

Headlines:

- **Pakistan's Rigged Elections Reveal True Face of 'Democracy of the Elite'**
- **British Establishment still Struggling to Reverse Brexit**
- **Secular America calls for 'Religious Freedom' after Trump Institutes 'Muslim Ban'**

Details:

Pakistan's Rigged Elections Reveal True Face of 'Democracy of the Elite'

According to the *Dawn*:

In a statement released to the media, the US State Department underlined what it said were flaws in the pre-voting electoral process and the constraints placed on freedom of expression and association.

"The United States shares concerns about flaws in the pre-voting electoral process, as expressed by the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan," said the department's spokesperson Heather Nauert.

"These included constraints placed on freedoms of expression and association during the campaign period that were at odds with Pakistani authorities' stated goal of a fully fair and transparent election."

Ms Nauert said the United States concurs with the conclusions of the European Union Election Observation Mission, whose report notes that while there were positive changes to the legal framework for elections in Pakistan, these were "overshadowed by restrictions on freedom of expression and unequal campaign opportunities".

The blatant and shameless rigging of Pakistan's elections occurred not just on election day but in the months and years leading up to it as Pakistan's military-centred 'establishment' or 'deep state' worked to exclude unwanted parties through intimidation of politicians to change parties, selective corruption trials against key political leaders, and even imprisonment of the former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and his daughter and son-in-law.

But the US and the EU have no right to blame Pakistan. All that the Pakistani establishment has done is copy over the same 'democratic' practices that exist in the West albeit with a little less finesse in the execution. The so-called democracy that exists throughout the world today, particularly in the West, is 'representative democracy' as distinct from real democracy, which they call 'popular democracy'. Popular democracy has not been made to work anywhere in the world; even the ancient city of Athens selectively defined their citizens, thereby excluding the majority of the population from the democratic process.

Representative democracy is in fact rule of the people by the elite and for the elite, in which the common people have the opportunity, every few years, to choose which members of the elite they wish to 'represent' them. Like spectators at a football match choosing to be supporters of a particular team, the common people have no real role in the game that unfolds, both winner and loser benefitting at their expense. This is because

whichever faction of the elite wins, they know that they must make concessions to the other factions, safeguarding their interests in addition to their own, in order to maintain the continuity of the system.

Despite all of Imran Khan's talk about change, the reality is that since elite interests in Pakistan have not changed, Pakistan's policies will continue fundamentally in the same manner: foreign policy will continue according to US prescriptions, the economy will continue to be determined by the IMF and World Bank, and the military establishment will continue to dominate domestic politics; all that will change will be the cosmetics and some municipal-level refocussing - perhaps a few more schools instead of a few more roads. No real change can occur until Muslims understand that the system in its entirety must be fundamentally changed by re-establishing the righteous Islamic Khilafah (Caliphate) State on the method of the Prophet (saw) that will serve Allah alone and make no distinction between the interests of the elite and the interests of the people.

British Establishment still Struggling to Reverse Brexit

According to *Reuters*:

The proportion of voters who favor a referendum on the final terms of any Brexit deal has overtaken those who do not for the first time, while Prime Minister Theresa May's approval ratings have plunged, according to opinion polls.

With just over eight months left until Britain is due to leave the European Union, there is little clarity about how trade will flow as May, who is grappling with a rebellion in her party, struggles to strike a deal with the bloc.

May has stepped up planning for a so called "no-deal" Brexit that would see the world's fifth largest economy crash out of the EU on March 29, 2019, a step that could spook financial markets and dislocate trade flows across Europe and beyond.

When voters were asked in a YouGov poll whether there should be a referendum on the final terms of any Brexit deal, 42 per cent said there should be a fresh vote while 40 per cent said there should not. The rest did not know.

In yet another feature of Western democracy, when there is a clash between the elite, then the ruling faction attempts to use a popular referendum to strengthen its position. This is exactly what the British establishment attempted to do with Brexit but badly misjudged public opinion and ended up with a result that contradicted their interests.

Britain's foreign policy is always to participate with others but maintain its own identity. It had achieved this, in the case of Europe, by carefully balancing both pro-European and anti-European factions within its political medium. However the increased domination of the anti-European faction in the last two decades threatened to upset this balance, especially as this faction existed within the Conservative Party itself, the party of the establishment.

Prime Minister Theresa May is firmly aligned with actual establishment interests and it has now become quite evident, despite all her previous harsh talk, that she actually working for deep continued participation in Europe, through what is being called a 'Soft Brexit'. Meanwhile, the establishment has been working hard to sow doubts about the original referendum, which could support such a position, with or without a second referendum.

Muslims must learn from the whole Brexit saga the true reality of this 'democracy of the elite', particularly in the West. Man was created to worship Allah, and not his fellow man.

Secular America calls for 'religious freedom' after Trump institutes 'Muslim ban'

According to the *Hill*:

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo rolled out a document on Thursday urging governments around the world to prioritize religious freedom, further elevating an issue that the Trump administration has pushed since last year...

The declaration states that "religious freedom is a far-reaching, universal, and profound human right that all peoples and nations of good will must defend around the globe."

Pompeo touted it as an effort to make good on President Trump's promise to make religious freedom a "key priority" of his foreign policy.

It is extraordinary to see talk of religious freedom from the administration of this American President in particular, who instituted the 'Muslim ban' after openly pledging to restrict the immigration of Muslims to the United States. America is calling for religious freedom abroad while ignoring its own actions at home. But even abroad, America's use of religious freedom is selective, as the article further indicates:

But critics have expressed concern about whether his administration has sought to help certain religious groups over others.

In fact, even abroad, America wants to favour other religions above Muslims and this is what the present initiative for 'religious freedom' is actually about.

In truth, the concept of religious freedom in a secular state is itself a falsehood. The entire purpose of secularism is to sideline religion, restricting it to the very personal and the voluntary, while basing public life upon worldly materialistic values that are enforced by state authority. Furthermore, the very idea of freedom contradicts religion, as freedom calls for man to act according to his own desires, whereas religion, any religion, requires man to live his life according to a higher code, ordained by one who is superior to him. With Allah's permission, the righteous Islamic Khilafah (Caliphate) State on the method of the Prophet (saw) shall soon be re-established, and the world will see honour and dignity restored for people of all religions, and jihad will be used to protect the sanctity of all religious places. Allah (swt) says in Surah al-Haj, ayaat 39-40:

﴿أَذِّنْ لِلَّذِينَ يُقَاتِلُونَ بَأْتَهُمْ ظُلُمًا وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ نَصْرِهِمْ لَقَدِيرٌ * الَّذِينَ أُخْرِجُوا مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ بِغَيْرِ حَقٍّ إِلَّا أَنْ يَقُولُوا رَبُّنَا اللَّهُ وَلَوْلَا دَفْعُ اللَّهِ النَّاسَ بَعْضَهُمْ بِبَعْضٍ لَهْذَمَتْ صَوَامِعُ وَبِيَعٌ وَصَلَوَاتٌ وَمَسَاجِدُ يُذْكَرُ فِيهَا اسْمُ اللَّهِ كَثِيرًا وَلَيَنْصُرَنَّ اللَّهُ مَنْ يَنْصُرُهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَقَوِيٌّ عَزِيزٌ﴾

Permission [to fight] has been given to those who are being fought, because they were wronged. And indeed, Allah is competent to give them victory. [They are] those who have been evicted from their homes without right - only because they say, "Our Lord is Allah." And were it not that Allah checks the people, some by means of others, there would have been demolished monasteries, churches, synagogues, and mosques in which the name of Allah is much mentioned. And Allah will surely support those who support Him. Indeed, Allah is Powerful and Exalted in Might.