

## Great Saying إِنَّمَا بُعِثْتُ مُعَلِّمًا and Status of Teachers in Muslim Countries: A Comparative Study of Past and Present for Future Improvement

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### ABSTRACT:

The Divine teachings of Islam are proved as reliable and eternal by advanced scientific researches. The first revelation of Islam is logically asserted the importance of knowledge acquisition. Prophet Muhammad PBUH proud to be a teacher rather than to be the Last Prophet, Mercy for all Universes, only Returner of heavens, First Governor of Islamic State or Ever Conqueror of Wars, etc. Islam said that there is no any distinction among human beings on the basis of being an Arab or a non-Arab, not on black or white skin color, not due to the status of tribe but a scholar has a great potential of knowledge. It can be proved through the study of history that whenever a society gave a high status to their scholars and teachers, it got respectably high status among the other nations of the world. This phenomenon is also ascertained accurate among the present societies of the world again. This article revolves around the evidences of best days of Muslims till present downfall and the status of teachers in those & present Muslim societies. Resultantly, it is concluded that if any country gives high status to their teachers, it will achieve the high status among the world.

**Keywords:** Teacher Status, Teacher and Islam, Social Development, Role of Teacher, Knowledge.

### Introduction:

The Divine teachings of Islam are proved as reliable and eternal by advanced scientific researches. Believe in one god is the basic preaching of Islam and great philosophers of this era discussed this believe in each corner and finally they concluded the same, as (Sheldrake and Shermer) stated “Finally, there is one God, I could believe in based on purely naturalistic worldview.”<sup>1</sup> Another researcher stated it in these words “a basic belief”<sup>2</sup>. Second more emphasized element is five daily prayers of Muslims, which are experienced the best need for a “healthy and peaceful life”<sup>3</sup>. (Christina) stated that it is admitted by scientific researches that there are hundreds of benefits of Ablution<sup>4</sup> doing for five times in a day by Muslims<sup>5&6</sup>. Islamic ethics are the core rules and policies of any social welfare state which is admitted as Cihan stated that “The Western revolution kept on unfolding after pursuing with momentous consequences of Islamic ethics”<sup>7</sup>. Further March declared the findings after a research survey that “Islam is such a religious/ethical doctrine par excellence” which insists Muslim to affirm their “loyalty...towards ‘even’ non-Muslim States”<sup>8</sup> if these states are acting as per Islamic Ethics even at some extent. This is the reason that in western states, Muslims are working peacefully for the betterment of their states in all spheres of life<sup>9</sup>. therefore, it can be summarizing that Islamic teaching provokes its followers

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to fulfill their responsibilities for a peaceful, knowledge loving, effortful and devoting life for the betterment of their society members.

### **Importance of Knowledge in Islam:**

The first revelation of Islam is logically asserted the importance of knowledge acquisition.

إِذَا رَأَى بِأَمْرِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ----- إِفْرَاءَ وَرَبِّكَ الْكَرِيمِ- الَّذِي عَلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ- عَلَّمَ الْإِنْسَانَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ<sup>10</sup> -

“Read: In the name of thy Lord Who createth, read: And thy Lord is the Most Bounteous, who teacheth by the pen, Teacheth man that which he knew not”.

It catches a critical and profound approach that there are millions of items in human life and many of them are very much important for the existence of life of a human being but Islam revealed the first divine message about the order to “Read”. This stressfully increases the value of reading, achieving knowledge and writing practices for enhancing the sources of reading. Two lines repetition, regarding the order of “Read” shows the importance of reading as Chinese proverb is “reading makes a man perfect” also impacts. Fourth verse pour the significances of “pen” that if anyone want to achieve knowledge, he has to use ‘pen’ as the proverb also shows “writing makes a man exact”. The fifth verse is very critical in its subject and meaning that it announces ‘He taught man which he did not know’. The knowledges, whatever the man did not know previously, He has taught him completely. So, after that, the untaught knowledges is finished and further undelivered or taught knowledge is ended so till the end of universe, any knowledge which will be understood as new knowledge, will not be the new one but it can only be in its new style of presentation or previously forgotten one knowledge. Comprehensively, it can be said that all knowledges has been presented in Quran or through the Holy Prophets sayings or acts. It is we, whom forgot those knowledges or still not able to understand those or still de-tracked but all knowledges of this universe have been presented due to its ultimate importance.

### **Proud by Prophet Muhammad SAW:**

Islam, “an originally peaceful religion”<sup>11</sup> as the word ‘Islam’ depicts its meaning is a really peaceful religion. Islam was conveyed by the Prophet Muhammad SAW, the most kindhearted person of the world for the whole world<sup>12</sup>. He proved himself as ‘the most tolerant’<sup>13</sup> especially during preaching period in Makkah, promising to his faith during the hardships of Shaeb-e-Abi Talib<sup>14</sup>, Truthful and faithful even at the night of Hijrat<sup>15</sup>, extremely good governor in newly established state of Madinah dealing with diversified religions and ethnicity gaps<sup>16</sup>, “mighty conqueror and king”<sup>17</sup> in all battles, physician to change a city of diseases, Yathrab, into a healthy welfare state<sup>18</sup>, the most “careful protector”<sup>19</sup> of new ideological religion, the Last Prophet of the world<sup>20</sup>, unmatched miracle holder<sup>21</sup> but when he himself explained his identification and cause of his personal self-proud, he said, “I am sent as a teacher”

إِنَّمَا بُعِثْتُ مُعَلِّمًا<sup>22</sup>

This is really strange for a common person of any age that a person with such great achievements and granted-blessings left all grand statuses and announces that being a

teacher is his proud. This phenomenon describes an ultimate importance and high status of 'teacher' and 'knowledge'.

### Honored Status Differentiated by Islam:

According to the revelation of Islam, the first most is related to 'knowledge'. According to the self-introduction of the Holy Prophet of Islam, the most favorite and proud able profession is 'teacher'. Therefore, resultantly, it is evident that the most grandeur status in Islam is allocated for 'Knowledge' and 'Teacher'. (Khawaja, 2013) accumulated it in these words, "Scholars are highly appreciated in Islam for being knowledgeable person"<sup>23</sup>. Some other researchers like (Holger and Geoffrey 2004) also emphasized that "Iman and Mulla, missionaries and teachers, are maintaining the high status of the Islamic learned person"<sup>24</sup>. Besides these, we found many sayings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad SAAW about the importance of knowledge.

<sup>25</sup> حَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ يُونُسَ -- قَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَتَخَوَّلُنَا بِالْمَوْعِظَةِ فِي الْأَيَّامِ

Muhammad bin Yousaf said through a chain of tellers that Prophet Muhammad SAAW fixed some days to teach us.

This saying urge out the importance of achieving knowledge that proper timing should be fixed for its transformation. In another saying Prophet said;

<sup>26</sup> حَدَّثَنَا سَعِيدُ بْنُ غَفِيرٍ -- قَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ مَنْ يُرِدِ اللَّهُ بِهِ خَيْرَ يُفَقِّهْهُ فِي الدِّينِ

Saeed bin Ufeer told that Holy Prophet Muhammad SAAW said that the person who, acquire the knowledge of any element/method, Allah desires the betterment for him.

This saying is very obvious in describing that if someone achieves knowledge, the Lord of all universes desires his betterment.

<sup>27</sup> حَدَّثَنَا الْحُمَيْدِيُّ -- قَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ لَا حَسَدَ إِلَّا -- آتَاهُ اللَّهُ الْحِكْمَةَ فَهُوَ يَقْفِي بِهَا وَيُعَلِّمُهَا

Hameedi told that Holy Prophet Muhammad SAAW said that don't envy anyone but ... with the person who has been granted knowledge and he is disbursing it with logic and teach others.

In a different scenario, Holy Prophet asserted the importance of knowledge and teacher that teaching is such a grand task that others can show envy for it in their surroundings.

In Indonesia, Kyai is the name of a teacher having knowledge of maximum spheres of life in context with Islamic education. Charlene searched out that "the high-status of Kyai is exemplified in the saying among Muslims"<sup>28</sup>. This example shows a glimpse of importance of teacher and knowledge in Muslim countries.

In the concluded paragraph of this part, importance of knowledge is being shown through a quite different angle. The Holy Prophet said that the end of this world will come at such time when the world will become empty with knowledge and darkness of un-knowing will prevail everywhere.

<sup>29</sup> حَدَّثَنَا عِمْرَانُ -- قَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ إِنَّ مِنْ أَشْرَطِ السَّاعَةِ إِنْ يُرْفَعَ الْعُلُومُ وَيُنْبَتِ الْجَهْلُ

Imran told ... that Prophet Muhammad SAAW informed that one indications of Last Day is that knowledge will be banished and dis-knowledge prevails.

Islam does not deal with a Muslim as an individual but it considers it as a compulsory part of family, society, tribe and country. It is very clear in form of distinction given to any person. Islam said that there is no distinction on the base of family status, color or race, tribe or country because all of these are not achieved by the efforts of the person who is being given distinction. These are all the efforts of others family members, tribal community, DNA contribution or members of other country men. The distinction will be given to any person whom he achieved something through his own effort and hard work. Islam said that distinction will be granted to any member of any society who gain knowledge, become petty for others and be God-fearing. This is logically accepted that these elements are self-attempted. Mirza (2008) explained in his book “Except on the basis of piety, knowledge and being God-fearing”<sup>30</sup>.

Islam is a religion of logic and its rational teaching has ultimate welfare of humanity. In this context, if Islam sets such grand status for a ‘Teacher’ and ‘Knowledge’, it must have its logical and rational reasoning that it produces welfare of the person who chooses his profession as a teacher and who achieve knowledge for knowing and disbursing it for the betterment of others. In next part, such evidences are being discussed which witnessed not only the welfare of the person who chooses knowledge but also the high status of all society.

### **Historic Honor of Teacher and Social Status:**

History of mankind displays the story of Adam ‘full of knowledge of names of complete things’<sup>31</sup> story of Hazrat Noah ‘full of knowledge to construct the first ever largest boat to save the entire existing lives on earth’<sup>32</sup>, story of Ibrahim ‘full of reasoning knowledges regarding false gods and a concrete logical belief in one God’<sup>33</sup>, story of Hazrat Yousef ‘full of knowledge of dream description and preserving of grain’<sup>34</sup>, story of Hazrat Mosa ‘full of knowledge of Creator’s miracles’<sup>35</sup> story of Hazrat Suleman ‘full of knowledge of languages of all creatures’<sup>36</sup> and stories of other prophets affirms that the knowledge is the basic element of human life which only benefits the human life till its generation beyond the boundaries of time and space.

Today we have handful existing documentary evidences regarding Greek golden period. It is proved through the study of Greek history that the golden period of Greek started in 500 BCE and this was the time of the first most influential philosopher of that land, Parmenides, a great thinker and poet of nature & human being. From Parmenides to Anaxagoras, Anaximander, Empedocles, Zeno, Pythagoras, Socrates and Plato, all these philosophers keenly study unlimited number of books and manuscripts and used pen to write many splendid books for next generations. They did not leave teaching others throughout this period of 510 BCE to 347 BCE. So, we find reading, writing and teaching were the most eminent tasks of that era and on the other hand, if we throw the observation over the social condition of that era, we find that it was really golden period of Greek history. As Arvind elaborated it as “from Socrates to Alexander should be considered as Golden era”<sup>37</sup>. The same is stamped by another researcher, Sylvanus “the golden era of Greek learning, beginning from the Persian war (after Zeno period), and ending at the time of Alexander the Great”<sup>38</sup>.

The richest and welfare age can be seen in Muslim countries when the learned scholars and teachers like Jabir Ibn Haiyan (722-804), Muhammad ibn Musa Al-Khwarizmi (780-850), Ibn Ishaq Al-Kindi (801-873), Thabit ibn Qurra (826-901), Al Battani (858-929), Abu Bakr Al-Razi (865-925), Abu Nasr Al-Farabi (872-950), Ibn Al-Haytham (965-1040), Ibn Seena (980-1037), Omer Khayyam (1048-1133), Ibn Zuhri (1091-1166), Ibn Rushd (1126-1198), Ibn Baiter (1197-1248), Ibn Battuta (1304-1369) and Ibn Khaldun (1322-1406) were teaching and researching in their fields. These great persons give knowledge to the communities and resultantly, the standard of their communities developed up. We find that this was the ever-green period of Muslim history. Students from all over the world, used to come to these Muslim teachers and get knowledge. This evidence asserts that the scholars and learned teachers of these eras promoted the knowledge to their peoples and people used those received knowledges. Ultimately, the life standard of all community flourished.

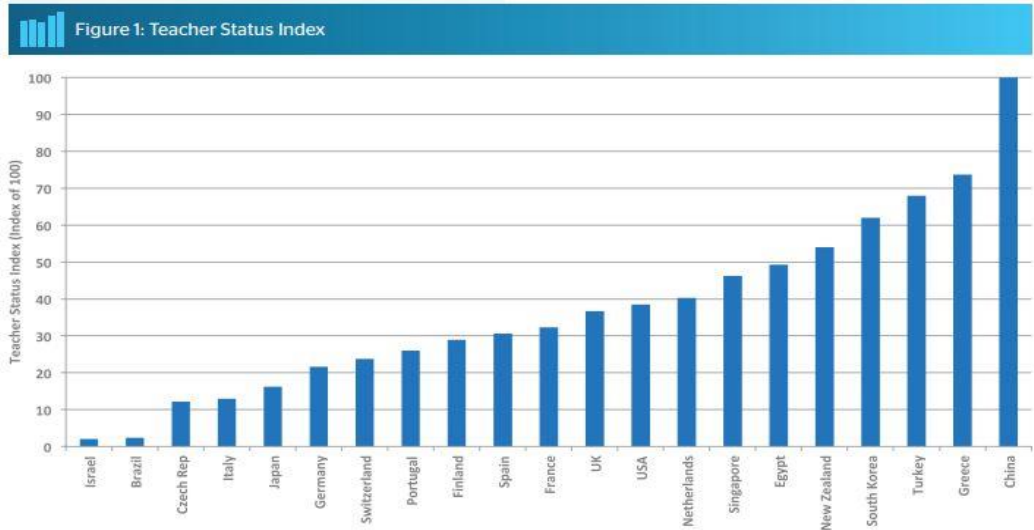
### **Present Era Evidences:**

First of all, human nature demands ‘more respect and honor of the profession’ in the society. Second any profession has more prestige and value if its remuneration is high and it has job security environment. According to these three points i.e. ‘respect’, ‘high remuneration’ and ‘job security’, person decides to choose that profession. Presently, there are different scenarios regarding the social respect, salaries & facilities and job security of teachers in different countries of the world.

In queue of previous discussion, it is concluded that if a society give high status to its teachers and scholars, it earns high status among other societies of the world. Therefore, present evidences are being collected in this regard, which are as under; China is acquiring a leading status in today’s world at financial, political, social and scientific scenario. BBC has published a recent research with the title “Teachers in China have the highest level of public respect”<sup>39</sup> this study was conducted at international level comparing teachers’ status in 21 countries. Prof. Dolton of University of Sussex compiled and indexed that “teachers are revered”<sup>40</sup> in China and “teachers in the UK are at 10th place”<sup>41</sup> in global index. In China, students and parents respect teachers but in Europe, students show respects to their teachers. Teachers are bracketed with nurses and social workers in Europe and in China teachers are compared with doctors. In US, teachers are compared with librarians and in Japan they are like government officials. Prof. Dolton said that status of teachers in present era were as highest in Greece. He said that after China, Turkey and South Korea are the countries where teachers are given highly respectful status. He placed countries regarding social respect, salaries, job security and desirability for being a teacher as Finland at 13th, Germany at 16th and Japan at 17th place among the developed countries of the world. The developing countries are at very lowest place in the concern.

### **Social Status and Salaries of Teachers and its Country:**

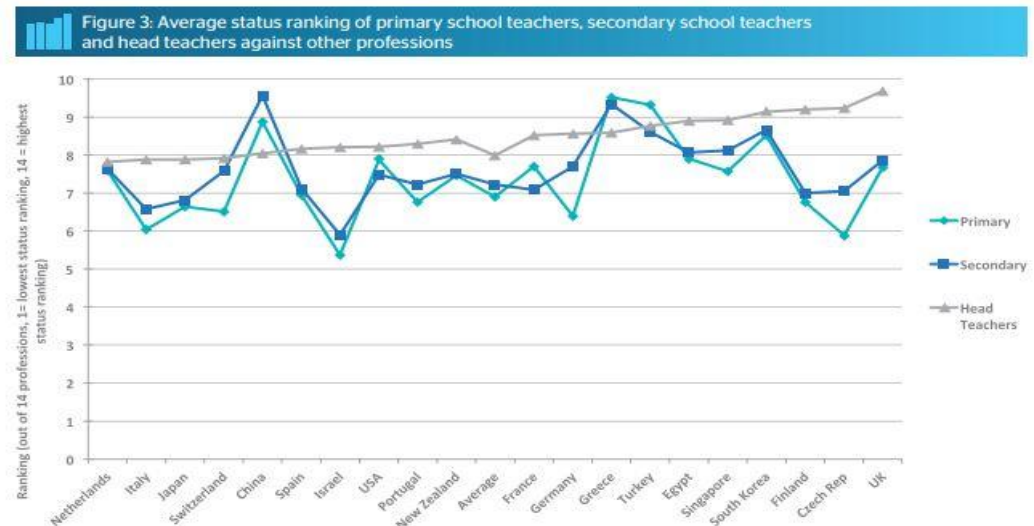
Research concluded that teachers in China are the most respectable by its communities and at second to onward places the order is as; Greece, Turkey, South Korea, New Zealand, Egypt, Singapore, Netherland, USA, UK, France, Spain etc.



(21 survey countries indexed on a relative scale 1-100)

OECD (2017)

According to the results of this part of research, Chinese give their teachers the highest-level salaries, respect and social prestige so obviously China is leading today's world.



OECD (2017)

Greece has a calm, peaceful, attractive, desiring and progressive environment in these days throughout the world. So it can be at second place in the respectable status of teachers. If we observe with a researcher's eye, the respectable and progressive status of these societies in 2013 was at the same order as this research survey showed the respectful status and level of salaries for their teachers in those societies.

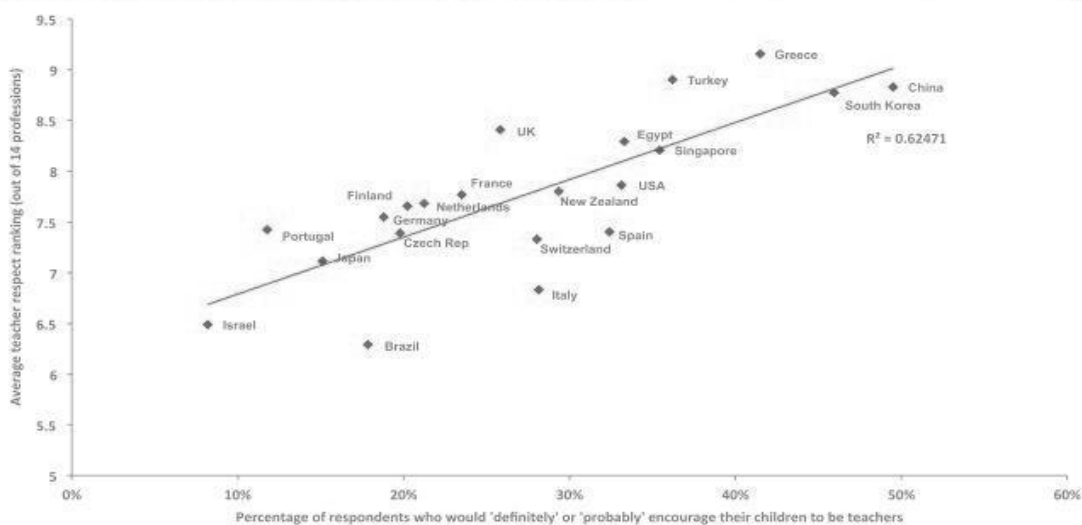


COUNTRY	INDEX RANKING	AVERAGE TEACHER SALARY (\$ USD, PPP ADJUSTED)	PISA RANKING (1=HIGHEST PISA SCORE, 20=LOWEST PISA SCORE)
China	100	\$17,730	3
Greece	73.7	\$23,341	17
Turkey	68.0	\$25,378	19
South Korea	62.0	\$43,874	4
New Zealand	54.0	\$28,438	6
Egypt	49.3	\$10,604	NOT AVAILABLE
Singapore	46.3	\$45,755	1
Netherlands	40.3	\$37,218	7
USA	38.4	\$44,917	12
UK	36.7	\$33,377	10
France	32.3	\$28,828	11
Spain	30.7	\$29,475	16
Finland	28.9	\$28,780	2
Portugal	26.0	\$23,614	14
Switzerland	23.8	\$39,326	8
Germany	21.6	\$42,254	9
Japan	16.2	\$43,775	5
Italy	13.0	\$28,603	15
Czech Republic	12.1	\$19,953	13
Brazil	2.4	\$18,550	20
Israel	2	\$32,447	18

OECD (2017)

The same situation is regarding the desirability to be a teacher in a society counts. The desire of next generation and parents to be a teacher is deviate a little than the order already given in previous annexures but the overall results are same.

Figure 5: Positive encouragement for children to become teachers correlated against average teacher respect ranking compared to other professions



OECD (2017)

### **Present Status of Teachers and Situation of the Muslim Countries:**

Islam gives the highest level of respect and status to teachers in its societies, now this is the time to look that what is the respect and status of teachers given by the Muslims countries. Donna and Evelyn wrote a story of Sudan which displays the beleaguering of a teacher by its Sudan and surrounding communities. ‘A young girl visits her father and said that a person, very much loving me, send marriage proposal for me. Her father asked, what is he doing for living? Suddenly the girl shocked and cautiously replies, “He is a teacher” but she added hopefully that his cousin is “working abroad”<sup>42</sup>. This attitude is showing a negative and inferior status for a teacher. This is not only in Sudan and its surroundings but in sub-continent, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh, all countries have approximately same social situation for teachers. In India and Pakistan, a teacher is called ‘Munshi’<sup>43</sup>. This world was proposed for a person who gets a minor skill of writing and reading and serves the landlords for his entire life. The words keep humiliating meanings also. This scenario is also depicting the low status of a teacher in these Muslim countries. Zohoor searched out that teachers in Iran has also “Low Status and Wages” and “too low to attract”<sup>44</sup> talented, well trained and exemplary teachers. Some other researchers, Mae and others stated that “shortcoming was that teacher status was low compared with other occupations”<sup>45</sup> in Indonesia and surrounding countries. As concern to Pakistan, an ideologically established country for performing Islamic values, situations for teachers are not different. There is very heavy interfere of politics in hiring teachers, teacher community is facing low wages, inadequate allowances, transfer and posting in far flung areas, no in time medical allowances, harsh and humiliating behavior by management officials, no adequate atmosphere for educational activities<sup>46</sup>. A greatly developed and rich Muslim country, UAE has relatively good but not excellent condition of its teaching staff as Mathew said in these words “declining trend for UAE teachers” and “relatively low status of teaching and the poor condition in schools”<sup>47</sup>. These are exemplary situations of low social status, respect, salary, facilities, choosing trend of being teacher and job security of teachers in Muslim countries.

### **Conclusion:**

Grandeur of knowledge is naturally built-in in human nature. Man feels grandness, respect and peace on acquiring and disbursing knowledge. Islam confirms the highest respect to acquiring and disbursing knowledge. The Holy Prophet Muhammad SAW declared him as a ‘teacher’ after endorsing the best ever highest other statuses of the world.

History of mankind is evident that whenever any society gave high status to knowledge and teachers, it got high status among other societies of the world like Mohanjo Daro, Socrates age of Greece, Muslim philosophers and scientists’ age of Iraq and Turkey etc. and presently China, Greece, Turkey, Sweden, USA and UK in todays. On the other side of picture, Muslim countries is giving low status to its teacher community so Muslim countries are lacking behind for high status among other countries of the world.



## Recommendations:

Give high status to teachers in your country today and start getting high status of your country among the world.

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