

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



April 01, 2018

Two Reasons behind Economic Development of China

Afghanistan is wrestling with a myriad of challenges for many decades. It is not only the issue of terrorism but also poverty and corruption despite having mineral resources. Afghanistan is called "a poor man lying on gold mines" which suggests the fact that it is rich in terms of resources but still suffers from poverty. Corruption within the government's machinery is believed to be one of the root causes of the ongoing challenges in Afghanistan. A number of senior officials do not fulfill their responsibilities and commitments. They fight for power and position rather than serving the nation.

If one asks me the reason behind the rapid growth of Chinese economy, I will say that their committed leaders, whose only claim to fame is to serve their nation, are the main drivers of progress. The rule of law is implemented strictly and all are equal before the law. Therefore, they always put the people first and hardly dare engage in corruption. Corrupt officials are detained and prosecuted fairly in China.

Chinese President Xi Jinping said in one of his speeches in 2015 that when he was in the post of a county party secretary, he went to villages by bike to touch the pain and sufferings of the poor from the near. He had to talk to villagers and local officials. He then added, "Avoiding responsibilities is the worst disgrace for an official". He persists officials to resist the temptation of power, money, and sex.

He mentioned that Chinese folk saying in many occasions which goes, "If an official does not act on the people's behalf, he would be better going back home and selling sweet potatoes".

Jiao Yulu, who is considered the symbol of honesty in China, when heard that his son had not paid for a show, he ordered him to send the money to the theater. Hence, this is the honest and committed leaders who push China forward.

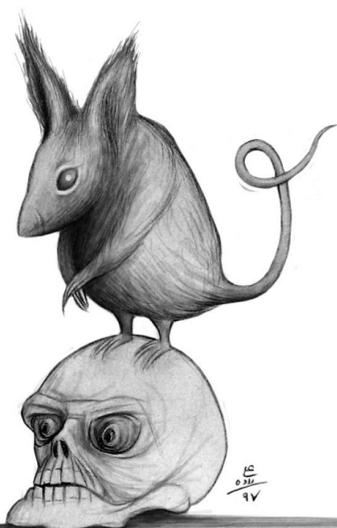
To enhance the accountability, it will be very effective if high-ranking officials, including ministers, report their achievements every year, explain their agenda for next year and point out the obstacles before their agenda so that all officials join hand to remove the barriers. It should be noted that provincial governors and even district governors should participate in such an annual session, which will not only enhance the responsibilities but also transparency. On the contrary, if officials are not asked about their agenda and achievements, they will hardly ever feel their responsibilities.

Chinese officials listen to the voice of people and to the voice of their time. They seek to win the trust and support of people and do not engage in an issue that might tarnish their personality in the society, it is what I have realized. Moreover, they do not promise beyond their abilities and economic means.

The second step to be taken to reduce the level of poverty is to promote education. That is to say, the government's responsibility is to alleviate poverty by facilitating self-sufficiency. It is aptly said, "Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day; teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime". To reach to a sustainable economic progress, the government needs to promote education and establish vocational institutions so that people could learn knowledge, technique and trade to stand on their own feet and launch their own business. People need to be inspired and encouraged in learning knowledge and vocational education. In short, they first should "take wing" and then "leave the nest". Promoting knowledge and vocational education is one of the steps that Chinese government takes in alleviating poverty. When people learn education and skill, they will be able to perform their activities in better way, be creative and start their own business.

The contribution of villages to the city and country should not be underestimated. In other words, imbalanced progress will not resolve the challenges. It is very important to bridge the economic gap between the rural and urban areas, this is what China is trying to do. If the government helps farmers to plant crops and fruits or establishes a company for manufacturing goods, they will send them to the city and even export them out of country. In such a case, they will also live a comfortable life and the gap between rural and urban areas will be bridged.

To overcome the challenges, it will be effective to choose the prosperous countries as a role-model and China is one of them which has changed from one of the poorest states to the second largest economy of the world. This country owes its progress to the committed leaders who devoted their lives wholeheartedly to their nation and left no stone unturned in this regard. To reach prosperity, Afghanistan also needs committed leaders and strict rule of law. If corrupt officials are not put to justice and if education is not promoted, there will be no progress, especially in terms of economy in our country.



The West's Unilateral Cold War

By Sergei Karaganov

MOSCOW – Rising tensions between the United Kingdom and Russia are but further proof that Russia and the West, according to no less an authority than Richard N. Haass, President of the Council on Foreign Relations, have entered a "Cold War II". I tend to disagree.

Yes, Russia's relations with the United States, and now also with the UK, are worse than in the 1950s, and the chance of a direct conflict is higher than at any time since the 1962 Cuban missile crisis. Given the complexity of today's strategic nuclear weapons and the systems designed to neutralize them, one cannot rule out the possibility that some actor on either side, or a third party, could provoke escalation.

Making matters worse, communication between US and Russian leaders is all but nonexistent, owing to the lack of trust on both sides. Among Americans, feelings toward Russia verge on something close to hatred, and many in Russia now regard Americans with ill-concealed disdain. This psychological backdrop to the bilateral relationship truly is worse than during the Cold War. But that does not mean that today's tensions amount to a sequel. Such a confrontation would require an ideological component that is decidedly lacking on the Russian side.

Russia has no intention of waging another Cold War. Although some degree of confrontation with the US does help President Vladimir Putin unite the public while burnishing Russian elites' nationalist credentials, Russia is not an ideologically motivated state. What ideology it does have is based in Russian culture and civilization, which it is not interested in exporting.

The Kremlin in fact prefers not to proselytize on Russia's behalf. Russia's approach to international affairs has long centered on respect for national interests and sovereignty, and the belief that all peoples and nations should have the freedom to make their own political, economic, and cultural choices. Russia also embraces universal human values such as trust in God, family, and country, as well as self-fulfillment through service to society and nation.

I dream of the possibility that even 2% of the accusations concerning Russian "interference" in the 2016 US election prove true. It would bolster my self-esteem as a Russian, while educating Americans – whose government has long interfered in other countries' internal affairs – about the dangers of throwing stones from a glass house.

But the problem between Russia and the West is really a problem among Westerners themselves. The US establishment is using the scarecrow of Russian interference to regain its lost political control, particularly in the realm of social media, where a discontented population and maverick politicians have finally found a voice.

But even if American elites do manage to wrest back control, the deeper

source of Western angst will remain. For at least the past decade, the world has been witnessing the endgame of the West's 500-year hegemony. It started in the sixteenth century, when Europe developed better guns and warships and began its imperial expansion. In the following centuries, Europeans would use their economic, cultural, political, and especially military dominance to siphon off the world's wealth.

For a few decades in the second half of the twentieth century, the West's dominant position was challenged by the Soviet Union and China. But after the Soviet Union imploded, the US emerged as the sole hegemon, and the world seemed to return to its historic status quo. Soon enough, however, the US overextended itself by plunging into geopolitical misadventures like the invasion of Iraq. And then came the 2008 financial crisis, which exposed the weaknesses of twenty-first-century capitalism.

At the same time, the US has long pursued military superiority. In 2002, it unilaterally abrogated the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty. And, more recently, it has embarked on a massive build-up of conventional forces and a large-scale modernization of its nuclear arsenal.

Still, Russia, China, and the rest of the world won't allow a return to US hegemony. Putin recently made this clear by unveiling a number of new, cutting-edge strategic weapons systems, as part of what I would call a strategy of "preemptive deterrence." The message was that the US cannot hope to regain absolute military superiority, even if it decides to bleed itself dry in an arms race, as the Soviet Union did.

Preliminary assessments that my colleagues and I recently carried out suggest that even if the US decides to wage a unilateral Cold War, its chances against Russia, China, and other emerging powers would not be very good. The balance of military, political, economic, and moral power has simply shifted too far away from the West to be reversed.

Nonetheless, a new Cold War, even if largely one-sided, would be extremely dangerous for humanity. The world's major powers should concentrate on strengthening international strategic stability through dialogue; reopening channels of communications between militaries; and restoring civility to their interactions. We should also consider establishing more diplomatic, legislative, academic, and educational exchanges. Most of all, though, we must stop demonizing each other. The world is entering a dangerous period. But if we are wise, we can build a more balanced international system, one in which the major powers will deter one another while cooperating to solve global problems. Smaller countries, meanwhile, will be freer to develop according to their own political, cultural, and economic preferences. The previous, Western-led system has collapsed. To ensure a peaceful future, we need to start working together to build a new one.

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Egyptian ultras: Down but not out

By James M. Dorsey

Egyptian general-turned-president Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi won a second term virtually unchallenged in what is widely seen as a flawed election. The run-up to the poll, including a soccer protest, suggests, however, that it will take more than a democratic whitewash to get a grip on simmering discontent.

The protest in early March signalled that militant soccer fans who played a key role in the 2011 toppling of President Hosni Mubarak may be down but not out.

To be sure, the differences between 2011 and 2018 could not be starker. Mr. Al-Sisi presides over the worst repression in recent Egyptian history that has targeted even the slightest form of dissent, making Mr. Mubarak's rule look relatively benign.

Potential challengers in the recent election were either jailed or persuaded, sometimes in a heavy-handed manner, to withdraw their candidacy. They included serving and former military officers as well as Mortada Mansour, a controversial member of parliament and head of starred Cairo club Al Zamalek SC. It was Mr. Mortada's withdrawal that prompted a last-minute race to find a non-threatening challenger who could muster the endorsement by at least 26 members of parliament and 47,000 voters in time to meet the nomination deadline.

Mousa Mostafa Mousa, a largely unknown politician who had earlier declared his support for Mr. Al-Sisi, registered 15 minutes before the deadline, ensuring that the government could claim that the election would be competitive. Mr. Mousa secured three percent of the vote, while Mr. Al-Sisi won a 92 percent landslide.

Among Egypt's estimated 60,000 political prisoners are scores of militant supporters of soccer clubs who were not only prominent in the 2011 uprising but also in subsequent anti-government demonstrations, including a wave of student protests in the wake of the 2013 coup that initially brought Mr. Al-Sisi, when he was still serving as Egypt's top military commander, to power.

The student protests, that turned the country's universities into security fortresses, were brutally squashed by law enforcement forces abetted by the adoption of a draconian anti-protest law, tight control of the media, and a crackdown on non-governmental organizations.

The seeming revival of the ultras comes at a time that soccer is re-emerging in Egypt as one of the few, if not the only valve for the release of pent-up frustration and escape from daily worries in an economic environment of austerity that has improved macro-economic indicators while fuelling inflation and making it harder for many Egyptians to make ends meet.

In the latest incident, seventeen supporters of storied Cairo club Al Ahli SCS, which traces its history back to the early 20th century when it was founded as an anti-monarchical club whose supporters played an important part in the 1919 anti-British revolution that paved the way for Egyptian independence three years later, were reprimanded in custody earlier this month.

The fans stand accused of participating in protests and clashes with security forces towards the end of a Confederation of African Football (CAF) Champions League match in Cairo that pitted Al Ahli against Gabon's CF Mounana. They reportedly chanted slogans against the police and in favour of freedom.

As an international competition, the match was one of the few games exempted from a ban on public attendance of soccer games that has been in place for much of the last seven years in a bid to prevent stadiums from re-emerging as potential venues of anti-government protest.

The incident threatens to delay plans to lift the ban that has been enforced uninterrupted since early 2012 when 72 Al Ahli supporters died in a politically loaded brawl after a match in the Suez Canal city of Port Said.

The potential charges against the fans include being part of a group that incites disregard of the constitution and the law, preventing state institutions and public authorities from carrying out their work and threaten-

ing the safety and security of society.

Public investigators said the detainees included members of the outlawed Muslim Brotherhood that won Egypt's only free and fair election in 2012 but was toppled a year later by Mr. Al-Sisi.

Ultras Ahlawy, the club's militant support group, denied involvement in the protest. It said those involved did not represent the group and that it did not want the incident to be construed "in a political way."

Phd student Hesham Shafick, however, described the CAF match as a return to the days prior to the 2011 revolt in which militants fans or ultras dominated the stadium with their highly artistic, choreographed support for their club that was often laden with overt and covert political tones.

"Their famous flames lit up the stadium and their famous song 'liberta' resurrected the moribund spirit of the January 2011 revolution," Mr. Shafick wrote.

Mr. Shafick's description and pictures of the Cairo stadium during the match suggest that the ultras as a group staged the choreographed support for their club. The staging defied a 2015 court ban of all ultras groups even if individuals rather than the group itself may have been involved in the last-minute protest.

In a statement, Al Ahli president Mahmoud El-Khatib seemed to take the Ultras Ahlawy position into account by asserting that "a few people interfered with our great supporters and did these shameful acts. They wanted us to return back to the past years that witnessed the team playing behind closed doors."

Mr. Al-Khatib was among a host of club presidents and athletes that attended a news conference hosted by the Egyptian Football Association (EFA) to endorse Mr. Al-Sisi's candidacy in a seeming violation of a ban on mixing sports and politics, arbitrarily imposed by world soccer body FIFA.

The revival of soccer as a release valve was evident in a Cairo coffeehouse on the second-day of Egypt's three-day election where men had gathered to watch a friendly match between Egypt and Greece.

"Our voice is heard when we cheer and make a difference to the players, who are also doing something for the sake of this country. But if we go and vote in the election, our voice does not count – it makes no difference," 28-year-old Hassan Allam told an Arab News reporter.

"There was no real competition against Al-Sisi and many of the people I know were harassed by security forces for their political affiliations. The only safe route for us to support the country is by cheering on our national football team; we have nothing else to do," Allam added.

It is that sentiment that Mr. Al-Sisi will want to turn to his advantage, much like Mr. Mubarak tried with at best mixed results when he sought to either polish his tarnished image by identifying himself with the success of the national team or at times manipulate soccer emotions into a nationalistic frenzy that involved rallying around the leader.

To succeed, Mr. Al-Sisi will have to do more than support the team, which this year qualified for the World Cup for the first time in 28 years or adopt a nationalist approach by creating a fund that would incentivize players to play for Egyptian rather than foreign teams.

Mr. Al-Sisi will have to ensure that economic reform trickles down to the ordinary Egyptian, get the upper hand in an Islamist insurgency in the Sinai, and ultimately loosen his grip on power to create space for political groupings and individuals to voice alternative and dissenting opinions. So far, there is little indication that Mr. Al-Sisi is rethinking his approach along those lines.

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