

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



December 19, 2016

## The Dystopian World of Mankind

War and violence leave no room for hope and one will never have a sigh of relief with the current crises. The tragic stories making the headlines in national and international media fill one with disgust. Streams of blood gush from the wounds caused by suicide bombings or terrorist attacks, one's honor and reputation are tarnished in the blink of an eye and people's pains and sufferings never come to an end. The catastrophe about human rights, around the globe, continues unabated.

The utopian world, where mankind could exercise their rights and liberty, was drawn by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) did not come true. "Freedom from fear and want has been proclaimed as the highest aspiration of the common people". On the contrary, "disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts". The utopia remains no more than an imaginary world. Inhumanity, cruelty and violence prevail in our world and life has turned into hell.

Democratic discourse is yet to come to fruition and the global threat, terrorist networks, is a flagrant slap in the face of democracy. In other words, democracy encounters great barriers and terrorist acts, which stem from radical ideology, are believed to be the strongest menace to it. Freedom fighters are repressed by the militants and radical ideologues.

The warring factions spew out fear and hatred and play a highly destructive role in modern world.

They seek to impose their ideology on individuals with the barrel of gun. Lack of tolerance and men's thirst for power are the main reasons behind the deadly wars.

Moreover, ethnocentrism is the second reason behind war and violence. Ethnocentrism is the tendency to believe that one's ethnic or cultural group is centrally important, and that all other groups are measured in relation to one's own. The ethnocentric individual will judge other groups relative to his or her own particular ethnic group or culture, especially with concern to language, behavior, customs and religion. These ethnic distinctions and sub-divisions serve to define each ethnicity's unique cultural identity. In our country, warring factions, mainly the self-styled Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), largely exercise ethnocentric acts and have stoked sectarian violence recently through killing ethnic minority groups on the basis of their race and ethnicity.

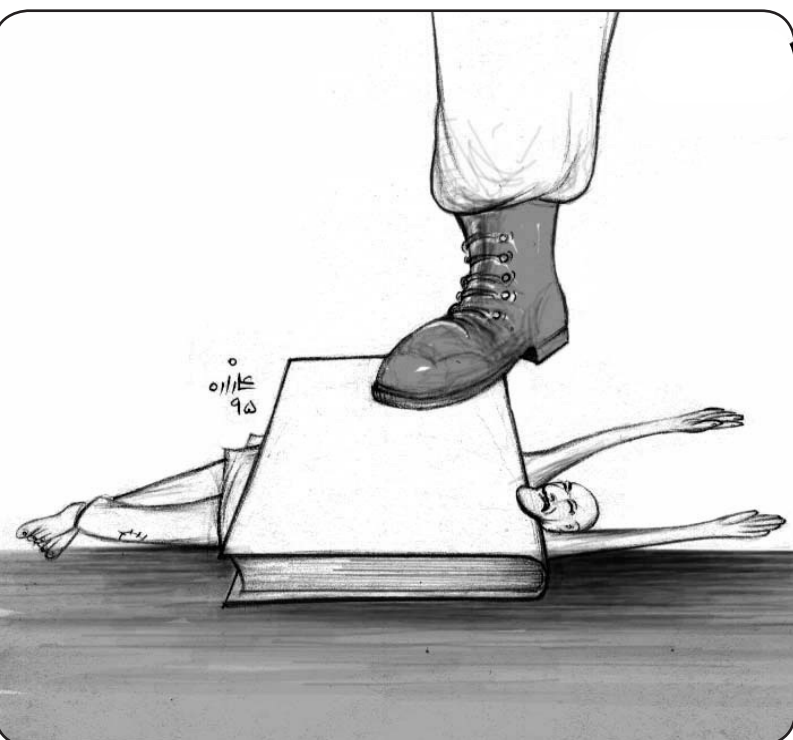
For instance, the day to day reports in national media is about gunmen shot dead five female airport workers and their driver in southern Afghanistan, suicide bombings left casualties behind, women underwent domestic violence, neighbor's girl was raped and attorney general's office recorded more than 3,700 cases of violence against women in the current year, the graph of corruption remains high, bribery is paid excessively, insurgency has been intensified, political wrestling goes on, the gap between state and nation widens, etc. We harm one another, perpetrate honor-killing acts, blacken our neighbors' reputation and shed our brethren's blood with no iota of mercy. We succumb to the worldly temptations, yield to carnal desires and satiate our voracious appetite for not only pecuniary issues but for hurting our fellows without feeling a sense of guilt.

The first hallmark of moralization is that the rules it invokes are felt to be universal. Prohibitions of rape and murder, for example, are felt not to be matters of local custom but to be universally and objectively warranted. One can easily say, "I don't like brussels sprouts, but I don't care if you eat them," but no one would say, "I don't like killing, but I don't care if you murder someone."

The other hallmark is that people feel that those who commit immoral acts deserve to be punished. Not only is it allowable to inflict pain on a person who has broken a moral rule; it is wrong not to, "let them get away with it." People are thus untroubled in inviting divine retribution or the power of the state to harm other people they deem immoral. Bertrand Russell wrote, "The infliction of cruelty with a good conscience is a delight to moralists - that is why they invented hell."

In the state of nature, man is man's wolf and there is war of all against all. Since men are naturally wicked, their wickedness will increase in social life. Hence, they step in civil state and submit all their rights to a person or a group of people so as to gain peace and security, this is called "social contract". It is made to reduce the pains and sufferings of mankind and to live in the utopia.

In modern world, it is commonly accepted that everyone is equal in the eye of law and no one, including the head of state, is beyond law. Since we live in civil state, we are supposed to respect people's civil rights. Moreover, it is widely agreed that human beings are born with a set of natural, inherent and inalienable rights awarded to them either by the Creator, reason, nature or state - there exist different theories - just for being human regardless of their race, sex, color, creed, etc, the same rights are stated in the international instruments especially in the UDHR. Therefore, we have to respect each one's rights and dignities and the violators are to be punished according to the law of state.



## Confronting the Next Global Health Challenge

By Jörg Reinhardt

Thanks to unprecedented international cooperation, the world is making impressive progress in the fight against malaria. According to the World Health Organization's just-released 2016 World Malaria Report, malaria mortality rates among children under age five have fallen by 69% since 2000.

And this progress is not limited to malaria. Many countries have reduced new HIV infections by 50% or more over a similar period, and the infection rates for other debilitating tropical diseases, such as leprosy and Guinea worm, have fallen significantly in recent years.

But while mortality rates from infectious diseases are declining, developed countries' sedentary lifestyles, tobacco use, and poor diets are catching on in the developing world, and noncommunicable diseases such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and cancer are increasing at an alarming rate.

NCDs now kill 38 million people annually, with almost 75% of those deaths occurring in low- and middle-income countries. And the outlook for developing countries is dire; for example, by 2030, NCDs are expected to cause more deaths in Africa than communicable, maternal, and nutritional illnesses combined. Beyond threatening lives, NCDs can destabilize economies, especially in countries with limited health-care infrastructure. The challenge for governments and global health agencies is to continue making progress against infectious diseases, while also addressing the rising NCD threat.

Fortunately, we can apply lessons from the successful fight against infectious diseases to the emerging fight against NCDs. Working with nonprofit agencies, intergovernmental organizations, and private companies, world leaders can have a profound impact on public health - even if foreign-aid budgets are strained.

For starters, we need innovation. Without the great leap forward in antiretroviral therapy in the mid-1990s, we would not have the tools we have today to control HIV. And without the artemisinin-based combination treatments that also emerged in that decade, malaria death rates would still be stubbornly high. Policies that improve access to health care should also support innovation - and they must never undermine it.

Beyond innovation, we need strong partnerships to manage NCDs and ensure that patients have access to the treatment they need. Effective HIV management has transformed that disease from a death sentence into a chronic condition in most places; but, of course, we now need sustainable solutions to provide continuous, long-term care.

The private sector is increasingly committed to this approach. Novo Nordisk's Changing Diabetes Care and Eli Lilly's NCD Partnership are just two examples of how companies are collaborating with governments and health organizations in resource-limited countries to develop scalable, sustainable, and locally driven programs to combat diabetes. And Novartis Access, which our company launched in 2015, is a socially oriented business that works with governments, NGOs, and other public-sector customers in lower-income countries. We have two goals for the program: to expand access to affordable medicines to treat NCDs such as heart disease, type-2 diabetes, respiratory illnesses, and breast cancer; and to cooperate with local and international organizations to strengthen health-care systems. So far, we have observed that developing countries need to shift their paradigm for medicine procurement, and update their national essential-medicines lists.

A third lesson to take from the fight against infectious diseases is that political commitment is crucial. As Chatham House and other independent observers have warned, too few governments - particularly in developing countries - spend the recommended 5% of annual GDP on promoting health. Even when national budgets are tight, health investments are worth it; after all, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. Lower-income countries that are heavily affected by NCDs have everything to gain from investments that will make their people healthier and more productive. As we have learned from managing HIV, investments in public health create a virtuous cycle: as people and communities begin to experience better health, they invest further in making health a priority. Managing the rise of NCDs will require long-term thinking, and government leaders will have to make investments that might pay off only after they are no longer in office. This is a serious challenge, especially in electoral democracies; but policymakers from around the world can come together to leverage their investments and those undertaken by the private sector. And even if most countries reach the recommended spending of 5% of GDP, the world will still need innovative financing mechanisms and policies to enable public-private collaboration.

Leaders from around the world must prioritize the global fight against NCDs. To this end, governments and global health agencies should apply lessons learned from the successful fight against infectious diseases. Through innovation, dynamic partnerships to strengthen health systems, and political will, the world can sustain the gains made against infectious disease, while also effectively combating NCDs. (Courtesy of the author)

Jörg Reinhardt is Chairman of the Novartis Board of Directors.

## How Climate Action Can Make America Great

By Vinod Thomas

Climate change is the single biggest challenge facing humankind. Yet the next president of the United States - the world's second-largest greenhouse-gas emitter and a critical actor in climate policy - does not believe it is happening, or at least that humans have a role in driving it. If Donald Trump actually wants to "Make America Great Again," as his campaign slogan declared, he will need to change his attitude and embrace the climate agenda.

So far, the situation does not look promising. Despite a mountain of scientific data, Trump claims that there is no evidence that humans contribute to global warming. He once even called climate change a "hoax," invented by the Chinese to make US manufacturing less competitive (though he later walked back that accusation). He has not, however, rethought his broader skepticism about human-driven climate change.

Reflecting this line of thinking, Trump has announced his intention to reverse carbon-emission limits for coal-fired power plants, step up fossil-fuel production, and roll back support for wind and solar power. He has also pledged to pull the US out of the global climate-change agreement concluded last December in Paris. Such a reversal would be catastrophic for global efforts to tackle climate change.

Just as US President George W. Bush's refusal to sign the Kyoto Protocol on climate change in 2005 initiated a spiral of rising emissions, a decision by Trump not to fulfill America's commitments under the Paris agreement could spur others to follow suit. After all, many countries are already worried about the costs of meeting their national commitments, especially at a time of sluggish economic recovery. And burning fossil fuels remains, in most economic activities, cheaper than using cleaner energy (when one does not account for the relevant environmental damage).

Of course, in the longer term, burning more fossil fuels will drive up health-care costs and impede worker productivity. Then there are the economic and human costs of increasingly frequent and severe climate-related disasters - including floods, droughts, storms, and heat waves, all of which are already on the rise worldwide.

To be sure, Trump recently met with the former US vice president and vocal climate activist Al Gore. Nonetheless, it seems unlikely that Trump will change his tune on climate change, not least because the cabinet members he has selected are largely singing the same song.

The good news is that he may not have to. In fact, there are actions that Trump can take for other ends - from boosting the US economy to enhancing America's global influence - that would also advance the climate agenda.

The first such action is to increase investment in research and development in climate-friendly sectors, such as energy efficiency and storage, renewable-energy systems, and safer and smaller cars. Technological breakthroughs in these areas - which the US is particularly qualified to realize - would be great for business. And building high-tech production and ef-

ficient energy sectors may be Trump's best chance of fulfilling his campaign promise to create a large number of jobs for Americans.

As much as Trump might like to revive steel and coal in the so-called Rust Belt states that were crucial to his electoral victory, that is likely impossible (as is bringing back large numbers of manufacturing jobs from abroad). Indeed, coal power is already on its way out in the US, as health and environmental (not just climate) concerns force plants to shut down.

Natural-gas production, meanwhile, is at an all-time high; its 33% share in power generation now exceeds that of coal. Renewable-energy sources and nuclear power are also on the rise, a trend that is almost certain to continue. To create a Rust Belt revival, Trump must capitalize on these trends, advancing a more innovative, energy-efficient approach, much like the one that is helping to support growth in the economies of California and New York.

Trump could reinforce progress in dynamic and profitable energy-efficient industries by entrenching energy efficiency in construction codes. New buildings and other infrastructure should feature energy-efficient lighting (including better use of sunlight), heating, and air conditioning. There are also huge payoffs from retrofitting existing buildings for more efficient energy use. There is one more key reason why Trump, the climate-skeptic, might be convinced to sustain progress on climate action: preserving and enhancing America's international influence. Other prominent global leaders - including Chinese President Xi Jinping, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and German Chancellor Angela Merkel - have expressed concern about the devastation caused by pollution and environmental degradation. If the US repudiates its leadership role in this area, it risks considerable reputational damage. Global climate leadership will require the US, first and foremost, to fulfill its Paris commitments. It is vital that Trump upholds America's Clean Power Plan, which establishes state-by-state targets for carbon-emissions reductions, with the goal of lowering national emissions from electricity generation by one-third relative to their 2005 level by 2030. The extension of tax credits for renewable-energy producers and consumers would go a long way toward advancing this goal.

But even achieving the Paris agreement's goals will not be enough to avert a catastrophic rise in global temperature. We must overshoot our targets by advancing clean energy, clean transport, and clean industry. For that, American know-how and savvy will be indispensable.

Trump already wants to invest in energy and infrastructure. If he does so in a climate-friendly way, the US will reap enormous benefits - and so will the rest of the world. If the mogul-turned-president does not recognize the threat that climate change poses, he should at least be able to recognize a tremendous business opportunity when he sees one. (Courtesy Project Syndicate)

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