

Shams Ali

Government without Politics

SECOND EDITION

The Difference between Government and Politics

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Preface to the Second Edition

Since the publication of the First Edition of this book in 2004, the notion that “government” and “politics” are not the same thing has found its way into the language of journalists, politicians, and “the Man in the Street”.

This edition has been updated with articles written after 2004 and upto November 2007.

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Preface to the First Edition

The words “government” and “politicians” are used interchangeably most of the time today. This is because for most people today “government” means “politics” and “politics” means “government”. Most people just cannot tell the difference between the two.

But are “politics” and “government” the same thing?

What are all those “isms”, by which politicians justify their “powers”?

How do “politicians” justify their actions and who “owns” politicians?

What is “Democracy” and is the “World Government” an “ideal” or a painful necessity?

Can people trust politicians and can they trust government?

This book asks and answers these and other questions relating to “government” and “politics”.

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Chapter 3

Opinions, Convictions, and Reality

Date of first publication: 2004-07-15

FINDING THE GUILTY PARTY BETWEEN THE LINES OF THE BUTLER REPORT.

John, the Chief Executive Officer of XYZ International, and Simon, the President of the same company, are standing near a window on the top floor of a tall office block.

John points at something reddish below on the pavement and says, "I am sure it is a brick lying down there on the pavement".

"It can't be a brick", says Simon, "I am sure it is card box".

"And I am one hundred percent sure that it is a brick", says John.

"And I am absolutely convinced it is a card box", answers Simon.

At this moment Susan, the cleaner, enters the room.

"Look at that brick down there, Susan", says John pointing to the pavement below, "Simon says, it's a card box".

"Which brick?", asks Susan.

"That reddish card box over there", says Simon.

"I see something reddish down there", says Susan, "But I do not know what it is."

"Come on, Susan", says John, "You must have an opinion! Of course, it is a brick!"

"Come on, Susan", says Simon, "It is important to have strong convictions! Of course, it is a card box!"

"Just wait a minute till I came back", says Susan and leaves the room.

"Some people have no convictions", remarks John, with an air of superiority.

"Yes, it is important to have opinions and to be able to defend them", agrees Simon.

At this point Susan re-enters the room holding a reddish plastic sponge in her hand.

"This is what you were arguing about", says she showing to them the sponge, "It is a sponge, and neither a brick, nor a card box".

"So, I was right that it was not a card box", exclaims John triumphantly.

"It was I who was right", retorts Simon, "It is certainly not a brick".

The above little scene had no serious consequences. No cities were destroyed and no people were killed.

But government decisions resulting in destruction of cities and deaths of tens of thousands are taken on the basis of opinions and convictions.

How often those in power have sufficient honesty and objectivity to tell themselves, "We do not know", rather than forming opinions and convictions. And how often do they take the necessary steps to verify the facts before they take decisions affecting life and property of others?

The conclusion of the Butler report that while everybody was wrong, there is no one to blame, is unfortunately correct. It is not the fault of Tony Blair or of any of the people mentioned in the report, that the Public agrees to be governed by people who take decisions on the basis of opinions and convictions, rather than having duty to undertake the necessary work to discover the facts.

Government requires decisions based on honest, impartial and objective investigation of facts. Politics is based on opinions and convictions. This is why politicians are incapable of providing honest and

competent government. Tony Blair deserves praise, not condemnation, for teaching the Public this important lesson.