

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



August 16, 2018

Why Terrorist groups Attack Education

A suspected suicide bomber blew himself up in front of an educational center in the west of the Afghan capital Kabul on Wednesday, August 15, killing at least 48 people and wounding at least 67 people. It is not the first attack on schools and education centers in Afghanistan. Terrorist groups including the Taliban assume schools and education centers as the foundations that produce apostates. These groups try to justify the macabre violence as a 'nursery' of those who 'challenge God's sovereignty'. However, according to the studies there are different factors for attacking the schools, universities and education centers by the terrorist groups. One of the factors is that schools, universities and education centers are usually unprotected in the conflict ridden countries. While Embassies, military bases, even hotels are, after a decade and a half of rolling waves of terrorist violence across the country, now are harder to hit.

Nonetheless, terrorist experts argue that there are other reasons, too. The main aim of the terrorist groups is to undermine the legitimacy and authority of a state. In many parts of the world, including Afghanistan, the local school is the state's only palpable presence.

What actually causes the terrorists to be afraid of education?

Considering the surge of terrorist attacks, education is often deemed as an antidote to terrorism; this idea mainly argues that education may make individuals less vulnerable to the false promises of extremist ideologies. For instance Eli Wiesel argues that education seduces some young people to terrorism? It simplifies things. The fanatic has no questions, only answers. Education is the way to eliminate terrorism.

What should the Afghan government do?

Any terrorist attack, especially attacking on education centers triggers a nationwide outcry over inadequate security at the important institutions, especially the educational institutions. The Afghan police are blamed, in angry voices, for failing to prevent the attacks. And it even calls into question the success of the military operations in different parts of the country.

Terrorist experts recommend a range of steps. The governments shall take the same measures that secure other spaces. They also argue that information is the key. As a result, governments shall take every necessary measure to ensure trust building between state institutions and the citizens. At the same time, governments shall ensure proper security measures to protect these institutions.

Some terrorism experts like Prof Boaz, holds that there are endless potential targets for terrorists and it is practically impossible to secure each one of them. As a result intelligence plays a critical role to prevent such attacks.

Education centers have been frequently attacked by the different terrorist groups in Afghanistan. These terrorist groups assume such institutions as the foundations that produce apostates. However, terrorism experts argue that the real cause of the fear of the terrorists groups of the education centers is that they are deemed as an antidote to terrorism. Nonetheless, the Afghan government shall take some specific steps to counter such terrorist attacks on the education centers and what is critical to ensure such steps is having a strong and vigilant intelligence coupled with closing the gap between the security institutions and the citizens. Therefore, ensuring trust building between state institutions and the citizens is the key to prevent terrorist attacks. However, considering the weak intelligence and the mistrust between the people and the government in Afghanistan, the country faces a big challenge to succeed in its counter-terrorism efforts. The last but not the least, the Afghan government shall take some concrete measures to address these challenges to revive the trust of the people to the security institutions. And, it requires practical steps to overcome these critical challenges.

BRI – A Megaproject for Regional Peace and Cooperation

By Hujjatullah Zia

This year marks the 5th anniversary of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) which aims to enhance economic ties and cultural exchanges between China and 65 other countries that collectively covers about 65 pc of the world's population, one-third of the world's GDP and about a quarter of all the goods and services the world moves.

The BRI was put forward by Chinese President Xi Jinping during his overseas visit in 2013 to connect Asian, European and African countries more closely and promote trade and transit between them. The BRI primarily consists of two parts: First, the economic belt, made up of six corridors including roads, railways, bridges and power plants and direct trade to and from China. The belt links China to Central and South Asia and onward to Europe. That is to say, the belt includes countries situated on the original Silk Road through Central Asia, West Asia, the Middle East and Europe. Second, the maritime silk road which is a chain of seaports from the South China Sea to the Indian Ocean and links China to South East Asia, the Gulf Countries, North Africa and on to Europe. The scope of the initiative is still taking shape. Until 2016, the initiative was known in English as the "One Belt and One Road Initiative" but the Chinese came to consider the emphasis on the word "one" as misleading.

For thousands of years, the Silk Road Spirit, i.e. "peace and cooperation, openness and inclusiveness, mutual learning and mutual benefit", has been handed down from one generation to the next and promoted the progress of human civilization. The Silk Road Spirit is a historic and cultural heritage shared by many nations around the world.

The BRI megaproject calls for regional integration; construction of a global market and strengthening infrastructure, trade and investment. In other words, it is a platform to benefit all countries – regardless of being rich or poor, large or small, strong or weak – based on win-win cooperation and provide room for them to take part in global market. "The Belt and Road Initiative has five major roles, to promote policy coordination, facilitate connectivity, promote unimpeded trade and promote financial inauguration and more people-to-people advance in these areas."

Through BRI, China is "not fighting over existing pie, but rather adding to the size of the pie by putting a lot of money to work around the world" so that all, including developed and emerging economies, could benefit from the fruit of the

pie.

The funding institutions such as Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, the Silk Road Fund and the New Development Bank have come into being to finance the BRI project and make this ambitious dream come true.

So far, more than 100 countries and international organizations have joined this initiative and 86 countries, including Afghanistan, have signed the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with China.

In 2016, Kabul government signed MoU with China and after a year it became the permanent member of the AIIB. Afghanistan also expressed its willing to have part in China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. To boost its economic ties with China, which is one of the largest foreign investors in Afghanistan, and enhance its connectivity, Afghan government will have to align its economic activities in the frame of BRI.

Afghanistan's geopolitics and mineral resources are highly significant for the BRI and it will be able to regain its historical position as "center of the Asian crossroads". To achieve this goal, Kabul government will have to hold counterinsurgency its top priority and resolve the conflict through peace talks or military deal. If militancy continues, the room for investment and trade will shrink, which will be a strong blow to the country's economy.

A number of individuals believe that the BRI is similar to the US Marshall Plan, in which the US gave over \$12 billion in economic assistance to help rebuild Western European economy after the end of World War Two. This comparison is due to the major role the BRI can play in the 21st century and promote global trade.

Countries along the BRI will be able to enhance their cultural bonds and people-to-people exchanges. Beside trade and investment, cultural exchanges are also highly essential in the current era of globalization. Countries and nations seek to carry their social values and national traditions through their culture. The BRI facilitates nations to exchange their cultural values so as to have mutual understanding and mutual learning.

In brief, BRI serves as a perfect platform for the world to boost their economy, exchange their cultural values, pursue multilateralism and win-win cooperation and seek peace through economic expansion.

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The West Must Face Reality in Turkey

By Richard N. Haass

Now that Turkey is at loggerheads with its erstwhile ally, the United States, the country's currency crisis has morphed into a political problem of the first order. The immediate issue is Turkey's refusal to release the American pastor Andrew Brunson, who is being held on charges of terrorism, espionage, and subversion for his alleged role in the failed July 2016 coup against Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan.

The US government is right to object to Brunson's detention. But its reaction has been counterproductive. In particular, the imposition of additional US tariffs on imports of Turkish steel and aluminum could further undermine confidence in Turkey's economy, triggering a wider crisis that would do serious harm to the global economy. Moreover, tariffs allow Erdoğan to blame his country's economic woes on America, rather than on his own government's incompetence.

It is still possible that the Turkish government will find a way to release Brunson, and that US President Donald Trump, anxious to demonstrate fealty to the evangelicals who form a core part of his base, will rescind the tariffs. But even if the immediate crisis is resolved, the structural crisis in US-Turkish relations – and Western-Turkish relations generally – will remain. We are witnessing the gradual but steady demise of a relationship that is already an alliance in name only. Though the Trump administration is right to have confronted Turkey, it chose not only the wrong response, but also the wrong issue.

The relationship between Turkey and the West has long been predicated on two principles, neither of which obtains any longer. The first is that Turkey is a part of the West, which implies that it is a liberal democracy. Yet Turkey is neither liberal nor a democracy. It has effectively been subjected to one-party rule under the Justice and Development Party (AKP), and power has become concentrated in the hands of Erdoğan, who is also the AKP's leader.

Under Erdoğan, checks and balances have largely been eliminated from the Turkish political system, and the president controls the media, the bureaucracy, and the courts. The same failed coup that Erdoğan cites as grounds to imprison Brunson has also served as an excuse for detaining thousands of others. At this point, it is impossible to see how Erdoğan's Turkey could ever qualify for EU membership.

The second principle underlying Turkey's "Western" status is alignment on foreign policy. Turkey recently bought more than 100 advanced F-35 fighter jets from the US. Yet, in recent years, Turkey has also supported jihadist groups in Syria, moved closer to Iran, and contracted to purchase S-400 surface-to-air missiles from Russia.

Above all, Turkey and the US find themselves on different sides in Syria. While the Syrian Kurds have been close partners of the US, they have been deemed terrorists by Turkey, owing to their ties to Kurdish groups inside Turkey that historically have

sought autonomy, if not independence. Against this backdrop, it is not far-fetched to imagine US and Turkish forces coming to blows.

Some might say that the current level of US-Turkish friction is nothing new; the two countries have long had their share of differences. The Turks were not happy with the US decision to withdraw medium-range missiles from Turkey as part of the deal that ended the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis. The two countries clashed repeatedly over the Turkish intervention and subsequent occupation of Northern Cyprus in 1974, and over US support for Greece. Turkey refused to give US military forces access to Incirlik Air Base during the Iraq war in 2003. And in recent years, the Turkish government has been infuriated by America's refusal to extradite the Pennsylvania-based cleric Fethullah Gülen, whom Erdoğan believes masterminded the 2016 coup attempt.

Still, what we are seeing today is something different. The anti-Soviet glue that kept the two countries close during the Cold War is long gone. What we have now is a loveless marriage in which the two parties continue to cohabit under the same roof, even though there is no longer any real connection between them.

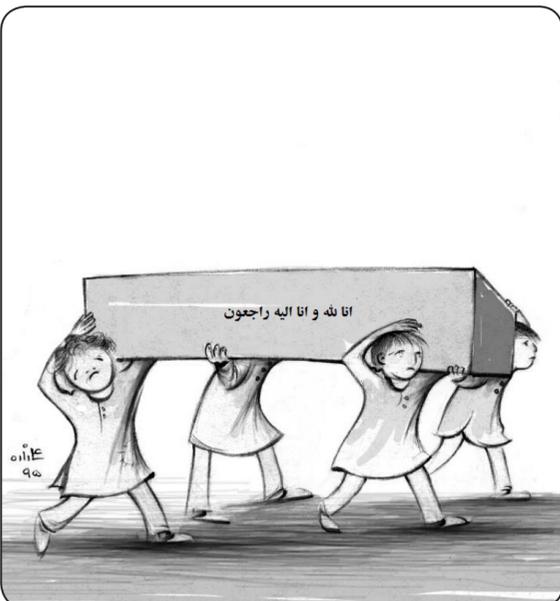
The problem is that the NATO treaty provides no mechanism for divorce. Turkey can withdraw from the alliance, but it cannot be forced out. Given this reality, the US and the European Union should maintain a two-pronged approach toward Turkey.

First, policymakers should criticize Turkish policy when warranted. But they must also reduce their reliance on access to Turkish bases such as Incirlik, deny Turkey access to advanced military hardware like F-35s, and reconsider the policy of basing nuclear weapons in Turkey. Moreover, the US should not extradite Gülen unless Turkey can prove his involvement in the coup with evidence that would stand up in a US court and satisfy the provisions of the 1981 mutual extradition treaty. Nor should the US abandon the Kurds, given their invaluable role in the fight against the Islamic State (ISIS).

Second, the US and Europe should wait until the Erdoğan era is over, and then approach Turkey's new leadership with a grand bargain. The offer should be Western support in exchange for a Turkish commitment to liberal democracy and to a foreign policy focused on fighting terrorism and pushing back against Russia.

Erdoğan recently warned in the New York Times that the US-Turkish partnership "could be in jeopardy," and that Turkey would soon start looking for new friends and allies if US unilateralism and disrespect were not reversed. In fact, the partnership was already in jeopardy, largely because of Turkish actions, and Erdoğan had already begun the process of looking for new friends and allies. It is time for the US and Europe to adjust to this reality.

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



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