

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



March 28, 2017

Individuals for the Society

People living in one society may differ in individual qualities but they are quite similar in social qualities since they belong to the same circumstances. Their personal problems may be different from each other but their social problems are same to a certain extent. That is why an individual effort or struggle might be relatively easier to do and in the same way it is easier to pursue one's thoughts and reach to the destination but it is not that easy when one society as a whole comes out on its way to its destiny. All the individuals are responsible for the development of the society equally though removing all the personal differences and gathering at a single ground is quite hard and almost impossible as everyone tries to be heard more than any other person and wants his ideas to be followed which, no doubt, brings hurdles in the way to prosperity.

To escape these hurdles we require a system that could be acceptable for all members and wherein all the members have are fully aware of their roles and status and they have the full understanding of the responsibilities that they have to perform; not a society, wherein, all the problems are related to the leaders and the leaders are held responsible for all the issues and deficiencies. It is really weird to find people blaming only the leaders for all the disorder and problems in the society. Before blaming the leaders for all the misdeeds it is important to consider some of very important questions - Have we ever bothered to see around ourselves and know the problems deeply? Have we every tied to bring about developments in the society? Have we ever been quite responsible to play our roles?

Have we every thought to keep the social matters above all other concerns? Have we ever considered over working for the society selflessly? Have we ever looked over our duties towards the society beyond our rights? Have we ever recognized our own tendency and things we can do for betterment? And have we ever learnt to have a critical view over our actions as and ask ourselves about the mistakes that we commit without much consideration? Or we have only found the easiest way to put the entire burden over leaders' shoulders?

It is important to note that all the leaders whom we hold responsible for having done nothing and for all harms to the society, belong to the same surroundings we have and they have become leaders because we have made them so.

Without the will and cooperation of the people, leaders would never become leaders. It is also imperative to consider that when we ourselves escape our duties, why should not the leaders do the same, as they are human beings as well? When we have never considered the evil to be eliminated from the roots and deconstruct the old useless system; how can we think to build anything new? How come we expect the leaders to be different from us when they are the products of the same corrupt society? We do not have the complete privilege to criticize them when we have never seen into our own collars.

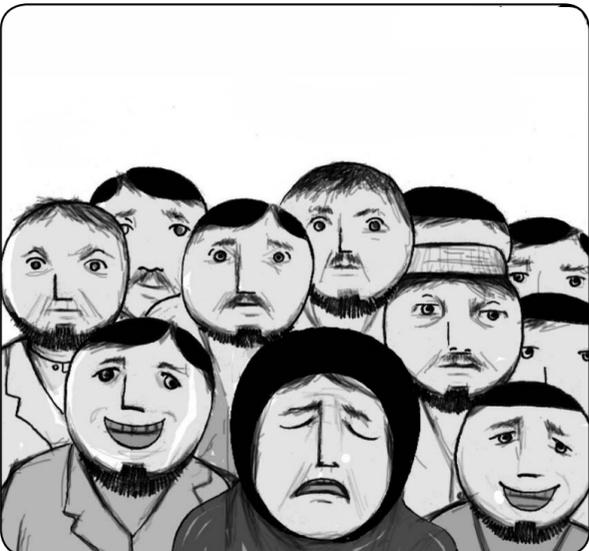
It is necessary to understand that the leaders may be able to give just a guideline to follow and ultimately it is the people themselves who have bring about changes.

Renowned scholars and thinkers in human history have utilized most of their energy in discussing how the leaders should be, but it is now time when human beings need to discuss that how the subjects should be as the human society is becoming more and more democratic and the in democratic setup the role of the subjects become more important than that of leaders as democracy is the government of the people. The will of the subjects basically get transformed into elections that choose the leaders to govern the country. Most of the institutions in democratic setup are people centered, not autocratic where the leaders alone take decisions; therefore, it is important in such setup that how the subjects are, and what sort of role they play.

If the subjects are aware, active and cooperative, a democratic setup is bound to be successful.

Our society can never go forth if we rely only on some representatives to do it. Unless we, all the common members of the society, try to support them, we will not face success in life. Let us leave blaming the leaders only because they are not wrong alone; we are their partners of equal shares of evils and let us promise to use up our energy and strength all together for a common cause and purpose and a broader perspective of mass well-being. Let us substitute the old ideas with the new ones in order to go with the pace of developed and civilized world.

Let us not only talk about our rights but speak up for our duties as well to have a better society. Let us all be active to play our role to fill the gap between leaders and the common people. Let us think beyond our personal interests to coup with the changing mood of the world.



The Escalated Militancy in Iraq and Syria

By Hujjattullah Zia

The Syria's interminable war resulted in large-scale casualties and destruction. Syrians are left at the mercy of violence which stems from men's megalomania and radical ideology. The sufferings of civilians under war will outrage the collective conscience as people, including women and children, are riddled with bullets on the grounds of their race, color and faith. The militant fighters fish in the troubled waters and inflict heavy casualties upon non-combatants.

The self-proclaimed Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) group is believed to play the most destructive role through exercising its fundamental mindset. Moreover, the warring sides do not pay heed to the humanitarian law which results in more casualties. In other words, the rights, liberty and dignity of civilians are violated by warring parties and the tragedies caused by ISIL group is beyond description. About 465,000 people have been reportedly killed and missing in Syria's civil war.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said recently that it had documented the deaths of more than 321,000 people since the start of the war and more than 145,000 others had been reported as missing.

According to this report, the government forces and their allies had killed more than 83,500 civilians, including more than 27,500 in air strikes and 14,600 under torture in prison and rebel shelling had killed more than 7,000 non-combatants. Even though the UN-brokered talks between rival sides in the Syrian conflict resumed in Geneva, the prospects for a breakthrough remain slim, amid ongoing violence across the Syria.

Recently, rebels were advancing in Hama Province, as part of their biggest offensive against government forces in months. The city of Hama remained under government control but the opposition has gained ground in the countryside; rebels have seized 11 villages and several ammunition depots since last week.

A report, published last week by Physicians for Human Rights (PHR), found the Syrian government "deliberately" restricted humanitarian access to besieged populations. "As the conflict enters its seventh year, Syrian authorities continue to deliberately and illegally manipulate UN humanitarian access, arbitrarily limiting, restricting and denying aid deliveries in order to ensure the continued suffering of besieged populations," the report said.

It is not only Syria which suffers from the venom of the ISIL group but also Iraq. Iraqi army on Sunday resumed operations against ISIL in Mosul after a one-day pause, amid growing concerns over an escalating civilian death toll as fierce fighting spreads to the city's most densely populated areas. The offensive was briefly put on hold after local officials and residents in west Mosul said suspected coalition air raids last week had killed scores of civilians at the ISIL-

held al-Jadida district. According to Iraqi authorities, more than 200,000 people have fled west Mosul since the operation to retake the area was launched on February 19, but the United Nations has said that about 600,000 are still present inside the city.

This week Iraqi prime-minister Haider al-Abadi concluded his first meeting with US President Donald Trump in Washington, DC, with Trump praising the "unprecedented cooperation" between the two countries in combating the ISIL.

Trump had promised to finish off ISIL thirty days into his presidency, but the battle for Mosul itself has dragged on longer than he anticipated. Trump's account of his meeting with Abadi indicates that he was focused on the military aspect of the conflict, however, little was revealed about what post-conflict strategies, if any, the leaders discussed, such as the humanitarian crises and reconstruction of formerly ISIL-held territories.

The tragic aspect of the war in Iraq and Syria is the salient point which is believed to be a stain on the collective conscience. To one's unmitigated chagrin, the escalated militancy in the two countries will increase the casualties. No wonder, even if the Syrian freedom fighters win the battle, it will be a pyrrhic victory for the Syrian nation. The destruction and casualties are indescribable.

After all, the post-war Syria will not be stable either due to the firm foothold of the ISIL group. Since terrorist groups are used as political pawns, they seek to destabilize countries in one way or another. For instance, the political turbulence continues in Afghanistan even after the downfall of the Taliban's regime. Similarly, Iraq has been changed into a war-torn countries after the fall of Saddam's regime - the turmoil will continue in post-ISIL Iraq too for the formation of multi-groups there.

In other words, the problem is that Iraq's military forces are numerous, ranging from the regular army, the Ministry of Interior forces, the Kurdish Peshmerga, to the myriad of Shia militias and Arab Sunni tribal militias that have emerged since 2014, subsumed under the al-hashd al-shabi or Popular Mobilization Units (PMU).

In brief, a pressing issue that looms on the horizon related to Iraq's post-ISIL recovery is the number of various Iraqi armed forces and the possibility of these forces turning on each other. What will happen to the myriad Iraqi militias that emerged in response to the ISIL invasion of 2014?

The International community will have to broker the peace talks between the rival sides in Syria so as to decrease the casualties. Furthermore, the US President must focus on rooting out the ISIL militants as he vowed so. Beyond that, the world must intensify its counter-terrorism mechanism to stop violence and bloodshed and protect the human rights and freedoms.

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America's Confidence Economy

By Mohamed A. El-Erian

Financial markets seem convinced that the recent surge in business and consumer confidence in the US economy will soon be reflected in "hard" data, such as GDP growth, business investment, consumption, and wages. But economists and policymakers are not so sure. Whether their doubts are vindicated will matter for both the United States and the world economy.

Donald Trump's election as US president has triggered a surge in positive economic sentiment, because he pledged that his administration would aggressively pursue the policy trifecta of deregulation, tax cuts and reform, and infrastructure construction. Republican majorities in both houses of Congress reinforced the positive sentiment, as they signaled that Trump would not face the kind of paralyzing gridlock that Barack Obama confronted for most of his presidency.

The surge in business and consumer sentiment reflects an assumption that is deeply rooted in the American psyche: that deregulation and tax cuts always unleash transformative pro-growth entrepreneurship. (To some outside the US, it is an assumption that sometimes looks a lot like blind faith.)

Of course, sentiment can go in both directions. Just as a "pro-business" stance like Trump's can boost confidence, perhaps even excessively, the perception that a leader is "anti-business" can cause confidence to fall. Because sentiment can influence actual behavior, these shifts can have far-reaching impacts.

In his groundbreaking General Theory of Employment, Interest, and Money, John Maynard Keynes referred to "animal spirits" as "the characteristic of human nature that a large proportion of our positive activities depend on spontaneous optimism, rather than mathematical expectations, whether moral or hedonistic or economic." Jack Welch, who led General Electric for 20 years, is a case in point: he once stated that many of his own major business decisions had come "straight from the gut," rather than from analytical models or detailed business forecasts.

But sentiment is not always an accurate gauge of actual economic developments and prospects. As the Nobel laureate Robert J. Shiller has shown, optimism can evolve into "irrational exuberance," whereby investors take asset valuations to levels that are divorced from economic fundamentals.

They may be able to keep those valuations inflated for quite a while, but there is only so far that sentiment can take companies and economies.

So far, the exuberant reaction of markets to Trump's victory - all US stock indices have reached multiple record highs - has not been reflected in "hard data." Moreover, economic forecasters have made only modest upward revisions to their growth projections.

It is not surprising that equity investors have responded to the surge in animal spirits by attempting to run ahead of a pos-

sible uptick in economic performance. After all, they are in the business of anticipating developments in the real economy and the corporate sector. In any case, they believe that they can quickly reverse their portfolio positions should their expectations change.

That is not the case for companies investing in new plants and equipment, which are less likely to change their behavior until announcements begin to be translated into real policies. But the longer they wait, the weaker the stimulus to economic activity and income, and the more consumers must rely on dissaving to translate their positive sentiment into actual purchases of goods and services.

It is in this context that the economy awaits a solid timeline for policy announcements to evolve into detailed design and durable implementation. While there is often some delay when political negotiations and trade-offs are involved, in this case, the sense of uncertainty may be heightened by policy-sequencing decisions. By deciding to begin with health-care reform - an inherently complicated and highly divisive issue in US politics - the Trump administration risks losing some of the political goodwill that could be needed to carry out the kinds of fiscal reform that markets are expecting.

Even if a bump in the economic data does arrive, it may not last, unless the Trump administration advances policies that enhance longer-term productivity, through, for example, education reform, apprenticeship programs, skills training, and labor retooling. The Trump administration would also have to refrain from pursuing protectionist trade measures that would disrupt the "spaghetti bowl" of cross-border value chains for both producers and consumers.

If improved confidence in the US economy does not translate into stronger hard data, unmet expectations for economic growth and corporate earnings could cause financial-market sentiment to slump, fueling market volatility and driving down asset prices. In such a scenario, the US engine could sputter, causing the entire global economy to suffer, especially if these economic challenges prompt the Trump administration to implement protectionist measures.

The US is on relatively strong footing to achieve higher economic growth. Indeed, by animating the economy's animal spirits, the Trump administration has laid the groundwork for the private sector to do a lot of the heavy lifting. But there is more to do.

Unless the Trump administration can work well with a cooperative Congress to translate market-motivating intentions into well-calibrated actions soon, the lagging hard data risks dragging down confidence, creating headwinds that extend well beyond financial volatility. (Courtesy Project Syndicate)

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