

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



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Afghanistan: The Failure of Leadership as the Main Challenge of Nation Building

Nations are one of the most important parts of modern society. If one goes back into history, we will see that the world used to be divided into empires and kingdoms in the past.

Afghans, as an integral part of the modern world, therefore, are rightly concerned about nation-building. However, I would like to put emphasis on the fact that nations just don't happen by historical accident; rather they are built by men and women of a country with vision and resolve. Therefore, Nation-building is the product of conscious statecraft, not happenstance.

It is necessary to know that nation-building has many important aspects. Firstly, it is about building a political entity which corresponds to a given territory, based on some generally accepted rules, norms, and principles, and a common citizenship. Secondly, it is also about building institutions which symbolize the political entity - institutions such as a bureaucracy, an economy, the judiciary, universities, a civil service, and civil society organizations. More importantly, nation-building is about building a shared sense of purpose, a sense of shared destiny, and collective imagination of belonging.

Challenges before Afghanistan Nation-building:

Afghanistan faces five main nation-building challenges:

(1) the challenge from our history; (2) the challenge of socio-economic inequalities; (3) the challenges of an appropriate constitutional settlement; (4) the challenges of building institutions for democracy and development; and (5) the challenge of leadership. These challenges continue to keep us from achieving our full potential. It is to these challenges that I would like to devote the rest of this article.

The Challenge of History

The historical legacies of Ethnical rule creates some challenges for nation-building in Afghanistan. Ethnical rule divided Afghanistan not only based on ethnicity but also based on the religion of different ethnicities of the people of Afghanistan with different land tenure systems, local government administration, educational systems, and judicial systems. Under these conditions, it was easy for prejudice and fear to thrive.

The Challenge of Socio-Economic Inequalities

One of the most important aspects of nation-building is the building of a common citizenship. But how can we have a common citizenship when the person in a certain part of the country has a radically different quality of life from the person in other parts of Afghanistan due to ethnic identity? Or when the woman in one part of the country is more likely to die than the woman in other certain parts due to ethnic identity? Through the development of the economy and equal opportunities for all, or through the development of social welfare safety nets, mature nations try to establish a base-line of social and economic rights which all members of the national community must enjoy.

The Constitutional Challenge

Since its independence, the Afghanistan has been facing the challenge of crafting a constitutional arrangement that has the backing of an overwhelming majority of Afghans. In most constitutions of Afghanistan the rights of ethnic groups have been neglected. As a result, it has been one of the main causes of ethnic conflicts in the country and has acted as one of the main barriers to nation building in Afghanistan. However, the new Constitution of Afghanistan, has been developed considering this issue and it has clearly considered this issue in Art. 6: The state is obliged to create a prosperous and progressive society based on social justice, protection of human dignity, protection of human rights, realization of democracy, and to ensure national unity and equality among all ethnic groups and tribes and to provide for balanced development in all areas of the country. However, most provisions of this article has not been translated to action yet.

The Challenge of Building Institutions for Democracy and Development

One of the critical challenges of nation building in Afghanistan is the challenge of institution building. Whether nations are able to manage their political and social disputes peacefully, without lapsing into conflict, or sustain economic growth without creating huge inequalities, critically depend on the quality of the relevant national institutions.

As a rule, there are three important components to institution building: setting the rules; hiring persons with the technical expertise and moral competence to interpret the rules or implement the goals of the organizations; and ensuring that the institutions inspire public confidence by being transparent, fair and consistent. Afghanistan, in this regard, needs to create or strengthen institutions that may help achieve the national goals of democratic governance and sustainable development.

The Leadership Challenge

As the research and our leadership experience show, the trouble with Afghanistan is the failure of leadership. Leadership is a critical factor in nation-building and it should be understood in two important but related ways. Firstly, there are the personal qualities of integrity, honesty, commitment, and competence of individual leaders at the top. Secondly, there are the collective qualities of common vision, focus, and desire for development of the elites as a whole.

Nations are built by men and women who have the will and vision to accomplish greatness, not for themselves, their immediate families and friends, but for their country. I believe that if the Afghans can find the will to offer such a leadership, and support it by strong and dependable political and economic institutions, we will find a way to national prosperity and greatness.



Seeking Peace Needs An Enterprising Foreign Policy

By: Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu

This week Istanbul will host two separate but related international conferences on mediation. One will be devoted to the state of play in the conflict map and capacity for mediation within the membership of the Organization for Islamic Cooperation (OIC). The second one will adopt a broad scope and discuss the connections between sustainable development, peace and mediation; the ways to increase gender and youth inclusion in mediation processes; and a thought provoking session on the role of big data and artificial intelligence in conflict and mediation analysis. It may be thought that conferences are conferences but the Istanbul Mediation Conferences have proven rather influential in cultivating a shared understanding of issues and an agenda for action in the field of mediation and peaceful conflict resolution. As the host of these conferences and the only country that co-chairs the Friends of Mediation Groups in three distinct important international organizations, namely the United Nations, the OIC and the OSCE, Turkey has the ability to share the findings of these conferences in these international organizations.

The fact of the matter is that humanity is facing a distinct challenge in the 21st century. Just when many people thought that the glass is half full in terms of the achievements in international law, institutions, democracy and the rule of law, accountability, free trade, gender equality and others, the empty half of the glass has begun to reassert itself. The symptoms are known to all of us and need no reminding. Trade wars, new forms of international exploitation, geopolitical competitions, great power proxy wars, disintegrating nation states, terrorism, xenophobia, animosity against Islam, raging inequalities and injustice count among the contemporary trends that make up the glass half empty. The challenges of humanity are eating away the achievements and opportunities of humanity. Which side will prevail? The answer depends on how we respond to challenges, including on how much we humans

can work together towards positive outcomes. One point is clear: unless we take initiative and be enterprising and humanitarian, the bad will prevail. Wait-and-see attitude is no longer tenable. Policy options differ from mediation to actual use of force against terrorists.

Take the situation in Syria. Turkey's enterprising and humanitarian approach cleared a total of 4000 square kilometers from two terrorist organizations, DEASH and PKK/PYD/YPG. Had we not intervened, our people would have been under continued assault from these terrorists and a political solution to the Syrian tragedy would have been unreachable. Turkey is doing utmost to relieve humanitarian suffering, hosting the greatest number of refugees worldwide, spending more than the biggest economy in the world as the world's top humanitarian spender. Turkey is also brokering agreements that save tens if not hundreds of thousands of lives and promoting a political solution based on the territorial integrity of the neighboring Syria. I gave the example of Syria for a reason. Syria demonstrates to us once again that prevention is important because once the fire of conflict engulfs a nation, then the only thing that remains predictable is that there will be unpredictable consequences on that state. One generation of citizens will be wasted in one way or the other; the future will also be bleak. Everyone, including those who are thousands of kilometers away will come to suffer, either in the form of terrorist threat, economic shock, irregular migration, or wounded human conscience.

If prevention and peaceful resolution of conflicts are of paramount importance, then we must take it seriously. This appreciation is driving Turkey's efforts in the field of mediation as the co-chair of the UN, OSCE and OIC friends of mediation groups and the host to a capacity building mediation training program and the two mediation conferences that we will organize in Istanbul this week.

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Why Human Chess Survives

By: Kenneth Rogoff

With so much angst about artificial intelligence and the future of work, the recent world chess championship in London offers some hope. It is not that mankind has turned the tables on the march of progress. Rather, what is remarkable is what a creative and ultimately human match it was between reigning champion Magnus Carlsen of Norway (the 27-year-old "Mozart of Chess") and 26-year-old challenger Fabiano Caruana of the United States (a major talent in his own right). At one time, it did seem that computers would sound the death knell for chess, not to mention all human mind games. That was certainly my guess in the late 1970s, when the rise of computers was one of the main reasons I gave for retiring from competitive chess.

As an MIT graduate student, I had the privilege of playing a number of games against legendary hacker Richard Greenblatt's remarkable early chess program. Greenblatt wired a large custom-built box, dedicated to sorting out legal chess moves in any given position, directly into the MIT mainframe computer. Although the program had "only" attained the level of a top club player, and I was still able to beat it consistently, the experience gave me a clear glimpse of what was to come, although not as quickly as I had guessed.

It took two decades, but in 1997, the IBM computer Deep Blue defeated world champion Garry Kasparov of Russia in a six-game match in New York City. Although technologists mark this as a signal event of the twentieth century, it initially seemed a real blow for chess professionals.

Indeed, when Kasparov next had to defend his title against a human challenger, match organizers found it much more difficult to raise a suitably large purse than in pre-Deep Blue days. Sponsors would invariably ask "Wait, what I am paying for, isn't the computer the real-world champion?" Fast-forward to today, and the top players cannot easily beat their cell phone.

Yet, rather than dying, chess has thrived. This is partly because the advent of computers and computer databases has made chess a truly universal sport. Once dominated by Russia, Vishy Anand of India held the title before Carlsen, and China's Ding Liren seems on track to be the next challenger. Parents, despondent over their children's addiction to video, are much happier to see them playing chess against a computer.

The advent of computers has required some adjustments in top tournaments. It helps that even the best computer programs do not play chess perfectly, because the num-

ber of possible games is greater than the number of atoms in the universe. Moreover, computers think so differently that it is not always helpful to know the computer's favored move unless one can tediously follow reams of subsequent analysis. It is not unusual for a player to comment, "The computer says the best move is x, but I played the best human move."

Obviously, chess tournaments now require players to surrender their cell phones and, sometimes, to undergo scans for other devices, including those that would let a third-party signal moves. Yes, there have still been some spectacular cheating cases, but they are the exception. Likewise, competitive chess has eliminated long breaks that might give players time to consult computers, which become more and more useful as pieces are exchanged, and the game becomes more amenable to brute-force calculation. As a last resort, if someone is suspected of cheating, the organizers can check their moves against the choices of the top computer programs. If there is too high a correlation, the player is subject to ejection.

In world championship matches, which typically take place only once every two or three years, the stakes are higher - and the precautions even greater. In London, the two players were ensconced behind polarized glass walls to prevent anyone in the audience from passing computer advice through signals. The audience could see in, but the players could not see out.

This all may sound extreme, but similar measures are already taken in other contexts (certainly university exams), and it is easy to imagine silicon helpers intruding on every aspect of life. Imagine worrying that your date has a silicon Cyrano in his or her ear giving advice on what to say, or that the job candidate you're interviewing is giving artificial-intelligence-aided answers.

In London, the "classical" portion of the championship match ended with 12 draws. That might seem boring, but many of the games were fantastic. As can occasionally happen with a great scoreless football (soccer) match, near-misses intensified the suspense. And just as tied World Cup matches end with a shootout, chess championship can come down to an "Armageddon" where the games are speeded up so much that it is virtually impossible to avoid big mistakes. In the end, Carlsen convincingly prevailed in the tie-breaker, in very human fashion. But we should all celebrate.

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