



IMAFI – A Recipe for Betrayal

Reports have revealed that retired General Raheel Sharif, just 45 days after having retired as Pakistan's Chief of Army Staff, has accepted the command of the 43-nation alliance of Muslim countries which has been put together by Saudi Arabia. Sensing the negative reaction of the Muslims to this acceptance, Defence Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif on 6 January 2017 confirmed the acceptance claiming that the government had been taken into confidence. Sensing further negative reaction, the Defence Minister on 10 January 2017 then resorted to further backpedaling by distancing himself from Raheel's acceptance, saying that Raheel has not applied for a No Objection Certificate for the appointment. However, the government campaign to justify Pakistan's involvement in the US's War on Terror and the need to defend the Saudi territory continues, in a bid to swing public opinion for the alliance/ coalition.

The impression is being created of Muslim unity enough to call into existence a single army, while leaving separate governments to control the nation-states into which the forces of colonialism and neo-colonialism divided the Ummah. This reflects, among other things, the need to present the Ummah with the impression that its need is being met: the unity of the Ummah, symbolized by a single military force, rather than over 50.

However, the coalition does not answer the next question that inevitably arises: why not have a single organic government, as also mandated by Sharia, rather than over 50 governments of nation-states which are as often as not the result of lines drawn on the map by European colonial administrators?

The purpose of the coalition is instructive. The very name of the coalition, Islamic Military Alliance to Fight Terrorism (IMAFI), reveals whose war is actually being fought. This coalition is not meant to fight for any Muslim cause. It is not meant to free Muslims in Palestine from the occupation of the Jewish entity, nor those in Kashmir from Indian occupation, nor the Rohingya from that of the Burmese majority; it is meant to fight terrorism. In other words, if it intervenes in Syria, it will do so against "terrorism", not to relieve those Muslims being killed because they are choosing to resist the Bashar Al-Assad regime. In other words, the IMAFI has been brought into existence by Saudi Arabia to fulfill American purposes.

There are two reasons for the IMAFI. The first is to provide a Muslim force as a substitute for US troops, which cannot be used because that would inflame domestic opinion. The second is to allay Muslim opinion, which has been fed the propaganda that Muslims can simultaneously be divided into over fifty different statelets, yet provide a single force. However, IMAFI merely is the counterfeit that shows what the real thing would be like. A coalition of forces is not needed, but a single force, the army of the Khilafah.

One of the problems with a military alliance has always been that of unity of command. These alliances are lacking because the forces composing them owe obedience to both their home governments and to the field commander. One means has been to ensure that the country providing the largest force also to nominate the

alliance commander. This is a problem for General Raheel, unless Pakistani forces form the bulk of the alliance's forces.

However, the forces of the Khilafah do not need any of the delicate balancing needed in an alliance, because there will be just one appointing government. In the case of the IMAFT, it is clear that the commander's main task will be to convince the Ummah that the force is the real deal, and represents the aspirations of the Ummah, even though it does not. Whose interests will thus be served? And thus who will General Raheel actually be serving?

One possibility that has been touted is that the IMAFT is basically meant for training, and it makes sense for the former commander of the world's largest and most successful anti-terrorism force to contribute his expertise. For one, this is proof, if any more is needed, that General Raheel was head of what was seen as an anti-terrorist force by those with so much to fear from terrorism. It appears that the force General Raheel will head is supposed to provide Saudi Arabia a role in Syria which was severely diminished by the increasing dominance there after the fall of Aleppo. It should not be ignored that Saudi desire for Pakistani forces, if not for deployment, at least to free up Saudi forces for deployment, in Yemen, were refused by General Raheel, so the Russian and Iranian dominance in Syria would not go down well with Saudi Arabia.

The IMAFT idea was there before the fall of Aleppo, but now it has assumed greater importance, because it represents the entry of Saudi Arabia into a theatre in which Russia and Iran appear well-entrenched, acting as proxies to the United States. It was the intervention of Russia, with its US-approved recent drawing closer to Turkey, which paved the way for the fall of Aleppo. The IMAFT is thus an attempt by Saudi Arabia, and thus its master, the USA, to consolidate US influence in this area at a time the sincere revolutionaries remain committed to the Khilafah project. Very conveniently, the IMAFT will make available troops at a time when the USA finds it politically impossible to send troops of its own due to the overwhelming anti-American sentiment in the Muslim World. Though one of the conditions General Raheel has laid down is that he will refuse to be subordinated to a Saudi commander, he will still find himself answering to the government that commits the most forces, and behind that, to the power that will be using the IMAFT to meet its strategic designs— the USA.

General Raheel is thus lending his name and his record as COAS, as well as his distinguished lineage, to what is actually a piece of US flimflam. The ummah has too long been made to hope that the OIC would lead to a greater closeness, and the most potent symbol of unity, an intervention force, has not come to the fore, with the result that not only do such old wounds as Kashmir and Palestine continue to fester, but new ones, such as Iraq and Syria, have come into being.

The Quran tells us what Muslims should be. This is one Ummah, unified on one belief, as Allah has told us. ﴿وَإِنَّ هَذِهِ أُمَّتُكُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَأَنَا رَبُّكُمْ فَاتَّقُون﴾ **“And truly this Ummah of yours is a single Ummah, and I am your Lord so have taqwa”** [Al-Muminoon 23: 52] Allah (swt) warned us of the consequences of disunity, which we feel the results of today, when He said: ﴿وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ إِلَّا تَفْعَلُوهُ تَكُن فِتْنَةً فِي الْأَرْضِ وَفَسَادٌ﴾ **“And those who disbelieve are allies are one another, and if you (Believers)**

do not do so (unite and help one another in deen) there will be fitna on the Earth and great corruption” [Al-Anfal 8: 73]. And Allah (swt) described Muslims as one brotherhood to the exclusion of all others. **«إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِخْوَةٌ»** **“Indeed the believers are a single brotherhood”** [Surah al-Hujarat 49:10]. And RasulAllah (saaw) said, **«الْمُسْلِمُ أَخُو الْمُسْلِمِ، لَا يَظْلِمُهُ، وَلَا يَخْدُلُهُ، وَلَا يَحْقِرُهُ، اتَّقَوْا هَٰ هُنَا، وَيُشِيرُ إِلَى صَدْرِهِ ثَلَاثَ مَرَارٍ، «الْمُسْلِمُ إِخْوَةٌ» بِحَسَبِ امْرَأٍ مِنَ الشَّرِّ أَنْ يَحْقِرَ أَخَاهُ الْمُسْلِمَ، كُلُّ الْمُسْلِمِ عَلَى الْمُسْلِمِ حَرَامٌ، دَمُهُ، وَمَالُهُ، وَعَرْضُهُ»** **“A Muslim is a Muslim’s brother. He does not wrong, desert or despise him. Piety is found here (pointing three times to his chest), despising his Muslim brother is enough evil for any man to do. Every Muslim’s blood, property and honor are unlawful to be violated by another Muslim.”** (Muslim). And he (saaw) described the Muslims one hand against others, **«الْمُسْلِمُونَ تَتَكَافَأُ دِمَاؤُهُمْ وَهُمْ يَدٌ عَلَى مَنْ سِوَاهُمْ يَسْعَى بِدِمَتِهِمْ أَدْنَاهُمْ وَيُرَدُّ عَلَى أَفْصَاهُمْ»** **“The blood of every Muslims is equal, they are one hand against others. The asylum offered by the lowest of them in status applies to them (all), and the return is granted to the farthest of them.”** [Ibn Maajah] When RasulAllah (saaw) gathered the Ansaar and Muhajireen as one Ummah in Madinah, he wrote in the Madinah Charter, **«بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ، هَذَا كِتَابٌ مِنْ مُحَمَّدٍ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، بَيْنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ «In the name of Allah the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful. This is a document from Muhammad the Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace), governing relations between the Believers, the Muslims of Quraysh and Yathrib and those who followed them and worked hard with them. They form one Ummah Ummah asides from the people.”** And he (saaw) wrote, **«وَأَنَّ سَلْمَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَاحِدَةٌ لَا يَسَالِمُ مُؤْمِنٌ دُونَ «The peace of the believers is one. No separate peace shall be made with other than believers when believers are as one fighting in the way of Allah. Conditions must be fair and equitable to all.”** This demonstrates the characteristics of that Ummah: their land, their war and their security is one. The IMAFT violates the verses and the Ahadeeth, and General Raheel’s participation puts him in the awkward position of violating them.

Raheel finds himself in the position of violating all the characteristics of a single Ummah given by RasulAllah (saaw). The Bilad of Syria is as much a homeland for a Muslim from Nigeria as from Indonesia, or (as in General Raheel’s case) from Pakistan. Who takes military force into a land? A stranger. Then, as for the waging of any war, how can one Muslim take part in a war on a side opposed to another Muslim.

In Syria, the IMAFT (and its commander) will not find terrorists, but Muslims fighting for their lives. If they are disturbed, how can any Muslim not share that unease?

**Written for the Central Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir by
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