

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

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Condemning the Attack on AUAF

It is really unfortunate that the death toll from the American University of Afghanistan (AUAF) attack in Kabul has reached to 16, while another 53 other people are reported to be wounded.

Public health ministry officials confirmed on Thursday afternoon that among those killed were eight students, including two females, three Crisis Response Unit (CRU) members, two security guards, two university professors and one civilian from the adjoining school where the initial car bomb was detonated.

"Five females are among the 19 wounded that have been brought to the emergency hospital. Some of the wounded are in serious condition and one of them died," said Dr Dejan Panic, program director for the emergency hospital.

The attack was really cowardly and it has been condemned widely; however, Taliban insurgents have always carried out such atrocities against the poor civilians and particularly against the educational institutions and media outlets. They have always opposed modern education and through different tactics have always strived to discourage the youth from pursuing modern education. They, in fact, fear that if Afghan youth continue their pursuit of modern education, and make strides in that regard, their way of thinking and living would be considered obsolete and they would automatically lose their worth and importance.

To discourage modern education, they have bombed the schools, targeted the teachers, thrown acid on school-going girls and even poisoned them in different ways. However, they have not been successful in shattering the will and determination of Afghan youth, particularly of the girls, and they have kept on making new achievements in this regard.

American University of Afghanistan is, undoubtedly, the best university in the country and it is offering quality education to Afghan students who can compete internationally after completing their education from this institution. Currently, most of the teachers and staff members, and almost all the students are Afghans and they have been trying to shoulder the responsibilities of the institutions themselves so that they are ready to develop it further once they stand on their own. Therefore, any claim of the insurgents that they have targeted a foreign institute is totally incorrect and shows nothing else except their hatred for education and students.

Moreover, it is also important to note that the claims of Taliban that they would not attack the civilians are nothing except eyewash. Statistics in recent times have revealed that most of the civilian casualties in Afghanistan have been because of the insurgents. The insurgents are not fighting a holy war for safeguarding religion; rather they seem thirsty for filthy power, which they want to gain for political purposes. And they are going to use that for the further annihilation of the common people, not their betterment and safety. It is really important that Afghan government, along with other stakeholders must get more serious to fight terrorism and insurgency. There have been worldwide condemnation by different countries and institutions. UNAMA condemned the attack in the severest terms and Pernille Kardel, the Secretary-General's Deputy Special Representative for Afghanistan and Acting Head of Mission said in a statement, "An attack deliberately targeting an educational facility, during evening classes for university students, is an atrocity and those responsible must be held accountable... The country's youth are a source of pride and bring real hope for a better future. I am hopeful that violence will not discourage their desire for continued learning and attaining the knowledge and skills critical to Afghanistan's prosperity."

It is really imperative that Afghan youth must not be discouraged and they should continue their pursuit of modern education. It is only education that can promise them a better and peaceful future; otherwise, following other means would lead them towards another civil war and more bloodshed.

United States, Ambassador to Kabul, P. Michael McKinley, condemned the attack and offered his heartfelt condolences to friends and families of those killed and wounded in the incident. He said in a statement, "It was a tragic evening for the students, for the faculty, a tragic evening for the brave service people of NDS and the Afghan National Police who went to assist and some of whom died in the effort to rescue students in the faculty who stuck in the buildings, and a tragic night for all of us who believe education is future for Afghanistan."

Similarly, European Union, Pakistan and India also condemned the attack strongly and called the attack an atrocity against the civilians and particularly against the students.

Though these condemnations show the concern of different countries and institutions about the situation in Afghanistan, they are not enough to fight the growing terrorism and insecurity in the country. These countries must make sure that they provide practical and tangible support to Afghan government so that it is able to fight the increasing terrorism. At the same time, Afghan government authorities and the security forces must make all the possible efforts to stand strong against the insurgency and must let others know that they are really serious about their responsibilities and they are worthy of support and assistance.

Attacking the Future of Afghanistan

By Mohammad Zahir Akbari

Since formation of the National Unity Government, Afghanistan has been facing increasing challenges unprecedented in contemporary history of this country. From Daily occurrence such as kidnapping, armed robberies, killings and suicide bombings became common and rampant. Gunmen kill people and burgle homes in broad daylight, but no action is taken to help remedy the situation. As if the so-called NUG has no ear to hear, no eye to see and thus, the international partners have forgotten all agreements and commitments. In fact, Afghanistan is suffering unforgettable days in its recent history. The failure of security forces to prevent such incidents is not the only problem; their behaviour, their justifications, their repeated negligence in the aftermath of explosions is also of frustrating to citizens. So many times government has established special committee promising to report their performance but non-has been fulfilled yet. People in Afghanistan are using opium to block their pain; the pain of bloodshed, hunger, sickness, losing their sons, daughters and men. Most of the addict women are desperate to blunt the trauma of endless war, mental trauma and unknown future. Still, the mourning of previous victims have not ended that once again Kabul has shaken by a massive explosion on American University of Afghanistan (AUAF), occurred at around 7:00 PM local time on Wednesday. The sound of the powerful explosion heard several kilometres away in capital Kabul. According to official reports, the deadly attack has ended with 16 dead and 53 injuries which include students, guards, police, men and women. Reportedly, three attackers were involved in the attack: The first attacker detonated a suicide car bomb at the entrance of the University the other two managed to enter the campus. The Interior Ministry spokesman Sediq Sediqqi said the attackers were armed with grenades and automatic weapons. The siege of the University lasted almost nine hours, before police killed the two assailants around 3.30 am, he said. This university, was established in 2006 and modelled on US colleges, has many foreign staffs and is popular among the country's small liberal elites. This University was unique in its kinds in Afghanistan. Much of its funding has come from the U.S. Agency for International Development, which administers civilian foreign aid, and today the school has more than 1,700 full- and part-time students. It has produced 29 Fulbright scholars and maintains partnerships with many U.S. colleges, such as Stanford, Georgetown and the University of California system. Also, two people employed by the university were killed in 2014 when a suicide bomber set off an explosion in a Kabul restaurant that was popular with ex-

pats. Such attacks and treats are not new in Afghanistan. Militants are purposefully causing schools and universities to should down or the attendance rates to drop and somewhat they gained their sinister goals. Where schools do not close altogether, each incident influences decisions by parents and students whether to continue to attend school/university and can influence the general perception of whether it is safe for girls and boys to continue to go to school or university. It is given greater social restrictions on girls' to continue their education. As insecurity is getting worse and has generated fear among families. When they hear about attacks on schools, universities or poisoning incidents in some schools, this really affect them and many parents decide to take their girls out school. So, Physical and mental Security is the most destructive and growing factors to make them leave schools and country for the purpose of reaching better abode. Educations target such as damaging or destruction of schools and universities by arson, poisoning, grenades, mines and rockets; threats to teachers and officials are common practice; students, teachers and other educational staff have been killed and there has been looting. Hence, Thousands of girls and boys are leaving education and country due to stable security concerns and unknown future. While the national unity government and International partners who had agreements and commitments still have not awaken. But they should understand that they have already crossed the redlines; people may not tolerate anymore.

To conclude with, Attacks on educations are attacks on the future of Afghanistan; thousands of girls and boys abandon schools and universities due to unknown future and endless war. No nation has changed his fate without seeking and protecting educations. Based on expert's idea, education is the best strategy to a sustainable development and to a secure Afghanistan in the long term. We need to choose it as a top national priority, and as a best way to reaching a peaceful, stable and strong Afghanistan. It is repeated by experts that education is the foundation of all infrastructures which means the whole environmental, social, cultural, political and economic challenges rooted to this great issue. Also the enemies of Afghanistan understand that education is the only tools that can rescue Afghanistan. Therefore and as a historic response to the consecutive attacks on education we have to include education as an obligatory duty in national constitution. And campaign in national and international level to gain financial and technical supports for the purpose of reaching to a sustainable and peaceful Afghanistan.

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Reform or Divorce in Europe

By Joseph E. Stiglitz

To say that the eurozone has not been performing well since the 2008 crisis is an understatement. Its member countries have done more poorly than the European Union countries outside the eurozone, and much more poorly than the United States, which was the epicenter of the crisis.

The worst-performing eurozone countries are mired in depression or deep recession; their condition - think of Greece - is worse in many ways than what economies suffered during the Great Depression of the 1930s. The best-performing eurozone members, such as Germany, look good, but only in comparison; and their growth model is partly based on beggar-thy-neighbor policies, whereby success comes at the expense of erstwhile "partners."

Four types of explanation have been advanced to explain this state of affairs. Germany likes to blame the victim, pointing to Greece's profligacy and the debt and deficits elsewhere. But this puts the cart before the horse: Spain and Ireland had surpluses and low debt-to-GDP ratios before the euro crisis. So the crisis caused the deficits and debts, not the other way around.

Deficit fetishism is, no doubt, part of Europe's problems. Finland, too, has been having trouble adjusting to the multiple shocks it has confronted, with GDP in 2015 some 5.5% below its 2008 peak.

Other "blame the victim" critics cite the welfare state and excessive labor-market protections as the cause of the eurozone's malaise. Yet some of Europe's best-performing countries, such as Sweden and Norway, have the strongest welfare states and labor-market protections.

Many of the countries now performing poorly were doing very well - above the European average - before the euro was introduced. Their decline did not result from some sudden change in their labor laws, or from an epidemic of laziness in the crisis countries. What changed was the currency arrangement.

The second type of explanation amounts to a wish that Europe had better leaders, men and women who understood economics better and implemented better policies. Flawed policies - not just austerity, but also misguided so-called structural reforms, which widened inequality and thus further weakened overall demand and potential growth - have undoubtedly made matters worse.

But the eurozone was a political arrangement, in which it was inevitable that Germany's voice would be loud. Anyone who has dealt with German policymakers over the past third of a century should have known in advance the likely result. Most important, given the available tools, not even the most brilliant economic czar could not have made the eurozone prosper.

The third set of reasons for the eurozone's poor performance is a broader right-wing critique of the EU, centered on eurocrats' penchant for stifling, innovation-inhibiting regulations. This critique, too, misses the mark. The eurocrats, like labor laws or the welfare state, didn't suddenly change in 1999, with the creation of the fixed exchange-rate system, or in 2008, with the beginning of the crisis. More fundamentally, what matters is the standard of living, the quality of life. Anyone who denies how much better off we in the West are with our stiflingly clean air and water should visit Beijing. That leaves the fourth explanation: the euro is more to blame than the policies and structures of individual countries. The euro was flawed at birth. Even the best policymakers the world has ever seen

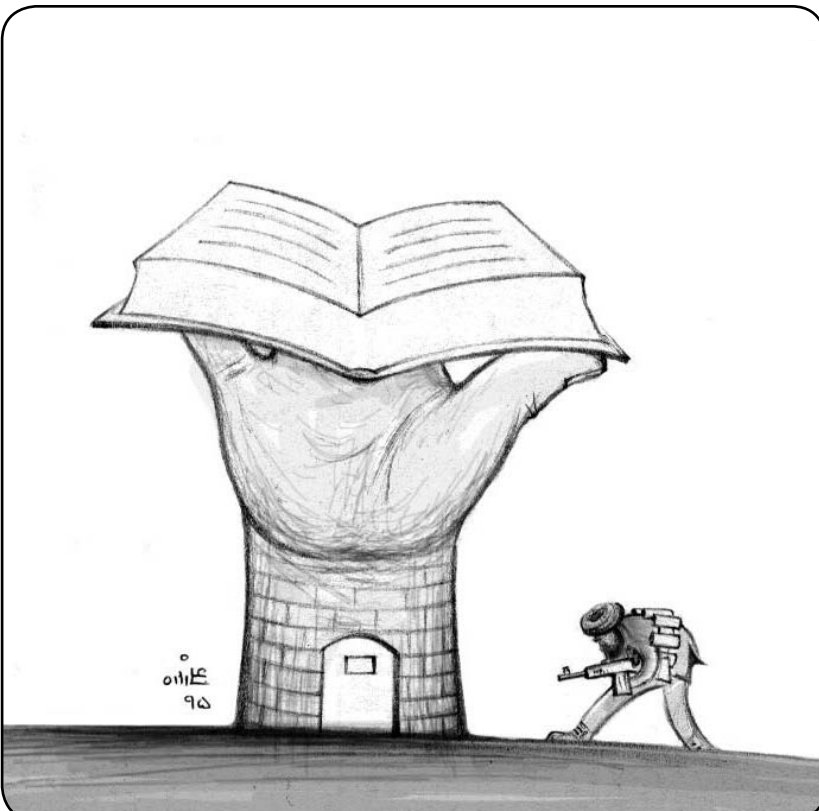
could not have made it work. The eurozone's structure imposed the kind of rigidity associated with the gold standard. The single currency took away its members' most important mechanism for adjustment - the exchange rate - and the eurozone circumscribed monetary and fiscal policy.

In response to asymmetric shocks and divergences in productivity, there would have to be adjustments in the real (inflation-adjusted) exchange rate, meaning that prices in the eurozone periphery would have to fall relative to Germany and northern Europe. But, with Germany adamant about inflation - its prices have been stagnant - the adjustment could be accomplished only through wrenching deflation elsewhere. Typically, this meant painful unemployment and weakening unions; the eurozone's poorest countries, and especially the workers within them, bore the brunt of the adjustment burden. So the plan to spur convergence among eurozone countries failed miserably, with disparities between and within countries growing.

This system cannot and will not work in the long run: democratic politics ensures its failure. Only by changing the eurozone's rules and institutions can the euro be made to work. This will require seven changes:

- abandoning the convergence criteria, which require deficits to be less than 3% of GDP;
- replacing austerity with a growth strategy, supported by a solidarity fund for stabilization;
- dismantling a crisis-prone system whereby countries must borrow in a currency not under their control, and relying instead on Eurobonds or some similar mechanism;
- better burden-sharing during adjustment, with countries running current-account surpluses committing to raise wages and increase fiscal spending, thereby ensuring that their prices increase faster than those in the countries with current-account deficits;
- changing the mandate of the European Central Bank, which focuses only on inflation, unlike the US Federal Reserve, which takes into account employment, growth, and stability as well;
- establishing common deposit insurance, which would prevent money from fleeing poorly performing countries, and other elements of a "banking union";
- and encouraging, rather than forbidding, industrial policies designed to ensure that the eurozone's laggards can catch up with its leaders. From an economic perspective, these changes are small; but today's eurozone leadership may lack the political will to carry them out. That doesn't change the basic fact that the current halfway house is untenable. A system intended to promote prosperity and further integration has been having just the opposite effect. An amicable divorce would be better than the current stalemate. Of course, every divorce is costly; but muddling through would be even more costly. As we've already seen this summer in the United Kingdom, if European leaders can't or won't make the hard decisions, European voters will make the decisions for them - and the leaders may not be happy with the results. (Courtesy project Syndicate)

Joseph E. Stiglitz, a Nobel laureate in economics, is University Professor at Columbia University and Chief Economist at the Roosevelt Institute. His most recent book is *The Euro: How a Common Currency Threatens the Future of Europe*.



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