

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



August 29, 2017

International Day against Nuclear Tests

29th August is celebrated as International Day against Nuclear Tests around the world. The day was adopted through resolution 64/35 of the United Nations on 2nd December, 2009. The resolution calls for increasing awareness and education "about the effects of nuclear weapon test explosions or any other nuclear explosions and the need for their cessation as one of the means of achieving the goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world." The resolution was initiated by the Republic of Kazakhstan, together with a large number of sponsors and cosponsors with a view to commemorate the closure of the Semipalatinsk Nuclear Test site on August 29, 1991. The Day is meant to galvanize the United Nations, member states, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, academic institutions, youth networks and the media to inform, educate and advocate the necessity of banning nuclear weapon tests as a valuable step towards achieving a safer world.

Though there have been efforts in some ways to control the race for acquisition of nuclear weapons and, thus, their testing, the fact is that there is no proper control. According to the UN statistics, more than 15,000 nuclear weapons still exist and more than half of the world's population still lives in countries that either have such weapons or are members of nuclear alliances. This grave situation exists largely because of prevailing economic and political conditions. The contemporary international political scenario can be well analyzed by keeping the term hypocrisy in our consideration. Basically the prevailing international politics does not function as an international integrating system; rather it functions as a catalyst to invigorate international disintegration by dividing the world into political giants and political ants. International integration, which should be a step before the first and foremost step, has been deleted from the hard disk of international politics. International integration that should be the fore-legs of civilizations has only proved to be a wheel-chair of crippled civilization that is leading it to nowhere.

Nuclear non-proliferation, as propagated by contemporary politics, seems to be a very controversial term-properly designed and masterly disguised. The most interesting fact about non-proliferation treaties is the fact that they have been controlled by those who have been responsible for most of nuclear proliferation.

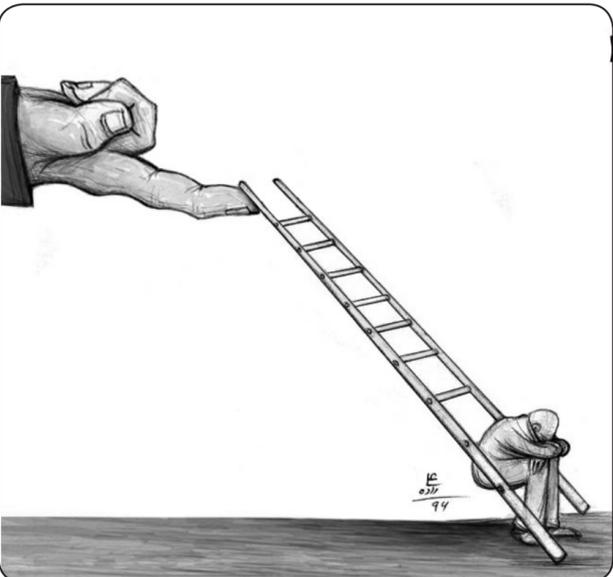
There are few thinkers who believe that the current slogans of peace and tranquility and non-proliferation are new techniques by the imperialists to strengthen their dominance in the international scenario. It is necessary to consider the view and analyze it as per the contemporary settings. They believe that today's imperialism is nothing more than an evolution of the same colonization. It has evolved in terms of both technology and technique. Today's technology is more modern and techniques are more misleading. Imperialism has clothed its cunning incentives by beautiful slogans. It is not what it seems. Its behavior is deceptive and nuclear non-proliferation is one of the examples of its dual nature.

The slogan of non-proliferation is raised because imperialism wants a solid excuse to shun the third world nations but it is important that they should start non-proliferation from the world powers that are the store-rooms of nuclear arms. The world powers have the capacity to destroy the whole world several times with their weapons. When the world powers carry out some nuclear tests the world peace organizations and test ban treaties do not seem to have much power to stop them. This is really a lame and cruel justice. There is a power game and the power is always skewed towards the countries that have large economy and are militarily strength. Most of the decisions pertaining to the world order and international law are influenced by them as they are the ones who have invented them and thus finance them.

There is no controversy about the fact that every nation has got the right of self-defense. The nations that want to guarantee complete security for their people need to acquire weapons; this is a reality that has to be accepted by everyone. If they do not acquire weapons they will be dominated by their enemies - this is how we have formed the world order and political scenario. There are many countries in the state of war and they always have certain enemies against whom they have to defend themselves.

However, from this discussion it must not be inferred that there should be uncontrolled competition of weapons.

The sanctions are necessary but the most important factor is that the sanctions must be just and they should be applicable against all the countries in the world-both strong and weak. If they favor just the strong, then it means they are tools for them to further their dominance and control in world politics and that means further disorder and wars. The international bodies that are formed so as to control the arms race and save the world from nuclear weapons must be authoritative enough to make independent decisions and they should also be in a position to make the countries follow their decisions.



Reforming and Improving the System of Higher Education

By Mohammad Mahdi Shafayi

Afghan President Muhammad Ashraf Ghani pointed out at the beginning ceremony of the new academic year that the current educational system of Afghan universities did not meet the needs of the country and its delay in reforming would lead to "national catastrophe". Addressing university professors, he said that the century had been changed but your chapters did not.

In fact, Afghanistan is beset by a myriad of challenges; however, if one ponders upon this issue, the root causes of the problems will be changed through reforming educational system. Let us first view the educational ranking of Afghanistan. According to SJR International Search Ranking Website, the number of articles written in Afghanistan in 2016 and published in reputable international journals are about 162 which ranks the country 140. If we view ten top positions, we will come to know that the countries which produce high quality articles are also ranked high in economy. For example, the US and China which held the first and second status in producing academic articles in 2016, are also strong economically. But Afghanistan's GDP has reached \$18 billion, ranked in 114 among countries.

In fact, there is a direct relationship between stock of knowledge and GDP or strong economy. The higher the production of knowledge is, the more dynamic a country's economy will be. On the other hand, when one searches the subject of commentaries for Afghanistan published in reputable journals, the bulk of articles are in the field of math (50), medicine (49), engineering (23), agriculture (22), social science (11), etc. but only one article has been recorded for Afghanistan out of 160. Considering the 185 thousand students and 5500 lecturers who are teaching in 56 state universities and 140 thousand students and 3700 lecturers teaching in 128 private universities, the said number of articles is not satisfactory.

Needless to say, the number of articles at national level will be high but the articles which are published in reputable international journals are low. It is also a fact that the relation between Afghan university students and lecturers on one side and international educational centers and publication on the other side is very loose. Therefore, the ministry of higher education and as well as state and private universities will have to strengthen their relations with reputable universities and educational publications.

Within the past fifteen years, the number of university students and lecturers has developed to a great extent. However, now it is time for developing the quality of universities. Afghan lecturers should be updated with modern knowledge and the issues of society and students must upgrade the level of their knowledge. This needs to be done both at the levels of managing universities and ministry of higher education. In brief, qualitative development should be prioritized by universities and ministry of higher education. It goes without

saying that Afghan people are wrestling with poverty and unemployment. First of all, the country will have to address the financial problems, unemployment and poverty. Hence, producing educational commentaries and conducting educational seminars in the field of economy should develop to a higher level. The government also needs to announce the priority of educational research annually, particularly in the field of economy, so that the researchers can do the necessary research in this regard and, on the other hand, the state will be able to utilize the outcome of the researches in promoting their program. The next issue is that the Konkor top position holders were engaged in studying medical field in past years and will continue to study the same field this year. That is to say, the energy of our top elites will be spent in treating patients. Although the medical field is highly significant and those interested in this field should be given the opportunity to study it, if we suppose that 5 percent of our people is patient, our elite will be involved in resolving the problems of 5 percent. But the problems of 95 percent of healthy individuals who have economic or social problems will remain unaddressed. The complication of human societies multiplies with each passing day and our top elites should study social science so as to curb the challenges through educational analyses. Our security challenge is the next issue. Perhaps lack of employment of our elites in security sector and organizing national army and police will be the main problem. It does not necessarily mean that our security sector is devoid of creative and elite people but there might be less number of such expert individuals who are not enough to handle all issues. Thus, those interested in security sector must be employed, too. One of the significant responsibilities of the government, particularly of ministry of education, is to create a think tank with different fields to support academic research with top national priorities. Material and spiritual support of such researches will certainly strengthen the quantitative and qualitative research projects in the country. It will ultimately strengthen governance and economics and solve the underlying problems of society.

To sum up:

- (1) There is a direct relationship between the country's economy and the production of scientific articles.
- (2) Prioritizing educational guidance and categorizing the elite and creative individuals in different educational fields.
- (3) Introducing research and scientific priorities to students.
- (4) Strengthening relations between state and private universities on one side and educational centers and international publications on the other side.
- (5) Establishing think tank and supporting reputable international researches and utilizing them for promoting the government's plans.

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Religious Freedom

By Hujjatullah Zia

Religious freedoms have been one of the controversial issues and encountered serious restrictions around the globe. With the rise of religious radicals, who violate people's fundamental rights on the basis of their faith and religion, this issue is debated hotly in recent years. A number of religious groups are not able to practice their religious beliefs or rituals freely in many parts of the world.

History shows that claiming religious superiority led to bloody wars around the human societies and millions of people were killed mercilessly for practicing certain religious tenets. People of different faith and religions slew one another in cold blood and curtailed their freedoms to a great extent. They never showed an iota of tolerance to one another. Hence, the cycle of violence and deadly wars continued unabated inflicting heavy casualties upon nations. To stop this cycle, the human societies approved a number of international instruments, mainly following World War Two, including the United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) which states in article 18, "Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance." A myriad of countries, including Afghanistan, endorsed the two international instruments to let people exercise their religious beliefs and rituals without barriers. Virtually, this approach could mitigate violence to some extent and precluded from large-scale wars of religions. Nonetheless, a number of religious individuals or groups found international instruments in conflict with their religious tenets and could not reconcile their religious beliefs with secular ideas stated in the instruments.

Mainly, there were two kinds of approach regarding the secular ideas. For instance, a number of states prevented religious rituals and symbols in public places and adopted secular idea in all its form. Wearing scarf for Muslim women or turban for Sikhs were not allowed. This was against the content of the UDHR which said that everyone was able to practice their religion freely and should not be discriminated in this regard. On the other hand, a number of radical groups resorted to armed conflicts to impose their own beliefs on people. Refusing to recognize international religious freedom, they continued violence and bloodshed. In recent years, religious radicals

operated into systematic way, terrorizing people and stoking sectarianism. They are called terrorist groups which, currently, have been changed into a global threat. Although terrorist groups are changed into political pawns and continue proxy wars, they operate under the mask of religion and fuel sectarianism. Thus, religious freedom was curtailed once more and changed into a hot topic.

Recently, the US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson has said that US allies did not uphold principles of religious freedom in 2016, while the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) group has carried out "genocide" against religious minorities. Lashing out at the US close partner Saudi Arabia, Tillerson said that Saudi should "embrace greater degrees of religious freedom for all of its citizens". He also singled out another Gulf Arab country, Bahrain, saying it "must stop discriminating against the Shia communities". He also called Turkey, Iran, Pakistan, China and Sudan to protect the rights and freedoms of religious minorities.

More or less, religious freedom is violated in many parts of the world. Bombing mosque this month in Minnesota caused an uproar in social media when the US media or President Donald Trump did not call it terrorist attack. For example, Brown Saraah tweeted, "Someone bombed a mosque in Minnesota recently. You probably didn't hear about this because mainstream media likes to demonize Muslims".

The Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) said that the attack comes amid a dramatic rise in the number of anti-Islam bias incidents in the United States.

The group found that there were 2,213 such incidents last year, a 57 percent increase from 2015. A recent report also said hate crimes spiked in 2016, which was the worst year on record for anti-Muslim incidents since the group began its documentation system in 2013.

To sum up, religious conflicts are likely to mount in the process of time with the intensification of sectarian violence and many religious group will be the casualty of their faith and beliefs. Terrorist groups will continue stoking sectarianism if the world does not adopt an effective mechanism to combat terrorism and militancy. The world must promote religious tolerance and the spirit of brotherhood to mitigate violence in this regard. Indeed, there will be peace and stability if all nations accept and tolerate one another and all be free to practice their religious beliefs and rituals without obstacles.

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