

## Headlines:

- **Egypt, U.N. Push Palestinian Rivals to Make Up**
- **Imran Khan has Won Over Pakistan. But Real Power still Lies with the Army**
- **Rethinking Islamic Education to Produce Global Muslims**

## Details:

### **Egypt, U.N. Push Palestinian Rivals to Make Up**

International mediators are increasing pressure on dueling Palestinian factions to reconcile their differences, hoping the long-shot effort could help relieve dire conditions in Gaza and create a lasting cease-fire with 'Israel' after weeks of violence. Egypt rolled out plans to try to form a unity government between Fatah, which runs the West Bank via the Palestinian Authority, and Hamas, which controls the Gaza Strip. At the same time, the United Nations has engaged in a blitz of shuttle diplomacy, trying to build trust between two sides whose split over a decade ago has roiled efforts to forge a two-state peace with the Jewish state. Negotiations face big hurdles. The two sides mistrust each other and a series of reconciliation efforts have failed since Hamas seized complete control of the 25-mile-long seaside enclave of Gaza in 2007 after a bloody battle with Fatah. The Jewish and Egypt have imposed a blockade on Gaza since then, and the Palestinian Authority contributed to the pressure by stopping payments to employees in Gaza and reducing payments for electricity supplied by the Jewish state. Hamas immediately agreed to Egypt's plan for Fatah and Hamas. Fatah is sending a delegation to Egypt next week to discuss it. "We are hoping to reach a comprehensive agreement with timelines and dates" said Saeb Erekat, a senior Fatah official. [Source: [Wall Street Journal](#)]

**Rather than use its armed forces to intervene and stop the atrocities of the Jewish entity, Egypt is blockading and pressuring the people of the Blessed Land - Palestine to accept the demands of Tel Aviv. With Allah's permission, the day is not far that the whole of the Blessed Land - Palestine will be liberated and returned to its rightful state, as a jewel of the Islamic world.**

### **Imran Khan has Won Over Pakistan. But Real Power still Lies with the Army**

It is now certain that Imran Khan will lead Pakistan's next government. But how much power will he really wield, and what can Pakistan and the world expect? Khan's victory speech struck a conciliatory note, a welcome surprise to many after a vicious election campaign. He pledged to improve relations with Pakistan's neighbours, India and Afghanistan, to widen the country's tax base, stamp out corruption and improve governance. Pakistan has been directly ruled by the military for more than half of its 71 years. In this nascent democracy, each election is a milestone: this was only the second transition from one democratically elected government to another. But Khan's victory comes against a troubled backdrop. Over the past few months, the country has seen drastically ramped up censorship, with widespread allegations of military interference in favour of Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party. Every single opposition party has rejected his win, alleging vote-rigging. Regardless, 22 years after entering politics, the former cricketer is to be the country's prime minister. I have spent the past few weeks in Karachi, Pakistan's largest city, and have heard countless people say something along the lines of "He can't be worse than the others". This is a symptom of a growing malaise with dynastic Pakistani politicians, who have swapped power between themselves for generations, appearing to do little more than enrich themselves. Khan is, first and foremost, a populist. He has long railed against corruption. During the last election campaign in 2013, he pledged that he would eliminate major corruption in Pakistan in 90 days. Given Pakistan is currently ranked 117 out of 180 countries on the Transparency International index, this is quite the promise. It is also worth looking at Khan's bedfellows. A big factor in his victory this time around was defections by popular politicians from the other main parties. Khan refers to these politicians as "electables". They might also be referred to as "corruptibles", deeply enmeshed in the system that Khan wants to overhaul. Perhaps one of the biggest questions about Khan's government is how much

power he will actually have. There is significant evidence of political manipulation by the military establishment during the run-up to the election. Nawaz Sharif, the former prime minister and leader of one of Pakistan's main parties, the Pakistan Muslim League – Nawaz (PML-N), was jailed earlier this month on corruption charges, in a move human rights advocates describe as selective targeting. In the days before Sharif's arrest, nearly 500 members of his party were detained as the military took steps to prevent a protest. Sharif has consistently asserted civilian supremacy and tried to reduce the army's role in public life. The military's apparent support for Khan and the PTI is most likely down to a desire to keep Sharif out of power, rather than any special liking for Khan. But his relationship with the military, coupled with the fact that he is likely to either be heading a coalition or to have a very small majority in parliament, will limit his power. Even when it is not in direct control of Pakistan, the army pulls strings behind the scenes, particularly on foreign policy and domestic security. In his courting of both hardline religious elements and the military establishment, Khan has shown himself willing to work with more or less anyone in the pursuit of power. [Source: The Guardian].

**After the euphoria, the inevitable reality of the army controlling Imran Khan will manifest in many different ways. Only then, the people of Pakistan will understand that the faces can change but the army's control over the country's political system is absolute.**

### **Rethinking Islamic Education to Produce Global Muslims**

Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Mujahid Yusof Rawa seems optimistic about changing the current narrow Islamic teachings into a more inclusive and broad-based spirituality that can make Islam part of an acceptable global civilisation. I support his optimism but it is an uphill battle. What is critically needed is a new framework to replace the present PAS-Umno and Jakim (Islamic Development Department) perspective of a prescriptive, ancient and exclusive Islam. I put forth the following suggestion for a new framework. Islamic education at the primary, secondary and tertiary level is still trapped in a parochial framework that does not take into account the idea of the global society and multi-cultural and multi-faith co-existence. The result is the production of graduates who feel Islam is not part of the bigger society of mankind. The idea of "me and the other" is emphasised too much. The graduates also do not understand the idea of "differences being the essential ingredient of meaningful wholeness". Two things are needed for meaningful change: Firstly, the curriculum of Islamic education must reemphasise the historical and civilisational location of Islam within human wholeness of experience and concerns. Secondly, the teachers of Islam must be retrained under a human civilisational construct and not just a narrow "Islamically defined" construct. At the moment, Islam is being taught as an isolated entity in a sea of human "ignorance" or "jahilliyah". To classify the whole experience of humanity as "ignorant" is truly an act of sheer arrogance. What is needed is a new, broader frame. My first step in rethinking Islamic education is to emphasise the direct historical link between Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Many Muslims are not even aware of this important chronological tie. Muslims seem to think that Islam appeared out of nowhere. In real fact, the roots of the values and construct of God as understood by Muslims is a product of historical evolution in the previous two religions. Many Muslims do not realise that most of the important prophets mentioned in Islamic theology and history come from the Judaic line of Ishak. Prophet Muhammad is the only one from Ismail but both Ismail and Ishak (Ishmael and Iseah) are Abraham's sons. This is an important geneological and spiritual tie. Muslim students must be taught that many seemingly religious conflicts between Islam and Christianity and Islam and the Hindus or Sunni and Shia are not necessarily religious. Many of these conflicts have their origins and main issues in geo-political concerns as well as egos and the private agendas of the proponents of wars like kings, popes and khalifah. For instance, Emperor Constantine and the Council of Nicea framed Christianity in a certain manner and may have acted for political and other intentions. Constantine knew that the old Roman order was dead and he must rise with the new faith if he were to survive. For instance, the Palestinian issue is political but possibly made into a religious one. Such historical events have a geo-political context and Muslim teachers must not simplify them as "religious conflicts". [Source: Free Malaysia Today]

**Since its inception, the education curriculum in Malaysia has been secular and Islam cannot be blamed for the ills of society. Secularized Islam sitting within the nation state model is responsible for Malaysia's regression.**