

Statement
by
H.E. Dr. Seyed Ali Mohammad Mousavi
Secretary-General of
D-8 Organization for Economic Cooperation
before
7th World Islamic Forum on
Strategic Communication: Reference Values, Institutions, Persons
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YAZD

Your Excellency Ayatollah Naseri, Imam Jumah of Yazd,
Your Excellency Mr. Mir Mohammadi, Governor of Yazd,
Your Excellency Mr. Mohammad Sadoughi, President of Sadoughi Foundation,
Your Excellency Amb. Murat Bilhan, Deputy Chairman of TASAM,
Your Excellency Dr. Zahrani, Chairman, IPIS,
Distinguished participants, Ladies and gentlemen,

I am delighted to be here with you at the 7th World Islamic Forum on *Strategic Communication: Reference Values, Institutions, Persons*. This forum has established itself as an important platform for strategists, analysts and policy makers to congregate and exchange ideas. I look forward to some very interesting ideas coming out of discussions during the course of this conference, while the whole Islamic Ummah living in a very deplorable situation. I hope the outcome of this conference would provide a critical insight to the cause of unity and prosperity of the Islamic World amid deep division and chaos among us. But before I begin, please let me just say how happy I am to be here in this beautiful and culturally rich city of Yazd, my hometown in fact, and express my deep appreciation for the warm and friendly welcome offered to me and my delegation since our arrival. It is pertinent to say that the organizers have aptly selected Yazd to deliberate on strategic communications and linkages to values, institutions and persons. I congratulate TASAM, IPIS and, of

course, our distinguished host H.E. Mr. Mohammad Sadoughi for their timely initiative to bring the importance of Yazd to surface.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Development of virtual world during last couple of decades has reshaped the process of strategic build-up and the pace of change in every stratum of human life: military as well as non-military. Innovation in information technology has pervasive effects across all domains of society. Internet has not only become part and parcel of daily life in both advanced and developing cities, it is nowadays deeply engrained in societal value chain. Today, 3.5 billion people have access to internet and more than 2 billion of them is active in social media and most of the are connected via mobile device. Virtual communication, therefore, has become an increasingly formidable strategic instrument for communication both in war and peace. Access to internet is a pre-requisite for opportunities available at arm's length and afar. This has offered liberty to some coterie whereas opportunities for great strategic build-up to others. I, however, believe that internet is only an instrument and we must run this instrument with to the maximum benefit of humanity. This is where strategic communication and role of institutions become relevant.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Now, I will highlight the importance of institutions, families and persons. For centuries, institutions uphold our values and morale. Many of us here inherit civilizations that reigned for centuries with glory and honour. Civilizations enabled establishment of institutions which upheld its supremacy in human welfare and scientific developments. Institutions nurtured and cultured knowledge, promoted innovation and preserved societal values through its practices in families. Families are the primary ground of learning where human values are engrained to the future ambassadors of our nation. From strategic point of view, families played immensely prominent role in every society. Take, for example, the pervasive role prominent families have been playing in Yazd.

In addition to prominent scholars in the Islamic World like Ayatollah Haeri Yazdi, I would like to focus on two families, the ‘Khatami’ family and the ‘Sadoughi’ family. Seyyed Mohammad Khatami, a prominent Iranian scholar and former President of Islamic Republic of Iran hailed from the soil of Yazd. He not only made enormous contribution to the country, but also at the international level floated the idea of ‘Dialogue Among Civilizations’. The United Nations proclaimed the year 2001 as the United Nations' Year of Dialogue Among Civilizations. President Khatami promoted the concept of a 'dialogue among cultures and civilizations' as new paradigm of cultural subjectivity and as new paradigm of international relations which gained traction in the international community of scholars and politicians.

The contribution of ‘Sadoughi’ family to the development and modernization of the city is critical. Leadership of Shahid Ayatollah Sadoughi during the revolution ensured a great service to Yazd and the entire nation. Their contribution was not only limited to politics and development, but also stretched to creation of human capital through establishment of quality academic and economic institutions. Shahid Ayatollah Mohammad Sadoughi, prominent Islamic scholar and Ayatollah in Yazd devoted his life to the people and to his holy belief.

These two families have exerted great efforts in politics, economics and cultural development and their efforts paid back to the people of Yazd with significant dividend.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen

At this point, and as the Secretary-General of D-8 Organization, I would also like to respectfully remember Merhum Erbakan, founder of the D-8 and yet another great personality in Turkey. Late Erbakan was the key figure who envisioned universal brotherhood of the Muslim Ummah and institutionalized cooperation and partnership through a more effective forum in the form of the D-8 Organization. Now, allow me to give a brief introduction on the scope of activities of the D-8 Organization for Economic Cooperation, as one of his legacy. The D-8 is an

intergovernmental organization consisting of eight developing countries namely, Bangladesh, Egypt, Indonesia, Iran, Malaysia, Nigeria, Pakistan and Turkey, dispersed in three different continents in Asia, Europe and Africa. The leaders of these eight developing countries gathered in June 1997 in Istanbul and through the historic ‘Istanbul Declaration’, established the D-8 Organization for Economic Cooperation.

D-8 is based on friendship, solidarity and pursuit of sustainable economic growth. D-8 countries are endowed with abundant human and natural resources and the Organization aspires to become a dynamic economic group promoting sustainable development in member states as well as a major actor in global economic governance and system. We are putting efforts to cope up with the complexity of today’s global economic environment which has already integrated such concepts as inclusiveness, environmental sustainability, etc. to pursue constructive works.

Since its establishment, the D-8 successfully formulated the Charter, Global Vision, Roadmap and several other documents in order to ensure growth through effective partnership and elevate Member States’ positions in the world economy, diversify and create new opportunities in trade relations and provide better standard of living.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am happy to inform this august gathering that His Excellency President Rouhani has kindly accepted to host the 9th D-8 Summit on 5th December 2016 here in Iran. This meeting will coincide with the 20th anniversary of the organization and also mark a shift from the organization’s focus of policy formulation to a mix of policy formulation and project implementation. This occasion, after its last Summit in 2012, would, therefore, be of immense significance to the organization. Our leaders will review progress so far achieved and guide us for future course of action to meet the trade target of US\$ 500 billion by 2018. The Summit would also provide avenue to the D-8 leaders for mutual interaction and consolidation of partnership between themselves. We are eagerly looking forward to this momentous event and working hard to make the outcome of the Summit significant, enlightening and visionary.

At the end, I hope this august meeting of scholars and think tanks from various corners of the Islamic World will yield a comprehensive approach for greater unity and joint prosperity of the Islamic Ummah in a time of deep division and mistrust. In D-8 Organization, we are ready to play our constructive role for the sake of unity of the Islamic Ummah.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Before concluding, I would like to thank H.E. Mr. Mohammad Sadoughi, a competent member jointly representing Sadoughi family and Khatami family, who has inherited and of course, earned by himself, the dignity and nobility from both the families, for hosting this exercise of ‘strategic communications’ and the role of institutions, family and values in building the communication network. I also extend my appreciation to TASAM and IPIS for their conceptual contribution and inviting me to attend their forum.

I thank you for your audience and wish this gathering a grand success.