

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



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Shortage of Clean Drinking Water

Fortunately, our world has been blessed with different resources that support us to live our lives with ease and comfort. Among these resources water is one of the most basic one. Enough water to drink and to use is really necessary for human beings to live alive and it is also important for animals as well. In fact, most of the life cycle on earth depends on water.

Though a large portion of earth is filled with water yet there are concerns that it would prove to be insufficient with the passage of time and the usage. And there is also another important fact which is really very much unfortunate; and the fact is that though there are large reservoirs of water on earth there is a considerable population in the world that does not have clean water to drink and enough water to use. In order to highlight the importance of water and the need to preserve it and use it properly, the governments around the world must make serious efforts.

It would be impossible for human beings to live without water; therefore, they require to use it wisely and at the same time find out new ways of providing it to all human beings so that everyone can benefit from it in the best possible manner. They have to make sure that the economic and political systems must ensure providence of natural resources to all the human beings alike - unfortunately that is not the case in contemporary world of ours. The short-comings in our administrative system have made the basic requirements seem lesser and inadequate though it is yet to face a serious threat of inadequacy.

It would be better for the world that it must cogitate seriously about every possibility of a new political economy so as to enable the world to compensate for the water and other shortages for the poor countries will have to suffer to a considerable extent as a result of the shortage of basic requirements and sources of energy.

Unfortunately, Afghanistan is one of the same countries and it will have to face serious challenges in the times to come to provide clean drinking water to its people. Decades of war in Afghanistan has affected the country to a large extent. Different sectors have been influenced by this menace. The basic infra-structure has not been able to get proper attention and people are suffering because of basic needs, among which food and water are the most basic ones.

Even the capital Kabul has been suffering because of the lack of these basic requirements. A recent report by Shabnam Sherzad of Pajhwok Afghan news, using statistics from Water Supply and Canalization Department and Central Statistics Organization, shows that around half of 4.5 million population of the capital Kabul does not have access to clean drinking water. The report depicts that the ratio of increasing population in the capital and their access to clean water is very huge.

According to a statement by head of Water Supply and Canalization Department, Dad Mohammad Baheer, around two and half million Kabul families have access to potable water provided by the Department; while, 1,550,000 other families use wells' water.

The people using wells' water are in great danger of getting different sorts of diseases as according to the estimates by environment protection and health officials the underground water has excessive contamination. As the septic wells are just beside the drinking water wells, the underground water cannot be considered pure and free of germs and bacteria.

In addition to its contamination, there are fears that the available underground water will decrease to a large extent in few years to come. A report last year showed that underground water level would deplete considerably in Kabul till 2017 and the residents of the city would face serious challenges in this regard.

According to the Ministry of Water and Energy, "The growing populations, seasonal droughts and over pumping are some of the factors that contribute to the rapidly plummeting underground water resources in Kabul." The ground water resources decreased from 44 million cubic metre to 31 million in a decade. "We have ground water for one million people, but the level is in great depletion because many people in Kabul pump water from wells dug at homes.

The ministry has already warned that ground water could become undrinkable over next three years if unplanned constructions continued, and the ministry had planned to initiate short and long term projects aimed at protecting the available ground water resources from contamination.

The shortage of basic requirements itself is a sure problem, but there are many other problems that are directly linked with the hunger and deprivation that result from such shortages. Many diseases would erupt and many social evils will find their way in the society and will further deteriorate the country's socio-political scenario.

It is really important that a decade of struggle for betterment in Afghanistan must not only end in peace and tranquility but also better living standard for the common Afghan people; and if that is not convenient, they must at least be provided the rudimentary requirements like clean drinking water, and the relevant authorities must make sure that there will be serious efforts aimed at providing all the people of Afghanistan clean drinking water.

Lack of Social Freedom

By Hujjatullah Zia

We have been longing for freedom voraciously. Freedom to express our thoughts, to act without restrictions, to walk without boundaries, to do what we want without the mood of being told to do what is right. In other words, freedom has mostly been misread; empty of moral values and responsibilities. We have walked to freedom, however, "made missteps along the way" without admitting. Moreover, we did not only make missteps but also went the wrong way feeling a great disdain to ask a guide the way to freedom.

Think of a person who is in prison for three decades. Whenever he peeps through the prison's hole, he sighs wistfully wishing to walk the same as the people outside the prison. He just sees people waking outside, but does not know exactly what is going on there. The prison guard releases him after many years. When he comes out, he sees the real criminals outside such as gangsters, kidnapers, murderers, robbers, bullies, etc. Every day, he notices violence, bloodshed, moral corruption, and so on. People, tyrannize him, threaten him to death, force him to do what they want and use him as a punching bag. Won't the person feel like returning to prison?

The present social disorders, political crisis and economic stagnation are some vital factors which have curtailed the social freedom and led the country on the verge of calamity. This problem has debilitated the country and its social fabric. Our social and political institutions have entirely crumbled and degenerated due to this turmoil. An ominous shadow darkens the country more than ever before. Indeed, the former three decades of war and present instability caused a great havoc in Afghanistan which seems to have left our politicians in confusion. Therefore, it is believed that Afghan officials will have to be on their toes. The political elites need to think of effective ways of improving the situation and providing freedom for the nation.

Hundreds of thousands of Afghans died in almost three decades of civil war from 1979, up to and during the rule of the Taliban between 1995 and 2001 when the US and coalition forces with the Northern Alliance (NA), drove them out. Although the large numbers of deaths associated with the nation's various internal conflicts are now a thing of the past, illegal killings continue today and the public rights to freedom are trampled upon flagrantly.

It is believed that maintaining illegal guns also leads to crisis across the country. Afghanistan has long had a reputation through its history of be-

ing an ungovernable land of warring tribes where local power struggles and customary or traditional law was maintained by village courts and the use of guns. There is little evidence that the present conditions are very different. Even before the Soviet invasion in 1979, people kept guns in their homes to protect themselves against clan and tribal disputes, as well as general banditry, and to help the government maintain stability.

The culture of bearing arms in Afghanistan is related to the country's history and geographic location. Afghanistan was strategically situated along the so-called Silk Road, which linked Asia to Europe and had been constantly attacked over the centuries. "The history of conflict, combined with weak governments and strong local loyalties, has led to a culture where guns are perceived to be as necessary as a cooking pot or a mule." Hence, such a culture threatens public freedom in the society.

"It's a sad reality that the majority of people are holding small arms in their houses. It needs strong government intervention to change this," Abdurrahman, a 23-year-old ex-combatant, is quoted as saying. He was only 15 when he took up a weapon. "The gun has destroyed my life. It made me illiterate - with war there was no school, nothing but fighting," he said. Man is born free and can enjoy this right as an integral element of a dignified life. In order to enjoy freedom, a person should be free from inhibitions of the social structure in carrying out their free will. Freedom is enhanced by the ability of citizens to participate in their government and have their voice, interests and concerns recognized as valid and acted upon. Isaiah Berlin recognized two main types of liberty. Berlin described a statement such as "I am slave to no man" as one of Negative Liberty, that is, freedom from another individual's direct interference. He contrasted this with a Positive Freedom statement such as "I am my own master", which lays claim to a freedom to choose one's own pursuits in life. So, men are born free and they are their own masters, therefore, they should be given the rights to breathe in a free climate.

After all, we have failed to remember that "with freedom come responsibilities." Whenever we claim for liberty, we have to shoulder a series of responsibilities in the society. In other words, there is a limitation for freedom. Besides using our rights, we are responsible to respect the rights of others. So, we are supposed to use our freedom in the frame of law otherwise we will trample upon others' rights. Nelson Mandela says, "For to be free is not merely to cast off one's chains, but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others." To feel free, one must also respect the freedom of others and do not forget the legal boundaries.

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Stability of Government in Afghanistan: Lessons of History and Visions of Tomorrow

By Latif Mohammadi

This essay examines parameters required for establishment of permanent political stability in a nation-state. It argues a country requires consolidation of two fundamental factors to be able to unify its civilian population into an internally cohesive nation-state.

First a country needs a majority culture. It is achieved through a process of cultural unification over the course of its history. Bonds of nationhood are born in this way.

Second a country needs a majority ideology. It is achieved through a process of ideological unification over the course of history of a country. Bonds of Statehood are born in this way. A common system of government is founded on principles of the majority ideology.

Operation of majority ideology and majority culture concurrently provides intellectual foundations of majoritarian politics.

Majoritarian politics creates majority political support for a system of government. This is distinct from popular support for government of the day.

Existence of majority cultural and ideological support for a system of government makes it politically stable. Minorities will integrate into mainstream culture and ideology over successive generations.

Despite changes in politics over successive generations, existence of majority culture and majority ideology ensures majority political support for a common system of government will continue. This provides popular ideological and cultural support to a common system of government. This is architecture of political stability in nation-states.

In such a case, minority population who disagree with majority political opinion is powerless to overthrow majority rule. Civil Government works in this situation. The other point that must be highlighted is importance of order of two stages of unification of a country. There is a correct order that must be followed to secure permanent political stability.

To achieve long-term political stability, correct order of unification must be followed. First cultural unification must be completed then ideological unification should come next. Coherent bonds of nationhood must exist before independent stable statehood can be achieved.

Next I examine histories of a few major nation-states to highlight how achieving unification in correct order has enabled them to be politically stable for the long term.

A brief examination of cultural and ideological history of China and Turkey highlights importance of completing the two unification processes in the correct order. Mainland China completed its process of cultural unification in third century under the first emperor (Feng, 2007, p. 20). For this reason majority of Mainland Chinese speak the same language, they have a shared understanding of history and they follow the same cultural norms and practices. The cultural uniformity provides social cohesion to the country. Social cohesion is an essential bond of nationhood.

Mainland China completed its process of ideological unification under Communism at completion of Chinese Civil War [1946-1950](Lew, 2009). In this way majority ideology was established. Subsequently a common system of government was established on principles of communist ideology.

Having achieved cultural unification first and ideological unification next has enabled China to be internally cohesive nation and politically stable state since 1950. For this reason Civil Government works in Mainland China.

Turkey went through a similar process of unification over course of its political history. Turkey got cultural unification under 800 years of Ottoman Empire (Tezcan, 2010). This process of cultural unification provides cultural basis of nationhood for country of Turkey.

Modern Turkish state got ideological unification under Kemalism in 1923 (Zürcher, 2004). The principles of Kemalism are Republicanism, Populism, Laicism, Reformism, Nationalism and Statism (Gürpınar, 2013). Ideological unification has provided Turkey with stable principles of statehood.

Having completed its two stages of unification in correct order has enabled

modern Turkey to achieve coherent nationhood and stable statehood. It provided Turkey with a politically stable system of Government since 1923. For this reason Civil Government works in Turkey.

The other point to highlight is order of unification must follow the correct order. Cultural unification at the national must be completed before first. Ideological unification should come next. When this order is not followed the result is always a reversible, fragile and temporary political stability and order. This has been experience of Afghanistan since 1919.

In Afghanistan, since 1919 correct order of unification of the country has not been followed. For this reason political stability has been temporary and short lived every time.

Current culture of Afghanistan is internally fragmented along lines of tribalism and ethnic nationalism. This fragmentation has politically divided the civilian population into several small ethnic, religious and tribal groups.

For this reason in Afghanistan there is no cohesive concept of nationhood at the national level. This has been consistent pattern of life since establishment of independent Afghanistan in 1707. Under such conditions any efforts that go into ideological unification fails to produce a stable political state since it will not follow correct order of unification.

Successive Afghan strongmen have attempted ideological unification since 1919. She had Secularism (1919-29), Monarchism (1920-1973), Republicanism (1973-78), Communism (1979-89) and Islamism (1989- ongoing).

Review of historical experience of Afghanistan shows it has never completed its process of nationhood at the national level since its establishment as an independent country in 1707. When there is no coherent concept of nationhood any efforts that go into ideological unification is wasted.

Afghanistan has put consistent effort into ideological unification to produce a stable political state since 1919. Every time it has produced temporary political stability and order. The important point to recognize is Afghanistan has not followed correct order of two stages of unification and therefore it has failed to secure long-term political stability. Civil war (1989- ongoing) still runs deep in Afghanistan. Over the long term culture of a society has got monopoly on its levels of collective perfection. Reformist politics can change short-term fortunes of a country. But it cannot change long-term fundamentals of a society.

Recognition of this limitation puts limitations on levels of change Afghanistan can accomplish under political leadership from Kabul.

In Afghanistan this means no single government, military officer, warlord or President of Afghanistan can permanently overcome long-term political instability created by incomplete process of evolution of nationhood and statehood. Generations of reformist political leaders in Kabul will come and go overtime. Reformist politics from Kabul cannot change underlying problems of incoherent nationhood and incoherent statehood in Afghanistan.

Long-term outcome of reformist politics from Kabul will always be temporary in the country. Regardless of who is in power in Kabul, over the long term, Afghanistan will continue to have problems of political instability as long as tribalism and ethnic nationalism provides philosophical framework of culture, political authority and statehood in Afghanistan.

Under competent reformist politics from Kabul, Afghanistan can have temporary political stability. But it will not have permanent political stability under current cultural realities. Current system of Government in Afghanistan was established after removal of Taliban from power in 2001. It can be best described as a weak tribal democracy. Lack of cohesive nationhood in Afghanistan means any form of structured statehood will have temporary existence.

This is certainly true for current Government of Tribal Democracy. The only way to temporarily overcome the cultural and ideological fragmentations in Afghanistan is to completely overhaul the political system in Afghanistan.

Recognizing historical shortcomings of Afghani society, in my next political essay I will outline my vision for alternative political systems in Afghanistan that can have a realistic chance of working.

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