

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



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Political Leaders Must Serve the People

Though the evolution of human society has enabled them to achieve some marvellous achievements, they have not been able to achieve one of the most important aspect – they have not been able to develop a better society to live in. They have not been able to achieve order and true prosperity in their social lives; thus it can be said that the human designs generated by their so-called superior minds have achieved chaos and disorder, on the contrary.

It is really unfortunate to note that human systems and ideologies have not portrayed the superior nature of human beings in practical life but instead has defamed them. Disorder and instability prevail in most parts of the world that is dominated by human beings. Infamously, our country is one of the same parts that have been highly influenced by disorder.

It is important to study the nature of the disorder that has dominated our society and its reason. It is generally believed that politics and politicians are entirely responsible for the current disorder and chaos and such a belief is difficult to reject as politicians have not left any other choice. Their attitude and behaviour have made the people think so and at the same time defamed politics.

If we analyze Afghan society, we can see that there are many problems that we face. We are confronted with many economic, social and political issues and multiplied with that is the fact that we are not completely prepared to solve them. Decades of wars and instability have further influenced our capacities to face the challenges. And then there is corruption, which like an anaconda has tightened itself around the society in such a way that it has no chance of escape. Extremism and terrorism have penetrated deep within the roots of our society and have been threatening our people to a great extent. Disorder, disturbance and chaos are building hurdles in front of the designs of our authorities to establish order, discipline and dignity.

The current chaos is, to a certain extent, because of our ruling elite as everyone can observe that they because of their negligence and self-centred incentives have made politics a ridicule. They are, in the true sense of politics, answerable to both politics and the people. Politicians, in fact, are to serve the people, facilitate the people with their basic requirements, guide the nation, lead the nation towards a better system, solve the problems and issues and have the sense of responsibility. In our country, the politicians evade the people, fulfil their own requirements and demands, mislead the nation, never strive for political order and institutionalization, utilize the issues for their personal and group interests and do not have even slightest sense of responsibility.

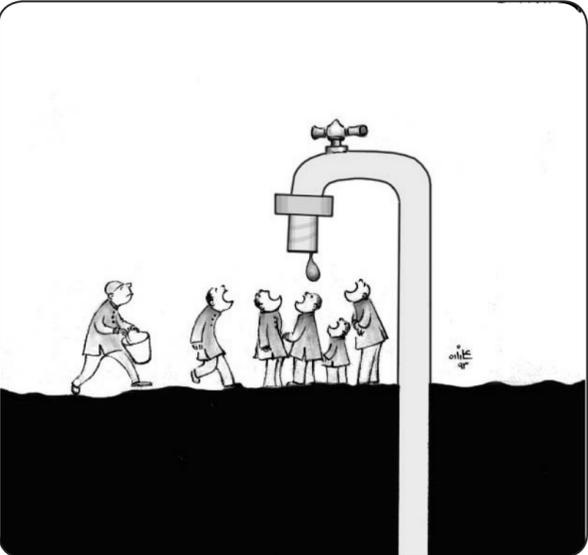
On the other hand, because of the strategic importance of Afghanistan, it has been dominated by the international political games played by the world powers. In fact, imperialism blinded with extreme power has influenced the Afghan land to a large extent. "Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely," said by John Emerich, an English historian, politician & writer.

There is no doubt in the correctness of this statement if we have a proper analysis of the contemporary international scenario. Few say that "Imperialism has died", while it has taken a new birth, it has been transformed in what is scarier.

The capacity of imperialism to exercise power has been enhanced by the availability of advanced mechanisms. No land is far away from the imperialists and no one can avoid their influences. They are the decision-makers, they decide the destiny of the nations and they determine the course of world order. A little happens in the favour of what they dislike. They follow their interests in weaker countries in different ways. They can launch a direct war, influence the other countries through cultural dominance or affect their policies through aid and assistance.

However, blaming the other countries for all of the disorders and disturbances has been one of the policies of our political leaders to avoid responsibility. It also helps them create a sense of lethal enemy who is always ready to destroy us and who has nothing else to ponder upon except our extinction. And we fall prey to such ill intentions and get ready to believe such concepts as a result of our blind and fanatic patriotism. In fact, in such a way we become ripe to be utilized by them the way they want.

A little political understanding and prudence can make us understand the games that are basically played by international world and our own rulers. On some occasions they make us be lost in the imaginations of an ideal society and on some others they slap us with the harsh realities to come back to the real world. What we understand is half-reality and half-lie, which is more dangerous than the whole-lie.



US Determination to Support State-Building in Afghanistan

By Syed Asif Husseini

The US ushered in its role in Afghanistan through state-building since post-conflict countries are in need of reviving their eroded institutions. The US stepped in Afghanistan when the country was on the verge of collapse and the re-establishment of state required both new mechanism and legitimacy.

Following the downfall of communist regime, Afghanistan founded two governments, run by the Taliban and Mujahedeen, based on religious legitimacy devoid of public will. The cornerstone of new state laid in Bonn Conference by the US and support of political powers, virtually transferred legitimacy from the holy realm to the public will. That is to say, establishing a modern state with legitimacy based on public will and liberal-democratic idea was supported by the international community. Subsequently, the Constitution designated independent institutions for strengthening democracy, and civil organizations played a key role in this regard.

The US political analysts believed that modern state-building will facilitate nation-building in the countries involved in tribal and ethnic conflicts. This way, a powerful state will take all its citizens under its wing and gradually reconcile individuals, though nurturing any kinds of mindset, with one another – this was the building blocks of the current constitution.

The foundation of a new national government following years of war and violence was a new hope for Afghan people. However, with the prominent role of former elements the past structure was revived which rendered irreparable loss to the new state and administrative corruption paralyzed the administration. On the other hand, the government showed no strong determination in removing the corrupt elements from the state machinery. As a result, people still suffer severely.

With his first round of presidency, Hamid Karzai was considered fit for Afghan society both in the eye of the public and the US. To support democracy and state-building, the US showed strong will which sparked a gleam of hope for Afghans. In the second round, the electoral deadlock seemed unbreakable and challenges emerged.

The US former President Barack Obama was of the view that Afghanistan's political and security predicament had to be resolved democratically. So, he revised his policy. Hamid Karzai, on the other hand, changed his attitude towards the US, which was a blow to Afghan nation.

The US supportive policy, according to public belief, passed with lack of concern and reviewing withdrawal from the country during the second round of Karzai's presidency.

This issue filled the air with a sense of anxiety and led to economic stagnation since investment declined. The Taliban capitalized on the vacuum left by lack of concern through reorganizing its group. Karzai's refusal to sign

the security pact with the US and Taliban's reorganization prompted Afghans to fluctuate between hope and fear. Fear overcame them with the reports about the withdrawal of US forces from Afghanistan.

The deadlock in Karzai's second round presidency, the mysterious hands of the neighboring countries, and the angry mindsets rooting in past conditions fueled the tension more than ever before.

Ultimately, the US emerged as a remedy in critical time with John Kerry's trip to the country. The US broke the electoral deadlock, which dogged Afghan people and put severe mental pressure on them. The support of US in this critical time was widely welcomed. In short, America's policy in breaking the stalemate in the ripe time manifested its role very crucial in tackling the challenges.

Hence, the standstill in third round presidential election was resolved. This reflects the fact that the nascent democracy will be in need of international support in case of facing deadlock.

National and international support will ensure democracy in countries involved in conflicts. In brief, the US played its role successfully from the first round presidency to the third one with all the ups and downs. The National Unity Government (NUG) was also supported by the US and also got its legitimacy on the basis of public will.

Moreover, the current president was and being considered as a technocrat personality. Muhammad Ashraf Ghani, was optimistic and hopeful about the international community in supporting the country and engineered his policy on the basis of such optimism. But he failed to implement his plan and the foreign ministry did not have a positive record, either.

Nevertheless, the NUG was able to re-attract the attention of Washington. In other words, the attention of the Obama's party was channeled to the country although Karzai's team narrowed this opportunity during his second round presidency.

Donald Trump has agreed with the democrats since the US will not endanger the structures made by its financial and political sacrifices despite disagreements within parties. In protecting the post-Taliban structure, the White House showed its strong determination several times. For instance, during the electoral tension and the idea of parallel government and also with the violence broke out during the demonstration of Rastakhiz Movement, the US Embassy issued serious statement bearing clear message. But despite the signing of security pact, the country is still vulnerable to terrorism. After all, it is believed that sending more troops to Afghanistan will not bring a long-lasting peace in the country. Reinforcing Afghan soldiers will be more effective.

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IS Stokes Sectarian Violence

By Hujjatullah Zia

Stoking sectarian violence in Afghanistan is the main reason behind the attacks carried out by die-hard loyalists to the Islamic State (IS) group which is operating under the black flag with radical ideology. Following the revelation of Mullah Omar's death, the Taliban's one-eyed leader, a number of the Taliban militants pledged allegiance to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi to continue their insurgency more violently. Subsequently, people were left at the mercy of sectarian violence and killed on the grounds of their race, color and creed on a large scale.

The Taliban fighters, who changed their white flag into black one, seek to toe the line and exercise the ideological mindset of the IS militants which is more radical than that of the Taliban. A spate of terrorist attacks, mostly claimed by the IS group, looms large and inflicts heavy casualties upon Afghan soldiers and civilians.

Sectarian violence was practiced in Afghanistan during despotic regimes, especially the Taliban – who discriminated and killed people on the basis of their racial and religious backgrounds despite the fact that they claimed to implement the divine rule rather than acting ethnocentrically. Initially, the Taliban militants fulfilled their promises, but their attitudes were colored with ethnic tendency which would pave the way to gain the support of certain tribe in Afghanistan.

With the fall of the Taliban's regime, there was zero tolerance towards sectarianism. In other words, people paid heavy sacrifices as result of sectarianism and racial superiority, fueled by the Taliban regime, and intended to stop this wound from bleeding through practicing the spirit of brotherhood. Furthermore, democratic discourse left no room for racial and religious superiority and all were equal in rights and dignity. That is to say, the constitution of Afghanistan, approved in 2004, denied discrimination based on racial, sexual or religious backgrounds and declared equal rights for all Afghans – who nurtured a gleam of hope for a bright future.

Nonetheless, sectarian violence was ushered in with the emergence of the IS insurgents in Afghanistan within the two past years. They make no bone about claiming responsibility for attacks on ethnic groups or religious and/or sacred sites. The IS and its loyalists carry out massive attacks on mosques, religious proceedings, funeral ceremonies, etc. to trigger sectarian sensitivity. In the past, they also resorted to abducting and slaugh-

tering ethnic minorities, including women and children. Thanks to the nation's insight about the sinister intention of the militants, Afghans went to the bottom of the issue and realized the ulterior motive for the attacks.

Virtually the IS group, which has lost its territory in Iraq and Syria, intends to sow the seed of sectarianism in Afghanistan so as to capitalize on this issue. The violent and sectarian practices of IS group will be condemned nationally and internationally, but it will not alleviate the challenges. Willy-nilly, this issue will pose more serious threat to the country in the process of time. In other words, it will not only lead to casualties but also fragment the spirit of brotherhood in the society if it is not curbed. To put it succinctly, officials will not have to downgrade the issue but keep a lid on it immediately. Otherwise, the current situation will go from bad to worse and Afghans will sustain heavier casualties.

It is believed that the mastermind behind sectarian attacks feeds the militants both ideologically and economically (there are ideologue and mercenary fighters) to continue war and violence in order to achieve their sinister objectives. Hence, targeting ethnic and religious groups will continue unabated which will keep the cycle of civilian fatalities running.

On the other hand, radical militants, including IS and the Taliban, are most likely to encounter lack of forces and seek to recruit soldiers through spreading their ideology and preaching via media outlet. Waging itself in the furrow of Sunnis and Shiites and excommunicating a group will make their goal more achievable.

Last but not least, the series of attacks will create a cleavage between state and nation. People's rights and liberties are violated to a great extent. There is a strong sense of fear across the country. That is to say, targeting civilians is the main reason behind causing mistrust between people and government.

To sum up, with the increase of IS militants, sectarianism will change into a highly serious threat to the country. It is a big tragedy for the nation to count the growing fatalities each and every day.

So, the government has to adopt an effective strategy to mitigate sectarian violence and put an end to civilian casualties.

Calling terrorist acts against humanity and condemning it in the strongest possible term will neither heal the wound of victims' families nor alleviate the issue.

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