

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

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Threatening Kabul Attack

In a mammoth suicide attack in Kabul on early Friday, August 07, 2015, about 8 people were killed and around 400 were injured. According to the reports a suicide bomber smashed his explosive-laden vehicle into the building of National Directorate of Security (NDS) office close to the Ministry of Defence (MoD).

The blast destroyed around 20 meters cemented wall of the Ministry of Defence and also completely damaged another building. The explosion caused 20 feet wide and some 33 feet deep crater in the ground, which spoke volume of intensity of the blast. Officials neither spoke regarding intensity of the explosion nor mentioned how much explosive materials used.

Destruction caused by the blast can be seen at the scene of the blast such as damaged buildings and wide spread rubbles. Hardly a building has left safe in 70 meters area of the blast.

Three buildings and four houses close to the explosion area have been completely destroyed where as hundreds of shops and residential areas have partially damaged.

This is yet another incident that has, in fact, targeted the ill-fated civilians. Though insurgents claim that they do not target civilians, the outcomes of the incidents they carryout show some other picture. This is even verified by the UNAMA's latest report on Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict.

UNAMA's report released on August 06, 2015 documented 4,921 civilian casualties (1,592 deaths and 3,329 injured) in the first half of 2015, a one per cent increase in total civilian casualties compared to the same period in 2014. The report reveals that the vast majority – or 90 per cent – of civilian casualties resulted from ground engagements, improvised explosive devices, complex and suicide attacks and targeted killings.

The report clearly depicts that anti-government elements continue to cause the most harm. UNAMA attributed 70 per cent of civilian casualties to their activities. Civilian deaths and injuries caused by pro-government forces caused 16 per cent of civilian casualties (15 per cent from Afghan National Security Forces and Pro-Government Militia and one per cent from International Military Forces).

Ground engagements between parties to the conflict caused 1,577 civilian casualties (379 deaths and 1,198 injured) – a 19 per cent decrease – yet remained the leading cause of civilian casualties in Afghanistan.

Similarly, improvised explosive devices caused 1,108 civilian casualties (385 deaths and 723 injured) – a 21 per cent decrease – while remaining the second leading cause of civilian casualties in Afghanistan.

Suicide and complex attacks executed by anti-government elements caused 1,022 civilian casualties (183 deaths and 839 injured), a 78 per cent increase compared to the first six months of 2014. Civilian casualties from targeted killings increased by 57 per cent, causing 699 civilian casualties (440 deaths and 259 injured) and became the leading cause of civilian deaths, despite being the fourth leading cause of overall civilian casualties (deaths and injured combined).

In the first six months of 2015, UNAMA documented a 23 per cent increase in women casualties and a 13 per cent increase in children casualties.

These figures reveal the true enemies of the people of Afghanistan and also highlight that unless there is peace and tranquility the lives of the people of Afghanistan would remain in grave danger.

The victimization of the Afghan people because of insecurity in different parts of the country is really a serious matter and must be dealt as a top priority matter. Some of the recent incidents in the country clearly showed that the lives of the civilians are in danger and the Taliban insurgents are mainly responsible for it.

The common masses in Afghanistan must bother about the rise in civilian casualties as they are basically the ones who have been suffering and may suffer to a further extent if instability and terrorism prevail in the country.

It is really pathetic to see the civilians losing their lives when they have nothing to do with the war. In the economically unstable and war-torn country like Afghanistan, people have not only suffered the hardships of the poor and miserable lives but also the horrors of war. They have been killed mercilessly as if their lives do not have any value or meaning and it is important to see that the Taliban are mostly behind the demise of the poor civilians. Taliban, on various occasions, have claimed that they would not target the civilians directly but the reality is totally against what is claimed by them. UNAMA's report clearly depicts that they do not care much about the civilian casualties; what they mostly care about is their threat and dominance over the security arrangements. Unfortunately, they pursue their objectives through the coward means of targeting the civilians. They have been trying to develop an image of caring and affectionate body that is trying to liberate the people of Afghanistan from the Western forces. But the fact is just on the contrary. They just want power and for that they will never hesitate to sacrifice the poor Afghan people. If they come to power, it is evident that Afghan people will never have peace, contentment and above all their due rights.

The innocent people of Afghanistan deserve that the Afghan government and security forces must ensure to them a better future. They need to make sure that the post transition period in Afghanistan will be a period that can give poverty stricken Afghan people security and basic requirements of living; provide them better representation and participation in political and social life and make them capable of governing themselves peacefully.



Changes in a Political System

By Abdul Ahad Bahrami

A political system is established within a state so as to safeguard the rights of its people and solve the socio-political issues that may hamper the better life opportunities. If a system fulfills the challenges and solves the problems that may erupt within a state, the system is said to be an ideal system. However, it is not possible to have an ideal system in practice but something near it may be achieved with the help of political prudence and continuous efforts. Moreover, it must never be forgotten that a political setup is a dynamic phenomenon; there have to be changes within the system so as to compensate for the ever-changing nature of human society. From the very earlier states the nature of political systems was not the same as they are today. Throughout the history of statehood, human beings have experienced different sorts of systems and setups. From monarchy to today's modern democracy, there have been myriads of political systems and political practices. The only common thing among them is that they keep on changing. Though some may take a longer time to change but ultimately they have to change as they do not have any other option.

There may be various reasons of changes within a political system. One of the basic reasons is that the human societies evolve, giving birth to new changes which give rise to new challenges. To overcome those changes the systems have to introduce changes. The need for changes may also arise when the system is not on the track to stability and fails to address the basic problems of the people. In other words it can be said that the perceived dissatisfaction from a system is directly proportional to the demands in change. The great political and social changes in the history of mankind have their roots in the same phenomenon. It can also be said that the standard of living of the subjects and their perceived satisfaction of socio-political scenario is one of the best ways of gauging the effectiveness of a political system.

There are two ways of introducing changes within a system. The first one is through amendments, i.e. bringing about necessary changes within the present system while keeping the basic nature of the system intact. Most of the changes within democratic systems take place through the same process. One of the qualities of democratic systems is that they keep on inviting changes. Moreover the democratic system proceeds in such a way that the changes become inevitable. The example of elections within a democracy is one of the most important processes in this regard. The elections guarantee government change after every specific period of time. If elections are held regularly the system keeps on moving ahead.

On the other hand, there can be changes within the overall system that actually tend to change the basic nature of the system. Such a change is basically referred to as a 'system change' and is brought about by a revolution or a military coup. For example, if a system changes from a democracy to a dictatorship or from Capitalism to

Socialism, it will be a 'system change'. The change in system becomes inevitable when all the possibilities of changes within a system are lost. The people start suffocating so much that they start demanding for a change in the entire system. Meanwhile, it should be mentioned that most of the revolutions are not very much peaceful and they involve blood-shed.

Amendments within a system are very much normal and there should not be a very strict stand on these sort of changes within a system because it would bring a society to a halt and would hamper its natural growth. Moreover, a democratic system is always a dynamic system and keeps on checking the possibilities of positive changes. It is the characteristic of a dictatorial government that dislikes changes and strives to maintain the status quo. The dictatorial systems are also characterized by being personality centered. The changes within the system are highly dependent on the personality of the ruler. Moreover, as there is no concept of regular elections in most of the dictatorial systems they do not guarantee frequent changes and the rule of the leader may last for many years.

The great democracies in the world have acquired their mature systems after many years of evolution. Changing from very immature and preliminary stages they have reached to today's position where they have been able to address most of the problems of their people. Their example is great guidance for the authorities in our country if they are really interested in establishing a strong political system and a reliable infra-structure upon which the future political setup can be built. Nevertheless, for that they have to give a great sacrifice and that is the sacrifice of their personal gains for the betterment of the majority of the people.

Currently, Afghan political setup does not seem to be compensating for the growing demands of time and has basic problems that do not let the system represent all the people within the Afghan society appropriately, especially the poor masses. At the same time, the current setup does not let the people out of troubles that they face. No doubt, we cannot expect Afghanistan to have a well-developed system as the democratic history in Afghanistan is very short, yet it must never be forgotten that in order to have a better system, changes have to be brought continuously as per the demands. There are many concerns about the political development in Afghanistan; the most important among them is the development of political institutions. Afghanistan, in this regard, has been suffering much. The Afghan society is basically a very diverse society; people from different ethnic backgrounds live here. A democratic system, truly representing people is best suited for the country; however, the development of political institutions is pivotal in this regard. In great modern democracies, it is the well-established democracies that run the state, establish order and provide the people their basic requirements. Afghan politicians, political parties and civil society members can all work together to guide the country towards the same sort of democracy; all they require is commitment and dedication.

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Afghan Children

By Hujjatullah Zia

On a burning day, his face was saturated with sweat, his disheveled hair; messy clothes with patches on them and exhausted expression on his face were the displays of his poverty and drudgery. He was wandering in streets with a sack on his back in search of waste paper and sometimes asking the shopkeepers imploringly to give their waste cartons. His struggle for not to miss a single piece of paper, made one think that if he goes home with empty hands, his old mother will argue him for not having any wood or fuel to bake bread. Perhaps, his mother also was out somewhere in search of flour. May I know your name? I asked. He gave me imploring look cleaning the drops of sweat from his forehead with a sigh of exhaustion and said, "My name is Ali Ahmad." Do you go to school? I continued. "Yes, I study in seventh grade. In the morning I go to school and in the afternoon I collect garbage for home." How old are you? I asked. "I am seventeen years old." Ahmad replied. His looks followed me for some seconds with surprise, wanting to ask me if I was a government official who has come out to see and touch the pain of poor children. I hung my head and left the street.

I was walking, lost in thought that how the fate of life is playing with many Afghan children. How harshly the backbreaking labors touch the fair skin of children in our country. The abject poverty which has opened its mouth wide to swallow the innocent children is highly irritant. When I was picturing the sad and exhausted image of Ali Ahmad, who was badly targeted by the harsh bullet of poverty, I was embittered greatly. Of course, it is not only Ali Ahmad but many more children like him are burning in the furnace of poverty and destitution, even though, it is too early for them to be charged with household chores and shoulder the big responsibility of bread-winners.

Mostly, childhood memories are very sweet and unforgettable. Children are always busy with their childish games in the streets and enjoy their times free of the sorrows and hardships of life. They are filled with joy and cheerfulness regardless of anything happening around them. They are competing to get a greater share of pleasure and happiness. Resounding laughter, happy shouts, careless noises, friendly jokes, childish games... are all childhood sweet memories which will remain forever. But, what about many Afghan children? Happiness has turned to an impossible desire for them. Their childhood memories are replete with sorrow and depression. Nothing will be bitter than wandering of a child in tortuous streets with sorrowful eyes in search of a morsel of food to alleviate the pressure of hunger for some more minutes. What if at the same time, a child of a rich family smirks and laughs at you? Do you know more painful memories than this? Isn't it the day that you wish you embraced death? Of course, it is.

Afghan children wince at their bitter childhood memories and try to get rid of them. But, how is it possible to forget all those economic sufferings which forced them to give up all happiness and find a morsel of food by hook or by crook. Whenever those days are pictured in one's mind, the footsteps are still heard walking in search of food in the streets. The howling memories which pinch the minds and force tears in the eyes of Afghan children are very excruciating.

Mostly the rise in crime is a reflection of poor society. Crime originates in poverty and destitution. It is believed that poverty, which means nakedness of wealth, will lead in nakedness of morality by persistence. Of course, people will lose their resistance by the pressures being put by poverty. Ultimately, they will succumb to crime and corruption so as to satiate their hungers and lessen the economic pressure. It is crystal clear that the children who join terrorist or many other criminal groups have come from poor families. Likewise, many girls who commit moral corruptions are mostly tempted by money rather than pleasure. In addition, many people abandon schools and universities for the lack of money and finally remain illiterate. Their illiteracy will lead them in crime and it is irreparable harm for the society.

It is beyond a shadow of doubt that government is in charge of neutralizing the catastrophic effect of economic pressures. If government intends to root out crime from the society, supporting and providing job opportunities for poor people can play significant role in this regard. Furthermore, much violence which is used against children also roots in poverty. Parents feel compelled by economic pressure to ask the support of their children by putting them in manual labors. Therefore, government is supposed to play its role in preventing crime and children abuse by amending the economic system in the country.

Indeed, economy is the backbone of a society that can lead it towards fall or prosperity. The vital role of economy is an undeniable fact in families and as well as in societies. Government is supposed to focus over this issue and think of a better way for developing the economic system of the country. Moreover, nepotism, arbitrary rules and regulations, etc, which are rampant in our country, should be eradicated. Likewise, the vacancies should not be always offered to moneyed and powerful people rather than qualified individuals. Removing administrative corruptions and installing meritocracy in the country is an urgent need to be dealt with. If such actions be taken, then, most probably, there will come great positive changes in the economic system as well. And the younger generation who mostly lose their hopes and abandon schools for not having a clear picture about their future which are caused by restricted job opportunities, will regain their hopes or at least many others will not be discouraged by injustice of the society. Hence, the above mentioned solutions can decrease the challenges of the country to a large extent.

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