

FOREWORD

In this life, more often than not, we observe that humans find themselves in situations/positions for which they have no prior experience and skills. As we look into history we find numerous examples where people even found themselves (often suddenly) thrown into leadership roles. Many have been entrusted because of political/religious/ethnic affiliations, family hierarchy, the compromise-candidate factor, being at the right place at the right time, sheer luck, and other factors which have no or little relevance to important leadership qualities. We can discuss various types of leaderships: military or monarchy; political, autocratic, democratic, religious, and even tyrannical. Here I will briefly comment on political leadership at the national and international levels involving nation-building and peace-building diplomacy leading to peace, happiness and progress of the human race while staying in balance with nature.

The political leader of one nation often seeks to align with other national leaders' policies merely to keep the best of that nation's status quo and self-serving friendship; even refusing to sign treaties that would advance wider global interests. Lack of wisdom and foresight is blatant. For example, consider the recent scenario where the American presidents and policymakers supported Egypt and its military ruler since the early 1980s and were suddenly faced with Arab Spring in 2011. Until then they had never communicated or interacted with the Muslim Brotherhood because they did not want to offend Mubarak and because of suspected and actual jihadist/terrorist related activities. Until President Obama, no one thought about keeping the lines of communication open. After the 2011 Egyptian revolution, the United States announced that it would open formal diplomatic channels with the group. It is quite obvious that no one had the vision to see this new awakening coming. The United States and other western leaders now face a situation where they have no option but to communicate with members of the Brotherhood as they rule the country. They now find themselves in a very awkward situation of abruptly starting this discourse. The United States and its leadership, which proclaims to spread democracy and human rights throughout the world, lacked in con-

viction as it wholeheartedly supported a dictator in Egypt much against its own propagated principles of democracy. It is important that leaders, including those of nations, lead by personal example by living their talk. It looks so inappropriate when the United States violates its own principles of democracy and freedom while at the same time trying to impose them on less democratic nations.

Political/national leaders should avoid making very tall statements like, “We shall never talk with the terrorist(s)” as no one for sure knows the future in this ever changing fluid world with advanced technology. Keeping the lines of communication open with one’s adversary does not mean one has given up on political integrity, rationale, and logic. Political leaders can keep interactions open without agreeing or giving in. Ignoring this wisdom, the United States, though a vibrant example of democracy granting its citizens human rights, has had many political pitfalls like Egypt as we observe history. President Bush said we will never talk to Al-Qaeda/Taliban/terrorists after 9/11/2001 attacks on the World Trade Center. The United States then went to war in Afghanistan to destroy Al-Qaeda and remove Taliban from power. Now President Obama’s desperate efforts to get out of this bloody mess have resulted in establishing a setup in Qatar to start dialogue with Taliban. We talk to our adversary after 12 years of painful, prolonged, and bleeding war. We needed confirmation of 3,300 plus US/allied soldiers dead, about 23,000 soldiers wounded/disabled, and thousands of Afghan casualties to start the dialogue process. It is very hard to comprehend and justify why this could not have been done earlier. Lack of humility, vision, and basic common sense is found in many world leaders. Sometimes we even see collective action which can rarely stand the basic test of common sense, integrity, and logic.

In the last decade or so, cell phone and social media communication technology has taken a quantum leap. This has diminished the authority of state control, power and maintenance of secrecy. The modern IT savvy generation is bound to react to adverse/unfavorable situations, organize within minutes to oppose such policies/dictates, and freely share information. Only about a year back Bank of America’s levying of fees on ATM withdrawal led to a sudden social media response and the bank had to reverse its decision. This displays the power, the reach, and the spontaneity of the modern generation with tools exhibiting and exercising its collective will, freedom, aspirations, and disagreement in an organized way. The recent cases of the Occupy Movement and Edward Snowden (whistle-blower on National Security Agency’s intelligence program PRISM which

collects phone/e-mail data on US and world citizens) are examples of the modern generation feeling disenchanted with their leadership and policies which lack transparency. Leaders at all levels have to keep pace with this technology savvy generation by staying in touch through constant communication and dialogue. This generation is defining our leaders for future challenges through loudly communicating their desired leadership qualities. These qualities hinge around democracy, human rights, and freedom, with more emphasis on fairness, equality, equal opportunities, provision of fair environments, especially fair justice systems, and transparency. In short, they are demanding responsive and dynamic leadership.

We all are aware that nations and their leaders conduct leadership and diplomacy with the aim to benefit themselves (as individuals or as a nation) in each and every situation. Each nation is doing that, yet each nation is also projecting itself as more ethical than the other and at times even projecting itself as an innocent victim. Internet technology has connected the world population in such a rock-hard way that nations find it extremely difficult to control and regulate this new instant communication phenomenon. This harsh reality of ordinary people having power with information, real-time exchange of ideas, and communication has to be accepted by governments/leaderships. We will see more instances where self-interested projections will be speedily exposed, challenged and suitably addressed.

If we observe the India–Pakistan situation, each nation's leadership is out to paint the other as an extreme bitter adversary whereas if both nations meet at the people to people level, there is not much conflict. On the contrary, there is friendship and good communication. Often in such conflicts, however, it is in the ruling leadership's interest to keep the conflict alive to stay in power and control the state by generating fear with constant war-mongering rhetoric. In coming times, finding even a remote level of acceptance for such belligerent demeanors will be exceedingly difficult.

Sooner or later we will have to move to a leadership level where we as individual nations are less important and relevant vis-à-vis the group of nations of the whole planet. We have lived and seen all types of leadership resulting in more personal gain, greed, and lack of trust in others. This has degraded the human faith in human nature affecting its current direction of evolution. We have to adopt a leadership style which works as a team with the aim to benefit most (if not all) at all levels. As several nations try to get hold of all the military power and resources; thus aiming to dominate over other nations, we create and escalate a gloomy situation which may

eventually lead to total destruction. This puts a big question mark on the future, the very existence of the human race and the Earth we depend on for sustenance. Future leaders have to take a quantum leap and move to a level where all nations conduct business as equal partners ensuring overall well-being of all and securing our planet for our future generations. Leaders have to function as seeing all nations and their population as connected, interdependent, and as one unit.

Future leaders have to focus on provision of good governance while keeping away from religion. They should put more emphasis on the spiritual aspects of human nature where love for all fellow beings and all life is more important than following divisive organized religion(s). These aspects should be introduced as a mandatory subject in elementary to high school level education curriculum. This will produce future leaders with constructive mind-set and help us move away from the destructive route which mainly focuses on material gain and growth.

I express my heartfelt thanks to Dr. Nancy Erbe and Dr. Anthony H. Normore who offered me this opportunity to write a foreword for this book. Both are well known published authors and experts in their respective fields. I also strongly commend all the esteemed contributing authors of this book who with their expertise have expressed valuable and relevant perspectives on leadership from varied standpoints. They have contributed immensely in their chosen subjects and I have no doubts in my mind that readers all over the world will immensely enjoy reading this book and thus benefit in many ways from its interdisciplinary contents on leadership at all levels. As I review the chapters of the book on transformational leadership, servant leaders and service-learning for community development, I see that Gandhi's example fits so flawlessly in all the above-mentioned leadership roles. Community service was of great significance to Gandhi. He continued serving with all his heart till his end. He never accepted government or political positions of power, wealth, or prestige and his transformative ability continues to inspire.

I wholeheartedly wish the book a grand success. The timing of this book, *Collective Efficacy: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on International Leadership* could not be more fitting as I see the conflict-ridden world along with an ever present real threat to the very existence of our planet. However hard we try, we will eventually lose our national identities and character. It is almost written on the wall. No one can avoid reading it, as it is loud and bold. As we lose these identities, we will create new identities

and leaders in consonance with oneness, modernity, and technology. This new identity will move toward being borderless in tangibility and free flowing in thought, dialogue, and expression. This new identity and leadership will be a blessing as it unbinds the human spirit towards synergy of humane expression and action. At its best it will create the ideal trinity in balance comprising humans, nature, and life itself as one connected entity.

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