

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



March 13, 2017

## Let's Promote Non-Violence

One of the most dominant and negative factors in human history has been violence. Though many abhor it to a great extent yet it prevails and shows how we have failed to establish a world that can prioritize love and tranquility and can put an end to violence, hatred and wars.

Human history clearly depicts the horrors that were displayed by violence and wars, particularly during the world wars and in the conflicts that erupted in different parts of the world.

These episodes of violence influenced different countries, killed millions of people, destroyed the cultures and demolished important buildings and organizations, yet it is weird to see that we have not learnt any lesson and continue to pursue violence in order to achieve our objectives. There is no doubt in the fact that violence brought a great deal of misery to human civilization.

It will not be an exaggeration to say that humanity would breathe its last in the atmosphere of violence. If love is not provided immediately, no one can stop it from a certain death. Human beings have to love it if they want to see it alive.

The world we are living in can only be conquered through everlasting love and non-violence. Love has the capacity to bind human beings together. Though there are many in the world who are shouting in the favor of violence and antagonism, they are in fact the sadists who clap at the sight of human sufferings, appreciate cruelty and dance with the cries of human hopelessness and can think of no way to extract the humanity out of this dismal and horrible situation. So, they should know that they are also participants in the miserable holocaust of human beings with the weapons of antagonism.

As human beings, compassion and affection should be our distinguishing qualities that may categorize us as the best of the creatures among the existing species. Non-violence should be the most essential part of our nature.

It is non-violence alone that can make us look above the pathetic division of human race. Non-violence alone can make us look above the religious extremism, nationalism, sectarianism and racism. History has the lesson that all the human beings have never been able to stand under a single flag.

It is because all the ideologies of the world have divided the human beings into "we and "they". None of them has ever been able to embrace all the human beings alike. That is why followers of one religion and ideology have launched sanguinary wars against the others.

Billions of people have been massacred in the pursuit of the blind power. It seems that the blood thirsty inclination of human beings have not been satiated yet.

Human beings definitely need to become one and make love and non-violence their guide in the rocky way to a better destination. They must think larger and make humanity proud. They need to see beyond the vicious circles of their cunning egos and join hands together for a peaceful world.

They have to throw down the weapons and have smiles on their faces to win the hearts. They are supposed to teach their children the essential lessons of non-violence so that they may not be caught in the quagmire of hatred. They are to rise in the stature by bowing in front of sympathy and brotherhood.

They should paint the world with the colors of bliss, contentment and pleasure, instead of the blood of the human beings.

They require keeping in their books the immortal words of invincibility and prosperity, instead of destruction and disorder.

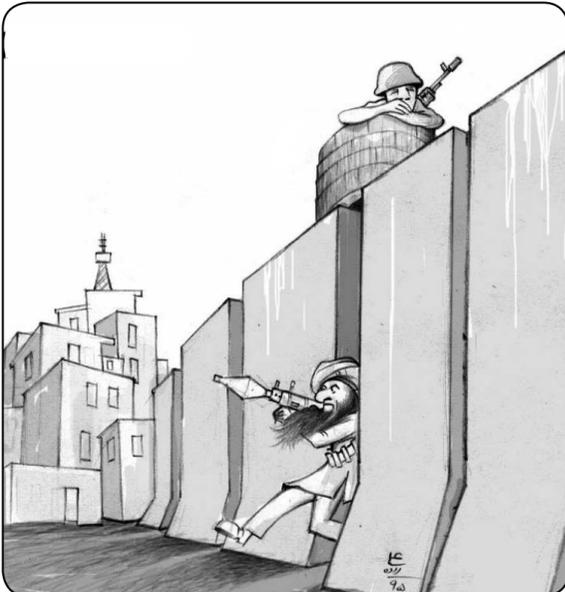
It is important for them to be human in the real sense of the word and conquer the world through non-violence, not antagonism.

Pursuing non-violence and peace is also very much important for the people of Afghanistan, as well, as the country has been suffering because of different forms of violence and wars. It is important that the people must realize now that nothing can be achieved through violence.

They have spent decades of their lives pursuing their objectives through violence and what they have achieved is destruction and instability. Millions people have been killed and thousands of families have been destroyed.

The country has not been able to come out of the quagmire of poverty, instability and misery. People suffer because of lack of rudimentary requirements of life. And crime, terrorism and extremism prevail everywhere.

These miseries are enough to teach them a lesson and they must realize that they have to value non-violence and peace and make every sort of effort to introduce them in their social and political lives. To some it may seem impossible but the life, teachings and practices of great people and nations show clearly that it is possible to pursue even the most difficult objectives through non-violence and strong resilience against antagonism, hatred and violence.



## Parliamentary Elections!

By Hujjatullah Zia

Election is a democratic movement which makes a significant landmark in a community. The citizens, who have been marginalized to decide on political issues, are supposed to play their vital roles in electing their president by going to election stations. Conducting election is the most democratic way which gives legitimacy to the power of a particular person. The main goal which is intended in election is to bring changes in political structure of a country in a democratic manner.

Moreover, a country which has been the witness of more than three decades of war and is at the outset of stepping towards democracy will certainly face many challenges. Of course, such a country which is at its infancy, therein political maturity is not grown enough and the political structure will be highly fragile. As Afghanistan is deep in the grip of many challenges such as instability, economic recession, violent crime, sectarian violence, low educational system, etc., it is too hard to pull it towards wellbeing overnight.

Afghanistan is tantamount to a baby crawling towards democracy, security, etc., however, it takes time to reach its goal if this baby is not teased by internal barriers or foreign enemies. According to Constitution, the parliamentary elections must be held before June 21, 2015, however, no measurements have been taken so far by the Independent Election Commission (IEC) and timeline for elections has not been announced yet. Recently, there have been contradictory statements on postponing upcoming elections, which have concerned election observer groups.

Last month, Deputy presidential spokesman Shah Hussain Murtazvi said the Independent Election Commission should present the timetable for the parliamentary election by early March.

He said a meeting was also organized with the international donors to discuss the arrangement of funds for the elections. To public amazement, in spite of the open door of nomination, political parties are in dilemma to send their leaders to be nominated. The long pause of the political parties is a matter of great surprise for public.

Correspondents are looking voraciously, with eagle eyes, to see who will move towards nomination, nevertheless, the politicians' resistance remains an enigma for the analysts to think for the correct reason. Indeed, it is highly astonishing that in a supposedly hustle and bustle of election, the country is facing the worst insurgency.

Whenever election approaches, the ominous cloud of nationalism creeps over the country. Many nations vote to their candidates based on national and racial grounds rather than considering qualified individuals. Indeed, this painful fact smacks of political immaturity and hot issues of nationalism. Likewise, their leaders are treated as infallible characters, no matter how much they betrayed the trust of their nations. Hence, Afghan people are still afflicted with the deadly disease of nationalism, even though, they have been victimized by common enemies and burn in the furnace of terrorism and radicalism.

It is a bitter fact to say that Afghan people have been the victim

of nationalism throughout the history. The factional conflicts, sectarian violence, political tensions, etc. left hundreds of thousands of dead behind, however; people repeat the same mistakes recorded by history time and again across the country. The more such murderous incidents continue, the more victims will be left behind. Thus, our people should be aware not to be digested in the storm of the same isms and conflicts. If the politicians hide themselves behind sympathetic façade for the sake of their own advantages, they will be the most corrupt leaders of their nations. Of course, some unconscionable acts are done by the political heads, while people have turned blind eyes to their blunders. It is believed that those who claim to shoulder the responsibility of representing the people; they must do their best to serve their nations devotedly.

Forming political coalitions by prominent leaders of several parties was no more than void displays. The sumptuous meetings in the home of one political leader or another, which first gave high hopes to the society, were all in vain. It is clear that in a country like Afghanistan, the main target of a candidate is to gain power and position. Struggling for stability, economic development, terrorist eradication, etc. are just a set of words to be said intentionally or unintentionally by those who are campaigning.

Anyhow, people fluctuate between high hopes and deep despair by the one news or another. How the election will change their future? Can the future president or members of parliament eradicate the terrorist and insurgency from the country? Will there strong political changes after the election? These are the questions arising in the minds of many citizens. Furthermore, the answers remain in ambiguity and it is too hard to decide on any reliable bases.

In addition, the transparency of the election is another issue which causes concern for Afghan people. Of course, cheating will be an inevitable phenomenon in country like Afghanistan. Many political powers will interfere in the issue for their own advantages. A clear and transparent parliamentary election is not possible in the country, considering the current situation. Hence, it is one of the major challenges going on in the country.

People are waiting for parliamentary election to vote with high hopes and expectations. The first and basic thing they need is security situation. They want to a parliament which would take nations issues seriously.

It is the moral responsibility of National Unity Government leader to play their role constructively rather than misusing their position or fame.

They have not to cause social fragment or political tensions in the country any more. Likewise, there should not be a business with the ballots of innocent people who are voting with high hopes. Election plays a key role in bringing better changes in a community. Furthermore, it is a way towards democracy and freedom, so people wish to breathe democracy in a secure society. It is hoped that the expectation of Afghan citizens with the entire struggle that they do, will not be dashed out.

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## Turkey's Death Spiral

By Andrew Wachtel

The series of terrorist attacks that have struck Turkey over the last year are sending the country - once viewed as a democratic, secular model for the Middle East - into a death spiral at the very moment when its people are to vote on a new constitution next month. Tourism - which previously accounted for more than 10% of Turkey's GDP - is withering, and foreign direct investment is set to slow considerably. These outcomes will reinforce each other, producing a vicious cycle that will be difficult to halt.

Turkey's government-controlled media and large swaths of the population see the nefarious hand of the West in the country's unraveling. Observers often blame Turkey's deepening plight on its inability to reconcile traditional Islam and modernizing Western tendencies, as well as on external events, such as the conflict in Syria. But decisions by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan have also contributed to Turkey's vulnerability to terrorism.

Erdoğan's first such decision, motivated by his desire to see Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's regime collapse, was to allow fighters, including recruits for the Islamic State, to cross Turkey's southern border into Syria relatively freely. He failed to recognize fully the danger these fighters posed to Turkey's own security, particularly as many of them joined Islamist-affiliated groups that are as hostile to Turkey as they are to Assad.

Erdoğan's second fateful decision was to re-launch the on-again, off-again civil war with Turkey's Kurdish population. In the early years of his presidency, Erdoğan reached out to the Kurds and managed, more or less, to halt active hostilities. But, in June 2015, Erdoğan's Justice and Development Party (AKP) lost its parliamentary majority, prompting the president to resume open hostilities with the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) rebels. Erdoğan's gambit allowed the AKP to retake a parliamentary majority in a snap election that November, but at the cost of reopening the Pandora's box of civil war. Despite these two decisions, it might have been possible for the Turkish security forces to continue protecting the country from both Islamist and Kurdish terrorism. But a third decision ruled that out: Erdoğan chose to break with Fethullah Gülen, the expatriate cleric whose influential followers - the so-called Hizmet movement - had for many years been among Erdoğan's most important allies.

Over the course of roughly six years, the Gülenists had helped Erdoğan to oust military and police cadres (among many other public-sector employees) who were loyal to Turkish secular and nationalist ideals, rather than to his own soft Islamism. But, in 2013, Erdoğan, suspecting that the Gülenists had begun plotting against him, began turning on them. The short-lived coup attempt last July spurred a vengeful

Erdoğan to organize a massive purge of the military and security services. While it certainly makes sense for a government to prosecute those who have attempted to overthrow it, Erdoğan took matters significantly further, pursuing anyone with the slightest potential connection to Gülen. In the process, he severely weakened the capacity of Turkey's police and military.

At a moment when threats from Islamist and Kurdish groups were intensifying, that was the last thing Turkey needed. Perhaps Erdoğan should have recalled Joseph Stalin's purge of the Red Army's officer corps in the late 1930s, which left the Soviet Union almost defenseless, opening the way for Adolf Hitler to attack in 1941. Turkey is now fully under the political control of a single individual - and incapable of dealing with the multiple crises that it faces.

Even in the best-case scenario, Turkey will be severely weakened, no longer capable of sustaining the regional leadership role that it played for nearly a century. In the worst-case scenario, Turkey's economy will collapse, sending huge numbers of refugees - including Syrians and others currently in Turkey, as well as Turks themselves - to Western Europe.

Not everyone is distressed by Turkey's misfortune. Russian President Vladimir Putin is probably more than pleased with the country's transformation. In Putin's worldview, the most dangerous countries are successful democracies allied with the West. Turkey used to be precisely that: a democratic and reasonably prosperous country and a longtime NATO member, moving swiftly to deepen its ties with the West. Now, Turkey is becoming an economically weakened autocracy, wracked by terrorism and unable to defend itself, much less to help NATO project power.

This is a dream come true for Putin. (It is also good news for Russia's ally Iran, which can only welcome the destabilization of its main non-Arab Sunni rival in the region.) If Turkey's downward spiral generates a new wave of refugees bound for Europe, further destabilizing the European Union, all the better.

This is not to say that Putin has planned Turkey's downfall. He didn't have to. Leaders like Erdoğan easily fall for Putin's brand of modern dictatorship, which relies on disinformation and the trappings of democracy to bolster the ruler's personal power. All Putin has to offer is inspiration, and perhaps some advice from time to time.

Beyond Turkey, US President Donald Trump seems equally enamored of Putin. We shall see whether the United States - with its economic strength, relative geographical isolation, and strong institutions - is better protected than Turkey against the influence of Putin's malign example. (Courtesy Project Syndicate)

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