

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



September 20, 2016

We Must Promote Peace

Every year on 21st September most of the countries of the world celebrate International Peace Day. This year, as well, it will be celebrated tomorrow and the theme for this year's Peace Day is 'The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): Building Blocks for Peace'.

This day was established by the United Nations General Assembly in 1981. And, in 2001, the UN General Assembly voted to designate the day as a period of non-violence and cease-fire. On this day the United Nations urges all nations to honor a cessation of hostilities and to commemorate the day through education and public awareness on issues related to peace.

Peace is really vital for today's world, particularly, when different nations can be found fighting with each other. For the developing and under-developed countries it is a prerequisite for other sorts of development. Without sustainable peace, thinking of prosperity is nothing more than a figment of one's imagination. With peace, a society would be on the track of a healthy evolution and it would be able to concentrate on many other issues that are hurdle in the way to bliss and contentment.

Unfortunately, no peace has been for ever and fortunately, no war has lasted long. Wars have always devastated human civilizations, killed millions of human beings, brought miseries and pains and yet they have not been rejected as unnecessary and this fact is really very painful.

It is difficult to believe that knowing the horrors of wars, human beings have always considered them necessary and almost all the nations in the world are really ready for wars. There are many important requirements that are neglected in the society and most of the energy and efforts are utilized to make a nation ready for launching war and strong militarily. It is weird to note that there are many countries on the face of earth that would not utilize the resources of the nation for improving the standard of the living of the people but would spend them magnanimously on acquiring modern weaponry. In fact, human beings are preparing for their own destruction and extinction consciously.

Just consider the amount and the characteristics of modern weaponry; they have the tendency to raze human beings from the surface of the earth completely. The magnitude of weapons of mass destruction at the disposal of world nations can even destroy the entire earth several times.

Unluckily, some of the human beings are of the view that peace can only be achieved through wars and therefore, wars are necessary in human societies. This is the biggest misconception human beings have ever had. War does not and cannot bring peace; it in its nature is destructive. Even if war brings peace that is only after the entire human civilization is erased. Would a peace, in a world without human beings, be required at all?

Most of the wars have been possible because the nations have been very much interested in dominating each other and gaining power as power has enabled them to play major role in international politics and power game. In the meanwhile, they have forgotten the basic philosophy of the development of politics and states. Politics is really a game of power but the same power can be used to bring peace and tranquility within the world. Moreover, if all the political achievements of human beings are not able to bring them peace, what is the purpose of all those achievements? If they are not able to use their tendency to love each other what is the use of their sensitive feelings? In words of Mahatma Gandhi, one of the greatest propagators of peace and harmony, "The day the power of love overrules the love of power, the world will know true peace."

One of the basic reasons of wars has been the tendency to subjugate others and try to revenge them for any perceived misdeed. And the series of retaliations have mostly formed an unbreakable chain of recurring circle and the wars have devoured several generations. This fact is true both in collective and in individual lives. Nations and individuals who have kept on retaliating have only been able to achieve great loss, nothing else.

Mahatma Gandhi had rightly quoted, "An eye for an eye would only make the whole world blind." That is how human beings in today's society behave. They behave as if they are blind towards all the ugly manifestations of bloody wars and to all the miseries; therefore, they are making themselves ready for more and more wars, more seriously than ever before.

For our country Afghanistan, peace stands paramount as the country is suffering from war, instability and resultantly from poverty and misery. On this day the efforts to restore lasting peace in the country should be further strengthened and the national, regional and international stakeholders should come together so as to establish lasting peace. And, it would be in the benefit of everyone.

The Nation's Cheap Life

By Hujjatullah Zia

The terror and targeted killings carried out by the militant guerrilla fighters have filled the air with a sense of fear and disappointment. The security situation deteriorates with each passing day and Afghan civilians and soldiers are killed in one way or another. The deadly and life-threatening incidents increase public anxiety and implant chagrin in the society. The public loses their morale and confidence and the status quo make entrepreneurs to give up financial investment.

Militancy discourages the individuals and puts mental pressure on them. In other words, insurgency and political unrest will not only damage a society's economic infrastructure but also harm the public mentally and emotionally. The pugnacious nature of Afghans is the result of three decades of war and violence. For instance, the tribal arguments, one's hot temper and violent behaviors within his/her family or society and men's aggressive attitude towards women are the destructive effect of carnage and bloodshed across the country. It is an undeniable fact that when one is socialized in a violent environment, suffered cruelty and witnessed fighting and killing, s/he will grow in the same way. Moreover, one will lose his/her confidence and hope.

It is believed that whenever the individuals' rights and freedoms are not valued in a society, they will not respect law and order and chaos will emerge among the public. Therefore, life will be cheap. When the state is not able to protect the citizens' rights to life, liberty and property and criminals are at large, many others will usher in criminal acts and break legal restrictions, religious values and ethical code. There is no doubt in cheapness of life in our society. The devoted souls, mainly soldiers, who serve the nation with strong sense of faith and humanity, are killed easily.

The blood of women and children is spilt on the street in suicide bombings and travelers lose their lives by Improvised Explosive Device (IED) or abducted and killed on the grounds of their race, color or creed. Subsequently, such outrageous acts of violence are condemned by the officials, without a strong backlash against the murderers. I believe that the increase in civilian casualties and high graph of corruption and crime and violent acts are the result of poor reactions from the officials.

Currently, the Taliban fighters target high-ranking officials, mainly those who carry out heavy operations against the militants. Although this incident will not deter our soldiers, it is a tragedy for the country. First, the government will have to combat terrorism more strongly than ever before. Secondly, it should tighten the security and protect the life of anti-Taliban figures through increasing their bodyguards and accommo-

dating them in safe and secure residences. Needless to say, if preventive measures are not taken for the protection of high-ranking officials, the nation will lose them in some ways. Afghan National Army (ANA) and soldiers, who play the best role in defending the country and protecting the life and liberty of the nation, are the national capital. In another item, our soldiers are the backbone of the country and seek to prevent from violence and bloodshed at the cost of their own lives. They make sacrifices to safeguard nation's life, national values and social norms.

So, the lives of soldiers, whose only claim to fame is to protect the individuals, should be held in respect. Their death is an irreparable loss for the nation.

The words of condemnation as a reaction to the Taliban's militancy and targeted killings will embolden them. The officials are to respond the militants stronger and target the high-ranking Taliban so as to demoralize them and prevent from further loss. Witnessing the abortive efforts for holding peace talks and the Taliban's foul play, I have always suggested military deal with the Taliban outfits. The Taliban fighters have increased insurgency and terror rather than decreasing their deadly operations. The death toll, containing combatants and non-combatants, escalated within the two past years - which is a flagrant ridicule to peace talks.

With the unmitigated violence, the mouth-watering hope for democracy and freedom has ebbed away. Warring parties put democracy under question through deteriorating the security situation and targeting the soldiers and high-ranking officials. Recently, a number of soldiers lost their lives. Since the Taliban are reeling from the death of their leader Mullah Akhtar Mansour, they seek revenge via inflicting harm and casualty upon the nation. Therefore, it is believed that "an eye for an eye" is the most suitable policy and effective mechanism in this regard. If not military deal, what will be the right strategy? What will be the next mechanism following the futile talks?

The persistent militancy, which has increased the combatant and non-combatant casualties, has been a roadblock to peace talks. Therefore, talks and military deal were toss-up for Afghan government. It would be naïve to think that Afghan government and the Taliban could agree on a common agenda about peace since the Taliban exercise radical ideology and violate humanitarian law. The government is considered a puppet administration for the Taliban elements and they will continue their insurgency. As the Taliban outfits talk with the barrel of gun and resort to bullet rather than peaceful mechanism, only counterinsurgent tactic will curb the issue and reduce violence and bloodshed.

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Globalization for Everyone

By Hernando de Soto

Nowadays, globalization's opponents seem increasingly to be drowning out its defenders. If they get their way, the post-World War II international order - which aimed, often successfully, to advance peace and prosperity through exchange and connection - could well collapse. Can globalization be saved?

At first glance, the outlook appears grim. Every aspect of globalization - free trade, free movement of capital, and international migration - is under attack. Leading the charge are antagonistic forces - from populist political parties to separatist groups to terrorist organizations - whose actions tend to focus more on what they oppose than on what they support.

In Russia and Asia, anti-Western groups are at the forefront of the campaign against globalization. In Europe, populist parties have tended to emphasize their aversion to European integration, with those on the right often also condemning immigration, while the left denounces rising economic inequality. In Latin America, the enemy seems to be foreign interference of any kind. In Africa, tribal separatists oppose anyone standing in the way of independence. And in the Middle East, the Islamic State (ISIS) virulently rejects modernity - and targets societies that embrace it.

Despite their differences, these groups have one thing in common: a deep hostility toward international structures and interconnectedness (though, of course, a murderous group like ISIS is in a different category from, say, European populists). They do not care that the international order they want to tear down enabled the rapid post-1945 economic growth that liberated billions of developing-country citizens from poverty. All they see are massive, unbending institutions and intolerable inequalities in wealth and income, and they blame globalization.

There is some truth to these arguments. The world is a very unequal place, and inequality within societies has widened considerably in recent decades. But this is not because of international trade or movements of people; after all, cross-border trade and migration have been happening for thousands of years.

The anti-globalization movements' proposed solution - closing national borders to trade, people, or anything else - thus makes little sense. In fact, such an approach would hurt virtually everyone, not just the wealthy elites who have benefited most from globalized markets.

So what is fueling inequality? To answer that question, we must consider what about globalization is generating returns for the wealthy.

A central aspect of globalization is the careful documentation of the knowledge and legal tools needed to combine the property rights of seemingly useless single assets (electronic parts, legal rights to production, and so on) into complex wholes (an iPhone), and appropriate the surplus value they generate. Clear and accessible ledgers that faithfully describe not only who controls what and where, but also the rules governing potential combinations - of, say, collateral, components, producers, entrepreneurs, and legal and property rights - are vital for the system to function.

The problem is that five billion people around the world are not documented in national ledgers in anything approaching an organized manner. Instead, their entrepreneurial talents and legal rights to assets are recorded in hundreds of scattered records and rules systems throughout their countries, making them internationally inaccessible.

Under these conditions, it is impossible for the majority of humanity to participate effectively in their national economies, much less the global one. Without any means of participating in the process of producing high-value combinations, people have no chance of seizing some of the surplus value created.

So it is a lack of consolidated, documented knowledge - not free trade - that is fueling inequality worldwide. But addressing this problem will not be easy. Just determining how many people are left out took my organization, the Institute for Liberty and Democracy (ILD), two decades of fieldwork, conducted by more than 1,000 researchers in some 20 countries.

The main problem is legal lag. The lawyers and corporate elites who draft and enact the legislation and regulations that govern globalization are disconnected from those who are supposed to implement the policies at the local level. In other words, the legal chain is missing a few crucial links.

Experience in Japan, the United States, and Europe shows that a straightforward legal approach to ensuring equal rights and opportunities can take a century or more. But there is a faster way: treating the missing links as a break not in a legal chain, but in a knowledge chain.

We at the ILD know something about knowledge chains. We spent 15 years adding millions of people to the globalized legal system, by bringing the knowledge contained in marginal ledgers into the legal mainstream - all without the help of computers. But we do not have decades more to spend on this process; we need to bring in billions more people, and fast. That will require automation.

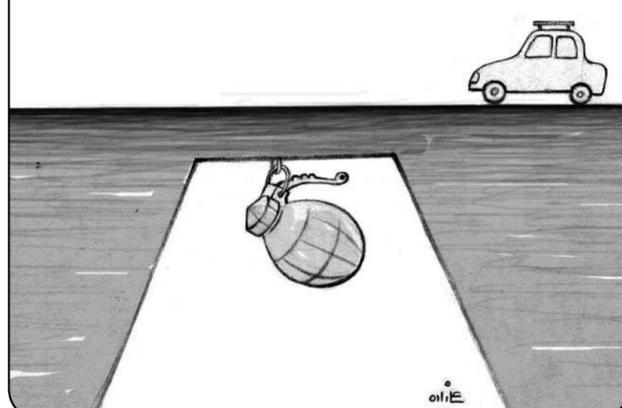
Last year, ILD began, with pro bono support from Silicon Valley firms, to determine whether information technology, and specifically blockchain (the transparent, secure, and decentralized online ledger that underpins Bitcoin), could enable more of the world's population to get in on globalization. The answer is a resounding yes.

By translating the language of the legal chain into a digital language - an achievement that required us to develop a set of 21 typologies - we have created a system that could locate and capture any ledger in the world and make it public.

Moreover, we have been able to compress into 34 binary indicators the questions that computers have to ask captured ledgers to determine which provisions should be inserted in blockchain smart contracts between globalized firms and non-globalized collectives.

Information technology has democratized so many elements of our lives. By democratizing the law, perhaps it can save globalization - and the international order. (Courtesy Project Syndicate)

Hernando de Soto is President of the Institute of Liberty and Democracy and the author of *The Mystery of Capital*



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