

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



December 07, 2017

Looking Through the Lens of Responsibility

There are two ways of looking at the role and position of an individual within a society. One is through the lens of rights, while the other is through the lens of responsibilities. Mostly, the first one is the way, the people or the subjects want to see themselves. They perceive themselves as the ones with the rights and they consider that the governments have the responsibilities to fulfill those rights; therefore, most of their focus is whether the individuals are getting their rights and the governments are performing well to satiate those rights.

The other perspective is mostly adopted by the governments; they want to see the people to be responsible citizens and expect that they should perform all the responsibilities that the state expects them to perform. They consider the individuals worthy to be given their rights only after they fulfill their responsibilities. However, it is important to see that both these views are extreme in nature.

For the people, it is really important to have a balanced view. They don't have to see their position within the society only from the perspective of the rightful candidates for certain decided rights; rather, they have to realize that they have many important responsibilities as well which they have to perform. Because of the cooperative nature of the society, it is vital to understand that all the individuals are responsible for the development of the society equally. If there are certain shortcomings within the society, the people are responsible in certain ways as well.

It is really weird to find people blaming only the governments for all the disorder and problems in the society. Before blaming the governments for all the misdeeds, it is important to consider some of very important questions - Have we ever bothered to see around ourselves and know the problems deeply? Have we every tied to bring about developments in the society? Have we ever been quite responsible to play our roles? Have we ever thought to keep the social matters above all other concerns? Have we ever considered working for the society selflessly?

Have we ever realized our duties towards the society beyond our rights? Have we ever recognized our own tendency and things we can do for betterment? And have we ever learnt to have a critical view over our actions as and ask ourselves about the mistakes that we commit without much consideration? Or we have only found the easiest way to put the entire burden over shoulders of the governments?

It is important to note that all the governments that we hold responsible for having done nothing and for all harms to the society, are composed of the people who live in the same surroundings we have and they lead us because we have made them so.

Without the will and cooperation of the people, leaders would never become leaders. It is also imperative to consider that when we ourselves escape our duties, why shouldn't the leaders do the same, as they are human beings as well? When we have never considered the evil to be eliminated from the roots and deconstruct the old useless system; how can we think to build anything new? How come we expect the leaders to be different from us when they are the products of the same corrupt society? We do not have the complete privilege to criticize them when we have never seen into our own collars. It is necessary to understand that the leaders may be able to give just a guideline to follow and ultimately it is the people themselves who have bring about changes.

As the human society is becoming more and more democratic the role of the people is getting more and more importance. The will of the people basically gets transformed into elections that choose the leaders to govern the country. Most of the institutions in democratic setup are people centered, not autocratic where the leaders alone take decisions; therefore, it is important in such setup that how the subjects are, and what sort of role they play. If the subjects are aware, active and cooperative, a democratic setup is bound to be successful.

Our society can never go forth if we rely only on some representatives to do it. Unless we, all the common members of the society, try to support them, we will not face success in life. Let us leave blaming the governments and leaders only, because they are not wrong alone; we are their partners of equal shares of evils and let us promise to use up our energy and strength all together for a common cause and purpose and a broader perspective of mass well-being.

Let us substitute the old ideas with the new ones in order to go with the pace of developed and civilized world. Let us not only talk about our rights but speak up for our duties as well to have a better society. Let us all be active to play our role to fill the gap between leaders and the common people. Let us think beyond our personal interests to coup with the changing mood of the entire world.



The Yemen Crisis

By Hujjatullah Zia

The mounting conflict in Yemen will put an adverse effect on the regional security and inflict heavy sufferings on Yemenis. Following the Syria's conflict, Yemen is most likely to be the target of militant fighters, who seek to destabilize the region. Moreover, the attacks against Houthis by Arab coalition will backfire filling the victims with a sense of revenge. In the future, there will come radical figures from the heart of crisis and carry out terrorist attacks against the attackers, which will undermine the security situation in the region. The turbulence will pave the ground for the foothold of terrorist fighters, too. Syria is a clear example. With the clash between Syrian freedom fighters and the regime of Bashar al-Asad, the self-styled Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) capitalized on the turbulence and sought their political objectives.

The conflict in Yemen has been compounded following the killing of Ali Abdullah Saleh, the former president. The war in Yemen has its origins in the failure of a political transition following the 2011 Arab Spring. Yemen has been devastated by a war between forces loyal to the internationally-recognized government of President Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi and those allied to the Houthi movement.

Feeling Saleh's long-running rule was only serving his interests, hundreds of thousands of Yemenis filled the streets in the first two months of 2011, protesting against poverty and unemployment. As weeks passed, the protesters' calls escalated from demanding government reforms to seeking Saleh's removal, accusing him of mismanaging the economy and corruption. In early 2011, student-led demonstrations in the capital, Sanaa, quickly spread to other cities, including Aden and Taiz. The protests prompted a brutal crackdown which resulted in the killing of at least 50 people. The deaths caused a public outcry, triggering mass resignations of government ministers and high-ranking military officials. Saleh, who had previously rejected a proposal by opposition groups that would see him leave power peacefully, indicated in March that he planned to step down. Eventually, the protests forced Saleh to hand over power to his deputy, Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi, for a two-year period as part of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) transitional deal.

With a 65 percent voter turnout, Hadi became president in a referendum-like election that was supported by the international community.

As new alliances were formed, Houthi forces and Saleh supporters, who were previously at odds, teamed up to fight forces loyal to Hadi's government. In September 2014, the

Houthis took over Yemen's capital. At the start of 2015, the Houthis tried to take over the entire country, eventually forcing Hadi to flee to Saudi Arabia, where he has been ever since. In March 2015, the Saudi-led coalition began its air campaign, code-named Operation Decisive Storm. According to Saudi Arabia, the coalition aimed to "shift from military operations to the political process" in order to restore Hadi's government. The conflict continued and more than 8,600 people have been killed and 49,000 injured since March 2015, many of them in air strikes by a Saudi-led multinational coalition that backs the president. The conflict and a blockade imposed by the coalition have also left 20 million people in need of humanitarian assistance and created the world's largest food security emergency.

What followed was two-and-a-half years of fighting which appears to have entrenched both sides, while three UN-organized efforts to negotiate a peace deal have failed.

Pro-government forces - made up of soldiers loyal to President Hadi and predominantly Sunni southern tribesmen and separatists - were successful in stopping the rebels taking Aden, but only after a fierce, four-month battle that left hundreds dead.

Jihadist militants from al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and rival affiliates of ISIL have meanwhile taken advantage of the chaos by seizing territory in the south and continuing to carry out deadly attacks, notably in government-controlled Aden.

The launch of a ballistic missile towards Riyadh in November 2017 prompted the Saudi-led coalition to tighten its blockade of Yemen. The coalition said it wanted to halt the smuggling of weapons to Houthis by Iran - an accusation that officials in Tehran denied - but the UN said the restrictions could trigger "the largest famine the world has seen for many decades".

On November 29, fighting erupted in Sanaa between the erstwhile allies. With both sides blaming each other for the rift, on 2 December Saleh appeared on television to tell the Saudi-led coalition that he was open to turning a "new page" in relations. He called upon the coalition to stop air attacks and loosen its blockade on the country and offered fresh talks - an offer welcomed by the Saudi-led coalition but that prompted accusations of betrayal from Houthi forces.

On Monday, Saleh's long and dominant presence in Yemeni affairs came to an end after being killed near Sanaa. Houthi sources said Saleh was killed in a rocket-propelled grenade and shooting attack on his car. Now Saleh's death will likely stir the political stalemate in Yemen, possibly throwing the country into further chaos.

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Turning AMR Words Into Action

By Jim O'Neill

It was Antibiotic Awareness Week earlier this month, and, as Chair of the UK government's Review on Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) under Prime Minister David Cameron, I participated in a number of events to draw attention to this important public-health issue.

The Review showed that even as the world runs out of effective antibiotics, we are overusing those that still work. If we do not rein in these excesses and develop new effective drugs quickly, there could be ten million people dying from AMR-related illnesses every year by 2050 - up from 700,000 today. The total cost to global GDP between now and then will have been \$100 trillion.

At the Science Museum in London, I spoke ahead of the launch of the new exhibition "Superbugs: The Fight for our Lives," which will last for the next 15 months. The exhibition is a good example of the increased attention AMR is receiving. The organizers expect around 1.5 million people to see it, but I challenged them to aim for six million - about 10% of the United Kingdom's population.

One way to do that would be to take the exhibition on the road, first to somewhere like Manchester, but eventually to more far-flung locations such as Beijing and Delhi. If you are reading this and you are a pharmaceutical executive, this is your cue to help out. One modest way for the pharmaceutical industry to address the AMR threat is to sponsor such exhibitions, so that more people have a clear, scientific understanding of the issue.

In the Review's final recommendations, increasing public awareness was one of our Ten Commandments. Despite the progress that has been made, much more could be done. For example, one of three large drug makers I met with recently appears to have good relations with China, whose 1.3 billion people have a crucial role to play in the fight against AMR. So I suggested that the company try to work with the Chinese messaging service WeChat to develop an AMR-awareness app. Among the other Ten Commandments on which some progress has been made, I am particularly excited about three. First, a promising amount of money is flowing into early-stage research and development, owing to a number of initiatives from Germany, the UK, the United States, the European Investment Bank, and the Wellcome Trust (which financed the Review).

Second, more researchers seem to be focusing on AMR (although I base that conclusion purely on the frequency and geographical locations of the speaking invitations I receive). And, third, the misuse of antibiotics in agriculture has been reduced more than I would have expected, owing to voluntary efforts by leading food producers and supermarkets. Far more needs to be done, but this is a good start.

In the past 18 months, international coordination in the fight against AMR has also improved, with the past two G20 summits and a High-Level United Nations meeting all shining a

spotlight on the issue. Still, world leaders' statements will turn out to be meaningless if not backed up with action.

Unfortunately, action has been lacking in the development of new diagnostics, vaccines (and vaccine alternatives), and antibiotics. Since the Review published its final report, there has been a lot of talk about these three crucial recommendations, particularly from the pharmaceutical industry. At the World Economic Forum's annual meeting in January 2016, the industry supported a generalized commitment to new initiatives - which one could interpret as a request for more government funding. And during Antibiotic Awareness Week, pharmaceutical executives presumably met to discuss AMR.

And yet no concrete action has been taken. To change that, the top 20 antibiotics producers could ask their respective governments to "pilot" a funding mechanism for taking new drugs through clinical trials and to market. In the Review, we recommended market-entry rewards for makers of new drugs, provided that the lump sum is not used for marketing and promotion. From what I gather, that proposal has been well received.

We also recommended that those developing new vaccines or alternatives and state-of-the-art diagnostics be eligible for such rewards, given that these innovations can vastly reduce the misuse of antimicrobials.

One of the pharmaceutical companies I met with recently showed me evidence that the use of antibiotics in treating young children in Iceland has plummeted since 2011, owing to vaccinations against pneumococcal infections. This was pleasing to see. As the Review showed, one of the best ways to prevent the overuse of antibiotics is to prevent infections in the first place.

Here is a final idea for the top 20 pharmaceutical firms to consider. Why not contribute \$1 billion each over the next decade? The \$20 billion prize could be divided among the companies that first produce appropriate new diagnostic technologies, vaccines, or antibiotics to address the World Health Organization's 12 "priority pathogens."

Obviously, this proposal is rather unconventional. But for one of the most profitable sectors of the world economy, \$20 billion spread over ten years is almost peanuts.

Collectively, the top 20 drug makers' annual revenues are around \$600 billion, and their annual profits are somewhere between \$150-200 billion. An annual contribution of \$2 billion would be less than 0.33% of combined annual revenues, and less than 2% of annual profits.

Moreover, it would be an investment in three of the Review's Ten Commandments. And in a world demanding more corporate social responsibility, it might even give pharmaceutical companies' share prices a healthy boost. (Courtesy Project Syndicate)

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