

In the Name of God, the Most Merciful, the Most Kind



April 05, 2018

The Role of Youth in Ensuring the Political Security of the Nation

United Nations Organization has loosely defined the youth as any person (mixed gender) whose age falls within 18 - 40 years. The youth represents the vibrant and most productive age, thus they are referred to as the backbone of any development, and therefore if the government fails to ensure their potentials are realized, the failure of development initiatives in the country will be inevitable. Human resources especially when balanced with economic resources are considered the most reliable agent to development and youth being the most essential segment of human beings as pointed out above, shall be treated with great care and concern in this context.

On the other side, to understand political security is to understand the concept of politics itself as well as security. As a result, Moa Tsetung defines politics as war without bloodshed. This means peaceful struggling to achieve political goals without violence or bloodshed in a given environment. Max Waver assumes, politics as who get what, when, where and how. This means that, politics is a process of attaining set goals in the society-these goals could either be political power, it could as well be economic or social goals. Other authorities viewed politics as the authoritative allocation of values. This suggests that, politics has to do with the use of power to allocate values in the society. These include security of lives and properties, laws and policies for the benefit of humanity as a whole. It is not possible unless we change our superstitious perceptions.

Central to the above three definitions is that, politics is a process through which human beings interacts to attain or achieve set goals which might be power or authority, economic interest, or any positive policy, program, agenda geared toward improving the life of the people in the society at large.

In Afghanistan, we are quite familiar with conflicts which is an integral part of human society but noted violent conflict as avoidable. Afghan has fought a destructive civil war from 1992-2001; and even now the conflict is going on in the country. As preparations for 2018 Wolsi Jirga, and District Councils elections are on top gear, youth in the nation have been taken for granted and perhaps misinterpreted, as they are easily provoked and misused against the political rivals.

The youth are considered as leaders of tomorrow, but not without preparations and putting realistic youth empowerment policies in place. Drug abuse, crime and most importantly the unemployment, threaten this leader of tomorrow and the agent of development of the country. As it is evident that the older person the more difficult it would be to change his behavior, it is a social law. It is therefore very timely for the youth to come together and identify what they should do to better their tomorrow and that of generations yet unborn. Ant it is the duty of the government to mobilize all its resources to address the needs of the youth and translate their potential capabilities into practice. Afghanistan is set to hold Wolsi Jirga, and District Councils election in 2018. Considering the tough security challenges the country faces, taking security measures accounts for the guaranteeing a relatively transparent elections in Afghanistan. On the other side, considering the presence of different terrorist groups in the country and also the power and influence of the illegal armed groups, it is likely the youth will be misused to vote for them or even to be misused against their rival candidates in a violent manner. These conditions call the government for putting specific measures and arrangement to ensure the security and also ensure the youth will not be misused by any

Sustaining Progress in Transition Countries

By Cihan Sultanoğlu

In the World Bank's most recent "Doing Business" report, half of the Eastern European and Central Asian countries included in the global ranking were among the top 50. As a measure of economic maturity, the report confirms what many in the international development community have long known: the region is ascendant.

Over the last decade, the economies of Eastern Europe and Central Asia have recorded spectacular gains, buttressed by ambitious market and public-sector reforms. The question now is how to ensure that this progress - which has tripled the size of the middle class - is sustained.

Signs of the region's social and economic prosperity are everywhere. In Azerbaijan, incomes have increased dramatically in recent decades, and only 5% of the population now lives below the poverty line - down from nearly 50% in 2002. Elsewhere, Estonia is the third country in Europe in startups per person and has one of the fastest Internet speeds anywhere. And from Albania to Kyrgyzstan, e-government systems are allowing more people to connect with critical services through online and electronic portals.

But while it is tempting to assume that the region is destined for prosperity, structural bottlenecks continue to slow progress, especially in the Western Balkans, the southern Caucasus, and parts of Central Asia. To maintain momentum in meeting the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030, leaders must address three key issues.

First, the region's economies need to be strengthened to incentivize smarter, more sustainable growth. For example, fossil-fuel subsidies should be reconsidered, because they discourage investment in energy-efficiency projects, and impede the development of renewable technologies. Similarly, while public financing of pensions and welfare programs is dependent on taxing labor, much of the region currently suffers from high rates of unemployment; in the Western Balkans, there are nearly no jobs, or none at all. Job creation is an urgent challenge for every state in the region.

Second, in many countries, the space for civil society is becoming narrower, posing a threat to pluralism and accountability. To prevent conflict and give voice to the region's marginalized groups, tolerance and respect for human rights must be made essential ingredients of governance.

Finally, the region must coordinate on strategies to address the changes that automation and artificial intelligence will bring to the labor market. Leaders in some countries, particularly Belarus, are shifting economic output from heavy manufacturing to technology startups. But authorities

everywhere can do more to increase the resilience of their workforces.

Fortunately, governments, technology companies, civil-society groups, and journalists recognize the salience of these issues and are working together to build more transparent and accountable institutions. In many countries, heads of government are using the SDGs to guide their national planning and efforts to legislate reforms. The parliaments of several Central Asian countries have even endorsed the SDGs as a development roadmap.

Changes like these are helping to translate development ambition into action. In Armenia, the government recently created the world's first national SDG innovation laboratory, a collaborative effort designed to "accelerate" SDG implementation. Initial research efforts will focus on increasing the country's tax collection, improving its education system, and boosting its renewable-energy sector.

Meanwhile, planning officials in Moldova have used crowd-funding to raise millions of dollars from the diaspora to fund sustainable development projects at home. Revitalization efforts have included the reconstruction of a public plaza in the capital, Chişinău, and the expansion of infrastructure in rural areas.

The region's private sector is also participating actively in sustainable development efforts. From Siemens' green heating and air conditioning systems to Unilever's "equal pay for equal work" policy, multinational firms operating in Eastern Europe and Central Asia are embracing sustainability and equality as viable business models.

In only a few decades, the people of Eastern Europe and Central Asia have witnessed profound political and economic changes. To capitalize on the development progress already made, countries and organizations must learn from one another, adapting solutions to local conditions. That will be the main topic at the Istanbul Development Dialogues, an annual global gathering organized by the UN Development Programme, this week. As the new UNDP Strategic Plan for 2018-2021 argues, collaboration is a critical component to any sustainable-development strategy.

If the measure of a country can be calculated by how easily business is conducted within its borders, the states of Eastern Europe and Central Asia have a bright future. With strong leadership that transforms the region's economies and modernizes its institutions, the region's recent gains will not be fleeting.

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Will China Really Supplant US Economic Hegemony?

By Kenneth Rogoff

As China and the United States engage in their latest trade tussle, most economists take it as given that China will achieve global economic supremacy in the long run, no matter what happens now. After all, with four times as many people as the US, and a determined program to catch up after centuries of technological stagnation, isn't it inevitable that China will decisively take over the mantle of economic hegemony?

I am not so sure. Many economists, including many of the same experts who see China's huge labor force as a decisive advantage, also worry that robots and artificial intelligence will eventually take away most jobs, leaving most humans to while away their time engaged in leisure activities.

Which is it? Over the next 100 years, who takes over, Chinese workers or the robots? If robots and AI are the dominant drivers of production in the coming century, perhaps having too large a population to care for - especially one that needs to be controlled through limits on Internet and information access - will turn out to be more of a hindrance for China. The rapid aging of China's population exacerbates the challenge.

As the rising importance of robotics and AI blunts China's manufacturing edge, the ability to lead in technology will become more important. Here, the current trend toward higher concentration of power and control in the central government, as opposed to the private sector, could hamstring China as the global economy reaches higher stages of development.

The possibility that China might never supplant the US as the world's economic hegemon is the flip side of the technology and inequality problem. Everyone in the West is worrying about the future of work, but in many ways it is a bigger problem for the Chinese development model than for the American one. The US needs to struggle with the problem of how to redistribute income internally, especially given highly concentrated ownership of new ideas and technology. But for China, there is the additional problem of how to extend its franchise as export superpower into the machine age.

True, it is highly unlikely that President Donald Trump's huffing and puffing and bluffing will bring about a large-scale return of manufacturing jobs to the US. But the US has the potential to expand the size of its manufacturing base anyway, in terms of output if not jobs. After all, today's high-tech factory floors produce far more with far fewer workers. And the ro-

bots and AI are coming not just in manufacturing and driverless cars. Robo-doctors, robo-financial advisors, and robo-lawyers are just the tip of the iceberg in machine disruption of service-sector jobs.

To be sure, China's rise is hardly a mirage, and its heady success is not built on population size alone. India has a similar population (both around 1.3 billion people), but for now, at least, it trails far behind. Chinese leadership must be credited with doing a miraculous job of lifting hundreds of millions of people out of poverty and into the middle class.

But China's rapid growth has been driven mostly by technology catch-up and investment. And while China, unlike the Soviet Union, has shown vastly more competence in homegrown innovation - Chinese companies are already leading the way in the next generation of 5G mobile networks - and its cyber-warfare capacity is fully on par with the US, keeping close to the cutting edge is not the same thing as defining it. China's gains still come largely from adoption of Western technology, and in some cases, appropriation of intellectual property. Trump is hardly the first American president to complain on this score, and he is right to do so (though starting a trade war cannot be the solution).

In the economy of the twenty-first century, other factors, including rule of law, as well as access to energy, arable land, and clean water may also become increasingly important. China is following its own path and may yet prove that centralized systems can push development further and faster than anyone had imagined, far beyond simply being a growing middle-income country. But China's global dominance is hardly the predetermined certainty that so many experts seem to assume.

Yes, the US faces vast challenges as well. For example, it must devise a way to retain dynamic technological growth while preventing excessive concentration of wealth and power. To be a hegemon, however, does not require being the world's largest country - otherwise, England would never have ruled much of the world as it did for more than a century. China might lead the digital future if the US drops the ball, but it won't become the dominant global power simply because it has a larger population. On the contrary, the coming machine age could be a game changer in the battle for hegemony.

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