

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



August 29, 2018

### Negotiations: An Undeniable Strategy That Every Government Appreciates It

Negotiations with Taliban have entered a new phase; even the United States has shifted its war strategy in terms of approaching Taliban and has started direct talks and negotiations with the with the insurgent group. Indeed, there are many other players who do not want to be kept out of the scene of the negotiations with the Taliban including Russia, China, Uzbekistan, Iran and many other regional and beyond regional players. What makes different players to be enthusiastic to the peace process in Afghanistan is its geopolitical position in the region. The latest development in this regard is Russian Sponsored Peace talks in Moscow that Taliban and 12 countries have accepted to take part in the summit. The peace talks was scheduled on 4 September, but was postponed based on the request of Kabul on the grounds that peace talks with the insurgent group must be led by Afghanistan. As a result Afghanistan will participate in the talks but the United States has already declined to take part in the summit.

#### The Significance of Moscow Peace talks

One of the main aspects of Moscow Peace Talks with the Taliban is that different countries that are mindful of the importance of diplomatic solution to the Afghan problem are present in the summit. Considering the complicated nature of insecurity in Afghanistan, more representation from other countries is needed to find a consolidated solution to the prolong conflict in the country. And Moscow Peace talks with Taliban provides the opportunity that different players to be present on the negotiating table hoping to find a consensus solution to the prolong conflict of Afghanistan and ensure no player is kept out of the loop. Another worth noticing dimension is that Russia is one of the key regional and international players, and it has strategic interests and concerns in terms of spread of violence and presence of the terrorist groups in Afghanistan that directly threaten Russia's allies and they even indirectly threaten Russia as well. This nature of the terrorism is the main cause of Russia's returning back to political scene of Afghanistan because Russia after its retreat from Afghanistan in 1989, had mostly exercised caution in its policy with this country and remained almost missing from the political scene in this part of the region. While the main goal of the Moscow peace talks is to bring about peace in Afghanistan and in the region as well, at different cases these peace efforts have been seen doubtfully by the Afghan government as well as by the US. Specific reasons have been mentioned occasionally for this lack of trust and most of the time it is the Russian Factor which usually is criticized by the Afghan government and the United States and allies. They approach the growing contact between Moscow and the Taliban stating that the anti-state elements are being supported, backed, and strengthened by Russia hence the motives behind these efforts are highly questionable. In addition, the US is worried that the American-led efforts in Afghanistan are being hijacked by Russia. AS a result it is keeping an eye on the Russian involvement and interest in Afghanistan and the region. Sending senior members to Moscow peace talks by the Taliban is another major development in the coming Moscow peace talks because the group because many political experts hold that any efforts towards bringing peace in Afghanistan should include Taliban as well if it is to be made a successful peace process. From the Russia's perspective the very agenda of these peace efforts is to keep the spread of ISIS in Afghanistan to Central Asian states and from there on to other states including Russia and China. According to Russia's terrorism encounter strategy, this is one of the main reasons for Russia's contacts with the Taliban and provides another reason as to why Taliban should be made part of the peace process.

Afghanistan peace process is in the center of the focus of the regional and international players and the marathon of negotiation with the Taliban is on the full speed between these players with different agendas. What matters for Afghanistan is, that first of all the peace process should be led by the Afghan government in order to ensure the national interest of the country. Afghanistan also believes that only an all-inclusive effort with all the stakeholders as part of the peace process will provide some hope to bring peace in the country and put an end to the long standing dead log in the peace process of Afghanistan.



## Global Peace Initiative of Kazakhstan

By Hadi Ahmad Bargasht

Every year on August 29, the world celebrates the International day against nuclear tests, approved by the UN General Assembly resolution on December 2, 2009. A draft resolution on this issue has been proposed by Kazakhstan. 26 States co-sponsored the resolution. It was on August 29, 1991 that the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site was officially closed by the decree of the President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev, which was the beginning of the process of Kazakhstan's refusal from one of the world's largest arsenals of nuclear weapons. The former Semipalatinsk nuclear test site was established in 1949 specifically for testing the Soviet nuclear device. From 1949 to 1989, 468 nuclear tests were carried out at the site. The total power of these nuclear charges is 2.5 thousand times more than the power of the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima.

Shortly after the proclamation of Kazakhstan as an independent state, President Nursultan Nazarbayev signed a Decree on the closure of the landfill. About 1.3 million people were officially recognized as victims of the tests at the site. It is in the East Kazakhstan region, where the Semipalatinsk test site was located, still, high mortality, critical level of cancer, many children are born with pathologies, life expectancy here does not exceed 50 years.

The International day against nuclear tests is intended to educate and inform people more actively about the consequences of nuclear test explosions and any other nuclear explosions and the need to stop them.

The resolution of the UN General Assembly noted that «it is necessary to make every effort to put an end to nuclear testing and thereby prevent adverse consequences for the life and health of people and the environment...the complete cessation of nuclear tests is one of the key means of achieving the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons».

The first International day against nuclear tests was held in 2010. Since then, every year this Day is celebrated by holding a worldwide, concerted activities, including symposia, conferences, exhibitions, competitions, publications, and lectures in academic institutions, information transmission, etc.

On August 29, 2012, President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev speaking at the International parliamentary conference in Astana, launched the «ATOM» project in order to obtain global public support for the final cessation of nuclear tests, and, ultimately, the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. To date, more than 300 thousand people around the world have signed an online petition of the «ATOM» project. In addition, the Head of state stressed that the most important initiative created at the suggestion of Kazakhstan forum «G-GLOBAL» should be the acquisition of humanity's freedom from fear of nuclear self-destruction. In particular, a step-by-step Plan for a comprehensive reduction of strategic offensive arms with the participation of all nuclear States, developed and adopted under the auspices of the UN, is needed. It was important to achieve the entry into force of the nuclear-test-ban Treaty. It is also necessary to develop mechanisms of promotion of States that



Monument to the victims of the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site called "Stronger than death" is established in the city of Semipalatinsk in 2001

had cancelled their military nuclear programs.

To this end, in 2009 the Republic of Kazakhstan took the initiative to host the International Bank for low enriched uranium (IBLEU) under the auspices of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Kazakhstan and the IAEA signed an agreement on the establishment of the IBLEU in Astana on August 27, 2015. This is the first such Bank in the world, whose task is that if a member state of the IAEA is not able to acquire low-enriched uranium for its nuclear energy, it may ask the IAEA to ensure the supply of this material.

The official opening ceremony of the IBLEU was held on August 30, 2017 in Astana with the participation of President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev and IAEA Director General Yukiya Amano. The Bank itself is located on the territory of Ulba metallurgical plant in Ust-Kamenogorsk in the North-East of Kazakhstan. To own the fuel Bank and will be controlled by IAEA, and it will be operated by Kazakhstan. Safety issues will be governed by Kazakhstan's legal requirements and the Bank will comply with all applicable IAEA safety standards.

In his speech at the event, President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev stressed: «Over the years of independence, we have made a rapid way from the possession of the world's fourth Arsenal of nuclear weapons to the leader of global non-proliferation of these weapons. Kazakhstan has become a trusted partner of the IAEA is the only UN body responsible for peaceful nuclear energy».

Thus, from the first days of state independence the Republic of Kazakhstan and its Leader Nursultan Nazarbayev consider the achievement of a global nuclear - free world to be their main strategic goal in the international arena. For the early realization of this noble goal of Kazakhstan and its President spend most of the peacekeeping work that welcomes and supports all progressive mankind.

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## The Myth of Secular Stagnation

By Joseph E. Stiglitz

In the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis, some economists argued that the United States, and perhaps the global economy, was suffering from "secular stagnation," an idea first conceived in the aftermath of the Great Depression. Economies had always recovered from downturns. But the Great Depression had lasted an unprecedented length of time. Many believed that the economy recovered only because of government spending on World War II, and many feared that with the end of the war, the economy would return to its doldrums.

Something, it was believed, had happened, such that even with low or zero interest rates, the economy would languish. For reasons now well understood, these dire predictions fortunately turned out to be wrong.

Those responsible for managing the 2008 recovery (the same individuals bearing culpability for the under-regulation of the economy in its pre-crisis days, to whom President Barack Obama inexplicably turned to fix what they had helped break) found the idea of secular stagnation attractive, because it explained their failures to achieve a quick, robust recovery. So, as the economy languished, the idea was revived: Don't blame us, its promoters implied, we're doing what we can.

The events of the past year have put the lie to this idea, which never seemed very plausible. The sudden increase in the US deficit, from around 3% to almost 6% of GDP, owing to a poorly designed regressive tax bill and a bipartisan expenditure increase, has boosted growth to around 4% and brought unemployment down to a 18-year low. These measures may be ill-conceived, but they show that with enough fiscal support, full employment can be attained, even as interest rates rise well above zero.

The Obama administration made a crucial mistake in 2009 in not pursuing a larger, longer, better-structured, and more flexible fiscal stimulus. Had it done so, the economy's rebound would have been stronger, and there would have been no talk of secular stagnation. As it was, only those in the top 1% saw their incomes grow during the first three years of the so-called recovery.

Some of us warned at the time that the downturn was likely to be deep and long, and that what was needed was stronger and different from what Obama proposed. I suspect that the main obstacle was the belief that the economy had just experienced a little "bump," from which it would quickly recover. Put the banks in the hospital, give them loving care (in other words, hold none of the bankers accountable or even scold them, but rather boost their morale by inviting them to consult on the way forward), and, most important, shower them with money, and soon all would be well.

But the economy's travails were deeper than this diagnosis suggested. The fallout from the financial crisis was more severe, and massive redistribution of income and wealth toward the top had weakened aggregate demand. The economy was experiencing a transition from manufacturing to services, and market economies don't manage such transitions well on their own.

What was needed was more than a massive bank bailout. The US needed a fundamental reform of its financial system. The 2010 Dodd-Frank legislation went some way, though not far enough, in preventing banks from doing harm to the rest of us; but it did little to ensure that the banks actually do what they are supposed to do, focusing more, for example, on lending to small and medium-size enterprises. More government spending was necessary, but so, too, were more active redistribution and pre-distribution programs - addressing the weakening of workers' bargaining power, the agglomeration of market power by large corporations, and corporate and financial abuses. Likewise, active labor-market and industrial policies might have helped those areas suffering from the consequences of deindustrialization.

Instead, policymakers failed to do enough even to prevent poor households from losing their homes. The political consequences of these economic failures were predictable and predicted: it was clear that there was a risk that those who were so badly treated would turn to a demagogue. No one could have predicted that the US would get one as bad as Donald Trump: a racist misogynist bent on destroying the rule of law, both at home and abroad, and discrediting America's truth-telling and assessing institutions, including the media.

A fiscal stimulus as large as that of December 2017 and January 2018 (and which the economy didn't really need at the time) would have been all the more powerful a decade earlier when unemployment was so high. The weak recovery was thus not the result of "secular stagnation"; the problem was inadequate government policies.

Here, a central question arises: Will growth rates in coming years be as strong as they were in the past? That, of course, depends on the pace of technological change. Investments in research and development, especially in basic research, are an important determinant, though with long lags; cutbacks proposed by the Trump administration do not bode well.

But even then, there is a lot of uncertainty. Growth rates per capita have varied greatly over the past 50 years, from between 2 and 3% a year in the decade(s) after World War II to 0.7% in the last decade. But perhaps there's been too much growth fetishism - especially when we think of the environmental costs, and even more so if that growth fails to bring much benefit to the vast majority of citizens.

There are many lessons to be learned as we reflect on the 2008 crisis, but the most important is that the challenge was - and remains - political, not economic: there is nothing that inherently prevents our economy from being run in a way that ensures full employment and shared prosperity. Secular stagnation was just an excuse for flawed economic policies. Unless and until the selfishness and myopia that define our politics - especially in the US under Trump and his Republican enablers - is overcome, an economy that serves the many, rather than the few, will remain an impossible dream. Even if GDP increases, the incomes of the majority of citizens will stagnate.

Joseph E. Stiglitz is the winner of the 2001 Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Sciences. His most recent book is *Globalization and its Discontents Revisited: Anti-Globalization in the Era of Trump*.

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