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Is a New Dawn Breaking?

Abstract: Historically when the world has found itself in turmoil, it has looked up to the United States for a solution. Could an Obama administration bring hope to fruition in finding solutions to global problems that threaten mother earth and her children in Afghanistan, Iraq, Africa and everywhere?

As the night was wearing off during the wee hours of the night, dark clouds clustered to conceal even the slightest ray of light. Planet earth was engulfed in misery. Its environment was in turmoil, its nature threatened, its atmosphere scarred and her children at the brink of losing all hope. The world economy took an uncertain turn for the worse; its political arena became over populated with death and destruction with little hope of peace and reconciliation anywhere in sight in parts of Asia and Africa. There was definitely a great need-real and felt, for change-for the dawn to break in time. The world, once again looked up to America to see what she can do in the way of change to deliver the world.

The change needed to be fundamental; history needed to be made. For the change to be tangible freedom from old ways was essential. This requires a break with what had nearly become a tradition of arrogance in a unipolar world. America that once was the Mecca of freedom and democracy was looked at as a mighty and selfish global force that called the United Nations irrelevant if it did not comply with instructions from Washington.

Then a miraculous event shook the world in a positive and hopeful way; it was a first in the history of the United States. The American people showed the world that notwithstanding partisan policies in force in the country, THEY, the people, upheld the principles of democracy enshrined in their constitution of the and envisaged by the country's forefathers. They went ahead and elected a person they thought would be able to play skipper in the wild national and international waters leading the ship of American hope to peaceful shores; marching ahead towards prosperity at home and on the globe. They thought he would be able to remind the world of the American dignity, its compassion for mother earth and her children anywhere. They rose beyond the politics of color and division and pronounced their desire for unity. They elected an African American as their

President with a name Barack that is synonymous with felicitous. His election was hailed in many parts of the world, including Europe, Australia and Africa.

Now the people of the world as well as the citizens of the United States look forward with great anticipation to see how much the new administration in America would be able to meet the expectations of the world community. Would an era of hope materialize in the upcoming administration of President Elect Obama?

President Obama has a huge national and international agenda to deal with. On the top of the long list of priorities for him would be the economy and the war in Iraq and Afghanistan. America has invested much in the war on terror and Obama would have to be extremely cautious about his decisions in this regard. He has already proclaimed his wish to end the war in Iraq in an appropriate manner and to win the war in Afghanistan. However, it is the issue of the war in Afghanistan that is more complicated and direr. Winning the war on terror in Afghanistan seems to be of utmost importance for the region and the world at large. That war however is fought in fact with Al-Qaeda and Al-Qaeda supported militias who are now based in safe havens in Pakistan and from where they are allowed to freely pass into Afghanistan for acts of violence.

Some shortsighted politicians believe that the war on terror in Afghanistan can be won militarily alone. They ignore history. They ignore facts. This is a war the winning of which requires wholehearted support by the Afghans, cooperation by Afghanistan's neighbors, and realization²⁰of the need to fight also social causes that lead to terror and extremism. In order to do this, there is a need to recognize time honored Afghan traditions, to uphold their dignity, to treat them as equals and to win their hearts and minds. Afghanistan has been occupied many times before, by superpowers of the times. Occupying Afghanistan sometimes has been easy, often difficult. Alexander the Great, whose army swept over the expanse of empires in a matter of days and weeks, spent three precious years of his young and short life to conquer the land of the Afghans. Chenghez Khan lost a grandson in the fierce battles the Afghans put up with his hordes that did not recognize defeat. But page through history and you will find that none of the great conquerors were able to keep their hold on this land for any considerable length of time. It is something about the nature of the Afghans that makes them live free or otherwise die in shame for having let aliens takeover their country. You can honor them and they will die for you, not otherwise.

So if the new American administration under Obama is to make any headway in this complicated war, he should rethink and redraw a new strategy, which would lean towards peace rather than war that would make Afghans partners rather than adversaries.⁼² 0Avoid civilian casualties, civilian harassment and acting as occupiers. Truly and genuinely, follow a course that provides for balanced education, health, economic development and above all reintroduction of a democracy that is true and workable under Afghan traditions. Work with the government to develop a transparent account sheet of what the country receives in aid and on what and where it is used. Introduce peaceful means for negotiated settlement of issues and a sure way of spreading enlightenment through education among the masses. And as the main superpower use its resources to provide for true democratic processes including internationally supervised elections in Afghanistan without the possibility of foreign intervention. Also help Afghanistan to stop intervention in its affairs by its selfish neighbors and regional interests.

And thus pave the way for withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghanistan in accordance with a reasonable timetable and concentrating on taking the war to Al-Qaeda wherever it is located.

Only then would the dawn give way to the serenity and warmth of sunshine and the light of the day for hope to win over fear and love to win over hate in Afghanistan and everywhere.