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**Challenges for Biden**

The victory of Joe Biden has created a ripple of excitement among his supporters, with euphoric crowds cheering and dancing in different states. Their jubilant mood indicates that they have taken a sigh of relief over the defeat of a whimsical incumbent of the White House who, according to them, resorted to the politics of divisiveness. Trump's policies have inflicted a deep wound on America’s social fabric which will take years or possibly decades to heal.

But this ephemeral happiness will be followed by the myriad of challenges that are awaiting the president-elect. The first arduous task that will confront Joe Biden is the Covid-19 spread in the US. The virus has killed more than 236,000 American citizens besides forcing over 29 million to apply for unemployment benefits. It is believed to have wreaked havoc with the lives of millions of Americans because of the botched attempts to handle it by Donald Trump, who not only dismissed it as merely a flu in the beginning but also came up with bizarre prescriptions.

Amidst the deaths and economic devastation caused by the contagion, Trump also picked fights with top medical experts, attempting to remain immersed in the ways that might help him re-elect. He did not seem to have realized that his mishandling of the pandemic was one of the factors leading to his drubbing in the elections. The Republican president showered favours on companies in the name of bail-out packages amounting to trillions of dollars instead of directing much-needed resources towards helping common citizens during the pandemic. Even one of the biggest crises of the US could not deter him from ratcheting up tensions with Iran, China and other countries.

So, Biden will have to address the economic devastation caused by the contagion. He will have to take urgent steps to satisfy the white working classes that greatly benefited from the first three years of Trump’s rule, which created employment at a massive scale. Some estimates suggest that this was a record level of employment in the last fifty years. This was one of the factors boosting Trump’s popularity among the white working classes and some other sections of society. Many believe that if the pandemic had not hit the second largest democracy, Trump would have been celebrating his re-election. So, Biden will have to prove that he is capable of dealing with this big catastrophe. He will have to come up with bail-out packages for common Americans and not for corporations.

He can do so by withdrawing some of the favours showered by Trump on large corporations during the pandemic. Bernie Sanders had named a number of top American companies that almost paid no taxes. The new president could penalize such companies, extracting money from them and spending it on the working class and other marginalized sections of American society. He needs to extend unemployment benefits to millions of Americans who were rendered destitute after losing jobs. Biden has already announced he will form a team of scientists with a task to come up with vaccines for the coronavirus. He should also explore ways to collaborate on this issue with countries like Russia, China and the UK that have already been working on this. The sooner he comes up with the vaccine, the better.

Biden needs to remember that Trump has been defeated but Trumpism lives on. Those politics of hatred will not wither away. The Republican leader secured eight million more votes than he did in the previous polls. It means that his popularity increased over the years. The vitriolic attacks that he directed towards non-white and other sections of society will be mainstreamed if the discontent among the white working classes is not urgently addressed. Muslims should especially cooperate with the president-elect and not justify extremism on any ground. Such justification will only create problems for Joe Biden.

Biden will also have to revive the Iran nuclear deal that was meant to dissuade the theocratic state from carrying out plans to become nuclear. The deal was also aimed at mitigating the hardships of the Iranian people who have been suffering the illegal sanctions slapped by Trump’s administration. A number of international bodies confirmed in the past that Tehran was not violating the deal but Trump chose to scrap it to appease the war-mongers sitting in the power corridors of Tel Aviv. Biden also needs to rein in Israel that has been flouting all international laws by carrying out illegal settlements in the occupied territories. The new president will also have to prevent the Zionist state from its plans to annex the Golan Heights. Biden should also come up with a plan to stabilize Syria, Afghanistan and a number of African countries that have been marred by Islamist and other insurgencies.

No American president has ever summoned enough courage to challenge the military industrial complex. It is because of this that many critics say no matter who sits in the White House, the military industrial complex will keep on enjoying his or her support. Can Biden set a precedent by challenging this powerful lobby of arms that thrive on death and destruction? Can he rein in the executives of arms manufacturing whose policies not only caused the decimation of around 2.5 million Iraqis, more than 550,000 Syrians and millions in Afghanistan, Libya and other conflict zones.

Can Biden put an end to military interventions of the US in various parts of the world? The US has militarily intervened more than 223 times since its creation. It has waged senseless wars that have not only caused death and destruction but deprive Americans of much-needed infrastructure and basic amenities. More than three trillion dollars was pumped into the Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts while the world spent more than five trillion dollars on the 'war on terror'. This jingoistic approach not only killed non-Americans in conflict zones but it also claimed over 39,000 American lives every year. Biden must put an end to all this, diverting trillions of dollars that are squandered in war zones to health, education, decent housing and improvement of the environment.

Biden is intent on normalizing relations with the EU but this should be for positive purposes. He should not be seen making efforts to normalize ties with European leaders to contain China. He should explore ways that help him cooperate with China and Russia. He will have tremendous pressure to go hard on these countries but if the world has to see ever-lasting peace and an environment of fraternity then the US, Russia, China and the EU must have cordial relations. Together they can put an end to the war machinery and direct precious resources towards the betterment of humanity. China and Russia are eager to normalize ties with Washington. Biden should lead the move from the Western side, scrapping the irrational decision of the Trump administration, and creating an environment where all states can thrive.

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