

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



April 25, 2018

Who are the True Politicians?

Politics is the science and art of establishing control and influencing and governing the people within a state. It is the basic knowledge that supports in understating the states and their relationships with the masses living in the states. It also includes the study of the government, its role, functions and its relations with the governed. However, such a definition of politics seems to be very ideal and does not relate to what is being practiced around the world in the name of politics.

One of the basic reasons that politics has been ridiculed is the performance and the attitude of the politicians. Like all the other fields of life, it is also important in politics that the politicians must have the basic understanding of politics or even should have the formal education in this regard as it is the age of specialization. Unfortunately, that is not the case - today those people become politicians who have financial support, enjoy good reputation in the society, belong to the elite or the authoritative strata of the society or are the landlords or belong to different sorts of mafia. They join politics only to maintain their status in the society or to gain power so as to achieve their personal goals. They, in fact, have no consideration for human welfare and betterment. Though they are elected by the people, they do not know how to respond to the people. They do not understand their basic problems and do not have any sort of familiarity with the dynamics of politics and political changes. With such a scenario at hand, it is very much possible that politics is further humiliated and degraded in human states.

Same is the case with our country Afghanistan. Here as well, the politicians have not been very much skilled in their jobs and they have made politics a filthy business. Though we have myriads of problems, the politicians instead of solving those problems tend to pursue their own gains. The socio-political circumstances in Afghanistan are clear to all. There are various troubles we are experiencing. We are facing different social, economic and political challenges and the fact is that we are not prepared at all to overcome them. Years of wars and instability have further decreased our abilities to overcome these challenges. Along with these problems, there is corruption, which has completely dominated our administrative system. Extremism and terrorism have become an integral part of our society and our people are being threatened to a large extent. Instability and chaos are creating hurdles in the way to establish order, stability and sustainability.

The current chaos is, no doubt, because of our politicians as everyone can experience that they have made politics a mockery. They, in the true sense of politics, are answerable to both the system and the people, but that is not the case in our society. Politicians are to serve the people, facilitate the people with their rudimentary requirements, lead the nation towards stability and welfare, solve the issues and fulfill their responsibilities as much as possible. Unluckily in our case, the politicians elude the people, pursue their own benefits, mislead the nation, never work for political order, use the issues for their political interests and do not have sense of responsibility.

At the same time, as Afghanistan has a strategic importance in the region, it has been a play ground of international political games blind by the world major powers. Imperialism, intoxicated with blind power has influenced Afghanistan to a large extent.

Nonetheless, blaming the other countries for the disorders and disturbances has been one of the tactics of our political leaders to dodge the attention of the people from their own weaknesses. It, at the same time, assists them in creating a deadly enemy who is always prepared to annihilate us and who has nothing else to contemplate upon except our extermination. Unfortunately, we become the victims to such intentions and get prepared to believe such ideas as a result of our blind patriotism. As a matter of fact, in such a way we are ripe to be used by them the way they would like. It is important to note that a little political cognizance can make us comprehend the games that are played by international powers and our own politicians. On certain instances they make us imagine of an ideal society and on other they smack us with the unkind reality to return to the practical world. In such a scenario we neither understand the reality nor the falsehood.

In the meanwhile, it must be kept in consideration that the reaction and attitude of the people have to be considered liable as well for the prevailing chaos and commotion in the society. If the politicians are not able to govern appropriately, they are also not able to fulfill their responsibilities and understand the trickery of the politicians. It is really essential for them to remain vigilant and raise voice against such attitude of the politicians.



Successive Attacks on West of Kabul

By Mohammad Zahir Akbari

After a few weeks of relative calm, once again Daesh Takfiri terrorist group targeted west of Kabul as security forces have apparently failed to protect people against the cruel group. Daesh, that has been behind the several past bombings in the west of Kabul, quickly claimed responsibility for the attack, identifying the bomber as Qari' Umar al-Peshawari, that implies he was from Peshawar, Pakistan. Over 70 people were killed including five children, 21 women and nearly 120 others wounded in the attack, which was carried out at the doorway of an identity card distribution and voters registration center in Kabul's Dasht-e-Barchi area. According to UNAMA, in addition to last attack, the "direct attacks against the Shia population" caused "154 civilian casualties (49 deaths and 105 injured)" during the first three months of 2018 and "nearly all" of these were attributed to "suicide and complex attacks claimed by" the so-called Islamic State's Khorasan province.

In recent years, Hazara Muslims have been successively targeted in a series of deadly bombings and several large-scale kidnappings across Afghanistan, which have prompted demonstrations and sit-ins in Kabul and elsewhere. In late December last year, killed at least 41 people and wounded dozens. In July 2016, at least 80 Shia Muslims were killed in two bomb blasts carried out by Daesh in Kabul. In November of the same year, at least 27 people were killed after a large bomb explosion hit a Shia mosque in the Afghan capital. However, this is the fourth attacks on such centers since voter registration for October's parliamentary elections began last week. The aim of the Islamic State and groups of its ilk is to scare the people of Afghanistan into staying away from polls, further weakening the government and striking at the legitimacy of democracy.

The Islamic State has made a habit of going after minority groups, particularly Shias. A day after their attack, the Taliban killed 14 soldiers and police officers in the western Baghdis province. Taken together, the two attacks show the different kind of threats posed by the two main militant groups in Afghanistan. The Takfiri group aims to spread fear among the Afghan population, choosing targets which will inflict maximum civilian casualties. The Taliban, on the other hand, goes after the state, hoping to weaken the government and law enforcement as it tries to gain control of more territory.

Moreover, the Takfiri group has another explicit goal targeting certain group of people to create sectarian tension in the country. This is a country where sectarian tensions have been relatively muted in the past but the relentless onslaught of Takfiri attacks could change that. Most of its fighters are foreign, recruited from the ranks of the TTP and the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan. Despite being an essentially foreign force, in the last couple of years it

has been able to expand from Nangarhar province in the east to much of the north and northeast of the country. The challenge for the government is to eliminate this militant group. It is said that, some outside countries have talked to the Afghan Taliban in the hope of joining it to defeat the Takfiri group. Since the Taliban and Takfiri are implacably opposed to each other, there is a line of thinking that believes that the Taliban should be used to defeat this even deadlier threat. The problem for the Afghan government though is that the Taliban continues to target it, making even a partnership of convenience impossible. There are no good options available here to the government but it must formulate a plan of action soon, before create more distrusts and weakened even further.

To add to the war-torn country's distresses, Daesh has also established a foothold in eastern and northern Afghanistan. The terrorist group has mostly been populating the eastern province of Nangarhar, from where they can carry out high-profile brutal attacks at major population centers across the country which has caused doubts and questions which remained unanswered yet. Daesh began establishing presence in Afghanistan almost a year after making sweeping land grabs in Iraq and Syria in 2014. The Takfiri terrorist group took advantage of the ongoing chaos in Afghanistan and recruited some of its fighters from among Taliban defectors. According to some reports, Daesh is present in nine provinces from Nangarhar and Kunar in the east to Jawzjan, Faryab, and Badakhshan in the north and Ghor in the central west.

In final, both government and the international allies are responsible to devise fundamental measures so as to protect people, especially in the election democratic process. However, they talked of Kabul security plan and also had pledged tight security to ensure the process proceeded safely. But those caught by Sunday's attack voiced frustration at what many Kabul residents see as government shortcomings in securing the capital. According to UN figures, more than 750 people have been killed or maimed in suicide attacks and bombings by militant groups during the three months to March ahead of an expected start of the Taliban's usual spring offensive. The government has set up more than 7,000 centers across the country to handle some 10 million voter registrations for upcoming elections but Election officials have acknowledged that security is a major concern as the Taliban and other militant groups control large swathes of the country, and some officials have speculated that elections could be delayed if there are major disruptions to the registration process. Several attacks have already been reported on registration centers since the process began on April 14 ahead of a long-delayed parliamentary elections scheduled for October.

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Time for a Global Financial Makeover

By Liu Zhenmin

NEW YORK - In 2015, United Nations member states came together and committed to achieving a comprehensive and universal set of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) spanning all dimensions of economic and social development.

Investment will be indispensable to achieving the SDGs, which aim to eliminate poverty, end hunger, combat climate change, build resilient infrastructure, and promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth. Yet, three years on, we still have not done nearly enough to leverage our financial systems in pursuit of the SDGs.

The UN, in coordination with almost 60 agencies and international institutions, recently published an assessment of the world's progress toward changing financing, policies, and regulations to achieve the SDGs. It finds that, despite positive momentum on sustainable investment, the goals will not be met unless we shift the entire financial system toward long-term investment horizons, and make sustainability a central concern. Without a long-term perspective, certain risks, especially those associated with climate change, will not be priced into private investment decisions.

Global financial flows are vast, yet the quality of investment matters. Currently, short-term investment patterns are driving capital-market and exchange-rate volatility, and significantly raising the costs and risks of sustainable investment, particularly for developing countries. If we create incentives to steer the flow of financing toward long-term infrastructure projects like bridges, roads, and water and sewage systems, we would be making a major contribution to both development and stability.

And those investment projects must be more environmentally and socially sustainable. Because today's investments, particularly in energy systems, will lock in development paths for decades to come, more must be done to ensure that investments now, and in the future, do not undermine our efforts to address climate change. Moreover, as with all economic policies, gender equality needs to become a central consideration.

Transforming finance will not be easy. Today's capital markets are highly oriented toward short-termism, as evidenced by capital-flow volatility and the short holding period of stocks in some developed markets, which has fallen from an average of eight years in the 1960s to eight months today. And while long-term institutional investors hold around \$80 trillion in assets, with about half of these representing long-term liabilities, nearly 75% are held in liquid instruments,

whereas just 3% are in infrastructure.

The same tendency is prevalent in the real economy. In 2016, S&P 500 companies spent more than 100% of their earnings on dividends and share buybacks, which boost stock prices in the short run, rather than raising long-term value through investment. A February 2017 McKinsey Global Institute survey found that 87% of corporate executives and directors feel "pressured to demonstrate strong financial performance within two years or less," while 65% say that "short-term pressure has increased over the past five years." Moreover, 55% said they would delay investments in projects with positive returns in order to hit quarterly balance-sheet targets.

Shifting investors from short-termism toward long-term thinking is a prerequisite for achieving all of our economic, social, and environmental goals. But the private sector will not make this transition by itself. Policymakers must step in and provide leadership. Markets do not operate fairly and in the public interest without well-considered and well-enforced rules set by governments. Aside from public investment, this is one of the state's most essential functions.

Specifically, transforming global finance will require changes in prudential regulations, capital requirements, investment-firm culture, and executive compensation, which will require new and more appropriate longer-term benchmarks. Reforms to accounting practices, especially for illiquid investments, will also be necessary, for example, to reduce the short-term bias introduced by mark-to-market accounting. And institutional investors must adopt a broader interpretation of fiduciary duty, which should focus on the long term and incorporate all factors that have a material impact on returns, be they financial, environmental, social, or governance-related.

With 12 years to go, it may seem like the world has plenty of time to make progress toward the SDGs. But the UN's past experiences with goal-oriented initiatives show that it is important to take decisive action early on in the process. Making matters worse, escalating geopolitical and trade tensions threaten to set us back, rather than take us forward. Such disagreements must not stand in the way of reaching the SDGs and building a sustainable future.

Above all, that future needs to be financed. Though many public and private institutions at various levels of international finance have already started to change, the overall financial system has yet to experience the sort of transformation that is needed. We have all agreed on what we need to do; now we must do it.

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