

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



April 16, 2017

MOAB Triggers Mixed Reaction

The 'Mother Of All Bombs' used by the US military against the self-styled Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), also known as Daesh, in Nangarhar province was a blow to this group. The 9,797kg GBU-43 Massive Ordnance Air Blast (MOAB) left about 96 casualties behind and the ISIS's high-profile leaders such as Abu-Bakr, Hamza, Shaheed Omar and Hafiz Saeed's brother, Wolkan Osama, are said to be among the dead. It has been a message of threat to the terrorist groups, mainly the ISIS and the Taliban.

The massive bomb was dropped after fighting intensified over the past week and US-backed ground forces struggled to advance on the area. A US Special Forces soldier was killed last Saturday in Nangarhar while conducting anti-ISIL operations.

ISIS has made inroads into Afghanistan in recent years, attracting disaffected members of the Pakistani and Afghan Taliban as well as Uzbek fighters. But the group has been steadily losing ground in the face of heavy pressure both from US air raids and a ground offensive led by Afghan forces. The bomb attack was hailed by the US President "very successful mission".

This massive bomb has prompted mixed feelings in Afghanistan. The Ghani administration supported the strike saying that it had been a joint mission; however, the Afghan former President Hamid Karzai denounced the attack and called it a violation of Afghan territorial integrity. According to him, the US had used "nuclear bomb" in Achin district of Nangarhar province and Afghan people should stand against the cruelty of US. It comes as the US had already stated that it was "non-nuclear bomb" and used to prevent from the casualties of Afghan soldiers and civilians. Additionally, the Taliban also condemned the attack.

However, Afghans will welcome serious strikes against terrorist groups, be it Taliban or ISIS. Afghanistan's security has been undermined by the armed opposition groups which has been a slap in the face of democracy. It goes without saying that people's rights and freedoms have been widely trampled by terrorist networks and Afghan nation suffers from escalated insurgency within more than a decade despite democratic movement. Terrorism, indeed, hampers democracy across the country and militant fighters leave no stone unturned to put pressure on the National Unity Government (NUG). ISIS group is believed to be a pawn in a big political game. Don't you think that it should be rooted out from the country instantaneously?

The use of this massive bomb comes as Moscow arranged to host a meeting on Friday about the stability in Afghanistan. The Friday meeting was held without the presence of the US envoy that called it legalizing the Taliban through giving them role in peace process. However, Russia said that its contact with the Taliban was due to the Russia-Taliban's common (hostile) attitude towards the ISIS. Russia also staged heavy strikes against the ISIS group in Syria. Despite this fact, the use of MOAB does not seem to bridge the gap between the two countries. Since both the countries show concerns about peace and stability in Afghanistan, do not you think that it will be more fruitful if the US and Russia hold joint military attacks against terrorist networks in Afghanistan?

By and large, there is still not an optimistic view about the impact of this bomb. According to political pundits, using such bombs will not put an end to terrorism in Afghanistan as they never did before. For instance, during the NATO's combat mission in Afghanistan, the GBU-43 had been tested in 2003 and Taliban's hideouts were bombarded heavily, however, the "war on terror" was not proved effective. To avoid backlash from warring factions, it is believed that it will be more effective to take silent but strong approach towards the ISIL and Taliban groups.

Regardless of the magnitude of the bomb's effect, Hamid Karzai's strong reaction to this attack came a surprise to the public. He is also said to have a meeting with the Russia's Ambassador. It reveals the fact that Karzai's view is in conflict with Ghani's administration. During the ending period of his presidency, Karzai also criticized the NATO night raid in the country and held out against signing security pact with the US. He said NATO-led night raids and home searches are preventing the country from signing a strategic partnership with the US. "Arbitrary operations and home searches have been a serious problem between NATO and Afghanistan for several years," Karzai reiterated. "This has been one of the main obstacles for signing the Afghanistan-US strategic partnership pact." But now he is expected to go in accordance with the NUG and cooperate with the state for peace and political stability - this will be a more positive role.

To strengthen democracy and protect the rights and liberty of the nation, the terrorist outfits need to be combated strongly. It is crystal clear that the militant fighters have inflicted heavy casualties upon Afghan combatants and non-combatants. Hence, none of the terrorist attacks should go unanswered. It should be noted that the ISIL fighters seek firm foothold in the country through preaching their ideology and recruiting teenagers. Their dream should not come true in Afghanistan. Otherwise, the graph of fatalities will rise further and the bleeding will never stop.



Marco - The journalist Builds School for Bamyan Residents

By Nawroz Raja

Repressing his breath like a white dove, he focused his penetrating look at tape, which was hanged before the building gate. Gliding the scissor's tail on the flamboyant tape, a burst of applause was heard and the 11th bell rang. She, who never knelt under a roof or sat on a chair for learning, offered a bouquet of wild flower - which was collected in the morning with her swollen hands from the surrounding hills of the school - to an old man who still held one head of the tape. Having a mild smile on her lip like a rose in bloom, Nikbakht gazed with her almond-like eyes to the old man's blue eyes and said with childish accent, "Uncle! Uncle! I am pleased that you have built school for us and we will sit on the chair and study our lessons at school from now onward!"

With his compelling voice, Marco Neyado, a 64-year-old foreign man, congratulated the school, which is located on the frontier provinces of Bamyan, Daikundi and Ghor, to the audience who gathered at the inaugural ceremony of Myan Kawak school building.

Shaking hands to the sunburnt men and women, who seemed to have suffered hunger for years, he said, "People can share the happiness of their life. I have been lucky in my life and wanted to share my happiness with you as you live in the most distant part of Bamyan."

Marco thought of sharing happiness when he visited Band-e-Amir in 2004 on the 50th birthday anniversary of her wife, Maria. The memorable celebration was provided by Maria's friend Philopo, one of the UN's staff.

The head of Shuhada Organization and Arghosha Committee's co-worker Jawad Wafa who befriended the old man and his colleague Mustafa Husaini said, "Marco Neyado is a journalist. He is from the Milano City of Italy and has a male child. This three-membered family lives in London now and shared his happiness with you within last 11 years." Being influenced by the wrinkled faces, swollen hands, and hopeful eyes of the locals, Wafa added, "Marco established his first school in 2005 in Arghosha area of Band-e-Amir, in the frontiers of Samangan, Sare-Pul and Bamyan, where the government's footprint is still lacking."

Marco who was distributing books and pens to the children, who circled him, said with a big smile, "Arghosha is a small Committee with only 4 members who are all Italian and members of a single family. We established this Committee to build schools in most distant places." Glancing at the blue sky of Myan Kawak and breathing a sigh of relief, he added, "Our family along with my friend Philopo struggles to build schools to bring smile on the lips of Bamyan children through collecting cent, dollar cent from about 40 or 50 of my friends who are all kind-hearted and want to see others fine and happy, too."

Pointing to the high mountains of Baba, Band-e-Pitau, Aros, and meandrous valleys of Bamyan, the old man said, the area of Arghosha is not only the name of our Committee, but Arghosha also means very distant school - i.e. the Committee of very distant school." After a short pause, Marco continued, "Today, we have come here to submit this school, as we built it in the most distant place, to the Department of Education, local elders and students who studied in the sun and on the soil up to now."

One of the Myan Kawak's elders Ghulam Haider asked eagerly how many schools this Italian journalist had built in Bamyan and how many students studied there. "This is the 11th schools of Mr. Marco and Arghosha Committee which has been inaugurated today," replied Mohammad Ayob Amiri, head of Bamyan's Education.

Shortly pointing out the Education in Bamyan in the past, Amiri said, "The schools have been built earlier by the financial support of Marco's family are: Arghosha, Sare-Qul, Komity, Joula, Chehardah, Resalat, Zarin, Dar-e-Ali, Ghorab and Sesarab. Overall, 3947 students are taught by 114 teachers in these 11 schools - small girls form most of the students."

A 55-year-old man Hasan Bik, a kind-hearted person from Yakaw Lung District, nodded and said, "I have heard earlier that a country's development is measured on the basis of a country's development in education. Now we have seen that wherever this gentleman built school, road and clinic were immediately built there, too." Clearing his throat and pointing to the highness of Arghosha, he added, "Since there was no school, the residents of that area were deprived to the extent that there was no road even for bikes. After the establishment of school, however, the residents of Arghosha own road, clinic, electricity and drinking water well." Bamyan is a quiet province, depleted of violence and replete with nice and attractive nature. Marco, who comes here annually along with his family for submitting his school, said, "The security, peace, civility and beauty of this province prompted me to spend more than one million and eight thousand US dollars on building schools."

It comes as Mr. Marco's other projects in Bamyan includes scholarship for ten girls to universities in Kabul, the establishment of four libraries, establishment of courses for teachers' capacity buildings, literacy, computer and English courses, sheep farm projects and women's empowerment programs which have been implemented by Shuhada Organization. Building schools in the farthest areas of Bamyan province by a foreign journalist has not been known to the government. The ground has been paved for other developing projects such as road construction, clinic, water channels and access to electricity and internet.

Nawroz Raja is the permanent writer of the Daily Afghanistan. He can be reached at thedailyafghanistan@yahoo.com

The Second Year of Europe

By Richard N. Haass

More than four decades ago, US National Security Adviser Henry Kissinger declared 1973 to be "The Year of Europe." His aim was to highlight the need to modernize the Atlantic relationship and, more specifically, the need for America's European allies to do more with the United States in the Middle East and against the Soviet Union in Europe.

Kissinger would be the first to admit that the Europeans did not take up his challenge. Nevertheless, we again face a year of Europe. This time, though, the impetus is coming less from a frustrated US government than from within Europe itself. The stakes are as high as they were in 1973, if not higher. Russia shows no sign of withdrawing from Crimea or stopping its efforts to destabilize eastern Ukraine. There is genuine concern Russia might employ similar tactics against one or more of the small NATO countries on its border.

Refugees have added to Europe's strain, as has terrorism inspired by events in the Middle East or carried out by attackers from the region. Brexit, the United Kingdom's exit from the European Union, has now formally begun; what remains to be resolved are its timing and terms, which will determine its impact on the UK's economic and political future and on others contemplating withdrawal from the EU. Greece and a number of other countries in southern Europe continue to be burdened by high unemployment, growing debt, and a persistent gap between what governments are being asked to do and what they can afford.

But of all the challenges confronting the EU, France's upcoming presidential election holds the most significance for Europe's future, and perhaps for that of the world. Polls indicate that any of the four candidates could emerge as the eventual winner. What makes this uncertainty different and truly consequential is that two of the four, National Front leader Marine Le Pen and far-left leader Jean-Luc Mélenchon, support policies far outside the French and European mainstream. If either wins the second-round run-off on May 7, it could mean the end of French membership in both the EU and NATO, raising existential questions for both organizations - and for all of Europe.

Such scenarios were unimaginable until only recently. For decades, Europe has constituted the world's most successful, stable, and predictable region, a place where history seemed to have all but ended. The goal of making the continent peaceful, whole, and free had largely been realized. But dramatic change has come to Europe. One factor is the willingness and ability shown by Vladimir Putin's Russia to use military force, economic coercion, and cyber manipula-

tion to advance its agenda. But an even greater challenge to modern Europe comes from its own politicians, who increasingly question the value of the EU, the heir to the European Economic Community established in 1957 by the Treaty of Rome.

The rationale behind Europe's six-decade-long integration process - often called the "European project" - was always clear. Western Europe, and above all Germany and France, had to be unified to such a point that war, which had so often characterized the continent's past, would become unthinkable.

This has been achieved, as has considerable economic progress. But, along the way, the European project lost its hold on Europe's citizens. The EU's institutions became too distant, too elitist, and too strong, not taking into account the national identities to which Europeans remained attached. The ill-advised creation of a monetary union without a fiscal counterpart made matters worse. The bureaucrats had overreached.

The rise of populist, nationalist candidates on both the left and the right in France and elsewhere in Europe is the result. And even if one of the two establishment candidates prevails in France, much will remain uncertain. The immediate crisis will have passed, but the long-term challenge will remain. It is apparent that the EU needs to be rethought. It needs to move away from "one size fits all" to something more flexible. There also needs to be a rebalancing of power away from Brussels, the seat of most EU institutions, toward the national capitals.

Governments need to do more to create the prerequisites of faster economic growth while enhancing workers' ability to contend with the inevitable elimination of many existing jobs as a result of technological innovation. Germany, whether led by its current chancellor or her principal opponent after its general election in September, will need to take the lead here.

Europeans, appropriately enough, will mostly determine Europe's future. But the Trump administration also has a role to play. Trump's shortsighted support for Brexit and other exits from the EU must end; a divided, weaker, and distracted Europe will not be a good partner in NATO. It may be true that Asia is more likely than Europe to shape the history of the twenty-first century.

But the lesson of the last century should not be lost: what happens in Europe can and will affect global stability and prosperity. (Courtesy Project Syndicate)

Richard N. Haass is president of the Council on Foreign Relations and the author of *A World in Disarray: American Foreign Policy and the Crisis of the Old Order*.



Chairman / Editor-in-Chief: Moh. Reza Huwida

Vice-Chairman: Kazim Ali Gulzari

Email: outlookafghanistan@gmail.com

Phone: 0093 (799) 005019/777-005019

www.outlookafghanistan.net

The views and opinions expressed in the articles are those of the authors and do not reflect the views or opinions of the Daily Outlook Afghanistan.