

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



September 06, 2015

Parliamentary Election

Though there are many processes that are necessary for the political development in Afghanistan, upcoming parliamentary election, at the moment, is considered the top priority matter. What will be the nature of the election and how it is going to be conducted will to a large extent decide the political scenario in post-2015 Afghanistan.

It is a crystal clear fact that Afghan political system needs extra care, concentration and honest efforts for its improvement. So, the Afghan authorities, especially the Afghan President himself must strive to strengthen the pillars of democracy in the country and make all the possible efforts to hold a historical and exemplary election in 2014. On the other hand, Western allies must put pressure and provide assistance so that the upcoming parliamentary election must be held as soon as possible and must not have the drawbacks that were present in last Presidential elections. It must be made sure that improvements are brought in the polling systems that can help the people of Afghanistan participate without complications in the elections and have their true representatives in parliament.

In addition efforts should be carried out to introduce improvements electoral reform and voter registrations. Government must also motivate and facilitate people thoroughly so that maximum number of people participates in elections and the turn out should be satisfactory. Independent Election Commission (IEC) of Afghanistan must also make sure that it carries out the necessary measures before the election is conducted.

It is time to know that one of the basic ways the people can participate in the affairs of the state is through elections. Well-established and developed election systems can provide opportunities to all the members of the society to cast their votes and have their say in the making of the government. However, in Afghanistan this basic institution of democracy has not been able to function appropriately. The last presidential and parliamentary elections were vehemently dominated by corruption and insecurity.

Most of the people because of the security concerns and many other problems could not even cast their votes. Moreover, the election fraud and misuse of power to influence voters also played dominant role in forming the government not fully favored by the people.

The proper and well-developed election process can play an important role in creating accountable government. A political party or a politician in order to be elected by the votes of the people tries to perform properly so that it gets chance of remaining in authority for a longer period of time. If the political parties and the contestants in the elections come to know that they can win the election even without the consent of the people, through illegal ways, they will never remain accountable to the people and would not care much about the public opinion. Afghan political scenario, at the moment, is facing almost a similar sort of situation.

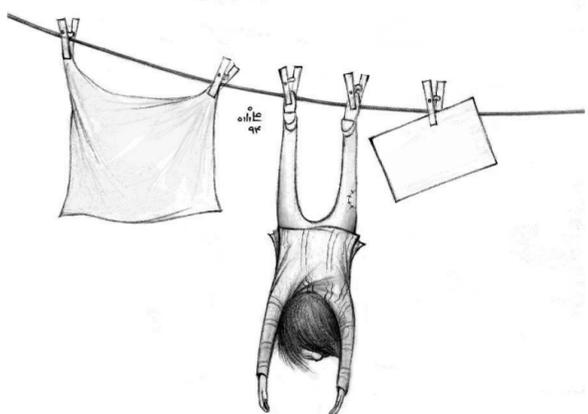
A thorough analysis of Afghanistan's political scenario will depict that currently the political processes are also being kept aloof of accountability along with the institutions. The current efforts for the reconciliation and reintegration processes are very much non-participatory and non-transparent. As the major stakeholders are being kept away from the processes, a sort of ambiguity and distrust is being generated within different circles and the people of Afghanistan. Moreover, there is a disadvantage of such an approach as well – it is likely to result in improper and incomplete outcomes of the processes, which will further generate controversies.

Afghan authorities have in fact kept on striving to limit the power and authority to themselves and, on certain occasions, have used the same irresponsibly. The need of time is to make the political institutions and processes accountable to the people through proper democratization of the political structure.

On the other hand, Security of the next year presidential and provincial councils' elections seems to be a tough challenge for Afghanistan National Security Forces (ANSF) that took over security responsibility of most parts of the country

it is expected that Taliban and other groups of insurgents will increase their activities to bar the people from participating in the election process. In 2009 elections, incidents where the Taliban chopped off voters' fingers were reported which caused waves of fear among the people. It is feared that the same or even worse cases of violence may repeat. In order to counter that, there is a pressing need for pre-planning and coordination among security forces in Afghanistan. The NATO troops will have to support the Afghan forces to let people vote in a peaceful environment.

Moreover, Afghan government needs to address the concerns regarding good governance and growing corruption. It has to make sure that the government is able to serve the people of Afghanistan and make the country a better place for them to live. It also needs to ensure that the ruling elite in the country does not utilize all the support and assistance to fulfill its own self-centered incentives. Otherwise, the expectations of peace and tranquility in the country and the region will be nothing more than woolgathering.



Submitting to State's Legitimate Jurisdiction Should Serve Peace Talks

By Asmatyari

The society characterized with undefined rule of mob turns the object of deterioration and decay –is bound to perish. This eventually is referred to be era of vindictiveness –exploiting the essence of development for peace that has turned a nightmare. The strength the anti-state elements have acquired marks the state of statelessness we display –making us realizes militants have grown irreversible strength. Undeniably, both Taliban and Daesh continuously fight to earn both physical and political gains.

The infighting between Taliban for leadership issue, between Taliban and ISIS over political dominance and gain of legitimacy is not surprise. The earlier report states the Taliban new supreme leader Mullah Akhtar Mansour had besieged a senior Taliban military commander Mullah Mansour Dadullah in Khak Afghan district of southern Zabul province on refusing to submit to his commandment. The emergence of differences between Taliban's leaders surfaced after Omar's demise, on the subject of whom to succeed. Taliban leadership council elected Mullah Mansour as the new leader, but Omar's family and a number of supporters opposed the election. The difference of opinion led to eruption of clashes between Taliban second rank leaders. According to credible reports supporters of Mansour and Dadullah have fought several clashes over the leadership issue in Khak Afghan district during the past one week. Conversely around 1,000 pro-Taliban religious leaders have gathered in Quetta city, of Pakistan since two weeks to resolve differences between Taliban leaders, but have so far been unsuccessful. Contrary to Taliban infighting, they are also confronting Daesh on several fronts in Nangarhar province at present. It's said at least 23 Taliban militants and affiliates of the (ISIS) Afghanistan chapter group were killed during a clash. The Provincial officials confirms the incident and said several houses were also torched as a result of the clash between the two militant groups. The fight continues unless one's dominance is accepted by the other. Realistically, the infighting earns mere human casualties as long as the blood conflict goes undecided. It depicts Taliban endeavoring to expand the territory of their rule, or exercising power display to make the government submit to their terms when the peace talks gains momentum. More or less prior to winning the heart and mind of masses the territorial gains can not be equated as a major gain. It can be assessed; even if Taliban succeeds securing lion's share in the jumpstarted peace talks, the fair exercise of ballot may not head them to assemblies.

Formerly, a number religious scholars in Kabul expressed their support for recent statements made by clerics in the holy city of Mecca, condemning Daesh and the Taliban as deviants from Islam and calling on all true Muslims to stand against them. The prominent scholar, Al-Ghamedi had said that both Daesh and Taliban have killed people in the name of Islam, but in fact have no connection to the true religion. This statement serves a severe blow to Taliban; is certainly deemed to their ex-communication from the religion of Islam, adjudged to offending the true pro-peace image of Islam. The jurisdiction issued caused severe blow to the terrorist and the

insurgent group. It is therefore both Daesh and Taliban are losing sympathies amongst ordinary masses –is a serious drawback to both the militant organizations. Earlier, harsh born jurisdiction has been issued against them; making them liable of public agonies.

However, Daesh consecutively assert their deadening presence by posting ferocious videos of butchery of innocent and non-combatant fellows they executed to implant their fear in the mind of rest of the people, getting them subjugate to their say. It is seen Daesh and Taliban launched successive attacks on Muslim and non-Muslim population who are fill-date vulnerable to their attacks. The government could not succeed restraining the terrorists away from commercial areas. Moreover the absence of trust and coordination between security institutions has let these terrorists invincible.

In the land of atrocities, Taliban were already flexing their muscle for greater share in Afghanistan politics –the space decade long war between coalition forces and Taliban produced is eventually filled by militants of Daesh. Reportedly, Taliban and Daesh are fighting for pressing their opponent. A recent report released by the Pentagon in Washington D.C. states that Daesh is expanding in Afghanistan and preparing to confront the Taliban. According to the report, the Taliban are also monitoring Daesh's activities, and the two groups have already faced off in confrontation on several occasions. For now, however, the battle against Daesh in Afghanistan is predominately taking place on a local level. In order to draw greater focus on changing political scenarios, Taliban recently sent a highly-publicized letter to Daesh leaders emphasized that there is no need for a new front in Afghanistan. The letter warned that if Daesh forces open a new battlefield, then they could face strong opposition by the Taliban. The Afghan Taliban has urged the self-styled caliph of Islamic State, Abu Bakar Al-Baghdadi, to keep his ultra-extremist group out of Afghanistan. An open letter sent by the acting chief of the Taliban's central council, Mullah Akhtar Muhammad Mansoor, said there was no need for launching a "parallel front in the presence of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan. According to the Taliban letter, since 1,500 religious scholars have name the leader of the Islamic Emirate in accordance with 'Sharia' and renowned scholars across the Muslim world have declared allegiance to him, "everyone should work under one leader and one flag". Hitherto Taliban letter is not responded however, Taliban' letter to Daesh not only confirms their presence but affirms entrenched footing –the former reports that fighters from both groups have fought deadly battles in parts of eastern Nangarhar province inflicting heavy losses to rivals support. The Taliban already suffer agitation over the defection of several cadres to IS. Taliban, having fought for several years got closer to reinstate with Kabul's central government.

The government at this very moment should extend the area of operation to all such part of the country where instability seems on rise. It is high time the central governments dismantle any group who turns down the state's writ by bringing them under the umbrella of state security net. Peace should be talked to those who submit to state's legitimate jurisdiction and democratic values.

Asmatyari is permanent writer of Daily outlook Afghanistan. He can be reached at asmatyari@gmail.com

The Economy of Politics or the Politicization of the Economy of India

By Saikat Kumar Basu

Sharp criticism of the current federal government of India has been visible in the national media, the opposition and some sections of the public regarding the performance of the emergent Indian economy. Innumerable questions are being raised about the government trying to uphold the image of India on a global platform as a regional and global strategic power, an emergent economy and to convince the world to make India a premier investment destination. While in democracy, all kinds of criticisms and introspections are welcome; but, at the same time one has to be objective and unbiased regarding their evaluations. The opposition must protest when a wrong policy is being adopted in the parliament; but one also needs to extend the support when a government works towards the long-term future of the nation. India has a huge population and a multi layered society with numerous complex century old issues. One has to remember that it is not easy to rule such a critically complex and heterogeneous multi-ethnic, multi-lingual and multi-faith nation easily. No government can ever solve all the problems and issues of the nation whatever may be their electoral promises. Rather than looking to the government for everything from monsoon rain to employment the public has to do self-inspection too; and think what they are individually contributing for the long-term future of their nation.

For the first time in the post independent history of the nation, India is being globally appreciated for the broader role played in establishing peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific region. The federal government should be commended for their relentless efforts in working towards that. India's role in extending cooperation to the earthquake ravaged Nepal has been internationally praised and the current government deserves appreciation for that. The federal government has been criticized for their enhanced focus on building strategic and diplomatic relationships with the neighboring countries over pressing domestic issues by the opposition. Our planet has transformed into a global village and to survive any country will now need foreign investments and international support. Without international engagement no country can prosper under the current global scenario. The successive previous national governments had concentrated most of their efforts in dealing with internal issues. Did this solve all of India's complex internal issues and problems? There has been no major complain regarding corruption in the first year of the government; and the peace and economic progress of the nation has shown some directions from the last decade however small it may be. The opposition needs to remember that they should be objective and constructive of their criticism; and hence coordinate and cooperate with the government for the future prospect of the nation rather than just pointing fingers at one another for their individual political agenda and personal gains.

The government must be appreciated for proposing a sensible railway budget with long-term sustainability and improvement in the infrastructure and service. For several years the railway budgets have been a document of appeasement and gimmicks for the public rather than facing the reality. The financial situation of Indian railways has been deplorable and that it needs efficient management rather than subsidized packages. It will

be important to increase the railway footprint in the country and extend the service to as many remote corners of the nation as possible. Bullet trains and other services are distant dreams for the nation that does not even have minimal railway infrastructure connecting all the states 69 years post independence. Rather than criticizing the budget for not having cheap attractions, one should look for accepting a sensible budget that attempts to build a stronger foundation for future opportunities.

India has done enough experiments in the past following British, Soviet and partly American free market economy with each system having its own merits and demerits. India should follow the economic strategy that caters best to her vast population including millions of rural poor and under privileged members of the society. There is no need to copy the exact success of another economy. Off course it is important to draw inspiration from others; however, the future growth of a nation is governed by numerous factors that are not taken into consideration by main stream economists such as political philosophy, national peace and stability and the numerous socio-cultural factors shaping the cumulative day to day impact on the sock markets, climatic fluctuations impacting agricultural productions, import and export balance, success in bringing foreign investments, stable internal growth rates, level of corruption within the nation, moral ethics and population growth rates. Several of these factors are way beyond the control of the administrative, economic and political machinery of a nation. Hence instead of surpassing anyone, India should focus in dealing with her own economic challenges and maintaining an environment of peace, political stability and a steady but continuous economic development across different states and union territories to reach its due place in time.

Last but not the least, it is important to face the crude realities of life without prejudice for a better future. The federal government of India may have been worried about the political backlash that it may receive by releasing the caste based socio-economic review report. This approach should be criticized. The Indian subcontinent has suffered in the rural front for centuries when the region was ruled by numerous small kingdoms and feudal landlords dating pre colonial period; and the situation has not changed even in the pre and post independent India. However, it is not just the result of the political failure but a complex problem of a social system with severe discrimination, lack of economic opportunities, education and scope of empowerment for the rural poor for centuries; and this could not be fixed in a day or by a single government. India needs to face the realities to identify the loopholes of her socio-economic dynamics and work with dedication, sincerity and enthusiasm to slowly but eventually bridge the gap between rural and urban India. But first it will be best to accept the truth and make sure that the nation works towards finding a proper solution to these challenging issues without being blocked by static and negative politics of the government and the opposition. The claustrophobic fight between the government and the opposition will not help Indian economy and her people to progress in the right direction.

Saikat Kumar Basu is a Canada and India based freelance journalist specializing in global geo-political, strategic and foreign policy issues, science & technology and environment & conservation related themes. Regularly contributes to newspapers, newsletters, bulletins, magazines and journals in Asia, Africa and the Americas.



Chairman / Editor-in-Chief: Dr. Hussain Yasa

Vice-Chairman: Kazim Ali Gulzari

Email: outlookafghanistan@gmail.com

Phone: 0093 (799) 005019/777-005019

www.outlookafghanistan.net



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