

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



March 19, 2015

Reforms in Public Offices; An Appreciable Stance

Afghanistan's political culture, produced and reproduced during more than a century of failed attempts to build a strong centralized and often tribalized nation-state in a multi-ethnic Afghanistan, gives Afghanistan's political culture its distinctive dynamics and outcome. It is also to hypothesize that socio-culturally inappropriate governance system based on centralization of powers; combined with Afghanistan's predominantly tribal political culture may have hindered the establishment of an effective governance system.

Factually stating every institution of public sector is suffering from mal-administration and worst corruption. The people reluctantly visit these institutions because they know the truants and dishonest elements would not lend a helping hand to them. Even for public utilities task, people have to offer bribe. Without any favor or bribe it's very difficult to get any work done from the public offices. Moreover, due to the malpractices of the public officials and misappropriation of public funds the infrastructure of public institutions has become cracked and a situation like chaos is prevailing all over the country. The government consequently, has to take an overwhelming tread to overhaul the affairs of every department.

Previously it was reported most of the diplomats and senior officials at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs were family members and relatives of government officials and lawmakers. It found that their appointments appeared to be based on nepotism and against rules and merit policy. Following the emergence of report President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani ordered the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) to sack officials appointed on the basis of nepotism. It was later reported at least 40 Afghan diplomats, including 11 ambassadors, have been dismissed "on the basis of their tenure and age and not meeting the required criteria". It is indeed a great spirit of statesmanship exercised by president, taking judicious action against illegal appointments.

Afghanistan for long has been passing through war and bloodshed. The four decades of war have earned nothing except ruins, countless miseries and devastation for poor masses. The ruins wreaked by war are multiplied by a degree of nepotism and favoritism displayed public officials. Consequently, no significant progress has been made despite elongated international efforts made to alter Afghanistan's socio-political culture.

A society may be one in which all the members, may be of the same ethnic group, subscribe to similar religious beliefs and in which disparities of wealth and social status are small. Another society may be multi-racial, have many religious and sectarian groups, and show marked caste, class and social distinctions; Afghanistan being such a society. In the former, decision-taking may be simple, whereas in the latter the conflict potential is much greater and its politics may, consequently, be more acrimonious and decision-taking result from the interaction of numerous clearly defined groups. Whatever the social environment, the relationships existing in non-political spheres may be expected to carry over into the political. There is, thus, a continuous interaction between the physical, social and political endeavors. It is hence, the cabinet picks emboldened the complications of incumbent government.

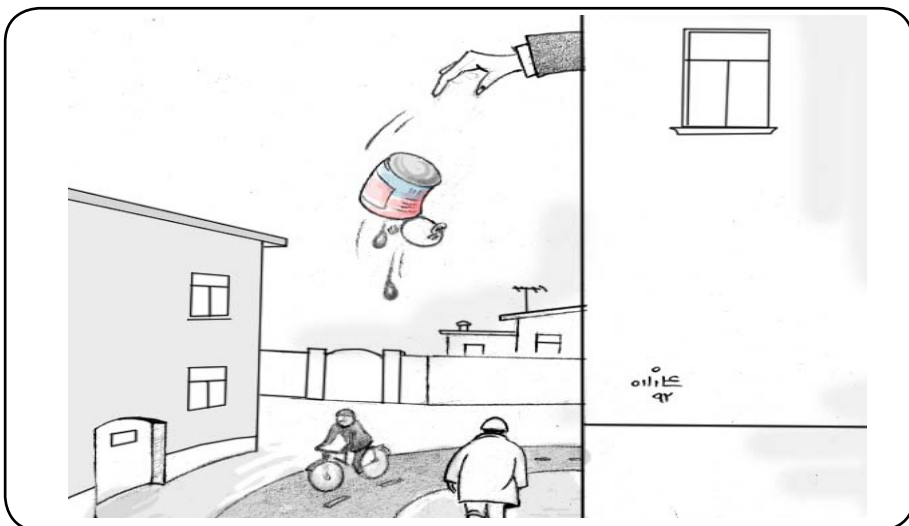
The individual members of the society will have certain values, beliefs and emotional attitudes which make up the culture the community of which political attitudes are a part. Such social behavior has its basis in the culture of a society and, similarly, political behavior has its basis in the political culture. Unluckily, what we witness is, the values have altered in the blind pursuit of some undefined eminence using an illicit course of action. Henceforth the government has to take concrete measure to get socio-political values we pursue, streamlined.

Of the primary requisites is accountability is a key tenet of good governance. Who is accountable for what should be documented in policy statements. In general, a government is accountable to those who will be affected by its decisions or actions as well as the applicable rules of law. It should ensure every individual finds an opportunity in public departments. Participation by both men and women, either directly or through legitimate representatives, is a key cornerstone of good governance. Participation needs to be informed and organized, including freedom of expression and assiduous concern for the best interests of the government and society in general.

Economic and political stability are deeply interlinked. Without one the other cannot be obtained, so government must evolve strait and requires a major re-structuring. Then continuity of policy is required without which, no result would be obtained. People must be educated without which they cannot protect their rights. Media can play a vital role in creating awareness among people regarding their problems and their solutions. In this way people would be able to demand their rights and will perform their duties in a more organized way. Thus, we can say without proper civic sense good and effective governance cannot be obtained.

If a country is poorly governed and there is a political instability, its enemies find opportunities in this situation and try to undermine it. While a badly governed country has many other problems to solve, it cannot ensure its security. A good governed country is economically strong and all the departments of the country function smoothly. It enables the rulers to strengthen the country's security.

The continuity of the good socio-political culture exempted of ill-practices even in the face of such occurrences and alterations, is a sign of the effectiveness of the process by which political culture is passed from generation to generation—the nurturing process of political culture.



“Struggle for Survival; Survival of the Fittest”

By Dilawar Sherzai

Darwin was the person who presented the theory of biological evolution and claimed that all the living beings struggle for their survival and only those among them survive that are the fittest. Thus, he gave the theory of 'struggle for survival and survival of the fittest'. However, his theory was totally biological and did not claim the same in social life. Herbert Spencer was the person who basically gave the theory of social evolution and claimed that in the social life the same applies – there is struggle for survival and only those survive who are the fittest.

Though not completely correct, the theory of evolution in the social life does have certain significance. If studied carefully, the different societies and nations that are there in the world are facing a changing environment – the social circumstances change with each passing day and they have to struggle to fulfill overgrowing necessities introduced by these changes and the ones that are able to overcome the challenges are considered the fittest and are the ones that survive.

In today's human societies the theory of struggle for survival may fit both individual and collective struggle for survival. The competitions ensued by socio-economic setup that we have in human societies compel the individuals to struggle for achieving their goals. The ones that are able to stand victorious in this competition are basically the fittest and stand distinct from others. However, it should be noted that here the survival does not necessarily mean living alive but it can, in this context, mean being able to defeat others in the competition.

At the same time, there are differences in the way the animals and the human beings compete each other for survival. Human beings have societies that have their rules and regulations and social norms and values. Moreover, there are ethical standards and religious obligations that human beings have to consider as well. Therefore, they are not supposed to do anything they like in their struggle for survival. In the biological evolution, however, the animals' only motive is to be able to survive by any means possible. They know no ethics and do not understand social norms and values.

It is also important to understand that struggle for survival in the biological context does not always mean that each animal has to fight its own war for survival but they also have the capacity to carryout collective endeavors in this regard. Peter Alekseyevich Kropotkin in Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution explains this clearly, "In the animal world we have seen that the vast majority of species live in societies, and that they find in association the best arms for the struggle for life: understood, of course, in its wide Darwinian sense—not as a struggle for the sheer means of existence, but as a struggle against all natural conditions unfavourable to the species. The animal

species, in which individual struggle has been reduced to its narrowest limits, and the practice of mutual aid has attained the greatest development, are invariably the most numerous, the most prosperous, and the most open to further progress. The mutual protection which is obtained in this case, the possibility of attaining old age and of accumulating experience, the higher intellectual development, and the further growth of sociable habits, secure the maintenance of the species, its extension, and its further progressive evolution. The unsociable species, on the contrary, are doomed to decay."

Human beings in today's world must also opt for collective endeavors to ensure their survival on the planet earth. Unfortunately, the negative competition among the individuals have isolated them to a large extent. Everyone, nowadays, is lost in his own world and does not easily associate with others. This has led to societies that have more discontentment and hatred. Learning from the animals, human beings can strengthen their mutual cooperation in their fight for their survival.

At the same time the misinterpretation of the term 'fittest' in the theory has also led human beings to consider that the nations and the individuals that are the most powerful, have wealth and social status and are the fittest; therefore, they alone can stay victorious in the struggle for survival. Nonetheless, that is not always the case. The fittest does not necessarily imply that human beings must be physically powerful or have wealth and social status. Though, wealth and power play dominant role in supporting the individuals and the nations in their survival but another factor that is even more important than that is the capacity to adjust with the changing society. Leon C. Megginson has rightly said, "It is not the strongest or the most intelligent who will survive but those who can best manage change."

The individuals and societies that understand the flow of change and change themselves, their perceptions in accordance to the demands of the time will definitely be successful. History has been witness to this fact. The western societies in today's world are the most developed nations of the world and more equipped to guarantee their survival just because they were flexible enough to change with the changing nature of their surroundings. They did not cling to their obsolete ideas and beliefs, progressed in science and technology and at the same time welcomed changes in the social and political lives, embraced democracy and freedom and became the fittest. The eastern societies on the other hand, could not cope with the changes. Denied to make necessary adjustments in their set of beliefs and ideas and as a result are lagging behind others and are struggling to survive.

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30 Abducted Hazaras Pessengers

By Sher Ali Nader

"Abducted Hazara passengers have been released," that is the first thing I saw on my Facebook news feed on Sunday. A wave of happiness travelled throughout my soul and body as I thought 30 Hazara passengers who were abducted last month in Zabul province of Afghanistan have been rescued. Nonetheless, the feeling vanished as I went into detail of the update. It was about 10 other Hazaras who had been kidnapped by Taliban earlier that day. They were released but had been brutally tortured.

The thirty-one Hazaras are still in captivity of terrorists! More than three weeks since their abduction have passed but still there is clue about their whereabouts. These Hazaras had just been repatriated from Islamic Republic of Iran and were on their way from Herat to Kabul when their buses were stopped in Zabul, one of the volatile provinces in southern Afghanistan by unknown gunmen who communicated in a foreign language. They took the Hazaras with themselves after singling them out.

The Kabul-Kandahar highway which further stretches to Herat offers an appalling example of destruction caused by Taliban to Afghanistan's already underdeveloped infrastructure. Bomb explosions, clashes between Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) and Taliban, beheading and kidnapping are common and frequent incidents that take place along this route.

In other words, Taliban have a great influence over provinces like Wardak, Ghazni, Zabul and Kandahar through which the highway passes. Neither ISAF nor have the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) been able to break their influence. This could be one of the major reasons for why the Afghan intelligence and security forces have failed to locate the Hazara abductees.

Is ISIS involved in the abduction? Afghan local officials have repeatedly expressed their concerns over growing presence of ISIS in southern provinces. Afghanistan's National Directorate of Security (NDS) said in a statement last month that Abdul Rauf, ISIS chief in southern Afghanistan who had also been a Taliban commander and had spent several years in Gitmo Bay, has been killed along with his five companions in Sadat village of Kajaki district of Helmand province. Despite that it is believed that ISIS has not been dismantled in Afghanistan and it has been able to recruit Taliban fighters into its ranks and white flags of Taliban are being replaced by black ones of ISIS. There are doubts that ISIS has kicked off its operations in Afghanistan by abducting 31 members of Hazara tribe, majority of which practice Shia Islam.

Based on a report published on The Express Tribune on March 15, 2015, Haji Muhammad Mohaqiq, a prominent Hazara leader who is also deputy chief executive officer in National Unity Government has said that he has sent negotiators to Pakistani cities of Quetta and Karachi to secure release of the Hazaras. Nonetheless, it remains vague with whom the negotiations will take place.

Formerly, some Afghan authorities had blamed Pakistani-based terror group Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ) for the abduction. LeJ, a fiercely anti-Shia outfit, has been involved in killing over 1,500 Hazaras in and around Quetta city of Pakistan over the past years.

The group might have extended its area of operation to target Hazaras in Afghanistan with assistance from Taliban and foreign terrorists operating in Afghanistan. In 2011, about 80 people mostly Shias were killed and hundreds were injured on Ashura Day in a series of terror attacks in Kabul, Mazar e Sharif and Kandahar cities of Afghanistan. The attack in Kabul was the bloodiest one as it took lives of 70 innocent people including women and children. Then, LeJ had taken responsibility for the attack.

Whether these Hazaras have been abducted by ISIS, Taliban, LeJ or any other terror group, it is the foremost responsibility of Afghan government to recover them! Despite public protests in various parts of Afghanistan, the government seems not be acting as it must.

The silence of National Unity Government over the issue is disappointing for the Hazara nation that enthusiastically voted in the last presidential election in the hope for a better, secure and discrimination-free tomorrow. Hazaras have always been the greatest supporters of peace, harmony and democracy in Afghanistan. But their agony seems be taking forever to end as they still face systematic genocide, beheading, abduction and discrimination just because of their ethnicity and religious belief.

As a Hazara who has travelled and risked his life by traveling on the Kabul-Kandahar highway for many times over the last few years - not because I was adventurous but because I was compelled - I can imagine what pain my family would go through if I had been lost or abducted as these 30 Hazaras. The senselessness of Afghan authorities including the Hazara leaders is weakening the hope and trust of the families who are awaiting safe return of their beloved ones.

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