

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



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## Can Stability be Attained in Afghanistan?

The weary war against terrorism that was launched after the incident of 9/11, brought with itself different sorts of influences and impacts on the lives of people in Afghanistan, South Asian region and U.S. in particular and the world in general. The war, though did much to topple down the Al-Qaida-favoring reign of Taliban and was able to target the mastermind of the incidents of 9/11, it brought with itself a pile of controversies.

Even, bearing a lot of medals on its chest, this war is considered to have proved very much lethal in some other ways. The resources that have been used in this war have not been considered to have hit the bull's eye and the very reason for which the war was started is yet to be achieved even after almost 16 years, when the involved nations of the world seem to be reluctant to continue the war and deciding to drag it towards a conclusion.

The most important pretexts to the war were to put an end to the terrorism in Afghanistan and help it build strong political and economic systems so that it can guarantee its survival on the modern concept of democracy. Both the pretexts are yet to be realized to full extent and the international community led by US seems reluctant to pursue those objectives. Neither the terrorist networks have been eradicated from the region nor the political and economic systems in Afghanistan are standing on strong footings that can be left alone without much attention and support from international community.

The phenomenon of terrorism has the capacity to grow into strong position from where it is today and can really threaten the region and the world as a whole. Further, this phenomenon is no more an issue only in Afghanistan and has been nourishing in the neighboring countries as well. Meanwhile, the democratization of the political system in Afghanistan is still immature and needs to go a long way before it can reach to a reliable position from where it can start a journey towards real democracy that can penetrate to the grass root level and can deal with the diversity existing in the country. Furthermore, any political agreement with Taliban still remains unattainable and the prospects of peace process do not seem very much optimistic.

There are no clear answers to the concerns and ambiguities regarding the untamed corruption in the country that has been paralyzing the governance system and has been hindering the way of the funds and supports from international community to be spent for the welfare and betterment of the common people of Afghanistan. Rather, it has been transferring the money, in some way or the other to those who, directly or indirectly support Taliban and terrorist networks in the country. International community in this regard has shown concerns on various occasions but tangible measures that can really introduce strong system of accountability are yet to be introduced.

The economic system has not reached to the level of independence and largely relies on the support of international community in some way or the other and serious investment and economic activities are yet to achieve confidence because of shaky situation of markets and the law and order situation.

In the meantime, keeping in mind the concerns regarding the capabilities of Afghan security forces and the strengthening terrorist networks it would be a great challenge to maintain peace and tranquility in the country. Moreover, the regional dissatisfaction and ambiguities are also increasing about the war. Afghanistan's neighboring countries do not see eye to eye with the US authorities regarding the war and it prospects. Though international community, particularly US, has promised that they will be supporting the country till 2020, the economic conditions in the developed nations of the world do not suggest so. They have been going through their own economic and political priorities and objectives.

But, whether the international community is going to keep supporting Afghanistan financially and militarily largely depends on the decision of the US authorities. Currently, US is in a position of uncertainty about the future of their role in Afghanistan and that is a cause of worry for Afghanistan in the ongoing difficult times.

Definitely, the war in Afghanistan has to be ended decisively and that is what the circumstances in Afghanistan and the neighboring countries are demanding. Both the eradication of terrorism and political and economic stability of country have to be made sure before the war is concluded.

Yes, there have been many sacrifices given in this war so far, both in terms of human life and resources, but with a little more effort the outcome of the war can be quite different from what it can turn into if left in the way it is. This war has to be concluded with the victory of peace loving forces against the terror networks, and the sun of tranquility must rise for the people of Afghanistan.



## Examining Opportunities and Challenges in Health Sector

By Mohammad Jawad Sorosh

Afghanistan established a new political structure more than a decade ago. The fragility of political stability, economic stagnation, administrative corruption and tens of insurmountable challenges are the main obstacles before development. These issues have not only put negative palpable effect on the function of the government's body and health sector, but also slowed down the process of public development.

The vast magnitude of corruption and instability is one of the serious and widespread challenges before Afghanistan's health sector. Instability has restricted people's access to public health services. However, corruption has exceed instability and poses greater threat to health sector across the country.

Although Ministry of Public Health had tangible achievements for the betterment of health condition, yet these achievements have not been sufficient enough in comparison with international aid offered in this respect. Afghanistan has the lowest standard health indicators in the region for many reasons: poor and inefficient management in health sector, corruption and lack of control and monitoring in the quality of health service, lack of a national and comprehensive policy for covering health sector, and lack of right and timely implementation of national programs about health development.

The high mortality rate of mothers, infants and children under the age of five, the high prevalence of infectious and non-infectious diseases, insufficient attention to the quality of hospital services, and lack of comprehensive and equitable health supplies in remote areas and villages are highly shocking.

According to the findings of the National Vulnerability Survey in Afghanistan, only 57 percent of the Afghan population has access to basic health services and 43 percent is still deprived of these services which means that 43 percent has no access to public doctors or clinics. It comes as in many countries one doctor is considered for 5 to 10 people according to their population. But in Afghanistan, one doctor is estimated to be for 500 people. In some villages in the country, there is not even a single female doctor available to solve the basic health problem.

The import of low-quality medicines is the next challenge which has added to the dissatisfaction of healthcare personnel. The issue of low-quality medicines has been changed into a serious issue in the country as a large number of doctors and people believe that the medicines imported in Afghanistan lack standard quality and effectiveness. The

medicine-importing companies import medicines which bear pharmacological marks and labels, but the quality and effectiveness of the drug is very low and may lack the necessary components. Only the producing companies will reap the benefit.

On the other hand, corruption in the Ministry of Public Health and Afghanistan's customs hampered the active control of such medicines. It is feared that if this trend continues, the diseases will last longer due to the low quality of the drugs - which shows the negligence of the officials. Subsequently, preventing this will cost highly for Afghan people and government in long-term period.

Since the provision of health services and coverage by the Ministry of Public Health alone seems unlikely, the role of private health sector and investment in this field will support the development of health condition in the country. Unluckily, the vast magnitude of corruption in health institutions has stagnated personal investments in this respect. In other words, the hard condition for investors in the field of health has not only failed to support welfare and health development but also paved the ground for bribery and corruption to a great extent.

Lack of public trust in health sector in the country is one of the issues to be considered. In recent years, it is most likely that people lack trust in public sector. That is to say, the mistrust between nation and health sector has widened more than ever before. The long queues of people in front of the embassies of regional states for obtaining visa has increased the amount of medical tourism to neighboring countries and regions.

Although medical tourism is a common practice in relations between countries, it should be noted that Afghanistan faces economic balance deficit. Thus, the withdrawal of hundreds of millions of dollars caused a serious blow to the country's economy. Strengthening general private partnerships can play a key role in improving the supply of health services and delivering quality health services.

Good governance is one of the most important factors that should be considered seriously by the Ministry of Public Health in order to create a transparent and accountable system.

Revising the law, facilitating the participation of private sectors in delivery of quality health services, converting projects into programs through the mechanism of sector-based activities, and fighting against corruption are believed to improve health condition in the country.

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## The Series of Attacks and Bombings Desensitize Violence

By Hujjatullah Zia

The social reaction towards tragic incidents and lethal attacks has declined tremendously in Afghanistan. The constant violent practices and suicide bombings carried out by militant fighters will hardly move people to tears. The religious fundamentalists who nurture radical ideology have desensitized violence and bloodshed in the society. Afghans have been embroiled in bloody wars more than three decades and their sensitivity is reduced amidst day-to-day carnage and ugly images.

Killing and wounding men, women and children in Afghanistan make repeated headlines in national international media. Initially, people raised their voice in the loudest possible way with observing gory incidents and urged the government and international community to protect their rights and freedoms. They were shocked and pressurized mentally with the picture of dead bodies of terrorist victims. Too many tears were flown, too many hearts were broken, and too many people were saddened with the countless murders committed by terrorist fighters.

To their unmitigated chagrin, however, their tears and anguish were turned a blind eye and there was no shoulder for the victims' families to cry on. On the other hand, the bloodshed did not only not stopped, but also escalated and militant fighters showed no iota of mercy to the grieving nation. Most likely, people's outpouring of grief and sufferings filled the murderers with a burst of delight and laughter.

They inflicted heavier casualties and targeted civilians on a large scale. People observed a spate of attacks and suicide bombings which left gory images behind with tens or hundreds of people wounded and killed. People's tears dried and their hearts turned to stone in the process of time. To put it succinctly, the flagrant violation of human rights, mainly their fundamental rights; i.e., their rights to life and liberty and the amputated and riddled bodies shown through media and posted in social media desensitized violence and murder and hardly triggered a sense of public compassion. It is believed that when life turns cheap in a society and violence and murder spark off no sense of pity or empathy, humanity, moral values and social norms will be at stake. A number of people and religious elements tend to lash out at western culture and call it detrimental to our culture, but they are silent about desensitizing death and violence in our society through terrorist attacks and their violent practices which will pose the most serious threat to our cultural values. People's lack of concern towards tragic issues will turn them indifferent towards all social affairs. Their moral di-

lemma and sense of humanity will decline with the passage of time. Gradually, they are more likely to engage in moral turpitude. After all, those who keep silent despite violent and anti-human practices and do not play their role actively in the society, they are considered, based on religious tenets, no better than those who are involved in such activities.

Every single individual is supposed to play its role based on their ability and capability. Here, the officials have far heavier responsibility and will have to play their role constructively.

Indeed, people are not to blame, but it is the government which has not fulfilled its responsibilities and this issue is a bitter pill for the government to swallow. Despite promises made in Afghan constitution and during the presidential and provincial campaigns of officials, they failed to protect the rights and freedoms of nation.

It is believed that posting bloody and heart-wrenching pictures in social media will add insult to public injury rather than consoling them. This act will traumatize the viewers and fill them with strong sense of fear and chagrin. Similarly, it will also lead to desensitization if recurred. Despite the fact that we are more indifferent to such issues than years ago, if you scroll down your Facebook before your family members and they all see a sliced throat, it will certainly put an adverse effect on their mind.

The government will have to do its best to protect the rights and liberty of Afghan nation and change its traditional mechanism for combating terrorism as the Taliban have changed their aggressive tactics. For instance, now they target funeral ceremonies and carry out successive attacks in the same site, especially when police gather to help the victims, and by putting on police uniform, etc.

Similarly, they have reinforced their intelligence through infiltrating police or places where soldiers are exposed to threat. The attack on Kabul military hospital in March 2017 was said to be arranged by a doctor from inside the hospital who acted as a member of the Taliban's intelligence and gained trust after years of working there. Hence, these all should be eye-opener for Afghan government so as to change its strategy for combating terrorism so as to protect the public rights and liberty.

Furthermore, the clergy will have to preach against violence and terrorism through enlightening the true spirit of Islam in order to prevent from desensitization of violence. Although the clergy also paid sacrifices in this regard since the Taliban make no bone about attacking religious scholars, they should continue fearlessly.

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