

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



December 07, 2016

Drug Addiction Gives Rise to Social Evils

The issue of drug production and addiction persists as one of the most serious evils within Afghan society. Though there have been many instances when Afghan media and civil society and even some national and international institutions have tried to divert the attentions of the relevant authorities towards the issue, little has been done to solve the issue and the result is deterioration in the situation to a further extent.

Afghanistan's ministry of counter-narcotics on Tuesday, December 06, said in a statement that there are over a million young Afghan male and female youths who are drug addicts. The total number of addicts in the country is estimated to be about 3.5 million and three percent of them constitute women. The minister of counter-narcotics, Salamat Azimi said that those suffering from addiction in some way escalate violence within their families and affects women and children. Drug addiction, at first, victimizes the addict. The drug addict not only endangers his own health, wealth, happiness and social relations but also destroys public morale, health, safety or welfare of the family and society as a whole. The drug addicts become dependent upon the drugs in a short duration with gradual increase in the intensity of its use.

It is generally believed that the dependence on drug is favored more by regularity of administration or the dose or method of administration. The addict becomes dependent on drug as he is on food. Furthermore, so long as he receives the usual daily supply he does not apparently look as an addict. Even the intimate friends and the members of the family may not notice this habit. However, if an addict does not get the daily supply, clear symptoms known as withdrawal or distress of abstinence symptoms will appear within 10 to 12 hours.

The addict would become nervous and restless and might develop acute stomach cramps and his eyes might water and nose run. Later on, he might stop eating and start vomiting frequently, lose weight and have muscular pains in the back and legs. At this stage the addict may develop shakes and at this stage if he does not get the supply he is in for mental and physical torture. The addict would go to any length to get the supply of drug to relieve the suffering of withdrawal distress. Once he gets the drug, he would appear normal again.

This physiological and psychological dependence on drugs, with the stage being set for the withdrawal syndrome, makes the addict a serious problem for himself, the family, friends, peer group, relatives and the society at large. As the tolerance of drug is developed by the addict more and more supply is taken to relieve the physiological and psychological symptoms of withdrawal distress. In this way, habit is established, which becomes very difficult to break.

And, once the addict is totally into the drugs, the miseries start visiting him frequently. Unfortunately, the misery does not remain confined to him alone. He can then transfer the same addiction to others. As, he is not committed or fails to commit to leave drugs, he may urge others to use it, particularly those who are his friends or in his company. It can be observed that mostly the addict practice the use of drugs in form of groups as the groups use may facilitate them even further.

Drug addicts can, afterwards, create many other social issues. Their family lives are disturbed and their relatives are influenced by them to a large extent. If the addicts are married and have children the repercussion may break the whole family. The wives of the addicts mostly suffer the most - they are beaten, their money is stolen and their whole lives are made a hell by their addicted husbands. Their children, on the other hand, remain without facilities and mostly grow up in the atmosphere of violence and discomfort.

Considering the influence of the drugs on the people in our society, it is imperative to design some effective measures to control the situation. Historically speaking, many efforts that were made to treat addiction in the past proved to be unsuccessful. Such efforts were mainly confined to medical and clinical treatment, or punitive measures through law and confinement of the addicts in the prisons. It is important to design other means to solve the issue. Most importantly, the addicts should be considered as human beings and not criminals or the rejected class of population. They deserve sympathy, love and affection rather than hatred or rejection. They should be treated as patients rather than deviants for the purpose of their rehabilitation into the normal society.

The solution must be perceived in the right perspective as it takes place in social situation of primary groups and its solution be sought in the social interaction. It is very well-said that prevention is better than cure. The teenagers must be watched with great care that their needs, feelings and social requirements are met by the primary groups in a desired and acceptable manner.

They may not bank on negative primary peer groups for the unmet social, economic, political and emotional needs. This is the locus of the point that interaction groups of the teenagers should be such that they produce normal and trouble free individuals.

International Conference; Cultural Heritage in Danger

By François Richier

At the joint invitation of the President of the French Republic and His Highness the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi, an international Summit was held on December 2nd and 3rd, in coordination with UNESCO, for the protection of cultural heritage at risk in conflict areas. Afghanistan featured prominently in this Summit, firstly because of the richness of its heritage and secondly because of the frequent attacks that have jeopardized it over the last decades.

The most recent destructions which have been perpetrated on cultural heritage by terrorist groups in Syria, Iraq or Mali highlighted to the world the importance of preserving the historical heritage for each country, and beyond for the whole of humanity. As a matter of fact, building and keeping every nation's unity implies the knowledge of its own history, and thus respecting and studying the heritage bequeathed by the generations that lived for thousands of years until our modern times, from archeological remains to contemporary audiovisual and digital archives. This endeavor does not only concern the intellectual elites for the national historic heritage belongs to every citizen, even the most deprived or the less educated. Heritage is indeed a constituent part of each citizen's identity and helps shaping his cultural future. Preserving heritage and understanding its importance can also help shaping peace and understanding between the various sections of a Nation.

For so many years of occupation, civil war and terrorism, Afghanistan has suffered massive attacks on its heritage, be it the treasures of the Kabul Museum, the Buddhas of Bâmiyân, the Herat Citadel and many other pre-Islamic or Islamic historical sites or treasures, intentionally destroyed due to ignorance or plundered by greed. As has Afghanistan also witnessed outstanding acts of conspicuous courage and dedication by institutions or simple citizens to save what could be saved.

Sharing Afghanistan's experience with other Nations in Abu Dhabi was therefore particularly important, as is the restoration of historic buildings, in particular through the cooperation with the Agha Khan Development Network, or most recently the launching by President Ghani of the reconstruction of Darulaman Palace conducted under the leadership of the Minister of Urban Development. As of today, destructions are no longer just the consequences of wars, such as those experienced by Afghanistan against the British in the 19th century or against the Soviets in the 20th century. Today, terrorist groups wilfully threaten cultural heritage. They want to destroy it to impose a falsified history or even to erase history of mankind and thus achieve their apocalyptic goals. But they do not just

destroy: using networks of accomplices and traffickers well established in neighboring countries and linked with international art markets, these terror groups sell national treasures piece by piece to finance their terrorist actions, as they sell in bulk the natural resources of the territories over which they gained control.

In Abu Dhabi, on December 2nd and 3rd, the delegations coming from all around the world sought to build a common vision on how to prevent damages to heritage in times of peace, and how to protect sites and works in times of war or instability. Furthermore, the delegations also sought to build a common vision on how to preserve and rehabilitate the sites and works for the times to come. These discussions included topics such as the involvement of private partners and the mobilization of public opinion.

Two proposals were on the table.

Delegations were invited to consider the establishment of an international fund to organize international solidarity for saving works and sites in danger or restoring them if they have been damaged. This fund might also support the training of professionals dedicated to conservation and restoration of works and should involve public and private contributors.

Delegations also discussed the setting of an international network of countries offering safe havens for endangered treasures: preventive arrangements should be made for evacuating the threatened works to sheltering countries, as well as conditions for their conservation and protection therein and eventually their return to their homeland country, once situation permits. France proposed to make available a safe haven in the northern part of our country, within the city of Liévin's branch of the Louvre Museum. Currently, the French archaeological delegation in Afghanistan (DAFA), is working with Afghan authorities on a project initiated by President Ghani, in order to establish a digital archaeological map of the country. This will undoubtedly prove as a unique tool in the world which will be essential for the future preservation and protection of the sites that are being mapped.

France wishes to collaborate closely with our Afghan partners for the success of this initiative, and beyond to cooperate as closely for the sake of the protection of Afghan heritage, which is both millennial and contemporary.

To this end, the support of the elected representatives of Afghanistan and the one of the population are essential because all Afghan citizens' heritage is at stake. The education institutions will also prove crucial to ensure that new generations understand the importance of this endeavor.

François Richier is the French Ambassador in Afghanistan.

Goodbye to the West

By Joschka Fischer

Now that Donald Trump has been elected President of the United States, the end of what was heretofore termed the "West" has become all but certain. That term described a transatlantic world that emerged from the twentieth century's two world wars, redefined the international order during the four-decade Cold War, and dominated the globe - until now. The West shouldn't be confused with the "Occident." While the West's culture, norms, and predominant religion are broadly Occidental in origin, it evolved into something different over time. The Occident's basic character was shaped over centuries by the Mediterranean region (though parts of Europe north of the Alps made many important contributions to its development). The West, by contrast, is transatlantic, and it is a child of the twentieth century.

When World War I began, it was a European conflict between the Central Powers and the Entente of Britain, France, and Russia. It became a true world war only in 1917, when the US entered the fray. This is the moment when what we now call the West began to take form. The West can be said to have received its birth certificate during World War II. In August 1941, after Nazi Germany had invaded the Soviet Union, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill and US President Franklin D. Roosevelt met on a warship off the coast of Newfoundland and signed the Atlantic Charter. That agreement would later develop into NATO, which, for four decades, enabled an alliance of independent democracies with shared values and market economies to withstand the Soviet threat - and which has safeguarded Europe to this day.

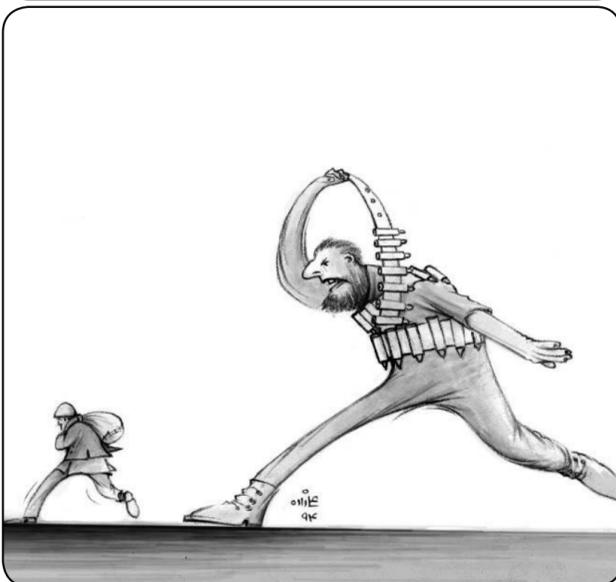
More fundamentally, the West was founded on an American commitment to come to its allies' defense. The Western order cannot exist without the US playing this crucial role, which it may now abnegate under Trump. As a result, the future of the West itself is now at stake. No one can be certain what Trump's election will mean for American democracy, or what he will do when he takes office. But we can already make two reasonable assumptions. First, his presidency will be highly disruptive to American domestic and foreign policy. Trump won the presidency by flouting virtually every unwritten rule of American politics. He beat not only Hillary Clinton, but also the Republican Party establishment. There is little reason to think that he will suddenly abandon this winning strategy come January 20. We can also safely assume that Trump will stick firmly to his pledge to "Make America great again"; this will be the foundation for his presidency, come what may. Former President Ronald Reagan also promised this, but he did so while the US, still engaged in the Cold War, could take an imperial approach.

Thus, Reagan pursued rearmament on such a large scale that it ultimately led to the Soviet Union's collapse; and he paved the way for an American economic boom with a massive increase in the national debt.

Trump does not have the luxury of an imperial approach. On the contrary, during the campaign, he heaped criticism on America's senseless wars in the Middle East; and his supporters want nothing more than for the US to abandon its global leadership role and retreat from the world. A US that moves toward isolationist nationalism will remain the world's most powerful country by a wide margin; but it will no longer guarantee Western countries' security or defend an international order based on free trade and globalization. The only remaining questions now concern how quickly US policy will change, and how radical those changes will be.

Trump has already pledged to scrap the 12-country Trans-Pacific Partnership - a decision that amounts to a gift to China, whether he realizes it or not. He could also bestow upon China another gift: reducing US engagement in the South China Sea. China might soon find itself the new guarantor of global free trade - and probably the new global leader in combating climate change, too. With respect to the war in Syria, Trump might simply hand that devastated country over to Russian President Vladimir Putin and Iran. Practically speaking, this would overturn the balance of power in the Middle East, with grave consequences well beyond the region; morally, it would be a cruel betrayal of the Syrian opposition and a boon to Syrian President Bashar al-Assad. And if Trump defers to Putin in the Middle East, one wonders what he will do with respect to Ukraine, Eastern Europe, and the Caucasus. Should we expect a Yalta Conference 2.0 to recognize Putin's new de facto sphere of influence? The new course Trump will chart for the US is already discernible; we just don't know how quickly the ship will sail. Much will depend on the opposition (Democrats and Republicans alike) that Trump encounters in the US Congress, and on pushback from the majority of Americans who did not vote for him. But we should not harbor any illusions: Europe is far too weak and divided to stand in for the US strategically; and, without US leadership, the West cannot survive. Thus, the Western world as virtually everyone alive today has known it will almost certainly perish before our eyes. So what comes next? China, we can be certain, is preparing to fill America's shoes. And in Europe, the crypts of nationalism have been opened; in time, they will once again release their demons upon the continent - and the world. (Courtesy Project Syndicate)

Joschka Fischer, Germany's foreign minister and vice chancellor from 1998 to 2005, was a leader of the German Green Party for almost 20 years



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