

In the Name of God, Most Beneficent, Most Merciful

Dear honorable members of Congress, ladies and gentlemen:

I thank you for providing this opportunity to discuss the rethinking of Afghanistan, which has become a major US foreign policy issue in the 21st century.

It was more than 30 years ago that I arrived in Virginia taking political asylum and beginning my life, first as a dishwasher in Blacksburg, Virginia, and now as a Professor in California and a host of an Afghan TV talk show. It was on my 34th birthday that I became a US citizen on 21 February, 1986, at the United States District Court, in Harrisonburg, Virginia. In that ceremony, Dr Ronald Carrier, then the president of James Madison University was the guest speaker. He said, "When you become a citizen this does not mean that you should forget the past, but rather, you become more responsible for your future as a new citizen." Also, I have learned one important lesson from my new homeland: One person can make a difference. Rosa Park was a prime example of making not only a difference but making history. It is on the basis of these two principles, responsibility and making a difference, which is why I am here today.

I sincerely thank you for reviewing my proposal for peace, especially Congressman Kucinich who made this briefing possible, and opened the door for a person who is neither a politician nor a lobbyist, but a simple university lecturer without any political ambition, having only a desire for peace for both, my place of birth, and my place of residence. One of the strengths of the American political system today is that it relies on her human resources. And I am proud to be part of this cultural mosaic and a contributor as a Muslim-Afghan-American.

We are here today as Muslim-Americans to stretch our hand for cooperation, for establishing peace and justice for all. This is because Islam is a religion of peace, justice, and cooperation.

We are here today to share with you that the solution for the Afghan crisis relies within Islam. Muslims often grow in Islam within America, which supports human rights, equality between sexes, freedom of press and media, business investment, and justice for all.

Concerning Afghanistan, we are dealing with a country for which the entire fabric is Islamic. Hence, the solution should be found within Islam as well.

It is my understanding that Afghanistan has become a battleground for all parties. In order to bring peace and stability, Afghanistan must be demilitarized. An international peace conference should be held to declare Afghanistan neutral, non-aligned, and demilitarized. This way, the arms race will stop in the region. Remember that Afghanistan is the heart of Asia. Her peace is the key to the peace of the region and her tranquility will lay the foundation for tranquility of the region.

The common denominator of the Afghan nation is Islam. 99.99% of Afghans are Muslims. It is only Islam that can unify the nation, provided that the right leadership comes into place. Ideas such as the partitioning of Afghanistan or decentralization of Afghanistan (Newsweek, July 26, 2010) will decry America as an imperial power that believes in the old concept of "Divide and Rule", and will increase resistance, radicalism, and bloodshed, and will never be forgiven by Afghans or Muslims at large. Our job as a democracy is liberation, not partition.

Therefore, we need to support an Islamic democratic system that meets the cultural and socio-political needs of the people, and safeguards the economic and strategic interests of the United States. We should not be afraid of an Islamic government. It is in the benefit of the United States as well as Afghanistan and the region. One reason that Islamic radicalism is on the rise is because we do not support Islamic political systems and therefore we are stigmatized as anti-Muslim. Politics is a game of winning the hearts and minds of people, not forcing or imposing foreign or unnatural ideas. America supporting an Islamic political system will gain the trust of 1.1 billion Muslims worldwide, diminish the growing power of China, contain the Russian

interference of the Muslim Federation, dilute the interference of Iran and Pakistan, and eventually lead to peace and reconciliation in the Middle East.

Islam is against terrorism, corruption, drug trafficking, and injustices such as poverty, illiteracy, and uncivilized manners or behavior. Unfortunately all of these have now become a norm of life in Afghanistan. A strong economy will induce a strong security, and a civic society will emerge out of a strong educational and vocational system by which people will start learning, working, and producing. Afghanistan must invest in her workforce rather than in the military. Afghanistan cannot succeed without foreign investments, but this investment should be in the interest of both the investor and investee. It is through this fair and just approach that America will regain her lost image in the world-stage and save Afghanistan that once fought for America's interests against the former Soviet Union.

With the new discoveries of minerals in Afghanistan, the "Great Game" will continue. America can play a major role by nationalizing the mineral resources and establishing an international panel to oversee the progress of exploration for the sake of Afghans. We do not want to create another Congo, Nigeria, or Sierra Leon.

To conclude, I would like to request that

1. A panel of joint members of Congress and Muslim-Americans travel to Afghanistan and speak to both the government as well as the opposition. This panel should be comprised of experts on Islamic-based economics, education, civic participation, and social justice in order to achieve the desired goals.
2. Exist strategy should be very gradual until a constructive system is replaced by a new plan of action; otherwise Afghanistan goes to another civil war.
3. We should stop going to Afghanistan through Pakistan. Afghanistan became a victim of Pakistan's regional ambition by the US foreign policy.

Thank you very much

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