

## Of Illusions and Delusions

*No one deceives you; you deceive yourself*

Wolfgang von Goethe

Man, a rational animal! You must be kidding. Animals have well developed instincts; humans think with their heart. Objectivity in the best of times was super human. Now that the US has joined Israel in its wars in the Middle East, it seems to be a mirage. But then these are precisely the times one may have to suppress one's desires and come to some reasonably realistic conclusions. The safer deductions first.

Iran and Israel will continue with the missile warfare. No change expected in whatever the Arabs in the neighbourhood were doing – or not doing. A wishful advice from me comes later. States on the periphery like Qatar and Oman tried to create a façade of being closet peacemakers, but must now take a backseat till another PR moment arrived. Erdogan after his shrieking and tweeting were openly mocked, lately has been mercifully quiet. Time for him to shed the illusion of a modern day “Al-Tughral”. Europeans resigned to their fate of being colonised in reverse and are out of any reckoning.

No prizes for guessing that China and Russia will not physically jump in the ring but would continue to support Iran as per their mutually agreed game plan. In my view, as shorn of wishfulness as humanly possible, these two countries stand to win the ongoing global scruffle. Let me venture to suggest that Iran was unlikely to target the American bases in the area. Indirect approach is a better strategy and should be left to the outside chance that the host countries could become uncomfortable enough with their presence and might come up with any of the many options in the book. I remember that the Prince Sultan Air Base the US established after the Gulf War of 1991 was such a pain in the Saudi neck that the Kingdom went great lengths to get rid of it.

Believe it or not, most difficult for me to forecast is how my own country might react – possibly by twiddling its thumbs, but am looking forward to be pleasantly surprised – that is, if it did go beyond making bold and inane statements. The easier option would be to continue to coordinate its actions with the new Gang of Five – China, Russia, Afghanistan and Iran being the other Four. A spectacular coup that we could still pull off, and that too at no cost except for the doomsday scenarios our foreign moles can be relied upon to paint. Let's withdraw Pakistan's support for a Nobel Peace Prize for Trump. When it was initially announced, I must concede that I was amongst the few who were struggling to rationalise the madness – was it to encourage Trump not to go the Way of the Warrior! It was as stary eyed as one could get and therefore I had to seek cover from the Great Faiz.

یوں نہ تھا میں نے فقط چاہا تھا یوں ہو جائے

Incidentally, it was not the first time this swindle was used to create a veneer of peace around a warmonger. A few years back even some Pakistani thinkers were deluding themselves that Modi in his third term would work for this honour and leave behind a

peaceful legacy. Obama of course executed the greatest con job in history – became a Nobel Laureate and stoked fires all across the Muslim World.

But I swear that my following conclusions are not meant to retrieve some consolation from what looks like a bad situation. I actually believe that both the Israeli attack on Iran a few days back and the latest trump card on its behalf have been blessings hardly in disguise. Could one imagine that a country enjoying immunity from all decent laws and practices could suffer the fate exclusively the preserve of its chosen enemies! And that the American MOABs dropped on the Iran's nuclear or non-nuclear targets would finally demolish any delusions some of us might still be suffering from: "we could be friends with a country that kills you in a fatal embrace as warned by Henry Kissinger". Adieu Israel.

The best is still to come.

More than three decades back Samuel Huntington floated the thesis of Clash of Civilisations. The world was up in arms without giving it a friction of thought that has kept us going around in circles on matters like cooperation on terrorism that should have been consigned to the bins long time back. One has to have the vision of an ostrich to deny that the world has been moving towards the Great Divide the Professor had predicted: Judeo-Christianity vs. Islam and Confucianism.

Let me get back to the very human proclivity – looking for silver linings. Having placated the neo-cons and the Zionists, Trump may just have created the right environment for the more credible intermediaries to get Israel and the US out of their Catch-22 syndrome. Not very likely but even an adversary should be provided escape before in desperation it brings down the edifice on our collective heads. Samson was fictitious but Samson' Option is not. "After me the Deluge" is pretty much a daily affair.

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