

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



August 05, 2015

The Empty Promises of Prosperity

It is unfortunate to note that we, human beings, have now learnt to live in violence, conflicts and wars, and the instability and chaos have now found our address. Thus, it is really important for us to come out of our houses and let the killers and the ones who are being killed know this tragic fact that life treats both the killers and the victims like a step-mother; it blesses someone with soft and comfortable bed while does not bless someone else even with proper cloths to wear, but the death sees everyone with the same eyes, treats everyone equally, hugs everyone in similar fashion and drags everyone to the grave in the same way.

For those who walk proudly on earth a lump of soil from any ground, any field or farm in the light of their hearts and minds would depict that it contains the remains of our forefathers who belonged to ancient times - thousands of years ago. It would contain some pieces of the proud and straight head of an arrogant ruler, a broken peace of the heart of a person who was hit by grief and agony, or may be some pieces of the fingers of a murderer. Some parts of it may also hold the fragrance of a virtuous and righteous person and others may hold the stink of the egotistical leaders.

The important question at this stance is, "What is the purpose of this lump of soil with the remains of the days and the people that have passed?" "What does it teach?"

This lump of soil should be presented to the leaders and it should be shown to them how the suffering people led their lives and how they went through the tyrannies and various cruelties, which were basically made their fate because of the tyrannical and self-centered policies of the rulers. It should be shown to them how the complete obedience of the masses and their support made the rulers achieve grandeur and write their names in the annals of history. How they were able to establish their great kingdoms on the shoulders of the soldiers, workers and laborers and they never realized those favors. Every time they were dodged, utilized and deceived by the rulers so as to achieve the objectives and interests that were totally alien to the common people. The same is happening today - promises are being made and the people are shown the ways to heaven and peace. However, none of the promises by the leaders are turned into realities.

All the promising and beautiful words, all the mesmerizing dreams, have been shown to the common people several times; they have been told that they would enjoy the streams of milk and honey and that their self-respect would return. And, the common people, like all the times, are ready to believe them and hope that they would not be disheartened this time. Nevertheless, they need to wake up and start living in reality. The dreams are dreams and they can only become reality when there is determination and honest intentions. But, the history has shown that all these two factors are lacking among our rulers.

The common masses must be vigilant and must have a vigorous participation in the affairs of the country. They must not be dumb, deaf and imbecile subjects as in that way their rights would be easily violated. There are many evidences in history that show that the rulers are basically the people who gain authority in order to defend their own interests. They are not always interested in what the common masses need and get; rather their attentions are preoccupied by their economic benefits. So, the masses must be vigilant to identify the policies of the government that are not intended to fetch prosperity for them. They have the right to fight for their rights politically and must make sure that their rights are not violated in any way. In that manner they would be able to stop the rulers from using the authority only for their personal benefits.

At the same time, masses must also develop political consciousness so as to understand the developments and the changes in the political system. Through such awareness they would also be able to measure the policies of the government as per the political demands. In addition, they would add the aptitude of strengthening the political institutions and augment the political culture with democratic and constructive essentials. In unison, they would be able to exert for positive political changes through their voting power, the propensity to change, participation in political affairs and, at most, through democratic demonstrations and protests.

Unfortunately, the common masses in Afghanistan have not been able to gain the attentions they deserve. They still lack rudimentary requirements of life and suffer from lack of awareness and consciousness. Therefore, their roles are very restricted in Afghan society and mostly the rulers rule the country as per their interests. Even if the rulers have the policies that are harmful for Afghan people and Afghan society and are clashing with the wellbeing of the masses, they do not face much resistance as the masses are not capable of identifying them and they never insist on the changes through political means.

Imperiled Human Lives!

By: Asmatyari

Having been misled or exploited in the name of forged ideologies, religion, vested interest man has gone mad to butcher hundreds and thousands of innocent lives. Or the individuals driven mad by evil motives, fear of losing what they own, lust of having numerous monetary gains have left them in the black race of domination, subjugation leading to formation of a human society we witness at the moment, characterized by rule of mob, violence, aggression, innumerable bloodshed and ruthless killings of fellowmen.

We witness innocent people succumbing to injuries owing no fault except belonging to particular sect, religion or racial group. A person set out to earn a decent livelihood meets his fate without being accomplice in any misdeed. Either the bomb blast blows him into pieces or terrorist attacks leave him dead, or IED snatches his worthless life. Third world societies characterized by mobocracy, lives are no richer than a bullet. It seems as if a movement is set into action to abolish human beings via mass killing -the whole scenario depicts. The society that is intended to eliminate men's very existence -the concept of human rights seems absurd and irrelevant subject.

Factually stating, rights come second, first come the preservation of human's priceless life -which they aren't cognizant to. We must be predetermined to instill the realization "a human life worth thousands" followed by assertion of human rights that let him exercise his free will in accomplishing his desired goals without anyone's interference. Afghanistan suffering from decade of bloody conflict is in dire need of in-depth realization of profound human dignity.

In order to unearth the grave situation of human basic right to life, the UN's former report is an eye opener for the government and its security institutions. The report discloses 1,000 civilians being killed in the Afghan conflict in the first four months of the year, while 1,989 were injured. It is not only the civilians who are preyed the aid workers are not spared either in the ongoing conflict. The UN chronicles contains serious reservations against ruthless killing of civilians in general and aid workers in particular. The report attributed most of the casualties to Taliban who is said to be engaged in large-scale attacks and bombings across the country as part of their summer offensive. The report mentions southern Kandahar province the most insecure with greatest life claiming incidents. The report continued that a total of 4,672 insurgents and 331 soldiers were killed during the month, a sharp spike in the causality toll as compared to the past few months. The report read a total of 60 bombings and IED explosions have occurred in the recent month. In addition, the report also attributed 47 incidents of abductions and other violence to insurgents. 124 people were reportedly abducted by insurgents during the month. The report depicts cowardice of insurgents who hold innocent civilians prey to head to their evil designs. Nonetheless, an identical number of casualties are figured from

the latest humanitarian organizations' report. Formerly, the Afghan Human Rights Commission (AIHRC) report raised concerns about the increased level of violence and the spike in civilian casualties recorded so far this year. On the basis of AIHRC findings, armed oppositions are responsible for more than 70 per cent of civilian casualties, which has increased dramatically, in the country. The Afghan local police standing on the front curbing insurgent's attacks unwittingly retaliate leading to great civilian casualties. It is seen the well trained regiment of army personnel stationed on standby reach to the rescue of trapped police personnel when they have already sought refuge amongst civic population. Apart from the said facts a great deal of conformity is reflected in the findings of both the reports. The Independent Human Rights Commission meanwhile chronicled a 30 percent rise in civilian casualties that is sharp increase in comparison to data in the first six months last year. The AIHRC spokesman Rafiullah Bedar said, "Civilian casualty toll is catastrophic. In the past six months more than 3,000 civilians were killed and wounded in the country, which shows a 30 percent increase compared to last year. Many of them were children and women".

Devoid of ruthless treatment transcended to field operatives, an inexplicable tale of atrocities is executed to war captives. Earlier, the security forces caught in Jalrez bore the worst of treatment from insurgents -their corps was desecrated. The report also underlines similar areas of concern such as hostage-taking, domestic abuse and torture of prisoners of war and an increase in homeless people. It is too seen the terrorists attacks on civilians' population -used as a shield to further their forged goals. The record of AIHRC records 75 per cent of civilian casualties attributed to armed opposition attacks, 3.7 percent attributed to pro-government forces and 16 percent of civilians were killed or injured by unknown people. Meanwhile, many families who have lost children in insurgent attacks have appealed to organizations working for peace to help stop attacks carried out in public places. The recent AIHRC findings show that civilians in Helmand, Badakhshan, Nangarhar, Faryab and Kunduz provinces are particularly at risk. The Human Rights Commission's findings are in line with UNAMA's last report, in June, that noted 978 Afghan civilians had been killed and over 1,900 wounded in the Afghan conflict in the first four months of the year.

With exception to fallacy of government displaying ineligibility reversing the attack, Taliban are equally responsible for civilian casualties. Taliban seeking refuge in nearest village endangers the lives of unarmed civilians did not restricting them doing this, is unjustifiable disposition worthy of loud condemnation with inclusion to Afghan forces led air raid. Significantly, the pursuit of tit-for-tat that made Taliban launch attacks on innocent local or foreign nationals is equally condemnable act. Despite governments largest spending on security and loophole as long as curtailed the human precious lives will go on wasting.

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Benefits of Afghanistan's Accession to the WTO

By: Waliullah Zadran

Afghanistan a least-developed country and landlocked economy is yet to become a Member of the World Trade Organization (WTO). Afghanistan has currently Observer Status and will be granted membership after the final working party report is adopted and the Ministerial Conference awards approval. Upon accession to the WTO for the first time Afghanistan will be experiencing integration into international economy and market, be benefited of a fair, free and non-discriminatory international trade within the framework of the WTO and thus gain sustainable development to the great extent. Afghan goods and services will be recognized and awarded most favored nation treatment by the international market, bodies and fellow Members. To be precise, all the like products and services of Afghanistan will be awarded immediate and unconditional advantage, favor, privilege or immunity that has been already awarded to the like products and services of the other WTO Members. Recently government of Pakistan increased custom duties thrice of what it used to be on Afghanistan fruits being exported to Pakistan, which caused great loss to Afghan traders. Had Afghanistan been Member of the WTO, government of Pakistan would have been under obligation to treat Afghanistan fruits equally as those of other exporting Member countries. Thus at the present situation it is believed that free trade without any discrimination or condition and pursuant to the most favored nation treatment and other principles under WTO law is of immense importance for Afghanistan products and services.

Further, WTO membership will not only provide access to cheap international markets and commodities but will also give rise to both export and competition. Competition in return will require and persuade quality improvement and standardization which is equally beneficial to both consumers and producers. Through WTO membership Afghanistan will be enabled to attract foreign direct investment in various sectors which will increase job opportunities, transfer technology among and from the Members, and decrease trade negotiation costs. The level of trade negotiations will be transformed from bilateral and regional level to the multilateral level.

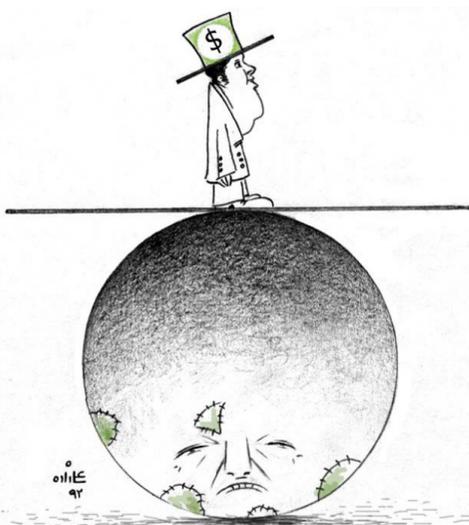
Afghanistan as a least-developed country will be entitled to the preferential treatments under the WTO law from WTO Members in terms of Special and Differential Treatment provisions enshrined within the WTO agreements. These provisions grant a least-developed country special rights so as to be treated more favorably by the developed country Members in comparison to other WTO Members. Such provisions may include awarding longer time for implementing agreements and commitments, increase of trade opportunities, protection of trade interests by other Members and/or capacity building in order to handle disputes and implement technical standards. Besides, Afghanistan can also request for technical assistance provided by the WTO which will adversely improve the national capacity related to trade, policy makings and dispute resolution. On the same stance Afghanistan will also be able to access to WTO dispute settlement mechanism. Dispute Settlement Understanding ("DSU") is considered to be the backbone of dispute settle-

ment under the WTO in order to treat all the Members according to a rule based system and to ensure that their share in and trade rights under international trade are fairly secured during dispute settlement. DSU on rules and procedures governing settlement of disputes provides certain special rules as well with regards to the least-developed countries so as to assist them during dispute settlement. In particular Article 24 of DSU requires the WTO Members to give particular consideration to the special situations of a least developed country Member at all the stages of the determination of the cause of a dispute and of dispute settlement procedures when such a Member is involved. At the same time due restraint shall be exercised by the complaining parties in asking for compensation or seeking authorization to suspend the application of concessions or other obligations, if nullification or impairment is found due to a measure taken by a least developed country. Further, during the consultations if the dispute is not resolved satisfactorily, upon the request of such least developed country Member, the director general or the chairman of dispute settlement body shall offer their good offices, conciliation and mediation so as to assist the parties involved in dispute to settle the same before the request for establishment of panel is submitted. Therefore relying on the WTO dispute settlement mechanism will assist Afghanistan to have a strong stand against the opponent Member/s during settlement of trade related disputes.

Afghanistan will be entitled to these benefits after accession to the WTO which can be utilized if post accession challenges are recognized and tackled. One of the major challenge, at the present, is security situation and the strategic location of Afghanistan itself as it connects central Asia to south Asia and provides China a trade route to Europe and Middle East as well. Lack of strong political and economic assistance and cooperation from and within these regions will add to security issues as currently we are witnessing various terrorizing movements by known groups and organizations. Another challenge one may claim is the lack of institutional competency and legal capacity to deal with trade related matters and disputes. Trade related disputes are vital part of multilateral trading system, settlement of which needs qualified legal expertise. Protection of domestic and infant industries, environmental issues such as deforestation and pollution, delay in enacting certain required laws by the legislation such as Industrial Design law, Patent Law and Foreign Trade Law, and etc. are the other challenges which shall also be tackled in order to utilize the above mentioned benefits. It is believed that Afghanistan has nothing to lose by joining the WTO which is a member driven international organization where decisions are made by consensus and Afghanistan can actively participate in shaping and structuring the trade rules. Analysis of the current trade status of Afghanistan, where the level of imports are higher than exports or to say that Afghan markets are already open to the other members, indicates the very importance of the benefits of accession to the WTO.

Once acceded, the core responsibility of the government of Afghanistan is sincere compliance with and fulfillment of obligations and commitments under the WTO law and agreements. To succeed, political and economic stability and commitment is must.

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