

Ansarallah's State Building Vision



Dr. Ahmad Sharafuddin

*Chief Ansarallah Representative, PhD in Law
Assassinated by unknown gunmen on the 21st of January 2014*



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Professor Ahmad Sharafuddin summarizes his vision in building the state's nationhood in key 3 aspects: **The Clergy, Tribalism and Militarism.**

The cure to what ails Yemen is the **formation of a unified secular state with a nationalistic army** (what he means here is an army that is loyal to the state and not tribes or sects or religion).

The Professor then continues and sheds light on how he proposes to combat these ailments:

To reform the clergy and religion in Yemen, when we talk about reform, that doesn't mean we are not pious. We are pious, perhaps maybe more than they are, and we care about Islam more than they do. Religion has been abused in the past and they used to back up their abuses with laws and the constitution. We want to build our nation in a different way, a secular state where religious fanaticism is absent, meaning that the state does not use religious rhetoric or propaganda. The state should not use religious propaganda against its own people, as religion belongs to the people and not the state.

Because at present time, the state revolves around a cult of personality. This controversy has been argued by intellectuals for a long time but without any tangible conclusion. We bring this controversy back to light and say that the state should not use religious propaganda in these present times. Why?

Because we have tried a religious state for hundreds of years, and we have seen how men in power corrupt religion and exploit it to adopt a certain ideology or sect, while disregarding all other sects and ideologies. many of the conflicts within the Islamic religion has happened due to these reasons in which the people in power try to force their will over their subjects or constituents in the areas they rule without reasoning, leading to bitter struggles. We know that Islam has different schools of theology and not just one, if they can't agree to this, what do you think will happen on the political field?

These conflicts cannot be resolved by a religious based political theory. A political theory stemming from religion will never be accepted by all people involved in the political process, so we

propose that we leave the people with their different schools of theology, their sects, and faiths to co-exist together, and that the state does not meddle in such affairs and be absent from it, while guaranteeing to protect all rights of people. This is after all what we are fighting for. There are many countries in the world that have implemented these principles and were successful in removing the usage of religious rhetoric from the state. Islam won't be the state religion and Sharia law won't be the constitution.

Because the constitution is what builds the state and acts as its fundamental cornerstone. If we allow the Sharia to become the source of its legislations, that means we are building an Islamic constitution, meaning that the state will be built on religious grounds hence not solving the issue at hand.

In dealing with Tribalism:

In building a federal state we will take away the power of the tribal powers by centralizing government and not local chiefs to sway and influence power, therefore taking from them their power and influence. The primitive state is characterized by Sana'a as the center of decision making based on the tribes around Sana'a who have considerable influence on state affairs due to their economic power, social weight, and prestige, meaning that they call the shots and dictate the policies of the state. When we build a centralized state, the local chieftains will lose their influence and won't be able to sway the state. Why?

Because they won't be able to control anybody, anymore.

Every state subject in the federal state will have a specific apparatus of jurisdictions, a legislative body, an executive body and a judicial body with its own constitution, its own laws, its own courts, and economic resources allocated to it, allowing to be free of the pull of any powerful clan or individual who wish to influence its affairs, thus keeping the clan influence minimal. If this is achieved, then we have created a federal centralized state. We also demand that the capital to be moved from Sana'a to another city away from seats of power of the tribal clans so that the federal state focuses on matters of Defense, security, Financial and foreign affairs, and anything that is common with the other states. Other than that, we leave the states to run itself. When we

call for a federal state in the right way, the proper way, we propose two regions like this or more. Multiple northern governorates or multiple southern governorates that all lead to the contour of federal statehood, details can be discussed later. I shed light on a very important matter that local governments should have a free reign on how they handle affairs as in world regimes there is nothing shorter than that.

There is a system, a system with its pillars and rules and if an imbalance happens it would shake the core of that system. There is nothing called having full executive powers. For instance, if we say decentralized governance, we all know what that is. It has systems and rules and pillars that it stands upon. If something changes that then it will cease to exist. The political term “full executive power” is a term used to mislead people, leading them to believe that they will have a local government who gives them so and so when it won't offer them anything.

We are not talking about government systems; we are talking about political systems. We are not talking about decentralized governance; we are talking about centralized policies in which all the authority of the state is distributed fairly and not only on the governance side. The Federal state should have considerable sway over decentralized authorities so it can reform it. Through parliament we have seen many times how this wasn't done correctly as it was done for political gains and not the welfare of the people. That's why we want to take the power from the clans and tribes and give it back to the state, so that Yemen be set back in order.

In dealing with militarism:

The military has always waged wars unjustly at times and in some way or the other has led the country. We want an army that is for the people, protects the people and doesn't wage war on them. An army whose ideology is to protect and defend its people do not wage war on them and kill them. An army with a nationalist ideology with no political deviations towards a particular group or party, usually the states use religious fervor to charge its men. Wars were waged on the south on religious grounds and declared a Jihad, a Jihad against who?! Fellow countrymen! Fellow Muslims! They have used this rhetoric many times in Saada and

on numerous occasions. “Kill these infidels! kill these Khwarij!” All this time the soldiers walk into battle with such a mindset that they are fighting a holy war. How misguided they are. We want an army that is built different. An Army that is built on the ethos of Nationhood, Brotherhood and to defend the nation against all enemies. An army that doesn’t have tribalism or religion or old allegiances affecting its ranks or ideology. We want a nationalist ideology where the army fights for the good of the people. An army where people from Mahra to Saada can join in an army of the people.

We can build a state on these three pillars: **Secular State, Federal State, Nationalistic army.**

We will thus be able to defeat the axis of evil that has plagued our country.