

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



December 22, 2018

Defending the Homeland as Our Most Important Duty

The US military has been ordered to begin planning to withdraw about half the troops in Afghanistan. This news was received with mixed responses from Afghans. Some of them welcomed the decision and considered it as aligned with the Taliban's Demand from The United States to withdraw its troops in Afghanistan. However, some other Afghans considered this move of the US as leaving Afghanistan alone in its fight against the international terrorism.

It is a crystal cut fact that Trump has repeatedly questioned the need to spend US blood and treasure in Afghanistan, asking in 2011: "When will we stop wasting our money on rebuilding Afghanistan? We must rebuild our country first." clearly expresses how the US president perceives the Afghan prolog war.

Nonetheless, just two weeks before the news of the withdrawal plan, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joseph Dunford, said at a Washington Post Live event that he "had not recommended" that the US withdraw. Dunford continued that he had not recommended that the US leaves Afghanistan because, in his judgment, leaving Afghanistan not only would create instability in South Asia. According to Dunford, it would give terrorist groups the space within which to plan and conduct operations against the American people, their homeland and their allies. He also had termed it as a problem that they were trying to solve it.

In the meantime, some other US politicians consider the new situation in Afghanistan as the combination of military escalation and diplomatic initiative that have made a favorable political settlement more likely than at any time in recent memory in the country and the withdrawal of the US forces can promote the current process.

Although the US has decided to reduce its troops in Afghanistan, earlier this month, NATO foreign ministers expressed steadfast commitment to ensuring long-term security and stability in Afghanistan. According to Lungescu, their engagement was important to ensure that Afghanistan never again becomes a safe haven for international terrorists who could threaten them at home.

Afghan President's Response to the US Troop Withdrawal

According to a spokesman for President Ashraf Ghani, a significant reduction in the number of U.S. troops in Afghanistan would not impact upon the security of the war-torn country. It has been the first official Afghan reaction to reports in the U.S. media that President Donald Trump is considering a "significant" withdrawal of American troops from Afghanistan.

What counts here is that Afghanistan shall reinforce its security forces and all the nation must contribute to this end. In order to keep Afghanistan safe, policies and systems have to be in place to stop attacks and prevent our resources from being overwhelmed. In addition, our security keeps the country prepared for any wars and natural disasters. The role of Afghan security is constantly evolving to keep up with the needs of the country and each Afghan shall be considered as a member of the Afghan security forces. Indeed, protecting our country requires community policing; using the community as a resource to minimize the spread of radical ideologies that nourishes the terrorism. By informing and supporting law enforcement through proactive partnerships, Afghan citizens can become key players and reliable partners in what some call "co-produced" public safety.

A Good Neighborhood is a Great Treasure (Part 1)

By: Liu Jinsong

Many Afghan friends know the Great Wall of China and the famous Chinese saying: He who has never been to the Great Wall is not a true man. Those who have been there speak of its majesty and practicality. As the most important military facility in ancient China, the over-2000-year-old wall was designed and used for defense rather than offense. Our ancestors took greater interest in defending the fruits of their own labor than plundering the land of others.

More than 600 years ago, when the Timurid dynasty rose in Afghanistan and Central and Western Asia, great Chinese navigator Zheng He led the world's most powerful fleet to the Indian Ocean seven times, visiting India and more than thirty other countries. More than half a century later, Western explorers also 'discovered' India. With a flagship nearly 10 times bigger than the arriving western ship in tonnage, Zheng took with him silk, porcelain, sincere friendship and advanced technologies rather than cannons, colonists, fortresses or churches.

In the past 70 years since the founding of New China, China has not never provoked any war or conflict. It has developed fair and peaceful solutions to land boundary questions with 12 neighbors, including Afghanistan. My country pursues negotiated solutions to border and maritime disputes on the basis of mutual understanding and mutual accommodation.

China's security thinking is based on self-defense. Active defense is central to its defense and military doctrines. We Chinese don't have a gene for aggression or colonization, nor do we have any political or economic need to do so. China does not accept the leadership by any other country and we don't have any intention to play the leader. The Chinese Character "□" (security) is written as a woman under the roof, meaning the creation of a family and protection of the vulnerable. The Chinese Character "□" (force) consists of two parts: "stop" and "dagger", i.e., using force to stop violence and aggression. The "Chinese Kung Fu" familiar to Afghan friends aims at keeping fit and protecting people against violence rather than bullying others.

Since modern times, China and Afghanistan have both suffered bitterly from colonialism, imperialism and hegemonism. From the 1840 Opium War to the founding of PRC in 1949, my home country had been invaded by more than 20 Western countries, forced to sign nearly 800 unequal treaties and lost more than 3 million square kilometers of land. Chinese casualties in the War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression reached at 35 million, one third of the global total during World War II. The never-forgotten sufferings of war and turmoil drive us Chinese in a tireless pursuit of peace. "Do not do to others what you don't want done to you." This is written in the Analects of Confucius. China will never impose the pain of war on others. Rather we seek our own development in a peaceful international environment and in turn contribute to world peace as a stronger nation.

The century of chaos caused by war taught the Chinese people three bitter lessons. First, weak countries have no diplomacy and lagging behind leaves one vulnerable to bullying. We must develop strong national defense. Second, cutting off external ties offers no protection and we must open our eyes and mind to see and follow world trends, reform ourselves and become stronger. Third, a nation stands firm in the family of nations and free from enemy greed only when it achieves economic development, political stability and national unity with the leadership of a strong political party.

Since the founding of New China, we have prioritized national defense development and demonstrated determination at critical moments to safeguard our independence and dignity against various external pressures. Yet military means should always be the last resort. The level of military modernization is still far from being sufficient to satisfy national security needs or catching up with advanced countries in the world. And we have not achieved a complete reunification of our country. In this connection, we must be mindful of danger in times of peace and make effort to enrich the country and strengthen the military at the same time.

China believes that peaceful development remains the trend of the times. There are still important strategic opportunities for development. But the world is not tranquil, with frequent 'black swan' events and increasing external resistance and challenges. As such, the Chinese armed forces set their

eyes on combat effectiveness, strive to effectively shape interaction dynamics and manage and control crises so as to avoid wars, and aim at winning a limited war of the information age when it occurs. They are therefore casting aside old thinking patterns for new ideas: from mechanized warfare to informatized warfare, from traditional security to comprehensive national security and extended strategic interests, from army-centric to integrated joint operations, and from departmentalism to wholistic approaches.

It is a strategic task of the Chinese military to safeguard China's overseas interests, participate in regional and international security cooperation, maintain regional and world peace, and taken an active part in UN peacekeeping operations. China is now the largest contributor of peacekeeping forces among the five permanent members of the UN Security Council. Thirteen Chinese soldiers have sacrificed their lives in peacekeeping missions and more than 2,500 Chinese officers and soldiers are now in active service of those missions. The PLA Navy performs anti-piracy escort missions in the Gulf of Aden and has been involved in many international disaster relief operations.

China has developed from a poor and weak country to the world's second largest economy, relying on neither charity by any other country nor external military expansion. Rather, we made it with correct policies, hardworking people and a stable domestic environment. China does not make troubles and has no fear of troubles. China does not accept blackmails, surrender to pressures, covet other countries' interests or envy their development, nor do we give up legitimate rights and interests or trade our core interests with others. China is the largest developing country in the world and the United States, the largest developed country. As the two largest economies and permanent members of the UN Security Council, China and the US shoulder great responsibilities for world peace and development. In the line of the famous Hollywood film Spiderman, "With great power comes great responsibility". For these two countries, cooperation benefits them both while confrontation hurts both. A fight between the dragon and the eagle will only put medium-sized and small countries such as Afghanistan in difficult situations. China-US relationship is now at a critical juncture. Its healthy and steady development will hopefully be achieved with the two countries respecting each other, focusing on mutually-beneficial cooperation and managing well their differences. China and the US have common interests on the Afghan question. To realize stability and development in Afghanistan, major powers must work together. China stands ready to further cooperate and coordinate with the US to turn Afghanistan into a haven of major cooperation rather than a stage of major power competition.

Terrorism is a shared concern for China, US and Afghanistan, all three being victims to it. China and Afghanistan, in particular, stand at the forefront of the international anti-terror war. China always believes that we must oppose terrorism in any form and that we will win the war against terror only if a comprehensive strategy addressing both symptoms and root causes is implemented and the breeding ground of terrorism is eliminated. While developing a global united front against terrorism, we must also cut off their financing channels and root out their propaganda on the Internet.

China advocates equal dialogue and harmonious co-existence among different religions and civilizations and opposes linking terrorism to any specific ethnic group or religion. I myself grew up in a Chinese Muslim community and have many Muslim friends. I am convinced that Islam is a religion for peace and goodness and against the evil. Some groups misuse and abuse Islamic teachings by advocating extremism. The Chinese government is determined to protect the lawful, stop the illegal, contain the extreme, resist the infiltration and crack down on the crimes.

In Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, my hometown, the government protects freedom of religious belief in accordance with laws, respects believers' customs, helps improving access to basic religious knowledge and nurtures patriotism within the clergy. For those brainwashed with extremist thoughts, vocational skills education and training are provided so that they are enabled to both distinguish the right from the wrong and develop an income-generating skill. This in our view is counter-terrorism by prevention.

Liu Jinsong is the Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to The Islamic Republic of Afghanistan

Macron's Misstep Is Europe's Loss

By: Dominique Moisi

Are the Yellow Vest protests across France as consequential as the mass rallies of May 1968? It is too soon to say. The revolt has forced French President Emmanuel Macron to make significant and costly concessions, but it is hardly a new French Revolution. Though some demonstrators clearly want to reenact the "feats" of their ancestors against their (elected) monarch, we are not in July 1789.

The uprising of May 1968, it is worth recalling, was driven largely by a bored generation of students living at the peak of France's post-war prosperity. Though the economy was at full employment, they rebelled against the status quo in the name of dubious utopias inspired by Fidel Castro's Cuba and Mao's China. They were joined by well-organized trade unions that helped the movement reach a critical mass, at least temporarily.

The difference between then and now is that those taking to the streets to protest against Macron's proposed fuel-tax increase are animated not by utopia but by despair. In this sense, the Yellow Vest uprising is not unlike a French Brexit, in that it amounts to an act of shooting oneself in the foot. Whereas the British resorted to the ballot box, the French have adopted a mixture of barricades, marches, and stone throwing.

In either case, everyone seems to lose out. Just as Great Britain's break from the European Union will leave both parties diminished, France's domestic upheaval could undercut European integration. Under Macron, France was supposed to keep the flame of liberal democracy alive in a world darkened by Donald Trump's America, Viktor Orbán's Hungary, and Matteo Salvini's Italy. With German Chancellor Angela Merkel's own leadership slipping, France looked like an island of hope in a sea of Western despair. That is clearly no longer the case.

One senses in British and American media coverage of the Yellow Vest protests a degree of Schadenfreude. The proud nation with the arrogant leader has been knocked down a peg; it turns out that the French are no different from anyone else.

The Yellow Vest revolt has been driven in part by Macron's mistakes. In pursuing radical but necessary reforms, he has been counting on stronger economic growth to vindicate him. But growth has not materialized, and that makes an ecologically motivated fuel tax impossible for middle- and lower-class French commuters to accept.

Making matters worse, Macron launched his reform agenda by slashing France's wealth tax, a move that won him the sobriquet "President of the Rich." Yet, be-

cause Macron had cut himself off from the country's "corps intermédiaires" – including mayors, regional representatives, and trade unions – it took him far too long to see that the anger in France's provinces, small towns, and rural areas was coming to a boil. By surrounding himself with a court of bright young technocrats, Macron lost contact with what he calls "his people" (a rather tone-deaf formulation in itself).

This is a longstanding problem with the French meritocracy. When I was teaching at the National School of Administration in the 1980s, I saw the "happy few" who had passed the school's highly selective entry exams being awarded their own cars and personal drivers. Imagine receiving this treatment as a 20-year-old intern in one of France's Prefectures. No wonder they operate as if the state is at their service, rather than the other way around.

Macron's own personality may also have been a decisive factor in this first major crisis of his presidency. Macron is an exceptionally intelligent, energetic, and courageous person, but he seems to lack the maturity and humility that come with age. He was so eager to restore to the French presidency the dignity that had been lost under his two predecessors – Nicolas Sarkozy and François Hollande – that he went too far in the opposite direction.

If you want to impress Russian President Vladimir Putin or other foreign dignitaries, hosting them in such a magisterial setting as Versailles is sure to prove effective. But reveling in the country's monarchical history can be dangerous. Many of those who voted for Macron may have been hoping for a twenty-first-century Bonaparte. But now they may be thinking more of Louis XVI, the king who paid with his life for the faults of his predecessors.

Can Macron learn from his mistakes and regain the confidence of French voters who have felt humiliated by him? It will not be easy, but it is not impossible. At any rate, one should not write off prematurely a politician of such vision and ambition.

Rather than rejoicing in a bold leader's comeuppance, those who still believe in democracy should be thinking about what it would mean if Macron fails. Italy's present would become France's future, and the populists who come to power in Paris would probably put an end to the entire European project.

That is not an outcome anyone should wish for. For better or worse, Macron still represents European democracy's best bulwark against a wave of populist nationalism.

Dominique Moisi is Senior Counselor at the Institut Montaigne in Paris. He is the author of *La Géopolitique des Séries ou le triomphe de la peur*.



Chairman / Editor-in-Chief: Moh. Reza Huwaida

Vice Chairman / Exec. Editor: Moh. Sakhi Rezaie

Email: outlookafghanistan@gmail.com

Phone: 0093 (799) 005019/777-005019

www.outlookafghanistan.net



The views and opinions expressed in the articles are those of the authors and do not reflect the views or opinions of the Daily Outlook Afghanistan.