mega Lecture

Flood politics and Indian water terrorism

Floods symbolise miseries and destruction and their effects can be felt for a very long time, like wrong decisions by politicians drive nations backward and derail them from the path of progress and growth. I am worried to see the way politics is being played on floods where the governments, at both the federal and provincial levels are fighting on percentage sharing. The federal government represents the state and the state is the mother which has to be looked after by each and every citizen of the land. I wish and hope that Imran Khan should have been more tactful and gracious in working with CM Sindh, and CM Sindh should also have cooperated for the sake of the people of Karachi.

The media teams on both sides fight like kids and it looks as if both sides' media teams are indulging in competition where they are winning at the cost of the public of Karachi who are already crushed with ethnic and poverty storms. I hope my observations will be taken positively as Karachi is my city too, where I studied and started my civil service; I know the problems of Karachi. My appeal to fellow politicians is to stop playing politics on floods and other natural disasters at the cost of your own poor masses.

Floods destroy everything that comes in their way and as a poor nation, we keep looking for support and help from rich countries at the cost of our self-respect. Is it not the duty of the federal or provincial governments to sit with the map of Pakistan, analyse past destruction of the floods and design ways to channel flood water by creating channels based on surveys and hold this water in dams in all provinces? We should know who is in the charge of it and which authority can take up with provincial authorities. Let me point out that it is the duty of "water board" which needs to be converted into Water board authority which should be empowered with adequate funding to manage the flood water and river water in such a way that each and every drop of water falls in the sea and every drop is used for agriculture to enhance our agricultural proceeds. Despite being rich in water resources, we Pakistanis continue to face water scarcity every year because of the inability of authorities to properly use and manage these water resources for socioeconomic and environmental sustainability.

Poor water management is costing our country around 4-5 percent of GDP each year. These costs are caused by the floods and droughts that we face due to poor

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water supply and sanitation. We are endowed with water yet we do not make the best use of this.

The most alarming thing here is that the water crisis was rated as the biggest risk to Pakistan by the World Economic Forum and the Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources. They also warned that the country could “run dry” by 2025. Half of the annual rainfall in our country occurs in July and August, averaging about 255 millimetres in each of those two months. The remainder of the year has significantly less rain, amounting to about fifty millimetres per month.

This year in August, only Karachi received 484 mm (19 inches) rain. It is the highest rainfall recorded over the last 90 years. Pakistan receives 145 million-acre feet of water every year. However, only 14m acre-feet of water are preserved and we can meet the shortage if we have proper storage of rainwater and floodwater.

We have rivers and small streams coming from mountains finally meeting at “Sutledge”. The flows and diversions need to be examined scientifically with proper measurements to ensure the use of water for the betterment of local people; it is also important to analyse its miserable effects on the public and crops.

Let every town build a local rain pond which can store all the rainwater which can be used by them later for agricultural and irrigation purposes. Once a storage capacity is built, then a sprinkler irrigation system can be designed and introduced to better store and manage this precious water.

The water can also be converted into clean drinking water by using small plants. This sweet water can be used in multiple ways if properly managed by the local bodies.

We may also let the DC be the Head of a Rainwater Authority to ensure the government’s indulgence and control. It is an extensive but very simple exercise and this should be opted for on a priority.

On one hand, we are facing water scarcity due to floods and poor water management while on the other, we are also facing water terrorism from India as it wants to either just stop/block our share of water with ulterior motives when we need it, or release extra water into our rivers to increase the flow causing floods in Pakistan and we know that both of these are dangerous for Pakistan.

As we are dependent on India for water, Modi, by blocking water, wants to deprive Pakistan of water to convert her into a desert. In fact, Modi is following a full-fledged anti-Pakistan agenda.

India has worked out that the one of the national key quotients is water and hence, India will continue to block water flow from India to Pakistan. PM Modi had already thrown the first water bomb on Pakistan in 2018 by blocking our legitimate natural watercourse. India had completed its construction of Kishanganga hydropower project on the Neelam River by diverting the watercourse through a 16 km tunnel, which is a clear violation of the Indus Water Treaty between the two countries.

The Kishanganga River, upon entering Pakistani territory is recognised as Neelam River that originates from Indian Illegally Occupied Kashmir, and flows through the Gurez Valley to join Jhelum River near Muzaffarabad, at Domail, in Azad Jammu Kashmir. The construction of Kishan ganga Dam is also in violation of Article III (4) of the Indus Water Treaty, which places an obligation or restriction on India not to construct any similar projects on western rivers, that is, on Indus, Chenab and Jhelum. Also, the construction of the Kishan ganga project will adversely affect the Neelum-Jhelum project, as its power generation capacity will be reduced radically. In accordance with Article III (2) of Indus Water Treaty, India is also prohibited from developing any human made obstructions that shall have or may cause a change in the volume of the natural flow of western rivers.

The project includes a 121 feet tall concrete-face rock-fill dam, which will divert a portion of the river to the south through a 24 km tunnel. The diversion reduced the flow of water into Pakistan by about 11 percent in the summer and about 27 percent in the winter, which would be contrary to the Indus Water Treaty as the western rivers belong to Pakistan. It also contends that the diversion would result in an ecological disaster for the area.

India had signed all the important Conventions that, with complete effect, would ruin our valley totally. It is sad to note that neither our previous government nor the present one ever took this matter seriously whereas the water issue is supposed to be an issue of life and death.

My above suggestions are better in both ways to use the extra water for irrigation. In this way, induction terrorism by India via water flow can be controlled and we can convert this misery into success by irrigating barren land.

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We need to bring an enactment/bill or a “rainfall act” to get these activities regulated as a national priority. I am confident that this law will be of great benefit for the nation.

As per many predictions, the next wars will be over sweetwater.

I wish our defence sector takes initiatives to take help of our soldiers to develop these water channels during peacetime with the help of the local public on a volunteer basis. Let all the provinces and the federation give serious thought to my above proposals. I will, however, move a bill on “The Flood Control Act” in order to store rainwater throughout the country, fixing the responsibility on concerned authorities.

We have water, all types of minerals, a fertile landscape, the best brains, four seasons, the best beaches, natural gas, green mountains with blue waters and lakes, deserts and forests, but we do not have the command of unity and the skills of governance. We are still slaves of false egos and are masters of self-destruction.

It is time for the leadership to wake up and not flood their national cause and interest. Lead your nation to drive to the valley of love and not hate to protect your future generations.

“National unity Zindabad”.

By: Senator Rehman Malik

Source: The Nation

The writer is former Interior Minister of Pakistan, Chairman Senate Standing Committee on Interior and Chairman of Think Tank “Global Eye”. He is the author of four books and his fifth book is about to get published.

The land of the pure: True to its name or drowning in ethnocentrism

In a country that was made on the grounds of freedom and justice, irrespective of cast, colour or creed, it is a shock to see that ethnocentrism is even a problem. However, as several instances have shown, both recently and in the past, there is no denying the fact that the words uttered by its founder regarding freedom of religion and matters of worship have now lost meaning to its people.

Ethnocentrism- a term used for a state of mind where one finds one's own culture to be superior to others and is therefore prejudiced against any other culture but one's own. The term is also often used to address religious discrimination- both of which is rampant in our society. From economic discrimination to discrimination when it comes to benefits offered by the state and a prejudice towards minority groups in our daily lives, we have come a long way from what this nation was intended to be.

Several Christian as well as Hindu groups have reported that they face this discrimination while they apply for cooperate jobs, people prefer their workforce to be Muslim dominated, and despite the quotas put in place by some private corporations, most continue to turn away Christians and Hindus. This then leaves them with jobs that undermine their potential such as cleaners and sweepers, a sore reminder of the class system that has been embedded into the society. We are raised to believe that these are the only jobs they are qualified for, and so these are the ones we end up hiring them for. The society, in general looks down upon its daily wage earners and when this fact is combined with the prejudice we hold against other religions, what results is an endless cycle of economic discrimination, one that prevents them from moving up the economic ladder at all. The spread of the novel coronavirus has also left these individuals in worse shape since more of them are now unemployment and according to sources, they are also refused state food supplies in some cases.

Moreover, over the past months, several cases of discriminatory behavior have come forth. One example is of the various church attacks during 2019 as well 2020. Apart from that, there are the day to day incidents of violence where people from other religions are targeted. One case that has been the cause for outrage among the Christian community recently has been of Saleem, a Christian man who was brutally murdered for daring to bathe in the tube well of a Muslim landlord in his

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village. He was beaten constantly before being killed on the grounds of him polluting the water. It was also reported that his killers did not return his body for three days. This happened back in February and the incident has drawn attention from activists all over the country.

There have also been several instances where Hindu temples have been demolished and the Hindu community living in Pakistan has been the object of violence in general. One such example is of the very recent demolition of the Hanuman temple in Liyari, Karachi. This incident came at a time when Turkey converted one of its churches into a mosque. The temple in Liyari was demolished, along with the homes of twenty Hindu families. Moreover, another recent development came forth when the Prime Minister allotted money for a Krishna temple to be built in Islamabad, but it was demolished as soon as the boundary wall was completed.

Lastly, forced conversions is yet another problem that is now on the rise. People, especially young women, from minority religious groups are forced to convert to Islam on the grounds of false pretenses or other excuses. They are both emotionally as well as physically blackmailed to abandon their own religion and embrace Islam, a religion that preaches kindness and insists there is no compulsion in it. Yet, we insist on finding new ways to mentally torture these groups by forcing our religion upon them. One recent example of this is a TikTok video where a man is seen offering a substantial amount of money to a Christian if they convert to Islam. The video was then called out for hurting the religious sentiments of the Christian community.

This nation was built on the idea of equal rights and opportunities for all its citizens, irrespective of case, creed or religion and yet we could not be farther from the ideology right now. We love to criticize other nations when they ban the hijab, shut down mosques, badmouth our Holy Book, or when we are on the receiving end of their prejudices against Muslims, but are we any better?

By: Minaal Maan

Source: Daily Times

The writer is a freelance writer and author. Her novel, "Our Tainted Souls" is now available for order, in both paperback and eBook form on Amazon

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The West's never ending quest to 'de-radicalise' dissent

An investigation by Declassified UK has revealed that for more than 15 years, US and UK security agencies have been waging a covert war in Kenya, arming and training a secret Kenyan paramilitary team that has committed atrocities against Kenyan civilians and violated Kenyan laws under the guise of fighting terrorism. While the report does important work in documenting this, the collaboration between Kenya and the West and its brutality is hardly news. Reports of Kenyan agencies working with their Western counterparts to disappear, rendition, torture and murder local terror suspects are legion, and have appeared regularly in Kenyan and international press for decades.

However, the Declassified UK report does bring to mind startling similarities between the way the global war on terror is waged today and the British effort to put down what came to be known as the Mau Mau uprising in colonial Kenya nearly 70 years ago. At the time, a peasant movement, focused mainly in the country's central highlands, had taken up arms and formed the Kenya Land and Freedom Army with the express aim of kicking out the colonial settlers and recovering the land they had lost. Their violence, which targeted white Europeans and their African collaborators, reflected the brutality employed by the British in their half-century occupation of the country.

In their response, the British sought to paint the rebellion as a reflection of the innate savagery and primitivity of Black Africans and to deny the fighters in the forests had any legitimate grievances or practical visions of the future. The press, both in Kenya and in Western capitals, was inundated with propaganda generated by the Colonial Office in London. "All we heard was how savage Mau Mau was," Caroline Elkins, author of the influential book on colonial atrocities during that period, *British Gulag*, quotes John Nottingham, then a young colonial officer, as saying. "Just completely atavistic, and somehow had to be gotten rid of, regardless of how this was done." As painted by the British, the conflict pitted the peaceful, progressive and enlightened forces of white colonialism against the dark, evil, foul and secretive filth of the degraded Mau Mau. The very name, Mau Mau, was an attempt to associate the movement with the idea of savagery. It did not originate with the fighters.

In fact, they actively rejected it. In a 1953 Charter, introducing the movement, Dedan Kimathi, the leader, declared: "We reject being called [Mau Mau or] terrorists for demanding our people's rights. [It is derogatory]. We are the Kenya Land [and] Freedom Army." Kenyan politician Josiah Mwangi "JM" Kariuki, who was interned in prison camps from 1953 to 1960 for channelling resources to the fighters, and eventually murdered by the state agents of independent Kenya, later wrote: "The world knows [the KLFA] by a title of abuse and ridicule with which it was described by one of its bitterest opponents."

Compare this with the descriptions of those today fighting against Western domination of Middle Eastern societies as anachronistic, long-bearded, cave-dwelling atavists defined by their brutality rather than by the aims they espouse. There is an entrenched resistance to the idea that those who espouse a violent overthrow of the current world order can either have legitimate reasons for doing so or espouse rational alternatives to their exploitation. This resistance manifests in the tendency to employ simplistic, binary views of conflict and the zero-sum, with-us-or-against-us rhetoric pioneered by the George W Bush administration.

It is also evident in the idea of "radicalisation" which seeks to paint a resort to violence as a form of mental illness or the result of brainwashing. In the 1950s, the British efforts against the KLFA focused on the secret oath-taking ceremonies that the fighters used to recruit their members. According to Elkins, the colonial establishment attributed their colonial subjects' anger to "the so-called spell of the Mau Mau oath rather than an outgrowth of legitimate complaints rooted in individual circumstances". Confessing the oath came to be regarded as the sin qua non of effective rehabilitation (or, as we would say today, "de-radicalisation"). To achieve this, the British established a horrendous system of camps referred to as "the Pipeline" where those suspected of taking the oath were interned and subjected to unspeakable tortures to get them to confess. Tens of thousands died and many more were left scarred and destitute. One and a half million people were forced from their homes and put in concentration camps where many starved. All this was justified by the rubric of fighting Mau Mau terror.

Today, the talk of "de-radicalisation" similarly denies the legitimacy of grievances. The anger many feel at Western policies and aggressions towards their countries and societies are easily dismissed and rather than focus on the oppressive policies, de-radicalisation frames the actions of the victims as the problem. For example, decades of massacres and brutalities committed by the Kenyan government against the majority Muslim regions of the coast and the northeast of the country are seldom cited as the cause of widespread disaffection in these areas. Rather the blame is easily laid at the feet of "radical" preachers whose words, like those of the Mau Mau, are said to have the effect of casting magical spells on simple-minded populations.

To recognise the legitimacy of grievances is not to defend the tactics of terror (though it will inevitably be portrayed as such by some). Rather, the resort to such violence should be understood within its full context, and that context includes recognition of the violence of oppression that incites it. Further, while the brutality of the British and their local allies did effectively break the KLFA, the cost of doing so has continued to be paid till today in the suppression of public memory both in Kenya and in the UK, and in the terror the Kenyan state exhibits towards its population and the consequent violence it perpetrates against them. Similarly, the brutal tactics used by the West and its allies may enjoy short-term success. But this will come at the long-term expense of entrenched instability, hostility, fear and conflict.

By: Patrick Gathara

Source: Al Jazeera

The writer is a communications consultant, writer, and award-winning political cartoonist based in Nairobi.

Trump intensifies assault on rule of law as he fights for reelection

President Donald Trump on Tuesday went further than ever before in putting the degradation of the rule of law at the center of his reelection campaign.

Trump called on his supporters in North Carolina to act as poll watchers, to watch out for "thieving, and stealing and robbing" that he is warning without evidence will taint Election Day. He made his call at a packed rally in Winston-Salem where he and many of his fans made a mockery of the state's mask mandate -- as well as the advice of his own government amid a pandemic that has killed nearly 190,000 Americans and was exacerbated by his prioritizing politics over science.

But most shockingly, and in one of the most stunning maneuvers in the modern history of the Department of Justice, government lawyers Tuesday applied to take over the defense of Trump in a defamation lawsuit filed against him by a woman who accused him of rape in the 1990s.

The move will inflame claims that Attorney General William Barr, who misrepresented the Mueller report and has intervened in other highly political cases that are inconvenient to the President, is acting as Trump's personal lawyer and desecrating his department's traditional role.

The latest development came nearly four years into a presidency marked by Trump's constant efforts to test the limits of his power and to weaponize the legal and institutional functions of the government to further his political ends. That process is accelerating now as a President impeached for abuse of power seeks to use all the tools of his office to secure a second term and is undermining the integrity of the vote with flagrantly false claims of election corruption.

But while Democrats, including former President Barack Obama, used their convention to warn Trump is tearing at the foundations of the republic itself, there is little sign that Trump's fervent base -- or the Republicans who saved his presidency in a Senate trial -- are concerned at his broadening power grabs.

Trump's rally in battleground North Carolina took place as he sought to extricate himself from another staggering controversy. He is adamantly denying reports that he called America's war dead "losers" and "suckers," eight weeks before an election in which he is currently trailing Democratic nominee Joe Biden.

Trump sows more pre-election chaos

After last week calling on North Carolina voters to potentially breach the law by trying to vote twice to test the security of mail-in voting, which he inaccurately claims is plagued by massive fraud, Trump went a step further on Tuesday evening.

"Got to be careful with those ballots. Watch those ballots. I don't like it. You know, you have a Democrat governor, you have all these Democrats watching that stuff, I don't like it," Trump said.

"Watch it. Be poll watchers when you go there. Watch all the thieving and stealing and robbing they do. Because this is important. We win North Carolina, we win."

North Carolina on Friday began sending hundreds of thousands of mail-in ballots to voters.

Trump's comments raised the specter of chaos and voter intimidation at the polls in the event that his supporters take his advice to mass at polling stations. They are part of a prolonged effort by the President to shatter the legitimacy of the election -- apparently either to excuse a possible loss or to prepare the groundwork for a legal fight in the event of a close result.

No President in living memory has made such explicit efforts with authoritarian echoes to portray the most sacred exercise in American democracy -- an election and the possible peaceful transfer of power between parties -- as unfair and corrupt.

The Department of Justice is meanwhile arguing that it must take over the defense of the President against E. Jean Carroll because his comments that sparked her defamation lawsuit came while he was in office.

Carroll, a former Elle magazine advice columnist, alleged in a lawsuit filed last fall that Trump defamed her with lies over her earlier claims he sexually assaulted her in a dressing room at luxury Manhattan department store in the 1990s. Trump has denied the allegation, calling it "totally false" and saying he "never met this person in my life."

The request and possible change of lawyers could further delay the lawsuit, or even kill it entirely. The application also raises the extraordinary possibility that US

taxpayers would fund a legal action arising from an alleged rape accusation against the President pertaining to an incident more than 20 years in the past.

Trump tries to move on from military controversy

In an earlier rupture of the role traditionally played by the commander-in-chief, Trump had on Monday rounded on generals he decided had not sufficiently defended him over claims he mocked US war dead first reported by The Atlantic.

His adamant denials of the story suggest he is worried it could hurt his support among those serving in the military, as CNN reported on Tuesday.

And the affair, in a way, is also yet another example of how Trump uses the institutions of government to further his advantage.

He loves to pose, in public at least, as a fierce Gen. George Patton-style leader and friend of the troops. And he's often used decorated generals, tanks, planes, ships and men as a backdrop and prop to perpetuate his own strongman persona. He therefore cannot afford any questions about this sincerity as commander-in-chief.

Since the choreographed Republican National Convention, which painted an unrecognizable picture of Trump as a benevolent, empathetic statesman, he has reeled from outrage to crisis, unable to effectively direct the tough assault on Biden being waged by his campaign.

It is a sign of the scrambled political scene in the middle of the worst domestic crisis since World War II, the uncertainty surrounding polling following Trump's shock 2016 win and questions about how Americans can even vote, that it is not immediately clear how the President's wild last few weeks will impact the election.

Still, as he trails Biden in national polls and with significant problems in swing states and a cash advantage that has evaporated, Trump can't afford to waste the campaign days left to him.

Democratic nominee Biden has seized on the controversy over Trump's reported remarks about the US dead in a French World War I graveyard and Arlington National Cemetery to bolster the kind of shadow presidency he is using to convince Americans that they need to put a more stable figure in the White House.

A new Biden campaign ad promises that the former vice president can help America "start fresh" to end the "anger, the insults, the division, the violence." "We can stop focusing on a President who thinks it is all about him and start focusing on what's best for us," the ad says.

By: Stephen Collinson

Source: CNN

Mega Lecture