

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



February 18, 2017

Inevitability of Society and State

Since the earliest times, man is known to have lived in society. Even when he was not so civilized, he lived in the company of his fellow beings whether his society started with his family, tribe, group or a combination of them. Plato said that society is essential for life while Aristotle improved on this expression by saying that society is essential for good life. Without society, it is impossible for humans to have the basic necessities like food, clothing and shelter. Society was needed even by the primitive people.

Their dependence on society went on gradually increasing with time so that, in due course, they gave up their nomadic life and started living a family life.

Once man learned to live in effective social groups he became superior to all beasts, but his dependence on the uncontrolled bounty of nature limited his chances of survival. Hunting wild animals and gathering wild vegetable foods could support about one human being per 10 square miles of territory, and even this small population was often threatened by droughts and the natural disasters. The situation changed abruptly when groups of men living in favored parts of the earth entered a stage of communal living.

They made certain plants and animals, part of the human groups, establishing a symbiotic relationship. That is, these people became farmers and herdsmen. Symbiosis with plants and animals gave social man a large and dependable food supply and started him towards developing his higher civilization. But it placed new demands on cooperative effort and required communities more highly organized than those of hunters.

The result was diversity of human groupings. People began to live in several different kinds of associations, each characterized by behavior pattern related to its size, to meet the varied needs imposed by agriculture and, later, by industry. The types of human communities now so familiar around the world quickly evolved. Now, an individual and his society are interdependent and essential for each other's existence. The problem that has haunted philosophers is whether the society has any right to regulate an individual's conduct and behavior, or allow the individual to have free expression and action.

It has been rightly observed that man is a social animal not only by nature but also by sheer necessity, right from the day he sees the light of this world till his death.

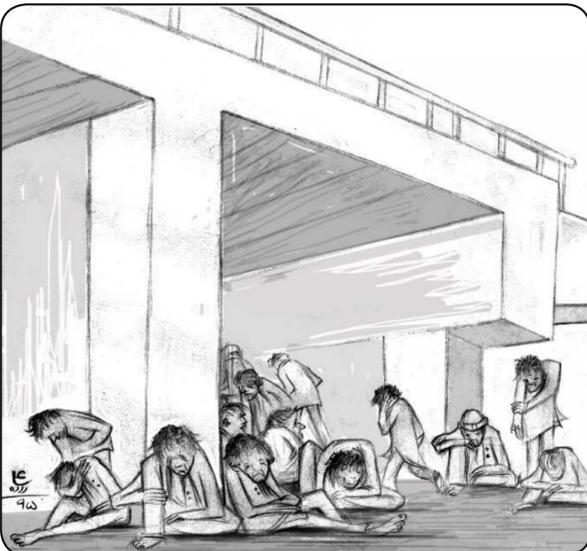
Even before his birth an individual needs a society to facilitate his healthy arrival and cordial welcome to the fold of humanity.

State is the most important political institution of society that looks after the material and spiritual interests of its individuals. Each nation-state today adopts what is called a constitution to regulate the behavior and activity of most of its nationals. Sometimes called the "basic law of society", the constitution describes the fundamental responsibilities of the state in regard to the functioning of the society as a whole. It establishes the form of government at the center, in the regions, districts and villages in the country for its governance, it also prescribes the outlines of powers and privileges of different wings (executive, legislature and judiciary) of the government together with the mutual relationships among them. It enumerates the basic objectives which govern the formulation of policies and programs of the state for the good of its individual citizens. The constitution also lays down the basic rules to regulate the behavior of individuals among themselves and towards the state and society.

The basic law of a society very often puts limitations on the liberty of the citizens of the state and prevents them from harming the interests of other individuals for selfish gain, either by exploitation, economic or social or by material or physical injury. In return for this restraint on his liberty, the state gives to the individual numerous facilities of citizenship. These facilities include the right to vote and elect political leaders at different levels, enjoy the social benefits of corporate living like the amenities of clean drinking water, street sanitation, electricity, roads, public transport, security of life, medical care etc., as well as the right to individual belongings and working opportunity based on merit and capability.

In recent decades the state has further expanded its role in society with a view to serve its citizens with more and more material and spiritual benefits arising from mutual cooperation. This has made the life of individuals, and thereby of societies, more comfortable, interesting and purposeful. In recent societies, the idea of social atomism has come up. According to atomists, a social atom is an indivisible unit of society and the whole society is made up of such social atoms or living units. The social atom is essential for the whole society and the society is essential for the very existence of its social atoms.

Keeping in view the enhanced and better role of state in the lives of the individuals, it is important that Afghanistan must also strive to develop a state that protects the rights of the individuals and provide them different facilities, while the individuals must respond in the same manner by carrying out activities that should prove positive for the state as a whole.



A Turbulent Year for Kabul and Islamabad

By Hujjatullah Zia

Terrorist networks have inflicted indescribable sufferings upon Afghan and Pakistani nations and the cul-de-sac of peace talks was not brokered within the past political debates. Terrorism is the core of the problems before the National Unity Government (NUG). Leaving two bloody years behind with the highest casualty rate, 2017 will be also a murky year. The recent terrorist attacks in Kabul and Helmand and the mysterious killings of six members of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) by unknown gunmen, suggest that the escalated militancy will continue. During a telephone conversation with President Ghani, Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif has said that terrorism is a common enemy of both Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Ghani offered his condolence over loss of life in Monday's Lahore terrorist attack, which killed more than a dozen and wounded over 80 people, Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) Jamaat-ul-Ahrar group claimed responsibility.

The lull in Pakistan has been broken and it came under terrorist's severe attacks recently. Lahore, Mohmand Agency, Peshawar and Sindh have been attacked in rapid succession by the militants. In between, Karachi and Quetta have suffered violence too. The suicide attack on Thursday killed more than 100 and wounded more than 150 people as they performed a ritual at the famous Lal Shahbaz Qalandar shrine in Sehwan in the southern Sindh province. The self-styled Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) group claimed responsibility for the blast via its Amaq propaganda website.

For Pakistani nation, the attack was reminiscent of the suicide bombing at the Shah Norani shrine in Balochistan in November last year. That is to say, the last attack on a shrine of a Sufi mystic took place on November 12, 2016, when a suicide bomber struck the shrine of Shah Norani in the Khuzdar district of Balochistan, where at least 52 people were killed and 102 were injured.

Last week must have been the deadliest week for Pakistan. Thursday's blast is the latest in a series of attacks across Pakistan since Monday, Feb 13, when 13 people were killed in a suicide bombing at a rally in the eastern city of Lahore, for which the Taliban-linked Jamaat-ul-Ahrar claimed the responsibility. Two police officers were killed on Tuesday while trying to defuse a bomb in the Baluchistan provincial capital of Quetta and Lashkar-e-Jhangvi Al Alami faction claimed the responsibility.

That attack was followed on Wednesday by a suicide bombing at a government office in the Mohmand tribal area and a suicide attack on government employees in Peshawar, killing six people, for the first attack Jamaat-ul-Ahrar and for the second Tehreek-e-Taliban claimed the responsibilities.

Three others were killed in an improvised explosive device (IED) in Awaran, no group claimed the responsibility. Thursday's attack was the deadliest in Pakistan since December 2014, when fighters assaulted a school in Peshawar, killing

154 people, mostly schoolchildren. Hence, warring factions seek to intensify their insurgency both in Afghanistan and Pakistan. It is most likely that the current year will be really turbulent and the militancy will not be mitigated. The Taliban led by Mullah Haibatullah Akhundzada are widely involved in carrying out terrorist attacks in Afghanistan. In Pakistan, nonetheless, different warring parties are believed to play prominent role in destabilizing the country.

Similarly, loyalists to the ISIL have also gained foothold in Afghan-Pak soil. Reports say that the ISIL group in Nangarhar province has ushered in recruiting militias and also exercise their radical ideology such as dishonoring women and killing men and children.

If a new, sustained wave of terrorism is to be avoided and the resultant downturn in violence to become a permanent trend, the anti-militancy policy framework will need to be overhauled. Developing the will to want to end all forms and manifestations of militancy is important, but the strategy and operational tactics to do so is an essential concomitant.

To find the root cause of terrorism, Pakistan's Members of the National Assembly Standing Committee on Cabinet Secretariat, while debating the Compulsory Education of Arabic Bill 2015, discussed whether the lack of Arabic as a subject in the curriculum was the cause of terrorism in Pakistan.

PML-N MNA Parveen Masood Bhatti expressed support for the bill, saying terrorism was increasing because students were not studying Arabic.

"We have started focusing on the English language, and parents put their children in English-medium schools and do not bother teaching their children the Arabic language. It is because of this attitude that terrorism is increasing," she is cited as saying. Similarly, Committee member Nafeesa Khatkhat, from the Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) supported the bill, saying introducing Arabic as a compulsory language from "the start of education" would allow children to learn and understand the Holy Koran and help a large number of people get jobs. However, some seriously disagreed on the mentioned ideas.

The idea that teaching Arabic will mitigate militancy seems very naïve and simplistic. Teaching Arabic is very prominent in Afghanistan's schools and universities; however, militancy seems to be on the rise. In the meantime, some Arabic teachers express fundamental ideas which trigger serious discussions and disagreement among the students.

Furthermore, it should be noted that the Taliban come from the Arabic background (seminaries) and their main focus is on Arabic lessons, they do not understand deeply and ultimately resort to radicalism.

So, it is not a panacea for radicalization at all and Pakistani officials have to seek better strategy for eliminating the root of terrorism.

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Mutual Assured Deterrence

By Sergei Karaganov

The degradation of governance within the international system is a hot topic nowadays – and for good reason.

The underpinnings of the rules-based world order are crumbling, and basic norms of international behavior and decency are in decay. By almost any definition, we seem to be living in a dangerous – even prewar – type of world.

Relations between Russia and the European Union, and with the EU's close ally the United States, are increasingly fragile. There has been an effort to cope with shifting power dynamics in Europe by restoring the military-political divide between NATO and Russia – this time, some 600 miles (965 kilometers) east of where it was during the Cold War. But that approach has created new dangers, particularly given the EU's own fragility, and is unlikely to succeed.

More broadly, the unipolar world order, with the US as hegemon, is withering away. Of course, that order was far from perfect. On the contrary, it was a source of large-scale disorder, not least through American support of regime change in countries near and far. Mounting chaos in the Middle East exemplifies the flaws in this approach.

Nonetheless, there are concerns about what will replace that US-led order, not to mention how the transition will be managed. These concerns are intensified by the political tumult facing many developed countries, including the US itself. The failure of moderate establishment forces to grasp and respond to the forces now moving the world, from digitization to globalization, led to a governance vacuum, which has now given way to a moral and intellectual vacuum.

But there is reason to believe that a new global order may be on the horizon – one with the potential to be more stable and orderly than Pax Americana ever was. One key pillar of that order will be Russia.

Having lost whatever hope it may have held that it could build amicably a fair and stable world order, Russia has lately restored its hard power. It has used that power, first, to stop NATO's expansion into territories that Russia considers vital to its own security, thereby averting the large-scale war that expansion would inevitably have brought; and, second, to forestall yet another illegitimate Western effort to bring about regime change, this time in Syria (where Russia has demonstrated both military might and diplomatic prowess).

With these actions, Russia has diminished the sense of invincibility that, since the end of the Cold War, has driven the West to pursue policies that provoked international conflict and undermined its own moral authority and soft power.

In this sense, Russia has reestablished itself as a balancing influence within the global order.

(Whether true or not, the allegation that Russia may have managed, using cyber tactics and propaganda, to undermine

Western institutions, and even American democracy, merely reinforces this interpretation.)

Of course, the West's sense of invincibility was already under siege at home, exemplified in the proliferating political challenges to the establishment elites who have advanced the post-Cold War strategic agenda. The ideological victory that they achieved with the Soviet Union's demise was not permanent.

This should serve as a warning to Russia today. While the country may seem to be on the "right side of history" – something that the Soviet Union could never claim – triumphalism is a mistake. There is no "end of history." And not even the most resolute actor can build a stable, peaceful, and sustainable global order alone.

That is why it is good news that Russia and China have been working lately to build an increasingly robust partnership. And it is also why the deep distrust between Russia and the US – which, despite its lost hegemony, remains an essential geopolitical actor – will have to be addressed.

The world's three largest powers – the "big troika" – must come together to create the conditions for a peaceful transition to a new, more stable world order. The idea is not new; in one way or another, a big troika has been proposed by the likes of Henry Kissinger and Zbigniew Brzezinski. For one thing, a trilateral arrangement can help to defuse the tensions of bilateral relationships.

The key to success today will be to drop the obsession with arms-control agreements, which have proved impotent time and again, and instead initiate a difficult but crucial three-way dialogue on how to enhance international strategic stability. All of the elements of security – from nuclear weapons to cyber-security to politics – must be considered, in the service of the overarching goal of strengthening mutual multilateral deterrence.

Eventually, the troika could be expanded to include other real and sovereign actors in a new "concert of nations." Despite its eventual failure, the last such concert, created in the nineteenth century, ensured relative peace and supported impressive progress for almost a century.

A twenty-first-century concert of nations could have a similar impact, though it would need to be underpinned by multilateral mutual nuclear deterrence. A new world order is beginning to evolve. But the process has so far proved slow, chaotic, and laden with risk. During this dangerous time, we should remember how we survived another dangerous time. Today, as during the Cold War, mutual deterrence can save the world. (Courtesy Project Syndicate)

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