

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



September 26, 2016

Militancy and Radical Ideology Menace Freedom

Freedom is men's natural right and one is not supposed to pose threat to this right or curtail it but on the basis of law. "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood." Exercising freedom in a peaceful environment will decrease violence and bloodshed and channel the globe to peace and stability. Since freedom is men's fundamental need, the world will have to respect it and seek to eliminate the barriers.

Human beings are free to exercise their religion and beliefs and no one, including the government, is allowed to force the individuals to practice certain faith or religion. Discriminating one on the grounds of his/her race, color, caste and religion is banned in national laws and international instruments.

Throughout the human societies, the violation of individuals' rights and liberty led to bloody wars and outraged human conscience. For instance, a nation sought to enslave others and kings sought to rule a nation at gunpoint. Their megalomania and lust for power or ethnocentrism prompted them to curtail the individuals' freedoms at the cost of millions of lives. The imposed restrictions triggered a strong backlash from the nations and they resorted to violence to fight the hurdles. It is believed that the World Wars were the result of showing contempt for human rights to life and liberty and humiliating them. Therefore, a large number of people lost their lives for denying the yoke of slavery and colonization and protecting their freedom.

It is believed that radical ideology and lack of religious tolerance pose the most serious threat to men's freedoms. Currently, the fundamental ideologies spill the blood of the masses on the grounds of their religion and beliefs. The armed militants such as the Taliban and self-styled Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) trample upon the freedoms of the public for not being able to practice religious tolerance. Their parochial worldviews and narrow mindsets leave no room for the spirit of brotherhood or respect to men's freedom. In other words, since the extremist groups seek to impose their ideology on the public at gunpoint, the individuals show reactions and protect their faith and beliefs at the cost of their lives.

If we consider many Islamic countries, the militant fighters stoke sectarianism and racial tensions. Those who deem themselves superior based on their race or sect, they will humiliate others and imperil their freedom. For instance, the ISIL group enslaved thousands of Yazidi women in Syria on the basis of their sect, rated according to desirability, labeled and transported them across ISIL-held territory. The fighters traded the women and awarded them by leadership as prizes. Moreover, the Taliban regime killed a large number of ethnic minority groups and treated women violently. They revived the cruelty of some former kings of Afghanistan who violated their freedoms, mainly the freedoms of speech, thoughts, assembly and press.

The philosophers and lawyers believe that freedom is men's natural and inalienable rights - which are also stated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) - and it is bestowed by the creator not the state. Therefore, the state will not be allowed to restrict the nation's freedom but on the basis of law. The theory of "social contract" suggests that people allowed the state, based upon a contract, to restrict their freedoms and protect their rights and liberty in return. Thus, when one breaks the legal restrictions and cross the red line set by the state, s/he will have to be prosecuted and punished according to law. In short, the government is supposed to form a civil society void of violence and bloodshed, safeguard the nation's rights and protect them from social and political harms. In Afghanistan, the warring factions pose serious threat to nation's rights and liberty and shed their blood in suicide bombings and terrorist attacks. The public are not able to exercise their freedom in a peaceful atmosphere. The graph of civilian casualties is high and the militancy continues unabated. The emergence of ISIL group has aggravated the instability and filled the air with greater chagrin. Life has turned cheap and valueless. Both individual and collective freedoms are susceptible to harm and peril.

Women are subdued to men indoors and to the militants outdoors. They suffer from violence and mistreatments. Moreover, they are still confined in social and cultural restrictions.

Traditional norms hamper them from taking active part in social activities and militancy curtails their political role. In short, the flagrant violation of the nation's freedoms is rife in the country. The inchoate democracy is left at the mercy of the Taliban's offensives. To strengthen democracy, the state will have to protect the citizens' rights to life and liberty and free the country from horror and terror. Freedom is the beating heart of democracy and should be upheld strongly. So, to nurture the spirit of democracy and pave the way for progress and prosperity, a nation is to be free from political instability and respect one's life and liberty or else it will suffer all the aforementioned challenges.



The Adverse Effects of Unemployment

By Mohammad Zahir Akbari

When a person is actively searching for a job, and is unable to find any work this is called unemployment. It can also be defined as a situation where someone of working age is unable to find a job but who would like to be in full time employment. Unemployment is often used as a measure of the health of the economy of a nation. The most frequently cited measure of unemployment is the unemployment rate. This is the number of unemployed persons divided by the number of people in the labor force. If a mother left work to bring up a child or if someone went into higher education, they are not working but would not be classed as unemployed as they are not actively seeking employment.

Work organizes life and it gives structure and discipline to life. Scientific research findings show that unemployment can affect an individual's psychological well-being and it can leave tremendously powerful scars on a person's psyche. Unemployment can leave some individuals with feelings of worthlessness, lack of motivation, feelings of embarrassment, greater level of anxiety, hopelessness and increased levels of stress. The worst adverse effect of unemployment is that a person who is unemployed has a very hard time getting hired. Companies usually hire people who already have jobs as people with jobs usually socialize in similar places and referrals increase their chances of getting new jobs. This really adds to the disappointment of unemployed people. Crime rates rise as people are unable to meet their needs and divorce rates often rise because people cannot solve their financial problems. In some cases because of the unemployment the youth delay their marriage age which is also a prominent social problem. Unemployment is associated with elevated rates of mental and physical health problems. It increases morbidity and mortality rates, and can cause detrimental changes in family relationships and in the psychological well-being of families. Scientific studies have already pointed out that unemployment can contribute to increased rates of suicide and reduced life expectancy. Unemployment is a greater motivator to illegal and unauthorized means to receive benefits.

Unemployment has a positive effect on the rise of violence and economic instability in Afghanistan. Most Afghans believe that unemployment is the main cause of continuous insurgency in the country. There are many examples that young unemployed Afghans joined the anti government armed groups; In fact, they are not joining the extremists or insurgents to follow their ideology, and sometimes they are against their ideology but they joined them to earn money to buy a loaf of bread for themselves and for their families. It is a clear fact that the killing of insurgents has not weakened the insurgent forces and they seem to be more stronger and the major reason can be the high rate of unemployment in country, which leads more of our unemployed youths to join the

anti-government insurgent groups. Unemployed teens are used as suicide attackers, battle forces, or laborers for implanting Improvised Explosive Devices (IED) and in some provinces unemployment has also led people to grow opium, poppy, and others are encouraged to join the extremist groups. In short, no national strategy will succeed unless create millions of more jobs! Imprisonment of poverty criminals is not a real solution to solve the problem of crime; it does nothing for the victims of crime, but perpetuates the idea of retribution, thus maintaining the endless cycle of violence in our culture. It is a cruel and useless substitute for the elimination of those conditions—poverty, unemployment, homelessness, desperation, racism, greed—which are at the root of most punished crime. The crimes of the rich and powerful go mostly unpunished. Afghanistan comes in the list of top countries with highest unemployment where the unemployment rate is estimated 50% - 60%. Unemployment and social difficulties increases the number of drug addicts, the number of drug users in Afghanistan is estimated to be as high as 2 million, among the highest rates in the world. The further depth of unemployment problem can be calculated by recent report of World Food Program (WFP) revealed about 40% of Afghan people facing food shortage comprising 11.3 million residents and forty percent children of chronic malnourishments. The Afghan National United Government has not been able to optimally exploit the resources and create jobs as promised. On the other hand, there is no part of the country which somehow not influenced by terrorists. It means that terrorist groups has not only threatened the economic arteries of the country but also disheartened economic investment in the country. In economics, hope and faith coexist with great scientific pretension and also a deep desire for respectability which has entirely disappeared.

The only solution to unemployment lies in active support of private sectors, and paves the way for multi-lateral national and international trades to create jobs and ensure economic stability. The easier to run businesses, the easier to create more jobs in a functioning economy: let's simplify the process of registering new startups and international companies in Afghanistan. Let's first invest in secure provinces. The old irrational practice has to be transformed into an efficient, technological and business friendly process that takes hours rather than days. Entrepreneurs and private sectors can create jobs and transition Afghanistan from aid dependency into self-sustainability. The government has to make doing business easy, support the private sector and not try to do business. The governments of the world are not good at doing business and should stay out. The Afghan government must ensure security, fight internal corruption and remove the barriers for private sector to deliver real value and change.

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Obama's Chance for Middle East Peace

By Carl Bildt

Next year marks the centennial of the Balfour Declaration, the British statement that paved the way for Israel's founding in 1948, and for the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians, as well as the larger Arab world, that continues today.

World leaders gathering in New York for the United Nations General Assembly probably won't have time to discuss this perennial political challenge. But, despite all of the Middle East's other - and seemingly bigger - problems, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is the lynchpin issue that will determine whether the region's future will be one of peace and prosperity.

The conflict - whether it is resolved or not - will also help define US President Barack Obama's foreign-policy legacy. As Obama's second term nears its end, it is worth recalling that when he came to office in 2009, he sought rapprochement with the wider Muslim world. In his historic Cairo speech in June of that year, he described the Palestinians' situation as "intolerable" and promised to pursue - "with all the patience and dedication that the task requires" - a policy of "two states, where Israelis and Palestinians each live in peace and security."

Obama has made very little progress on this issue since then, though not for lack of trying. During Obama's first term, Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu and Republicans in the US Congress united against him to derail any meaningful peace efforts. And during his second term, his secretary of state, John Kerry, led a heroic nine-month effort - involving almost a hundred bilateral meetings with Israeli and Palestinian leaders - that simply petered out.

Netanyahu and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas have now both expressed a willingness to meet, in Moscow or in some other location yet to be determined. But no one seriously expects the parties to make real progress toward a two-state solution at this point. One reason is that Netanyahu is waiting for Obama to leave office. His current priorities are to secure a massive military-aid deal with the US in the coming months, and to orchestrate a new public-relations blitz justifying his government's current policy regarding settlements in the occupied territories, which the international community has condemned as illegal. Moreover, Abbas's authority is slipping, and there is no mandate for a Palestinian leader to pursue serious peace efforts in today's political climate.

Leaving office without having made progress on an issue he specifically promised to resolve would be a colossal failure for Obama. Fortunately, he still has time, and many previous US presidents have set a precedent for bold diplomacy during their final months in the White House. In late 1988, Ronald Reagan recognized the Palestine Liberation Organization and authorized the State Department to begin "substantive dialogue" with PLO leaders. In late 2000, Bill Clinton published his parameters for a future peace framework. And, starting with the Annapolis Conference in late 2007, George

W. Bush mediated a series of negotiations between Abbas and Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert.

Now it is Obama's turn, and he should push for a UN Security Council resolution that establishes new parameters for a future peace accord, and replaces UN Security Council Resolution 242, which dates back to the 1967 Six-Day War between Israel and Egypt, Jordan, and Syria. The international community agrees that ending the conflict is in everyone's interest - France has long argued for a new resolution, and Russia has no incentive to oppose one. Obama should start by approaching Russia, the European Union, and the UN to discuss how the resolution should be phrased.

He will need international support, because Netanyahu will certainly object to any new parameters that undermine his own increasingly apparent vision of a Greater Israel from the Mediterranean to the Jordan River. Netanyahu will have American allies to turn interference for him. Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump doesn't even mention a two-state solution in his platform; and Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton has assured American pro-Israel advocacy organizations that she opposes any new Security Council resolution to lay the foundation for a future accord.

Still, a new resolution would ideally come this November, just after the US election, sparing the next president the political costs. A Clinton administration would benefit from already having something to work with, and a Trump administration would benefit from low expectations, while being restrained from doing more damage than it otherwise could have done.

The resolution itself will have to be far more comprehensive than previous efforts by the Security Council. Indeed, Resolution 242 doesn't even mention the Palestinians or a future Palestinian state. A far better model would be the Arab League's 2002 Arab Peace Initiative, which embodies a much wider regional perspective, and which Obama has previously said would give Israel "peace with the Muslim world from Indonesia to Morocco."

Moreover, a new resolution should establish that the international community will recognize no changes to the pre-1967 borders, including with regard to Jerusalem.

Admittedly, a resolution now would not lead to immediate peace, or even to peace talks. In fact, it might divide Israelis and Palestinians further in the near term. But if the world wants to avoid a future cataclysmic confrontation between a coming Greater Israel and a Palestine backed by a larger alliance of Arab countries, the conditions for talks leading to a stable two-state solution must be established now.

Obama is in a position to establish a framework for an eventual settlement. If he does, it would demonstrate that his Cairo speech was not in vain, and it might even justify the Nobel Peace Prize he received at the start of his presidency, when he vowed that peace between Israel and Palestine would be a defining part of his legacy. Carl Bildt is a former prime minister and foreign minister of Sweden.



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