

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

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Women Seek Role in Peace Process

Calling on the Taliban to stop violence, a group of women in Khost province said Afghan women want a big role in the peace process. This indicates women's concern over peace and their rights and freedoms.

Making great strides under the nascent democratic administration, Afghan women fear their achievements will be compromised at the negotiating table with the Taliban. Both female officials and ordinary Afghan women air their concern about the return of the Islamic Emirate. They find their rights and freedoms vulnerable.

Practicing a parochial mindset towards the rights and freedoms of women during their regime, the Taliban restricted women's role in collective life to a great extent and marginalized them in social, political, and economic activities. Women could not go out without male chaperon let alone serve as politicians or police officers.

Willy-nilly, with the return of the Islamic Emirate, the social role of women is likely to be restricted to some extent. For instance, Afghan women may not be allowed to serve in police ranks, participate in cultural activities and concerts. Their role may be also curtailed in film industries. That is, it is very hard and time-consuming to desensitize women's part in social and cultural life. If peace agreement is signed between the Taliban and the Kabul government, the Taliban will be in the limelight initially. They would be cautious not to be criticized or their ideology challenged by domestic or foreign media.

But it is believed that the Taliban will be localized with the passage of time and those issues will be desensitized. For example, a number of hardline religious group are operating in Pakistan, but do not put the role of Pakistani women under question.

On the other hand, head of Hezb-e-Islami Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, who was fighting against the government, joined the peace process. But no changes were brought in the women's role after he joined the government.

Since the Taliban claim that their mindset had been moderated, they do not have to push for the amendment of Afghan Constitution, which was endorsed with the presence of high-profile clerics in the post-Taliban Afghanistan. The Taliban should not seek to re-impose their mindset on the public or push for including their ideology in the Constitution, which leaves no room for gender discrimination.

In the post-Taliban Afghanistan, women have proved that they are able to play a highly constructive role in the country's social and political issues. They promoted their knowledge and skills and played key role in all spheres of life. It is self-evident that if women are marginalized in social and political life, the country will see a sudden downward spiral. If half population of a country boycotts playing their role, they will cause irreparable loss in the country.

With this in mind, negotiating parties have to reiterate protecting and respecting women's rights and freedoms in their agreement and pledge that they would not curtail women's social or political parts in the country.

In 2016, Laura Bush, a former American first lady, called for a continued military presence in the male-dominated areas. In an interview with a media outlet on the sidelines of the Aspen Ideas Festival, she remarked withdrawing US troops from Afghanistan as "we would have to start all over again" in Afghanistan. Women would lose the ground they have gained since the 2001 US invasion of the country, she argued. "The Taliban had been there and we just hadn't paid any attention. The plight of the women there was a shock to American women."

Such a concern lingers on among Afghan women, who bore the brunt of violence during the Taliban's regime.

But the gleam of hope is still there for two reasons: First, the Taliban said earlier that their ideology had been moderated and they would not enter Afghanistan with the mindset prevailing during their regime. They also said they did not seek to hold power alone but share it with the government.

Second, the Afghan government said that women's rights would be a "red-line" in the peace talks. Meanwhile, women are now more active and aware of their rights and freedoms. Thus, these issues generate hope for Afghan women that their rights and liberties would be protected.

The International community and regional and global stakeholders have to continue their support in empowering Afghan women. Civil groups and the media should also operate actively to make sure that Afghan Constitution is implemented thoroughly and women's social and political role is not curtailed.

Now similar to their male counterparts, women should participate in the peace talks and be included in the negotiating team.

Contemporary Anti-Terror Laws and Structures of America

By: **Rajkumar Singh**

In combating terrorism the United States of America has a different counter terrorist structure than other close allies, such as Australia, Canada, France, and the United Kingdom. Each has a structure that fits its particular legal system and culture: there is no ideal solution. A continuing issue is whether there needs to be a domestic intelligence service separate from the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) which has had difficulty in breaking away from its law enforcement roots and cooperating with other intelligence services. In past coordinating structures have been created by each President to fit his administrative style and the perceived level of threat. The National Counter Terrorism Center (NCTC) is no longer in the CIA proper, but is in the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI). However NCTC contains personnel from the CIA, FBI of the Department of Justice and other members of the Intelligence Community. A counterterrorism center did exist in the CIA before the NCTC was established.

Anti-terror arrangements before and after 9/11

The National Security Act of 1947 had created the CIA but strictly forbade it from having any domestic police authority, however, the CIA still has multiple dimensions. The National Clandestine Service (NCS) of the CIA can infiltrate or otherwise gain human-source intelligence from terrorist organisations, their supporters, or from friendly foreign intelligence service. The NCS has a covert operations capability that, possibly in combination with military units from the United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) may take direct action against terrorist groups outside the United States. Above all, the key CIA counterterror partner is the FBI, which has the domestic operational responsibility for counterterrorism, both domestic intelligence collection and domestic police work. In the highly decentralised police system of the United States, the FBI also provides liaison and operates cooperatively with state and local police agencies as well as with relevant Federal units. Long before the 9/11 attack the US intelligence community has been dealing with aspects of terrorism. Those aspects included the support of guerrillas against Soviets, in Southeast Asia, and other places where the guerrillas methods may have included terror. In Asia, Latin America and Africa, the US worked with government to suppress terror.

In post-9/11 period the Government of United States felt the need to pass special orders/laws for persons detained by the US authority in connection with terrorist activities. Making the idea more clear Dick Cheney, the Vice President of the country on November 14, 2001, said, 'the basic proposition here is that somebody who comes into the United States of America illegally, who conducts a terrorist operation killing thousands of innocent Americans, men women and children is not a lawful combatant. They do not deserve to be

treated as a prisoner of war. They do not deserve the same guarantees and safeguards that would be used for an American citizen going through the normal judicial process. They will have a fair trial, but it will be under the procedures of a military tribunal. Although US Congress has not formally declared war against Al-Qaeda, the President has authorised the detention treatment and trial of non-citizens in the Global War on Terrorism under a 'Military Order' derived from the constitutional authority vested in his position as the President and Commander in Chief of the armed forces of the United States. It resulted in the prosecution of the war against terror in the detention by the United States of at least 650 citizens from more than 40 countries at military detention facilities on the US naval base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. As per a report prepared by Defense Department lawyer in 2003 Guantanamo Bay was preferred by the Administration because it offers the Administration certain legal advantages as it falls outside the jurisdiction of US courts and hence removes the possibility of detainee's rights to question the detention in US courts. In succeeding year the Guantanamo Bay issue became a controversial one and US Supreme Court as well as a Federal District Court had passed comments in negative and found it a step which undermines the rule of law in the country.

For reasons known to all Osama bin Laden, Al-Qaeda and its various affiliates remained at the top of US research and analysis wings. Thousands of studies were made on the different aspects of Al-Qaeda networks in countries of the world, the US in particular. In this connection some occasional insights were offered in a way that was certainly believable, but without real documentation, it however, described the group a loose organisation of terrorists who may have no idea who the leader is or where the plans come from. Weiser and Golden quote Juliette Kayyem of the Harvard University, Kennedy School of Government: 'Bin Laden is the leader of a movement that does not necessarily need a leader to function and be effective ... This is such a diffuse structure that it can survive without him'. In sum what the reports do describe it is a loose association of two types of persons, planners and doers. The former gather intelligence, pick targets, and provide the materials. The latter are expendable persons whose commitment to the cause, but lack of special training, places them in such a role. Thus, the incomplete picture conjures up a highly dynamic group, with some semblance of leadership structure that may be important for the large efforts, but may not be critical for the maintenance of the terrorist activity. The group is financed by large amounts of money that bin Laden has brought to the process, but has been augmented by significant contributions and, probably, considerable entrepreneurial activity.

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Trade Disruption Is a Symptom of a Deeper Malaise

By: **Mohamed A. El-Erian**

It's only a matter of time until the escalating tensions between China and the United States prompt many more economists to warn of an impending global economic recession coupled with financial instability. On August 5, Bloomberg News said that the yield curve, a closely watched market metric, "Blares Loudest US Recession Warning Since 2007." And Larry Summers, a former US Treasury Secretary who was also closely involved in crisis-management efforts in 2008-09, recently tweeted that "we may well be at the most dangerous financial moment ... since 2009."

Many economists argue that resolving US-China trade tensions is the best way to avoid significant global economic and financial disruption. Yet, while necessary, this would be far from sufficient.

Don't get me wrong: the focus on the deteriorating relations between China and America is entirely understandable. After all, their worsening dispute increases the risk of a trade war which, coupled with a currency war, would lead to "beggar-thy-neighbor" (that is, lose-lose) outcomes cascading throughout the global economy. As growth prospects deteriorated, debt and leverage issues would come to the fore in certain countries, adding financial instability to an already damaging economic cocktail. And with the US-China row now extending beyond economics to include national-security and domestic political issues, the best-case scenario on trade is a series of ceasefires; the more likely outcome is escalating tensions.

Yet, when viewed in the broader context of the past decade, trade tensions turn out to be a symptom rather than a cause of the world's underlying economic and financial malaise. In fact, an excessive focus on trade risks is deflecting policymakers' attention from other measures needed to ensure faster and more inclusive growth in a genuinely stable financial environment.

Policymakers must also contend with growing political pressure on central banks, the backlash against the inequality trifecta (of income, wealth, and opportunity), the politics of anger, the growth of anti-establishment movements, the loss of trust in governments and expert opinion, regional economic and geopolitical tensions, the growing risk of financial instability, threats to long-term financial-protection products, and a general sense of economic insecurity.

As I argued in *The Only Game in Town*, all of these recent developments - and also, of course, the growing US-China tensions - are related in a meaningful way to two basic and persistent features of the global economy since the 2008 financial crisis.

The first is the prolonged period in which economic growth has been not only too low but also insufficiently inclusive. As a result, growing segments of the population have felt marginalized, alienated, and angry - leading to unexpected election outcomes, the rise of populist and nationalist movements, and, in a few cases, social unrest.

The second post-crisis feature is the persistent over-reliance on the

pain-numbing but distortionary medicine of central-bank liquidity, rather than a more balanced policy mix that seeks to ease the (mainly structural, but also cyclical) impediments to faster, more inclusive growth. Monetary policy has not been very effective in boosting sustainable growth, but it has lifted asset prices significantly. This has further fueled complaints that the system favors the already-rich and privileged rather than serving the broader population - let alone helping more disadvantaged groups.

If both these features persist, the global economy will soon enough come to an uncomfortable binary prospect on the road ahead. At this "T-junction," the current, increasingly unsustainable path will give way either to a much worse outcome involving recessions, financial instability, and rising political and social tensions, or, more optimistically, to a pick-up in inclusive growth and genuine financial stability as the governance system finally responds to popular pressure.

Moreover, the journey to the neck of this T-junction is itself increasingly uncertain. In particular, the protracted use of unconventional monetary policies has entailed costs and risks that have intensified over time. These include attacks on the operational autonomy of central banks, the excessive decoupling of asset prices from their underlying economic and corporate fundamentals, and systemic overpromising of liquidity to end users (particularly in the non-bank sector). Today, a policy mistake or a market accident could make the journey much faster and a lot bumpier.

To avoid a nasty outcome for the global economy and financial system, China and America need to resolve their differences in the context of a more comprehensive policy compact that also involves other leading economies (especially Europe).

Efforts to revitalize free but fairer trade should start by addressing genuine US and European grievances vis-à-vis China regarding intellectual-property theft, forced transfer of technology, excessive subsidization, and other unfair trade and investment practices. And this in turn should serve as the foundation for a comprehensive multilateral effort to remove constraints on actual and potential growth.

Such an initiative would include infrastructure rehabilitation and modernization in Europe and the US, more balanced fiscal policies in Europe and a stronger regional economic architecture, stronger social safety nets around the world, and targeted liberalization and deregulation in China and Europe.

With concerted global action of this type, the world economy could navigate the upcoming T-junction favorably. Without it, current complaints about economic and financial instability and insecurity could pale in comparison to what comes next.

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