

Prerequisites for Political Understanding and Policymaking (Part 1)

(Translated)

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Introduction

Politics in Islam is siyasah which means looking after affairs. Therefore, in a sense every individual is a politician, as every person takes care of their own affairs or the affairs of those under their care. However, the mind does not turn to this reality when the term “politician” is used. This is because a person who takes care of his own affairs only has no influence beyond his own affairs, and his thoughts do not extend beyond his needs. Instead, when the term “politician” is used, the mind turns to those who look after the affairs of their nation, state, or more. These politicians’ influence extends to their nation, state, or more.

Now, politics has been defined by Westerners as the “art of the possible.” This definition is true in one regard, but false in another. If the meaning of the possible is considered the opposite of the impossible, or it means the necessary, then this description is correct. The politician does not deal with the impossible. However, if the definition means that the politician deals with reality as it is, and starts with the current reality as the basis of what is possible, which means that he is pragmatic and a realist, then this description is false. In fact, such pragmatic politicians are dangerous to their nations if they take control of them. Their policies draw from reality alone, and their vision does not go beyond the existing reality and status quo. If the reality existing in these nations is shaped by their enemies, then they will not be able to escape the cage in which their enemies confined them to. If this reality is shaped by them, then they will not be able to advance it or preserve its goodness. Instead, they will retreat on their heels.

The politicians who elevated their nations crossed the threshold of the reality in which their nations live. They sketched out a reality for their nations that would advance them, made it a goal, and formulated policies that led them to it. Allah (swt) Almighty has determined for us a vision of the politician who looks after the affairs of his Ummah and does not remain in the mire of corrupt reality. He is the carrier of the Islamic Dawah. Allah (swt) said, ﴿وَمَنْ كَانَ مَيِّتًا فَأَحْيَيْنَاهُ وَجَعَلْنَا لَهُ نُورًا يَمْشِي بِهِ فِي النَّاسِ كَمَنْ مَثَلُهُ فِي الظُّلُمَاتِ لَيْسَ بِخَارِجٍ مِنْهَا﴾, **“Or is he who was dead, and We gave him life, and made for him a guiding light by which he walks among the people, the same as one whose example is that of one in darkness from which he cannot emerge?”** [TMQ Surah al-Anaam 122]

The Messenger of Allah (saw) was the best example of this. When he (saw) was sent, he was sent to a people who had been hostile against each other and shed each other’s blood, yet they were humiliated by the Persians and the Romans. So the Messenger of Allah (saw) called them to leave their current reality, status quo, of humiliation and disgrace, and to move to a reality in which they would sit on the throne of the world. Among this is what happened when the leaders of Quraysh came to Abu Talib complaining to him about the Prophet of Allah (saw). So Abu Talib asked him, and the Messenger of Allah (saw) responded, «يا عم، أريدُهم على كلمةٍ واحدةٍ تدينُ لهم العربُ وتؤدِّي العجمُ إليهم الجزية» **“Uncle, I want them to agree over one truthful kalimah (proclamation), then the Arabs will obey them, whilst the non-Arabs will pay them jizyah tribute in submission.”** [Musnad Ahmad]

A politician who seeks to look after the affairs of his people and state and more than that must be able to formulate policies in order to move from the crucible of theoretical understanding to practical influence. In order to be able to formulate policies, the politician must have a political understanding of events, and a political understanding of international relations. He must have a special vision through which he looks at the world, and build policies on that basis.

Political understanding is as essential to those striving for revival (nahdah) as air is to a human being. Whoever strives for revival in the Islamic Ummah must view himself in terms of what is to come. He or she wants to establish a state for his Ummah that upholds an ideology, where this state strives to become a major power, then to sit on the throne of the world to be the foremost state in the world, and then the dominion of this Ummah will attain what Allah has provided for His Messenger (saw) on this earth.

For all this to happen, the Muslim must strive hard to achieve it. These efforts must be coupled with his engagement in the Shariah method that leads to the establishment of his state, and his engagement in preparing himself and his community so that the state he establishes will be able to compete with the major powers of this world, and then fold them up like a page of history. This can only be achieved if the political understanding of the one working for revival is built on sound foundations, producing true results. Otherwise, the outcome will be an illusion and a fantasy that prevents him from emerging from the corner of his home to lead the world.

The individual's transition from working for revival to leading and ruling the world with Islam requires good policy formulation. This can only be achieved through sound political understanding, good goal selection, good action leading to these goals, and good linking of action to these goals, connecting cause and effect. Therefore, it has become imperative to establish important foundations that open horizons for anyone who finds within themselves the ability to pursue this field. Understanding the necessary foundations for political understanding alone is not sufficient for mastering this field, as observation and practice are essential to achieving mastery.

Learning does not happen overnight. It requires training, patience, determination, and willpower. Learning after the need for it is more likely to ingrain knowledge in the mind and establish it in the heart. It transforms the learner into a worker and learner. This is unlike learning without purpose or need, which is like someone who spins, and unwinds what he has spun, or sows seeds, but does not benefit from what he has sown, until his crops turn yellow and are destroyed by pests.

These articles shed light on the reality of political understanding and analysis, the reality of political awareness and policymaking, and the political information required for them. Readers must realize that they will not become politicians simply by reading information. Instead, it is by taking from them what benefits them and engaging in pursuance, understanding, awareness, and influence.

I dedicate this work to the Islamic Ummah, the best Ummah brought forth for mankind. I dedicate it specifically to the carriers of the Islamic Dawah who are diligently striving for revival, and especially to the shebaab who are seeking the path of correct political understanding. I discourage anyone who reads these articles from using them to become merely a political analyst, as this will have no impact in this life, and those who ask only come to them out of curiosity. Instead, I ask everyone who reads them to use them as a means to raise the level of thinking within the Ummah and to use them as a tool of guidance, through which they can understand the political reality correctly, view it from the perspective

of the Islamic 'aqedah, and take care of the affairs of the people. And Allah is the guide to the right path.

Political Analysis

Political analysis is essential for anyone who wants to understand and deal with the political reality, and for policymakers. Therefore, political analysis is extremely important for the structure working to advance the Ummah's progress and is essential for the state. Sound political analysis protects the structure, the state, and the Ummah from the risks surrounding them, and enables them to adopt policies that ward off harm, thwart the deceit of their enemies, or help them achieve their goals.

Political analysis is the production of political opinion on emerging political events. It is based on political information and contextualized linkages. Political analysis is achieved through understanding political reality, not simply giving the mind free rein to sketch out every possible vision related to a piece of news or event. If given free rein, it moves from the framework of political analysis to one of imagination, speculation, and logical investigation. This approach does not lead to truthful results. On the other hand, if understanding is linked to correct political concepts, it leads to truthful results. This is because politics is the action of politicians, and is built on the visions and orientations of their countries, and the natures they have been imprinted with throughout their history. Accordingly, understanding the reality of politicians, the nature of the visions and orientations their countries hold, the nature of the current event, and connecting them correctly, based on correct political concepts is considered understanding, not speculation or imagination. Instead, it is drawing a complete picture by assembling its smaller components, within a clear framework. Accordingly, if some of the smaller parts are missing, their nature can be explored by examining the adjacent parts of the picture, thus drawing the complete picture in the mind. This is political analysis.

Political analysis requires three elements: political information, constant awareness of political news, and careful selection of political news. Hizb ut-Tahrir discussed this topic in detail in a publication dated March 27, 1974, titled "Politics and International Politics." The Hizb stated that political information is, ولا سيما حقائق التاريخ، ومعلومات عن الحوادث والتصرفات والأشخاص، والمتعلقة بهم من حيث الوجه السياسي، ومعلومات عن العلاقات السياسية سواء بين الأفراد أو الدول أو الأفكار؛ فهذه المعلومات هي التي تكشف معنى الفكر السياسي سواء أكان خبراً أو عملاً أو قاعدة عقيدة كانت أو حكماً، وبدون هذه المعلومات لا يستطيع المرء "historical information, فهم الفكر السياسي مهما أوتي من نكاء وعبقريّة؛ لأن المسألة مسألة فهم لا مسألة عقل especially historical facts, and information about events, actions, and people related to them from a political perspective, and information about political relations, whether between individuals, countries, or thoughts. This information is what reveals the meaning of political thought, whether it is news, action, a principle of belief, or a ruling. Without this information, a person cannot understand political thought, no matter how intelligent or brilliant he is, because the issue is a matter of understanding, not intellectualization."

The Hizb then continued to say, وأما معرفة الأخبار الجارية ولا سيما الأخبار السياسية، فلأنها معلومات، ولأنها أخبار عن حوادث جارية، ولأنها هي محل الفهم ومحل البحث، لذلك لا بد من معرفتها. ولما كانت حوادث الحياة تتغير قطعاً وتتجدد وتختلف وتتناقض، فلا بد من دوام تتبعها حتى يظل على علم بها. أي حتى يظل واقفاً على محطة القطار التي يمر منها القطار فعلاً، "As for ولا يظل واقفاً في محطة لا يمر منها القطار الآن، بل كان يمر منها قبل ساعة ثم تغيرت، وصار يمر في محطة أخرى. knowledge of current news, especially political news, because it is information, and because it is news about current events, and because it is the subject of understanding and research, it is therefore necessary to know it. Since life events certainly change, are renewed, differ, and contradict each other, it is necessary to constantly pursue them in order to remain aware of them. That is, so that one remains standing at the train station, through which the train is actually passing. He does not remain standing at a station through which the train is not

passing now, but instead passed through an hour ago and then changed, and it is now passing through another station.”

Then the Hizb stated, سواء أكان مهماً أو لا، بل يجب أن يتحمل عناء البحث في كومة تبن من أجل حبة قمح، وقد لا يجدها. لأنه لا يعرف متى يأتي الخبر المهم ومتى لا يأتي. من أجل ذلك لا بد من أن يظل على تتبع للأخبار كلها، سواء التي تهمة أو التي لا تهمة. لأنها حلقات مرتبطة بعضها ببعض، فإذا ضاعت حلقة فكّت السلسلة، وصُغِب عليه معرفة الأمر، بل قد يفهم الأمر خطأ، ويربط الواقع بخبر أو بفكر انتهى وذهب ولم يعد. **Therefore, it is necessary to constantly pursue the news in a mandatory and consistent manner so that one does not miss any news, whether it is important or trivial. Instead, it is necessary to he goes to the trouble of searching in a haystack for a grain of wheat, and he may not find it. This is because he does not know when important news will come and when it will not. Therefore, he must continue to pursue all the news, whether it interests him or not. This is because they are linked links, if a link is lost, the chain is broken, and it is difficult for him to understand the matter. He may even misunderstand the matter, and link the reality to a piece of news, or a thought, that has ended and is no longer valid. Therefore, it is mandatory to follow the news sequentially in order to understand politics.”**

The Hizb then stated, وأما اختيار الأخبار، فإنما يحصل بأخذها، لا بمجرد سماعها. فهو لا يأخذ إلا الخبر الهام، فهو إذا سمع أن رئيس وزراء فرنسا سافر إلى لندن، فإنه يسمعه ويأخذه، ولكنه إذا سمع أن مستشار ألمانيا سافر إلى برلين، أو ذهب إلى واشنطن، أو اجتمع بالأمين العام لهيئة الأمم، فإنه يسمعه ولا يأخذه. إذ يجب أن يميز بين ما يأخذ وما لا يأخذ، وإن كان يسمع الأخبار كلها. لأن الأخذ إنما يكون للأخبار التي من أخذها فائدة، ولا يكون لغيرها ولو كانت قد تشكل معلومات. وهذا هو التتبع. **As for selecting news, it is achieved by taking note for consideration, not merely listening. He only takes note of important news. So if he hears that the French Prime Minister traveled to London, he both listens to it and considers it. However, if he hears that the German Chancellor traveled to Berlin, or went to Washington, or met with the Secretary-General of the United Nations, he hears it but does not take it for consideration. He must distinguish between what he takes for consideration and what he does not take, even whilst he listens to all the news. This is because taking only the news that is beneficial for taking into consideration, and not other news, even if it may constitute information. This is the pursuance of taking for consideration, not merely listening.” End quote.**

News is also taken from the mouths of politicians themselves, including leaders, foreign ministers, spokespeople for their countries, and those working in the field of national security. The observer must be concerned with tracking the reality of these individuals, or those sent by their countries to carry out related political, military, or intelligence missions. It is necessary to know their biographies, so as not to miss any element that constitutes the complete picture.

Although political analysis is important, it is not an end in itself. Instead, it is a means to an end. Therefore, those working for the revival and those working in the state must use political analysis and become familiar with it because of its benefit in their work. Every worker for the revival of his Ummah must view his structure as the leader of the change that will be global, and his Ummah as the one whose dominion will reach the extents of the earth, that Allah has reserved for His Messenger (saw) and the state on his Method is the state that will be the leading power in the world, and then the only power in the world.

(To be continued...)