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## Afghan National Armed Forces Day

February 28, 9 Hoot, marks the Afghan National Armed Forces Day. In this day, Shah Amanullah Khan Ghazi decided to free Afghanistan from the invasion of the Great Britain and opened a strategic chapter in the history of the country.

The cabinet of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan announced 28 of February as the Afghan National Armed Forces Day in 2016 to acknowledge the sacrifices of them and to further empower our security forces. Afghan National Armed Forces Day, is the day on which we acknowledge the men and women who have dedicated their lives to the service of this country. They have answered the most noble calling – to defend the country, to protect her sovereignty and guard her territorial integrity.

Afghan security forces have sworn to serve Afghanistan and its people in accordance with the Constitution, and to uphold its values. The 28th of February holds deep significance for us as Afghan citizens.

Our Security and Defense Forces have given many sacrifices to protect the homeland. The men and women who have died have volunteered at a time when different terrorist groups have been active across this country to turn Afghanistan into the safe haven of terrorism to destabilize the country, region and beyond. In such a context, our security forces hope with their service to fight against the terrorists who have been threatening the country, region and beyond.

Afghan Security Forces have played their part in defense of the freedom and preservation of humankind.

They are our heroes, and it is our duty to impart to our children the story of their bravery and courage.

It is said that it is only in the service to one's fellow human that one's mettle is truly tested; and the armed forces of Afghanistan can be justifiably proud of having produced soldiers of resolve, of steadfastness and of great patriotism. Through National Armed Forces Day, we display to our people the capabilities and state of readiness of our armed forces. We also want to expand the public's understanding of the military's function and purpose in our society. The roles that the military plays are diverse.

For the ANSDF to effectively carry out its mission, we need to recruit high-caliber individuals into its ranks. In fact, the armed forces are a home for the youth of this country. It is the means through which they can serve, through which they can also step forward and say: God, Homeland and Duty. The Afghan Security is, and will remain, key to supporting our National Security and advancing our vision to grow our transit and economic hub economy. Like many other countries, we are impacted by the illegal exploitation of our resources, which seriously threatens the sustainability of them. It is upon our security forces to protect our trade routes, to cooperate with neighboring countries and international bodies to promote regional security, and to advance our developmental objectives. It is also the responsibility of Afghan security armed forces to guard our country's borders against the infiltration of transnational criminal syndicates and terrorist groups, the flow of drugs, human trafficking, undocumented migrants and other illicit activities.

It is imperative therefore that all our armed forces to be supported to enable them to respond effectively to current realities and threats, as well as emerging ones. As Afghans we are secure in the knowledge that our security forces are well-trained, capable, and, above all, that they uphold the highest values of our Constitution. Our armed forces are the great unifier; they are part of what makes us proud to be Afghans. We applaud their professionalism, their discipline and their dedication. The path they have chosen is not an easy one. Nor has it been easy for their families and your loved ones; because they protect the homeland, all democratic achievements and human rights values.

However, these days, some specific elements call for the dissolving of Afghan National Army and some other security institutions. But our security and defense forces are the sole protectors of the Afghan citizens, ensure the sustainability of our democratic governance system and values, Afghanistan new constitution and our democratic achievements. As a result, our security forces are our red line in any peace deal.

We celebrate the Afghan National Security Forces Day, and pray for our brave fallen heroes, and will continue their path to ensure their goals. We will remain beside our people and security forces and support them unconditionally to evolve as one of the most powerful security force in the region.



## Role of Media in Peace Building

By: Moh. Sakhi Rezaie

Media can play a vital role in Peace Building in Afghanistan. One of the key issues to be interrogated by media researchers in relation to conflicted societies is the extent to which the media serve to escalate or reduce the overall conflict situation. The argument goes that the media either escalate the conflict by accentuating disagreements, foregrounding confrontations, and lending air time to forceful voices, or, conversely, reduce the conflict by shunning extremism, giving room for alternative voices and visualizing peaceful solutions. For several reasons, the media situation in and around Afghanistan provides an interesting ground for discussing these issues. For one, the longlasting Afghan conflict has been a recurrent issue for both the local and the international media. In addition, the extraordinary situation of the growing Afghan diaspora has provoked a media engagement that in a special way treats issues of conflict through civic-driven, transnational media channels. Within this backdrop, it is the aim of the current article to discuss the role of the extended Afghan media in relation to the local conflict situation.

Within media and conflict research, a particular movement, namely "peace journalism," has received increased attention over the last few years. In short, peace journalism seeks to challenge conventional journalism by working actively for peace through the media. The movement has gained momentum as a result of criticism raised against conventional media operations in the coverage of the so-called global war on terror, a critique that echoes several decades of disappointment with the global media and their coverage of national and international conflicts. Against this backdrop, peace journalism claims to be an alternative to the traditionally conflict-oriented news paradigm. Peace researchers generally see a great potential for im-

provement in the area of mass media as an instrument for change and reconciliation. Media analysts are often more skeptical. It is difficult to decide what role the Afghan media actually play in the process of conflict resolution. In practice, when the peace journalism philosophy is transferred to actual media work, small media and active audience formats are deemed most useful. When traditional news media channels are requested to engage in peace journalism, the recommendations tend to reinforce traditional journalistic standards: independence, objectivity, fairness, and the importance of fact checking. These standards correspond entirely with the values called for by journalist organizations in Afghanistan. In this area, the contribution of peace journalism does not stand out as something new. When it comes to the need for explaining the complexity of the Afghan conflict and creating understanding between the various parties, there is undoubtedly room for improvement both in the Afghan and international media. A bulletin style news language would not suffice. One needs wider program formats and participation from diverse interests, including average citizens. The language of the media must also be the subject of persistent critical analysis. Some of the important issues are how reporters frame a conflict and who they include and exclude in the presentation. To scrutinize the media processes, one could very well be inspired by Johan Galtung and other peace researchers who are critical of the logics of the mainstream media.

However, traditional journalism actually does not appear to be hostile to improvements in these areas. To the contrary, it is part and parcel of the journalistic craft to be cognizant of the effects of word choice and media framing. To journalists covering Afghan issues, however, the appropriate approach appears to be the exercise of professional journalism rather than entering a peace mediation role.

## The Social Solution to Automation

By: Nicholas Agar

Nowadays, one struggles to think of any jobs that will still be available for our children when they grow up. Panicked parents are increasingly trying to anticipate the next big digital thing, so that they can give their kids a leg-up over all the other humans whose jobs will soon be automated. Accountants and radiographers are already doomed, but surely the developers perfecting driverless cars or adding new features to Facebook are safe, right?

Instead of thinking this way, we should view the emergence of fabulously efficient digital technologies as an opportunity to create new kinds of jobs that satisfy our social natures. This approach would not only solve the problem of the "end of work"; it would also address one of modernity's greatest ills: loneliness.

Socially isolated people are sadder and sicker than those who enjoy meaningful human connections, and their numbers are growing. According to a 2016 commentary in the New York Times, "Since the 1980s, the percentage of American adults who say they're lonely has doubled from 20 percent to 40 percent."

A social-digital economy would respond simultaneously to the problems posed by automation and loneliness. Machines and algorithms already rule the digital economy, and humans must accept that they have no chance of competing with them in terms of efficiency and computing power. We should expect – and welcome – a future in which machines fly our passenger jets and perform our heart surgeries. Why put up with clumsy, distractible human pilots or surgeons if we don't have to?

To be sure, some human workers will be required to manage things in the digital economy, but not nearly at the levels of the past. Meanwhile, all of the humans who would have become pilots, surgeons, or accountants in earlier times can instead perform the jobs at which machines are inherently bad.

As Sherry Turkle of MIT notes, for some activities, the involvement of a machine spoils the experience. Consider social media. Facebook and Twitter cannot reduce loneliness, because they are designed to serve up a biased sample of social experience. Like digital sugar, they can make a social interaction instantly gratifying, but they always leave an empty feeling behind. By offering merely a simulation of social experience, they ultimately make us lonelier.

In the past, the label of "social worker" applied to a narrow cohort of professionals who cared for those who could not care for themselves. But in a social-digital economy, the meaning of the term would be expansive. After all, the barista who makes your latte also provides a social service merely by asking how your day is going. That simple question, even if motivated by compliance with workplace rules, would have no meaning coming from a machine. Our need for social interaction is a product of our evolution. Humans, the social neuroscientist John Cacioppo explains, are "obligatorily gregarious." A zookeeper tasked with creating a "proper enclosure for the species Homo sapiens," he writes, would "not house a member of the

human family in isolation" for the same reason that she would not "house a member of *Aptenodytes forsteri* (emperor penguins) in hot desert sand." Put another way, if one wanted to torture an obligatorily social animal, the most cost-effective way would be to isolate it.

Throughout the industrial and post-industrial eras, our social nature has been suppressed by a cultural addiction to efficiency. But the digital revolution could help us rediscover what we have lost. Nowadays, the sole application of digital technologies in the workplace is to boost productivity. But with a socially-minded approach, we would instead focus on giving human workers freer rein to express themselves.

In a social economy, we would still care about efficiency, but we would make allowances for human fallibility. Just as we don't expect perfect efficiency from our lovers, we should not expect it from human teachers, nurses, or baristas.

In addition to efficiency, we should also be thinking about how we can socially enhance various professions, including those that don't seem especially social. Consider astronauts. A focus on efficiency would require us to phase out human space explorers more or less immediately. Machines are already better at making course corrections and gathering data, and they don't require the extra facilities that humans need to stay satiated and sane in space.

But there is another way of thinking about space exploration, one in which the presence of humans is the entire point. Storytelling has always been a deeply enjoyable social experience for humans. And though robot rovers can stream data from atop Mars's Olympus Mons, they will never be able to tell an emotionally satisfying story about what it's like to climb it. Why explore space at all if not to contribute to the story of humankind? From a social perspective, replacing human astronauts with machines is a bit like replacing Meryl Streep with a CGI animation.

For anxious parents, the best way to predict the future of work is not to study the latest technologies, but rather our own past. Before *Homo sapiens* became farmers, we belonged to forager communities that satisfied many of the social needs that go unmet today. The future of work in the social economy will be about attending to those needs once again.

For that to happen, though, we need to change policymakers' and businesses' mindset. As matters stand, the workers who deal most directly with other humans are often the first to be displaced by automated services. But this is a choice, not an economic necessity. Nothing about the digital revolution requires us to stop valuing humans and human interactions.

Rather than channeling the automation dividend into the pockets of a few billionaires, we should start using it to restore meaningful connections between obligatorily gregarious beings. Succeeding at that would be a human story worth telling.

Nicholas Agar is a New Zealand-based philosopher who has written extensively on the human consequences of technological change. His latest book is *How to Be Human in the Digital Economy*.