

Part 3 – Desi Cultural Handicap

The disgruntled British diplomat (“Sir” John) wrote:

“I hold in my hand a book which contains the maps of Europe, showing the political landscape for the past 5000 years. Every race is mentioned here. You have the Nordic people, Gauls, Celtic, Slavs, Latin, Iberian, Turks, Greeks, Persians, Arabs, the Chinese (Mongols) and even the Africans (Africans ruled over Sicily for some time). There is no mention of the Desi people. I categorize Desi people as those who have lived in the sub-continent and were at some time, part of the Mogul empire – mostly inhabitants of the present day Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Sri-lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal and Bhutan.

Why hasn't anyone from this region (Desi) ever created a mufti-continental empire, in the past 5000 years of known human history? Why have they never ruled the world? No Mai ka lal had enough dam? [The last sentence above leads me to believe that he had some local help in writing this].

When you raise this question with an average Desi, he immediately deploys the default defense mechanism - denying the facts. This is most commonly done by renouncing his actually ethnicity and claiming to be of an Arab, Greek, Mongol, Central Asian or Persian decent. A closer inspection will show that this excuse or line of defense is also useless for the inhabitants of this region. This is because of the way history and events have played out. Every global super power (with one exception) has come to the sub-continent and kicked the local's behinds.

The wall of shame, if we go in reverse, reads something like this: [currently we have the Americans in Afghanistan, eighteen years and counting]. In the 80s you had the Russians who killed many Afghans and Pakistanis. The Chinese attacked and captured a lot of Indian Land in the 60s. Rewind a bit more and you have the British who ruled the area for 200 years. Before that you had the Central Asians, the Mogul Dynasty who ruled for eight hundred years (The Mogul emperors were Central Asian Turko-Mongols from modern-day Uzbekistan). Preceding this you had Genghis Khan, who chose to construct the tallest tower of skulls in the sub-continent - as a sign of his disgust. The Arabs came and ruled a significant portion of the subcontinent for a long period of time (Most of what is now Pakistan was captured during Caliph Omar's time + Mohammad bin Qasim), as did the Persian Empire. Before the Persians we had the good old Alexander the great visiting this region. The only exception are the Romans but I think that they would have kept the pattern going as well if Caesar had not been assassinated. There are two reasons for this confidence - The very next day Caesar was assassinated, he was supposed to take his forces and march east - Who knows where he would have stopped? Secondly, Caesar was a very ambitious man. When he went to Alexandria to sort out the mess between Cleopatra and her brother, he visited Alexander's tomb and cried there ('I have not just cause to weep, when I consider that Alexander at my age had conquered so many nations, and I have all this time done nothing that is memorable?). So it is possible that Caesar too would have honored you with a visit had he not been killed.

Therefore, no matter at what point you choose to start your history, every generation has had the dishonor of having their behinds kicked. A Desi fellow told my friend that he was a descendant of Genghis Khan (The fact that his features did not look Chinese did not matter to him). My friend told him that reading history must be a very embarrassing experience for him, his father, grandfather and others. When he asked why, my friend said that by bowing their heads to the British for 200 years, they had damaged Genghis Khan's name and legacy.

The Desi Man's Wall of Shame

(In reverse chronological order)

America (2001 and counting)

Soviet Union (1979 – 1989)

China (1962)

Great Britain (200 years)

Moghul Empire (800 years)

Mongols (Genghis Khan)

Arab Caliphate

The Persian Empire

The Greek Empire (Alexander the Great)

We have already hit 3000 years....

Why is it that every global/regional power came to the sub-continent and kicked the local's behind?

It becomes clear fairly quickly that this wall of shame has nothing to do with religion. Over these 5000 years, the religion of inhabitants of the sub-continent changed a few times. Plus every religion was practiced in this region at one time or another. You currently have Desi Hindu, Christian, Muslim, Buddhist, Jews and so on. Someone must have been right! The only thing unique to this region is the Desi culture which has remained fairly intact over the centuries. You can tell a lot from a people's way

of living by looking at their architecture. If you look at the ruins in Taxila and Mohenjo-daro you will see small similarities between Qissa khawani bazaar; Anarkali bazaar and especially Multan (because Multan is a very old city and was around when Alexander visited).

What is the Desi cultural handicap that is behind this wall of shame?

The British, published formulas for controlling different groups living under the British Raj (Punjabi, Pushtoon, Baloch, Sindhi, Tamil, Kashmiri, Marathi, Gujrati, Bengali etc) in their "British army officer's sipahi training guide". The conclusion of this guide also states that as long as these races shall walk the earth, these formulas shall hold. You bully a Punjabi, bribe a Pushtoon, ignore a Sindhi, corrupt a Kashmiri and control the elders of the Baloch. These formulas are quite offensive but the sad part is that during their 200 year rule, there was never any revision issued - Thus proving their conclusion to some extent.

This was all published and was common knowledge! Why the helplessness?

A fellow once told me a joke that shed light on the two questions above. He said that after the Day of Judgment, an angel was flying over hell. He looked below and saw a roof of fire with small chimneys. On each chimney there was an angel sitting, holding a rod of metal. Whenever a human head popped out of the chimney, the angel sitting there would strike it down. There was one chimney however, which was unguarded. When the flying angel asked about the unguarded chimney, the angels replied back by saying that underneath that chimney is where we are burning the Desi folks - as soon as one person tries to climb the chimney, the others pull his feet down."

The old man has pointed a finger at our culture here. We have two options. We can dismiss what he wrote as nonsense and continue on our merry way. Or we can take an honest look and see if there is any truth in the accusation. After all, the first step in solving a problem is to accept that the problem exists!

Culture is a sensitive topic these days for reasons which are unknown. Criticizing someone culture is a no go area. However, religion does not see it that way. After all, culture is not the creation of the Almighty. Islam criticized the Arab cultural traditions repeatedly and there are many examples of this. Before Islam, the Arabs used to perform acts of divination to find auspicious moments for performing important acts. The usual practice was to run at a flock of birds sitting on the ground and see which way they would fly (right side = good omen, left = bad omen). Their culture did not permit fighting in certain months. Or they were permitted to distance themselves from their wives by swearing an oath likening them to their mothers. They used to bury their daughters alive to protect their honor. Islam attacked all of these odd cultural traditions. I think that this event happened just to drive the point home: The prophet (PBUH) was once walking in Medina and Gabriel visited him. He pointed to an area and told the prophet that this is the place where your father is buried. When the prophet immediately tried to offer a prayer for his father, Gabriel stopped him saying that you are not permitted to do this (One really has to admire prophet's courage (PBUH) after reading these hadith, Sahih Muslim 398 and Sahih Muslim 976). Culture and ways of the forefathers do not have precedence over religion.

One of the most courageous things that the Arabs did was that they accepted the Islamic criticisms of their culture and changed it. Perhaps a brave and open minded understanding of the two aforementioned hadith allowed them to start again. Thus the Bedouin Arabs of the desert, who were called gypsies by the Persians and lizard eaters by others, transformed to become the rulers of the World. I doubt that the Desi folk have this much courage.

Is it worth our time to scrutinize our culture and identify the handicap?

To root cause the problem with the Desi culture we need to look at the Hindu religion which predates Islam by a couple of thousand years. The Hindu religion has helped shaped the foundation of the Desi culture. Islam definitely did have an effect, but no amount of effect can change the foundation of something. The three potholes in the Hindu religion which have had a significant impact on the Desi culture are:

1) Reincarnation

The best option for a soul, in the Hindu faith, is to re-incarnate as a human being. Now off-course the human beings are further sub-divided via a caste system, but if you are a human being, you already have a very good deal! It is much better than coming back as a donkey, dog or any other animal. As you already have a good deal, then it is important to try your best to maintain the status-co. This means risk aversion and playing it as safe as possible. After all, if you die, then the surety of you coming back as a human being is not high enough. A safe strategy can include following what successful people are doing and as long as you are doing better than the fellow next to you, you are doing well. As there will always be people doing better than you, then there is always someone to follow.

This no-risk policy guarantees a maniable population consisting of pro-system individuals – a nation of followers and a general lack of courage. As an example, these followers will never dare to question the judgments passed by a court, a ruler, a parliament, a university or a central examination board regarding an individual's ability. Any chance of ground breaking innovation, which by its very nature is anti-system and causes a threat to the existing status-co, can simply be ruled out. An Arab scientist who invented a medicine, first tried the medicine on himself. His rational was that if the Almighty wants harm for him, then nothing can save him. This sort of behavior can simply be ruled out in a Desi society. As the resources of this world are limited, as opposed to the hereafter where the resources are infinite, there is bound to be envy and competition in people whose only concern is this world.

This particular pothole sheds some light on that joke written earlier. Envy and competition means that there is no chance of a collective effort. Chance of help from the Almighty in this world also is limited as “he will not change the state of a people until they change themselves”. According to the psychologist Helmut Schoeck, envy sits at the base of a primitive society and it also guarantees that such a society will remain primitive. [What would be a good translation of “primitive people” in Urdu? “Jahil, Dehati, paindo, ganwar, chamat log”] Individual success becomes meaningless because when another ethnic group sees the king of an ant hill, they still see an ant. The sad part is that this pothole restricts the chance of salvation also. The prophet (PBUH) said “you will not enter paradise if you don't want for your brother what you want for yourself”.

Mr Schoeck came to this conclusion after spending time with the American Red Indians, trying to understand their society and culture better. Christianity (and by the same logic Islam), with a strong belief in the non-worldly life and hereafter, allowed its societies to rise above pettiness and think about collaboration and the greater good. This is the reason why these societies have dominated world history as much as they have. Envy is the main differentiating factor between a primitive culture and an advance culture.

After the end of the cold war, the American government removed its “friendly” ambassador to Islamabad and appointed someone who could only be described as “uncouth, white trash”. At a social

event in Islamabad, this individual made a very vulgar remark to a member of the Pakistani senate (An honest, hardworking and well educated Rhodes Scholar who achieved great success in his academic and professional life). Outraged, the senator responded by saying that he will not dignify the ambassador's comment with a response and excused himself. Later in the evening some concerned citizens complained to the senator that his response was inadequate. They said that by insulting the senator, the ambassador had insulted the institution of the senate and in turn insulted every Pakistani. The senator replied by saying that we all deserve to be insulted. Due to our collective national failure "the best of our lot gets lorded around by the worst of their lot". Their zero starts above our hundred!

2) Death do us part

"Burn the woman after her spouse's death" or to a lesser extent "death do us part" means that finding the one true love is a valid goal for one's life. You get only one chance to get it right. Get it wrong and you are unhappy for the rest of your life. Thus, this becomes the most important decision of one's life. The Desi media's main focus is to make people accept this goal - media houses are absolutely fixated on this and there is constant bombardment. Almost 90% of Desi music and video content targets the boy meets girl story line. The effeminacy of men that ensues because of this has devastating effects. The effeminate men of the Desi media, while having body builder's body, imitate women by plucking out their hair, applying makeup and seeking and keeping the company of women. They often boast about their perfection of effeminacy and their emotional personalities (crying for their woman). Persistence and habituation can make even the most unnatural of acts pleasurable. Seeing the same thing in acquaintances and on media makes these acts a societal norm.

One Roman general advised that when you conquer a nation, one of the first steps is to get control of the minds of the natives' women. This is important because a society can be controlled through the women. For example, if the women in a society declare that they will only find attractive the men with green hair, quite a few men in that society will dye their hair green.

As proximity to women is essential to the fulfillment of this most important goal, sedentary lifestyle is a must. This means that spending limited time in the wilderness and even in isolation become invalid and unnatural acts. How many men have climbed the Everest or K2? How many of them are Desi? According to Ibn Khaldun, "Sedentary people are used to luxury and ease of life. They entrust the defense of their property and lives to the militia (army/police) that is tasked to guarding them. They find safety in their cities. Successive generations grow in this way. They become like women and children who depend on the master of the house. Eventually this becomes part of their character and replaces natural disposition".

So when Bedouins or tribes living in the wilderness attack a decaying city with decaying institutions, once the guarding militia gets defeated, the sedentary people become easy targets of the invaders. This explains to some extent the ease with which foreign invaders have conquered the subcontinent. How many times did Mehmud of Ghazni invade? How is it possible that a few million Talib's are threatening an entire population?

No risk policy, maniable and pro-system population and sedentary lifestyle means that individuals must follow different types of man-made laws. Ibn Khaldun further adds, "When laws are enforced by means of punishment, they completely destroy fortitude, because the use of punishment against someone who cannot defend himself generates in that person a feeling of humiliation that, no doubt, must break his fortitude. When laws, intended to serve the purposes of education and instruction, are applied from childhood on, they have to some degree the same effect, because people then grow up in

fear and docility and consequently do not rely on their own fortitude”.

Laws and the nature of Man must have a link. The whole idea of “death do us part” is something that is very alien to Islam. However, the Islamic law does not have any problem with it. For better or for worse, the modern Muslim world adopted this idea from the Christian/Hindu societies. This idea gives rise to unrealistic expectations which put pressure on the institution of marriage. If “they lived happily ever after” is true, then what is the point of heaven? With open marriages, people living together out of wed lock or higher divorce rates, the idea of “death do us part” is coming under further stress and damaging the institution of marriage in the developed world.

A scholar once wrote that although Man is free to live his life as he chooses, it would be foolish for someone to set having a drink of water as his goal and highest achievement in life. Nor can having a good meal be considered a valid goal or highest achievement in one’s life. Similarly, it would be wrong to set making love to a woman as one's goal of life or highest achievement. Sexuality and the need to be loved is a basic human requirement no different than water or food. The broad nature of laws relating to marriage and divorce in Islam allowed that society have a liberal view. The society was not sexually charged and there was no enchantment associated with sex. For example, there is an account of a man standing up in a religious congregation and asking the scholar about whether it was permissible to be intimate with his spouse in a certain way. The explicit nature of the question did not evoke giggling, laughter or blushing in the crowd.

Why doesn't the creator say that there is to be no love for unchaste people? Larry Flynt, the founder of the adult magazine, Hustler, was married to a prostitute. They both chose to live promiscuous lifestyles and yet they both loved each other very much. Why so much emphasis on marriage in every religion? The general idea of a religion is to protect the society from greater harm. If one wanted to see the greatest divergence between (Christian/Hindu) religious laws and a society's conformity to them, one only needs to look at the sexuality in these countries.

They say that war is a very dehumanizing experience. A gulf war fighter pilot recently wrote in his memoir about a bombing raid he was asked to carry out in Iraq. He wrote that his main priority was to finish the task and make sure that he got back in time to watch the third quarter of the basketball game! Remote controlled warfare removes the human element to a large extent. I suppose the Muslim innovators did not devote their energies to the improvement of military equipment for a reason – Killing someone with a sword and then watching him bleed to death keeps the human element intact.

The dehumanization brought about the developed world's sexuality has equally grave consequences. Woody Allen, when asked about his affair with a minor, said that the heart wants what the heart wants! Other clichés commonly heard these days include “you can look at the same piece of meat for only so long” or “you show me one woman you think is beautiful and I will show you one man who is tired of banging her”. The last one is important because people use it to attack the institution of marriage. What they don't see is that there still exist unions where a husband and wife grow old together and do not face any such problems.

It would be wrong to associate such behavior with the developed world only. A landlord in the sub-continent scolded a friend's grandfather (also a landlord) for opening a girl’s school on his land. He told my friend's grandfather that a woman is like a man's shoe and that educating them could jeopardize his physical entertainment options! The tendency to treat a human being as a shoe or a piece of meat is not something a human being is born with.

3) Rejection of egalitarianism

Further social order can be imposed if people are led to believe that they are not created equal. The Hindu religion divides humans into four castes (#1 Priests, #2 warriors and Merchants, #3 Laborer, #4 untouchables). In the Desi culture, lineage, clans, and family history plays an important role. This Darwinian, dog eat dog culture is a result of a disbelief in the equality of man. The rejection is not only projected via religion, the modern education system is based on this fallacy.

The grand Master at the Al-Azhar University was absolutely distraught when the Imperial British tried to change the system at the university. He offered two main criticisms of the new system that was based on fixed curriculums and time lines for courses. He said that if I possess the knowledge then the student who is seeking the knowledge must have the right to choose what he wishes to learn from me. Secondly, we both should have the right to exchange the knowledge as quickly or as slowly as we want. After all, he is spending his resources and most importantly his time for the sake of his education. Also, the university is not a factory that is required to produce labor for the industry within a fixed amount of time and grading its product.

You love your creation. The higher the creation the greater the love. As the Human being is the Almighty's greatest creation, his love for this creation is easily seen through his unlimited mercy - People can even choose to deny his existence but they continue to breathe, eat, drink and live. However, the Almighty shares credit of his greatest creation with someone.

These kids at a wedding thought that it would be a good idea to hide one of the young girls, then go tell her mother that they had seen someone take her girl out of the building. After the initial search for the girl finished, people started to get worried. The woman, when she realized that her daughter was actually missing, started to panic. Her reaction was extreme, like a fish out of water, she could hardly breathe. What I saw on that woman's face was the highest form of love imaginable. Nothing else comes even close. There at that moment was the finest example of pure, unconditional and the highest form of human love possible.

The Almighty shares the credit of the creation of the human with the Woman. A child's existence is dependent on the Almighty and the Woman who brings her into this world. The Almighty has created rules to protect the woman. The Islamic laws for custody of children and financial support are present to protect the mother. Even in the afterlife, a person's entree into heaven can be blocked by the mother if she was miss-treated by her child. As for creation itself, the law of induction proves that the human being cannot create something that is better than the human being in every way. The Human being will always be better than man's creation. So if the Human being will always be the best of creation and the woman gets credit for this creation, then there is nothing a man can create which is better than a woman's creation. As her creation is the greatest, then her ability to love is the greatest and beyond question.

So if love is dependent on creation then one has to ask, can everyone create? Egalitarianism is the central pillar of all Abrahamic faiths. We are told by the Almighty that man is created equal. The prophet also said that after Adam all humans are created equal, like the teeth of a comb. Consequently, Man has the right to ask for proof here. After all, humans are tall/short/physically strong/weak/etc. What is the measuring stick or the standard used to determine this equality? There is a verse in the Qur'an where the Almighty is addressing the atheists and the agnostics, giving them examples of his creation. The creation of the universe is mentioned, the stars, the sun and moon and then it is said that Man is created, each with a unique voice. One has to wonder how the creation of the universe and

giving man a unique voice can be equally great achievements.

The audible band in the wave spectrum consists of all frequencies that can be heard by the human. It is a narrow band with frequencies ranging from 3Hz to 3 KHz only - Yet every human's (from the beginning of time till the end) voice is unique. So you can identify each human by his/her voice (difference can be infinity large or infinitely small). This uniqueness extends to every aspect of the human body. The shape and size of the limbs, the shape of the brain, the genetic code, cornea, thumb and finger impression, etc. A machine that is unique in every way is able to produce something that is also unique in every way. An apple can do what an orange cannot do and vice-versa. So what makes man equal is not the stupidity that what one man can do another can also do, but the fact that every human being (from the beginning of time till the death of that human) can do something which no other human being can do.

This uniqueness can be seen in both the human physical and mental work. Just like no one can become a good poet – you either have it or you don't – similarly no one can play a sport exactly like a famous sports star (the size and shape of bones and muscles are different). For example, you could have a painter whose gift is to draw the crest of a wave, while another painter who can draw the trough of a wave like no other – both have unique gifts. A human being is thus like a unique ray of light from a sphere. As light fades it disperses and there is overlap. Similarly people acquire knowledge from others – so today's innovation becomes tomorrow's knowledge.

If every human being has been created with an equal ability to create something unique, then why don't we see innovations every second? What stops the human being from using his or her unique gift?

Einstein said that for innovation, imagination is far more important than knowledge. It is possible to extend this by saying that courage is just as important for innovation as anything else. To stand on the frontiers of human knowledge and look into the abyss, devoting your time and resources to go where no one else has gone before – all this requires courage. The self-denial, effort and perseverance, often for a goal that has no material benefit, requires that one takes the road less taken. Finally, none of this (no innovation) is possible without mental freedom.

The uniqueness of the creative gift given to human beings means that a person can be given a gift of growing potatoes or cleaning something. The stigma that society attaches to certain tasks means that this person must possess courage and mental freedom to think for himself and pursue work in his field.

Freedom, whether it is physical or mental, can be compromised. When a human being enters this world, he/she may or may not have physical freedom. However, mental freedom is something every child is born with. It is something that no one can take away. Perhaps, this is the reason why people take it for granted. The only way to lose mental freedom is if the person surrenders it.

Mental freedom allows one to discover his creative gift and do the gift related work, ignoring completely what the world thinks or says. You can tackle this type of work gladly, without resentment or avoidance. The eternal gift related work is a value above a paycheck and above praise. It is the only avenue to independence, self-reliance, resourcefulness and most importantly, genuine self-respect. The uniqueness of the eternal gift guarantees that this type of work will lead to a unique outcome (i.e. creation).

It is not possible to measure a human being. It is not possible to measure the human will. It is not possible to measure the depths of a human soul. Egalitarianism dictates these facts. Doesn't the

uniqueness of every human body guarantee equality? Isn't what they call genius something as common as dirt? Is there any difference between standardized examination/testing and organized crime?

To be able to love yourself you need to know yourself. If you know yourself, then you know your creative gift. As neither love nor mental freedom are tangibles, a person's creation is the only physical manifestation of his thoughts – a form of his mental freedom and his love. You, your creation and your love are the same. You don't cheat your work because you don't cheat what you love.

There is a notion spread by the left that money is something bad. This is not correct. Two individuals can say to each other, "you want to benefit from my gift? Then I want to benefit from your gift!" Money facilitates such a transaction between equal human beings. The one who creates can say, "You are going to pay me whatever I ask because I am the only one who can do this". The uniqueness of the human body allows all human beings to say this. Therefore, the loss of mental freedom, which leads to the loss of creation, can affect what one achieves in life.

There are off-course cases where a human being can face a tribulation as a test from the Almighty. It is ones moral, religious and rational obligation to help people in need. However, for an able person to live his life extracting benefits from other people is simply reprehensible.

It is important to understand that Man was not created for the universe. Instead, the universe was created for Man. As far as Man is concerned, the second greatest strength in this world resides inside him. Those who sell their dignity or surrender their mind and its freedom, constantly reduce their own self-worth in the eyes of their conscious. When your success solely depends on the abilities of other people, then you sell your dignity every day. In such a society, everyone kisses someone else's behind and no one has any dignity. It is no wonder that the majority of the citizens in the Desi land want to immigrate to some other country!

If creation nor love is possible without freedom then one needs to stay on guard against the sources which deprive people of their freedom. The oldest trick that is used by the few to make the many surrender their minds is to preach human inequality. This can be done via a religious doctrine like caste system or by enforcing social hierarchy like the European class system.

For all of his humane outlook, Mr. Gandhi was still a strong follower of his beliefs. This can be seen from his actions, like the letters of admiration he wrote to Hitler: "My friend, how grand are your thoughts!" This is hardly surprising though, because after all, what is the difference between the Hindu Caste system and Fascism? They both reject the equality of Man. At a dinner, my Indian friend and I were sitting next to a German diplomat. During the course of the meal, my Indian friend started expressing his admiration of Hitler. The German diplomat, who looked uncomfortable, immediately excused himself and left. Later on, when I apologized to the diplomat for my friend's behavior, he told me that I should not worry. He said that it is odd that he hasn't become "used to" such incidents by now – considering the fact that so many Indians have expressed similar views to him on so many occasions. He added further that what these folks don't realize is that had Hitler conquered India, he would have killed most of the inhabitants, simply because of the color of their skin or the size of the head.

The man who created Pakistan was not a feudal lord. He was not a religious leader nor the leader of some tribe. In fact, he came from a fairly average family. The color of his skin was so dark that he would have made an excellent candidate for the untouchables club. As fate would have it, he was given the opportunity to polish whatever unique gift the Almighty had given him. The most astonishing part of Mr. Jinnah's story is that when he applied for admission to the law school, Lincoln's inn, his

application was denied because he did not know Latin. Mr. Jinnah argued his case, in front of men whose job was to produce lawyers, and won. After polishing his gift, he used it to earn a very decent livelihood for himself and was successful. Lord Mountbatten, the last viceroy of India, called him an evil genius and a bastard – this coming from ones greatest foe is no small achievement!

So here you have a man who had neither the right caste association nor the religious backing nor the nobility to become a leader. All he had was his gift and he used it to attain physical freedom for his people. As is often the case, attaining mental freedom is much harder. A historian once asked a very important question that didn't colonialism actually start once the colonialists left? He went on to explain that when he lived in Morocco during the French imperialism there was an independence movement active. The locals there, although without physical freedom, possessed mental freedom. When he visited Morocco after independence, he noticed that the locals now, although physically free, were mentally colonized. A famous cricketer elaborates further by saying that the worst thing about colonization is not that they take over your land, enslave your people, loot your wealth - these are all material things. The worst thing is that they put it in your heads that they are better than you are.

Mental colonization is the surest way to surrender one's mental freedom – you enslave the minds, it is irrelevant what the body does. The colonizers culture, language, values and traditions are to be religiously followed. Why create when you have a perfect example? Just toe the line!

There is a lot of criticism thrown around these days against the United States. Some of it is justified, especially if you look at the American role in the genocide that is taking place in Palestine and the greater Middle East. What is often overlooked is how this nation ascended to the rank of number one and sole super power. Of particular importance is the role that was played by the generations which lived in the 18th and 19th century. This is because it was these generations which formed the foundation and base of the super power.

When, right after the second world war, the British Queen called upon the visiting American president at the American Embassy in London, he served her hot-dogs. The British press did not appreciate this and took offense. An article in an American newspaper commented on this by saying that it is clear to all that victories in the two world wars had passed a verdict against Fascism. What has not dawned upon these Europeans yet is that these victories have also passed a verdict against the European “estates of the realm” [European class system]. It concluded by giving an ominous message “let them complain, as long as they are afraid”.

It was these successful generations which could see the failings of the European social hierarchy and stayed clear of it. In the process they were able to create a system that provided equal opportunity to all their citizens so that each could polish their respective creative gifts.

However, if it was the generations of the 18th and 19th centuries which caused the ascent of the United States, it is the generations of the 20th and 21st centuries which will cause its fall. The roots of the decent were laid right after the two great wars. This is evident if one looks at the formation of the organized education system that really took off in North America in the late 19th century. Systems of Mass schooling, compulsory demagoguery and elite schools for the affluent, things which had their roots in Europe became firmly established in North America. The father of modern education, John Dewey, had this to say about the system: “Every teacher should realize he is a social servant set apart for the maintenance of the proper social order and the securing of the right social growth. In this way the teacher is always the prophet of the true God and the usherer in of the true kingdom of heaven.”

In a certain western country, Coca-Cola decided to change the shape and color of their bottles. This resulted in a massive reduction in sales, even though the taste and color of their beverage did not change. Why did this happen? The marketing psychologists concluded that adults, from early childhood, had become accustomed to the shape of their bottles and color of their logo. A change in these was causing the people to subconsciously suspect that something was odd – That somehow something about the drink had changed.

Human beings are neither products nor raw material, to be processed through a fixed curriculum and then graded depending on quality. Modern schooling guarantees that people are dependent on group approval. Critical judgment can be ruled out in such a case, as there can never be collective critical judgment. Education has become an exercise to get a grade or be ranked. The system of bells and whistles ensures that people will have short attention span, weak memories and concentration. Extending childhood means that most people will have the most energetic and rebellious part of their lifespan spent locked away – There are people today, in their 30s, still waiting to start their lives! After every decade the school curriculum is deliberately dumb-ed down – just compare the text read by school goers in the 50s to what kids have to read now. By the time individuals exit the system, their reactions to events would be uniform and formulas can be applied to rule them easily. A system of positive recognition and negative consequences, means that teachers can become therapists and their patients, the students, always looking to gain approval. The main goal here is to instill upon the young the idea of subordination. No escape is possible now because schooling has been established as the only avenue to the majority of occupations. The eventual goal is to draw all work into the school net.

An Architect who was recently asked by his client to replicate the acoustical features of the Grand Mosque of Cordoba requested that the task be given to an acoustics engineer. The acoustics engineer refused the work saying that he was not an architect. One has to wonder how many degrees the creator of the Mosque possessed!

One might expect the Desi community living in the west to be problem free, especially those who were born in the west and are considered to be second or third generation Desi. Firstly, as the saying goes, “roots – you cut them down and they grow right back, runaway and they follow you, where ever you are; they find you”. It is not really possible to get rid of one’s culture. A much larger problem arises due to the cultural shock that immigrants and their children receive. Cut off from their own culture and language, these children look at the leaders of the media and society and consequently do a comparison. In most cases, the conclusion that is made is that the reason why their immigrant parents have not become leaders is because of their differences. This is especially true of low income Desi families in the west. The ghettos or the slums are considered incubators, which produce genuine citizens. The parents who arrive in these incubators might not be full products, but by the time they graduate from these incubators, their children will have become real citizens – stripped of their older language, customs and culture. The biggest and best guarantee here is that these children will make good followers and will follow the rules of the system to climb the ladder. They can never invent ways which can change the society or culture or alter the system in any way. This all can be easily seen if one looks at the millions of Desi people living in the west. While quite a few have achieved financial success, they have not been able to produce any real scientists, artists or genuine thinkers, even though they have access to the best education and research facilities.

The division lines amongst the Desi’s in the west can be defined by FOB’s versus the CB’s. Those born and raised in the west tend to stick together as a group and look down upon the new immigrants and label them as “fresh off boat”. One of the differentiating factors used here is the new immigrants inability to speak English properly or with an accent. The immigrants look down upon the other side by

calling them cultural bastards (Sometimes this term is used: *BCD (where * could be A (American/Australian) or B (British) or C (Canadian)) and BCD stands for “born confused Desi”). While the immigrants have the option of fixing their speaking abilities in order to graduate, the CB’s have no option to discard their own label. Their failure to create a new culture means that their label must persist. This is unfortunate because the CB’s had the best hope, living in a free society with many resources at their disposal and using the Americans as an example who come up with a new culture. Had the CB’s succeeded in creating a better Desi culture, it could have been used in the Desi lands to resolve the problems there.

A “blueblood” landowner, who also happened to be in politics in the United States, asked an Indian CEO of a large corporation that if he was satisfied with the “bakshish” he was being given in the US. The message was clear that in the end, the Indian was only shining someone else’s shop. This becomes further evident when one looks at the world. It was the Desi blood and sweat of the brow which built the Middle East. Whether it is the IT industry or the healthcare industry in the west, you will find large scale Desi contributions. How much has the Desi expat community contributed to the Middle Eastern or western GDP? When you compare these numbers with the GDP of Desi countries you will find large inequalities. The Middle East and the West have the mosques and the mandars, the only thing they do not have is a culture which lacks courage.

An HR recruiter working in a technology firm disclosed the technique he used to vet the Desi applicants applying for critical positions. After asking the technical questions, he would take out a clean sheet of paper and ask the applicant to produce the greatest thing he/she can – “Do anything you want with the paper but it has to be your greatest creation”. With no problem to solve, no past paper/exam to look at, no one to tell what to do, no example to look at – this almost always created a crisis within the applicant and a meltdown. The problem is that this is an exercise of the soul and not the mind, if done properly. While focusing on the applicants eyes, face, body and observing him do the work, one has the opportunity to take a peek inside the applicants soul. This is when the closet opens and the skeletons start coming out, usually starting with the applicant loosening his tie or a streak of sweat running down the forehead.

One has to wonder why the Almighty chose to alter the course of events so dramatically in the first half of the 20th century. Firstly, why did the Almighty wipe out a quarter of the European population through disease? Secondly, why did he allow the two great wars to happen – events which caused the elimination of another quarter of the European population? One has to wonder why the Almighty chose to create Pakistan? If you look at the wall of shame, this is the only bright spot in Desi Muslim history. Why didn't the Almighty just let things go on – in a state of decline? The defeat in 1857 drove home the fact that the Muslims were no longer capable of defeating the British militarily. The mechanization of warfare meant that taking on an industrial nation without matching their scientific prowess was going to result in failure. It became clear that the pendulum had swung completely and when it came to knowledge and rationality, the Muslims now matched the medieval Christians and the west looked like the early Muslims.

This realization led to the formation of Schools and Universities, like the Sir Syed University and a sort of a revival. What these early reformist clearly understood was that blindly adopting the western system would lead to disaster – it would never succeed and the Almighty will never permit it. This is evident if one looks at the initial steps taken by the reformers. For example, Syed Ahmad Khan had sections of the Al-Ihya (The revival of Islamic science – Al-Ghazali's 40,000 page master piece, perhaps the greatest human intellectual accomplishment of all time) translated and made it a mandatory reading for all new students.

Within a span of 50 year, these reformers and the institutions they formed, were able to produce enough people who could update and re-boot the stalled Islamic systems – A critical mass had been reached. These folks clearly understood that a society is like a fabric, you pull one string and the rest comes with it – Thus while learning from the west was important, one had to be very careful, as even selective adoption can be dangerous (After all, Ghazali and his fellow citizens probably had access to Plato's The Republic and chose to stay clear of it). For instance, this speech given by Dr Iqbal at Cambridge University shows that those early reformers clearly understood the dangers:

"I would like to offer a few pieces of advice to the young men who are at present studying at Cambridge. ... I advise you to guard against atheism and materialism. The biggest blunder made by Europe was the separation of Church and State. This deprived their culture of moral soul and diverted it to the atheistic materialism. I had twenty-five years ago seen through the drawbacks of this civilization and therefore had made some prophecies. They had been delivered by my tongue although I did not quite understand them. This happened in 1907. ... After six or seven years, my prophecies came true, word by word. The European war of 1914 was an outcome of the aforesaid mistakes made by the European nations in the separation of the Church and the State".

If the Almighty has promised to protect this religion then from time to time, he sends people who help guide the majority of the followers back to the middle path and to correct the tilt away from the extreme. When the followers had reached the “tree-hugging” extreme in the 12th century, Genghis Khan and the Mongols were sent to correct the problem. These invaders became extinct fairly quickly by actually becoming conquered themselves. However, the overall effect was a course correction for the majority. Again when the majority of the followers of the faith began to tilt towards stagnation and backwardness, the European colonialists were sent to correct the path. Once the colonialists outlived their usefulness and the critical mass of followers was ready, the colonialists too were made extinct. We see yet another tilt these days and the war against extremism is being fought. This phase is going to pass also, resulting in a course correction.

Quite a few promises were made to the Almighty in the subcontinent by these reformers in the 19th and early 20th century. Some positive steps were also taken. As a reward the Almighty created the country and gave a homeland to the followers. Here is an example of one of the promises (Jinnah's speech to the State Bank of Pakistan):

“I shall watch with keenness the work of your Research Organization in evolving banking practices compatible with Islamic ideas of social and economic life. The economic system of the West has created almost insoluble problems for humanity and to many of us it appears that only a miracle can save it from disaster that is not facing the world. It has failed to do justice between man and man and to eradicate friction from the international field. On the contrary, it was largely responsible for the two world wars in the last half century. The Western world, in spite of its advantages, of mechanization and industrial efficiency is today in a worse mess than ever before in history. The adoption of Western economic theory and practice will not help us in achieving our goal of creating a happy and contented people. We must work our destiny in our own way and present to the world an economic system based on true Islamic concept of equality of manhood and social justice. We will thereby be fulfilling our mission as Muslims and giving to humanity the message of peace which alone can save it and secure the welfare, happiness and prosperity of mankind”.

Why would the Almighty allow the establishment and flourishing of an interest based system? After all the Quran itself alludes to the fallacy of such a system by saying that the example of a person who

takes interest is like that of a man who tries very hard to get up, and then someone pushes him back to the ground – He tries to get up again and is thrown back to the ground once more – boom and bust cycles anyone? Even though Jinnah spoke about banking and finance above, one can easily extend this to any other system that is bound to be rejected by the Almighty because it has a sinister foundation.

Turning back on a promise made to the Almighty or trying to fool him, guarantees one thing only – That the Almighty will cause humiliation. Whether it is the cricket field (match fixing), or the yearly trips to the IMF and world bank (begging), or defeat in wars (1971), or the natural disasters like the yearly flooding or the regular earth quakes, the troubles facing the inhabitants are guaranteed to never end. It appears that near the end of his life, Jinnah himself caught on to this predicament and its aftereffects when he remarked to a friend “watch how every ruler of Pakistan is going to be worse than the previous one”. A creator knows his creation better than any other!

Thus in conclusion, one can say that the Desi cultural handicap will guarantee nonstop failure. That the Almighty will not allow any sincere effort to help the masses to succeed, regardless of whether it is from an honest individual or a foreign nation. Dr Iqbal warned about this Desi cultural handicap in his poem “Jawab-e-shikwa – Almighty's answer to the complaint”:

Waza Mein Tum Ho Nisara, Tau Tamaddun Mein Hanood,
Yeh Musalman Hain! Jinhain Dekh Ke Sharmaen Yahood?

From Christians you have learnt your style, your culture from Hindus;
These folks are Muslims! Who shame even the Jews?

Yun To Syed Bhi Ho, Mirza Bhi Ho, Afghan Bhi Ho
Tum Sabhi Kuch Ho, Batao To Musalman Bhi Ho!

You are known as Syed, and Mirza, you call yourselves Afghan;
You are everything, tell me, are you also Muslim?

Yale University

YaleGlobal Online

punjabi - Bully

In a book to be published this week, former US Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott tells the story of President Bill Clinton's personal diplomacy in averting a possible nuclear war in South Asia. The conflict began in May 1999, when Pakistani commandos infiltrated the Indian part of Kashmir in the Kargil region. By the end of June, a furious Indian response with air and artillery assaults threatened to overwhelm Pakistan. Intelligence reports suggested that a cornered Pakistan might turn to the ultimate: nuclear weapons, which both India and Pakistan had tested in 1998. On July 4, 1999, while the US celebrated its Independence Day, an alarmed Clinton and his national security aides went to an unannounced meeting with Pakistan's Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif – a meeting that US national security adviser Sandy Berger said could be “the single most important meeting with a foreign leader of his entire presidency.” The following story about that momentous day is adapted from Talbott's “Engaging India: Diplomacy, Democracy and the Bomb” (Brookings Institution Press). – YaleGlobal

The Day A Nuclear Conflict Was Averted

During the 1999 Kargil crisis, Clinton's forceful diplomacy pulled Pakistan back from the nuclear brink

👤 Strobe Talbott 📅 Monday, September 13, 2004



On the brink of a catastrophe: Indian artillery pound Pakistani infiltrators in the Kargil region of Kashmir.

WASHINGTON: During the first week in June [1999], just as Milosevic was acceding to NATO's demands over Kosovo, Clinton turned his own attention to India and Pakistan.

In letters to Nawaz Sharif and Vajpayee, the president went beyond the studied neutrality that both prime ministers were expecting—in Pakistan's case with hope, and in India's with trepidation. Clinton made Pakistan's withdrawal a precondition for a settlement and the price it must pay for the U.S. diplomatic involvement it had long sought. Clinton followed up with phone calls to the two leaders in mid-June emphasizing this point.

Pakistan was reported to be readying its nuclear weapons until President Clinton intervened

The United States condemned Pakistan's "infiltration of armed intruders" and went public

with information that most of the seven hundred men who had crossed the Line of Control were attached to the Pakistani Army's 10th Corps.

In late June Clinton called Nawaz Sharif to stress that the United States saw Pakistan as the aggressor and to reject the fiction that the fighters were separatist guerrillas. The administration let it be known that if Sharif did not order a pullback, we would hold up a \$100 million International Monetary Fund loan that Pakistan sorely needed. Sharif went to Beijing, hoping for comfort from Pakistan's staunchest friend, but got none.

"This guy's coming literally on a wing and a prayer,"
– President Bill Clinton about Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif.

Pakistan was almost universally seen to have precipitated the crisis, ruining the promising peace process that had begun in Lahore and inviting an Indian counteroffensive.

On Friday, July 2, Sharif phoned Clinton and pleaded for his personal intervention in South Asia. Clinton replied that he would consider it only if it was understood up-front that Pakistani withdrawal would have to be immediate and unconditional.

The next day Sharif called Clinton to say that he was packing his bags and getting ready to fly immediately to Washington—never mind that he had not been invited. ..He warned Sharif not to come unless he was prepared to announce unconditional withdrawal; otherwise, his trip would make a bad situation worse. The Pakistani leader did not accept Clinton's condition for the meeting—he just said he was on his way.

On the eve of Sharif's arrival, we learned that Pakistan might be preparing its nuclear forces for deployment.

"This guy's coming literally on a wing and a prayer," said the president." That's right," said Bruce Riedel [NSC aide], "and he's praying that we don't make him do the one thing he's got to do to end this thing."

It was not hard to anticipate what Sharif would ask for. His opening proposal would be a cease-fire to be followed by negotiations under American auspices. His fallback would make Pakistani withdrawal conditional on Indian agreement to direct negotiations sponsored and probably mediated by the United States. Either way, he would be able to claim that the incursion had forced India, under American pressure, to accept Pakistani terms.

After several long meetings in Sandy Berger's office, we decided to recommend that Clinton confront Sharif with a stark choice that included neither of his preferred options. We would put before him two press statements and let Sharif decide which would be released at the end of the

Blair House talks. The first would hail him as a peacemaker for retreating—or, as we would put it euphemistically, “restoring and respecting the sanctity of the Line of Control.” The second would blame him for starting the crisis and for the escalation sure to follow his failed mission to Washington.

On the eve of Sharif’s arrival, we learned that Pakistan might be preparing its nuclear forces for deployment. There was, among those of us preparing for the meeting, a sense of vast and nearly unprecedented peril. When Clinton assembled his advisers in the Oval Office for a last minute huddle, Sandy told him that overnight we had gotten more disturbing reports of steps Pakistan was taking with its nuclear arsenal. Clinton said he would like to use this information “to scare the hell out of Sharif.”

Sandy told the president that he was heading into what would probably be the single most important meeting with a foreign leader of his entire presidency. It would also be one of the most delicate. The overriding objective was to induce Pakistani withdrawal. But another, probably incompatible, goal was to increase the chances of Sharif’s political survival. “If he arrives as a prime minister but stays as an exile,” said Sandy, “he’s not going to be able to make stick whatever deal you get out of him.” We had to find a way to provide Sharif just enough cover to go home and give the necessary orders to Musharraf and the military.

We had to find a way to provide Sharif just enough cover to go home and give the necessary orders to Musharraf and the military.

The conversation had already convinced Clinton of what he feared: the world was closer even than during the Cuban missile crisis to a nuclear war. Unlike Kennedy and Khrushchev in 1962, Vajpayee and Sharif did not realize how close they were to the brink, so there was an even greater risk that they would blindly stumble across it.

Adding to the danger was evidence that Sharif neither knew everything his military high command was doing nor had complete control over it. When Clinton asked him if he understood how far along his military was in preparing nuclear-armed missiles for possible use in a war against India, Sharif acted as though he was genuinely surprised. He could believe that the Indians were taking such steps, he said, but he neither acknowledged nor seemed aware of anything like that on his own side.

Clinton decided to invoke the Cuban missile crisis, noting that it had been a formative experience for him (he was sixteen at the time). Now India and Pakistan were similarly on the edge of a precipice. If even one bomb were used...Sharif finished the sentence: “. . . it would be a catastrophe.”

[Clinton] returned to the offensive. He could see they were getting nowhere. Fearing that might be the result, he had a statement ready to release to the press in time for the evening news shows

that would lay all the blame for the crisis on Pakistan.

Sharif went ashen.

Clinton bore down harder. Having listened to Sharif's complaints against the United States, he had a list of his own, and it started with terrorism. Pakistan was the principal sponsor of the Taliban, which in turn allowed Osama bin Laden to run his worldwide network out of Afghanistan. Clinton had asked Sharif repeatedly to cooperate in bringing Osama to justice. Sharif had promised to do so but failed to deliver. The statement the United States would make to the press would mention Pakistan's role in supporting terrorism in Afghanistan—and, through its backing of Kashmiri militants, in India as well. Was that what Sharif wanted?

*Theatrics must
be used!*
↓

Clinton had worked himself back into real anger—his face flushed, eyes narrowed, lips pursed, cheek muscles pulsing, fists clenched.

Clinton had worked himself back into real anger—his face flushed, eyes narrowed, lips pursed, cheek muscles pulsing, fists clenched. He said it was crazy enough for Sharif to have let his military violate the Line of Control, start a border war with India, and now prepare nuclear forces for action. On top of that, he had put Clinton in the middle of the mess and set him up for a diplomatic failure.

Sharif seemed beaten, physically and emotionally. He denied he had given any orders with regard to nuclear weaponry and said he was worried for his life.

When the two leaders had been at it for an hour and a half, Clinton suggested a break so that both could consult with their teams. The president and Bruce briefed Sandy, Rick, and me on what had happened. Now that he had made maximum use of the “bad statement” we had prepared in advance, Clinton said, it was time to deploy the good one. ..Clinton took a cat nap on a sofa in a small study off the main entryway while Bruce, Sandy, Rick, and I cobbled together a new version of the “good statement,” incorporating some of the Pakistani language from the paper that Sharif had claimed was in play between him and Vajpayee. But the key sentence in the new document was ours, not his, and it would nail the one thing we had to get out of the talks: “The prime minister has agreed to take concrete and immediate steps for the restoration of the Line of Control.” The paper called for a cease-fire but only after the Pakistanis were back on their side of the line. It reaffirmed Clinton's longstanding plan to visit South Asia.

The meeting came quickly to a happy and friendly end, at least on Clinton's part.

Adapted from Strobe Talbott's "[Engaging India: Diplomacy, Democracy and the Bomb](http://bookstore.brookings.edu/book_details.asp?product%5Fid=12008)" (http://bookstore.brookings.edu/book_details.asp?product%5Fid=12008) (Brookings Institution Press). Talbott, former Deputy Secretary of State is the President of the Brookings Institution. Copyright © 2004, The Brookings Institution.

Pashtun - Bribe

What they never tell us about Ayub Khan's regime

Murtaza Haider | Updated November 01, 2016

Pakistanis are a forgiving lot. They are even more forgiving of the dead. Civil and military dictators, fascists, hate-spewing clerics, and vigilantes end up with disciples, and at times, even with a shrine.

Military dictators are slightly more fortunate. An army of reputed defenders, in uniform and civvies, continues singing the praise of the golden era when the 'General Sahib' once ruled.

They reminisce about the days when honey and milk flowed in ravines and open drains, and when the economic growth rivalled that of South Korea or some other Asian tiger or cat.

October 27 marked the 58th anniversary of the Martial Law imposed by General Ayub Khan.

Given that we have the advantage of hindsight, we can revisit the 'golden days' to test the veracity of the claims of bounty and harmony that are usually retailed, yet seldom verified.

Political leaders of all stripes and tenor must envy the good repute General Ayub Khan continues to enjoy almost 50 years after he reluctantly relinquished power.

The popular discourse about the Ayub era (1958 - 1969) is that of economic growth, prosperity, and the growing stature of Pakistan on the world stage.

However, the economic realities of the time are much less glamorous, if not dismal.

An objective review of General Ayub Khan's policies and actions suggests that his primary motive was to sustain and prolong his rule as his regime sowed the seed, and generously watered the plant, for Bangladesh's separation that came years later.

He empowered the religious fundamentalists as he sought their support against Fatima Jinnah.

The economic growth, which many cite as his singular achievement, promoted the income inequalities resulting in the rise of the 20 influential families who controlled the nation's resources and amassed ill-gotten wealth, leaving the rest poor, hungry, and resentful.

The economics of inequality

Shahid Javed Burki, a former World Bank economist, rightly identified the fundamental disconnect between the public and the Ayub Junta that celebrated 10-years of being in power by highlighting GDP growth and other inflated macroeconomic indicators.

The general public, however, cared less of the aggregate statistics as they struggled without much success against price inflation and spatial income disparities.

Burki points out that the so-called economic growth was rooted in income inequality, which worsened over time between regions and among people with the growth in the macroeconomy.

The result was evident: half of the industrial wealth accrued to Chinoties in Punjab and the immigrant Memons, Bohras, and Khojas.

At the same time, General Ayub opened the door to foreign experts who were ignorant of, and alien to, the political economy of Pakistan.

Yet they came armed with policies that might have worked elsewhere but were ill-suited for Pakistan's challenges.

General Ayub's economic prowess need not be discounted entirely. His penchant for central planning is evident in the second five-year plan.

The inflow of foreign capital, at twice the rate of that of India, sparked growth in industries that supported consumer goods.

One must also review what drove the growth and what industrial sectors blossomed as a result.

A close look at what transpired reveals that there was nothing organic about the growth.

It was primarily driven by foreign aid, the same way General Musharraf's rule was buttressed by American aid after 9/11.

By December 1961, foreign aid was more than twice the size of foreign loans. With the second five-year plan in 1964, foreign aid was responsible for 40% of the total investment. ←

And that's not all. Foreign aid covered 66% of the cost of imports. One must give credit where it's due, and it's mainly foreign aid. ←

Read next: Religious orthodoxy during Ayub regime

Sindhi - ignore

GULF NEWS 

US president snubs Pakistan president at summit

Leaves Islamabad off list of nations he thanks for Nato supply

Published: 00:00 May 23, 2012 02
AP

Chicago: In an unmistakable snub, US President Barack Obama left Pakistan off a list of nations he thanked for help getting war supplies into Afghanistan.

The omission speaks to the prolonged slump in US relations with Pakistan that clouded a Nato summit where nations were eyeing the exits in Afghanistan.

Obama readily acknowledged the tensions raise questions about whether Pakistan will help or hurt the goal of a stable Afghanistan. Continued mistrust between the US and Pakistan also threaten cooperation to eliminate Al Qaida sanctuaries and could undermine US confidence in the security of Pakistan's growing nuclear arsenal.

"We need to work through some of the tensions that have inevitably arisen after ten years of our military presence in that region," Obama said Monday. "I don't want to paper over real challenges there."

Pakistan is not a Nato member but was invited to the summit on Sunday and Monday because of its influence in next-door Afghanistan and its role until last year as the major supply route to landlocked Nato forces there. Pakistan closed those routes after a US attack on the Pakistani side of the border killed 24 Pakistani soldiers in November.

The last-minute invitation from Nato to join the Chicago talks was a sign of hope the rift had healed.

But it hasn't. And Obama's dealings with Pakistani President Asif Ali Zardari made that clear on Monday.

Zardari came to Obama's hometown expecting a separate meeting with the US leader like the one accorded to Afghan President Hamid Karzai. But without a final deal to reopen the supply lines, no such meeting was to occur.

Obama, along with Karzai, did speak briefly with Zardari on the sidelines of a large group meeting on Monday. Karzai dismissed the encounter in an interview with CNN as a "three-way photograph taking...just a photo opportunity."

That was after Zardari had to sit by as Obama opened Monday's session with public thanks only to the nations north of Afghanistan who allowed expanded supply shipments to transit their territory to compensate for the closed Pakistani border gates. Pakistani officials played down the snub.

*Add Benazir Bhutto's Trip to US
+ snub by Bush (1989)*

Add Kashmiri + Baloch