

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



December 23, 2018

Curbing Population in the Country

There is no short cut to or any spontaneous method to decrease the number of people in a particular community and adjust them with the available sources and resources of the country. On the other hand, however, it requires a long-term planning with an effective and an efficient organization on the country level to make the people conscious about the rapid growth of population and to change their old values about the family and marriage. In the western countries and in some of the neighboring countries such organized programs like family planning are going on for better planning of population and resources. According to the prevailing conditions, family planning is the only remedy which can help people as well as the government to lead a prosperous and richer life in better ways.

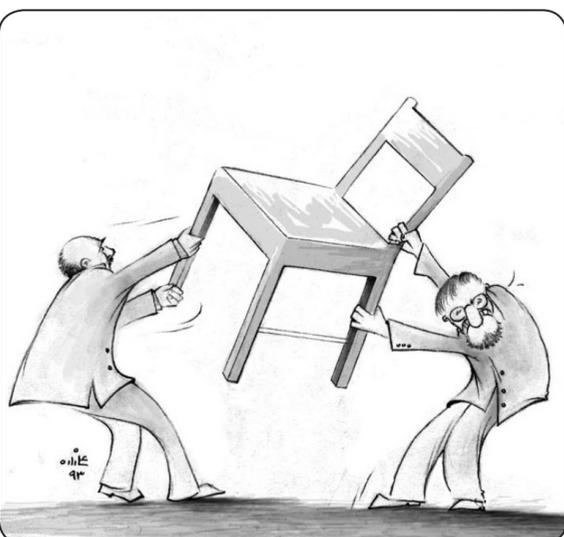
The concept of family planning is not clear for a layman. Family planning does not imply the absence of children or sterilization, but it is only a low rate or reproduction and nothing unnatural or inhuman. Taking into consideration the prevailing deteriorating conditions of the country and masses as a whole, family planning can be one of the main solutions. Family planning can be an effective measure to check the rapid growth of population and provide a happy life both for the parents and children. Family planning is nothing but planned parenthood, i.e., reproduction of the children with a reasonable interval between the first and the second baby without affecting the health of the mother and socio-economic stability of the family unit. The number of children in the family should be according to its resources and it should not be too large to make proper socialization and education of the children difficult for the parents.

It is vital to understand that high population growth exerts pressure on national efforts for future economic growth and development and simultaneously diverts resources from productive uses to more consumption and creates greater demand for more and more civic amenities. Therefore, it is important to adopt a comprehensive national policy to deal with the situation of rapid growth of population so that both the nation and the individuals benefit from it.

Population planning is certainly beneficial to the families with low income, less literacy, already too many children and such other disturbing socio-economic characteristics. In all parts of the world including urban and rural people, economic reasons for adopting family planning seem to be more convincing in comparison to the other advantages in support of planning. For example, the head of the rural family is faced with the problem of dividing up his small holding of land among his large number of children. While in a poor family, it is obvious that each new baby increases the burden on parents. Among those in somewhat higher economic circumstances, interest naturally develops for a better life and education for the children. In cities, household appliances and other comforts are desired. All these facilities are difficult or impossible to attain for a large family except in families enjoying the highest economic status. The same kind of effects can be seen for the nation as a whole.

Then there are many health benefits as well that are attached to family planning. The women who are benefitting from this sort of planning tend to have better health. Enough time period during the two consecutive babies supports women in gaining enough energy. Then it should also be taken note of that there are higher chances of mortality in case of females during the child bearing period. Repeated pregnancies break down the health of women, weaken them and result in their deaths. The women are more likely to die during child birth if they have more babies. And it is more dangerous if they are older in age and give birth to babies. Moreover, frequent births deteriorate the health of the babies as well. Insufficient diet for the mother and babies effect the health of the babies to a large extent. The health of the father is also affected negatively due to overwork as he struggles to support a large family. On the other hand, sick and unhealthy babies disturb the peace of mind of the fathers as well.

Therefore, it is essential that the families must adopt proper family planning so as to save their lives from different sorts of trouble and give birth and nourish the children who can be positive members of the society. Few may suggest that family planning is not acceptable in Islam but they fail to understand that Islam is the most recent religion of the world. It not only takes care of the spiritual side of man but also guides him regarding his relations in the world with his fellow humans. Islam demands from Muslims to be wise and take actions that should assist them to spend easy and blissful lives, free of difficulties and sins.



Taliban Continue to Outsmart Afghan Government & the US under the Guise of 'Peace Talks'

By: Mohammed Gul Sahibzada

When US and NATO member countries first committed to Afghanistan and sent their armies to establish order and security after they toppled Taliban regime in Kabul, Afghans started to believe that their fate was then at safe hands because international community had stepped in, which could stop neighboring countries from interference in their. The reason for this optimism was that most Afghans believed these countries - including United States of America, United Kingdom, Germany, France... were parties to World War 1 and World War 2, and in the process of these great wars they had helped many countries to rebuild from the ashes of these two wars. It was believed that Afghanistan was in similar condition and genuine intervention by international community could really have reconstructed Afghanistan and pulled it out of this intrinsic war, which continues to cause destruction and take immense toll on people's lives and properties for last more than forty years now. Another cause for optimism was the power of US over countries involved in Afghan war - especially Pakistan. When George W Bush, the then president of United States of America declared war on terror after terrorists strike of 9/11, he bluntly warned the then president of Pakistan, Parwiz Musharaf, to either side with US or be against US in the war against Taliban. Pakistan quickly submitted and allowed all facilities and ports at the service of US military to use them against Taliban fighters in Afghanistan. This was done despite the fact that Pakistan had brought up and established Taliban in Afghanistan with their gold and blood. This was the established 'operating procedure' of US forces around the world, which had resulted in toppling of Taliban regime in a matter of less than a month. But as US and NATO member countries started to settle in post-Taliban Afghanistan, this calculus of the people of Afghanistan - to be optimistic - has proved wrong. In one of those meetings held between Hamid Karzai, the then president of Afghanistan and Joe Biden, the then US vice president, Joe Biden told Karzai that 'Pakistan was fifty times more important to the US than Afghanistan' in response to Karzai's insistence that ongoing terror attacks and support for Taliban are coming from Pakistan, and that US had to go after Pakistan.

A sort of 'shadow game' and double standard policy is adopted, which continues to contribute in prolongation of war and increasing casualties of Afghans. The reason for this shift in intervention in Afghanistan is due to changing geopolitical interest of parties involved. In a mysterious manner, Taliban were allowed to spread over a large swath of Afghan territory - forty percent - in a mat-

ter of four years during Hanif Atmar's tenure as National Security Advisor to the president! In addition, absence of a national strategy for war and economic development has been the cause for present chaotic situation in both military and economic arenas in the country. Government responses to Taliban insurgents and other international terrorist organizations operating in country have been spasmodic. Appointment of military officers and war commanders has been politically instigated hence a level of incompetency and laggardness prevails in the security and defense institutions in the country. It requires whole lot of space to write about short-comings of government in relations with its responsibilities of numerous failures and setbacks in all fronts of governance and accountability. These factors have allowed Taliban to take advantage and spread like cancer throughout the country, and pose as 'invincible force' and 'force to reckon with', which resulted in government to beg for peace. This development in turn made regional countries and neighbors of Afghanistan to establish diplomatic relationship with Taliban, giving even more leverage to Taliban insurgents. At this point in time, government of Afghanistan is all, but besieged and left behind with denigrated dignity. US and other major powers are talking to Taliban directly - as Taliban demanded the same - and government of Afghanistan is sitting in waiting line for its turn - shamelessly hoping for a peace deal! Taliban insurgents, seeing the situation and time in their favor, continue to ratchet up their demands - now including withdrawal of US forces from Afghanistan before they agree to any ceasefire! Where are those ears, eyes and mouths to come forward and tell Taliban that they had the entire army regiments from Punjab of Pakistan during their five year reign in the country? Hadn't they provided safe havens to Al-Qaida leaders and fighters, who were Arabs using Afghan territory for their own purpose and had nothing to do with Afghanistan? To the disappointment of the people of Afghanistan, Afghan government doesn't seem to have alternative plan in the event so called 'peace negotiations' failed. Multi-parallel teams and organizations are formed by Afghanistan government to engage in peace negotiations, while Taliban insurgents only have one team. President Ghani has assigned his negotiating team whose members don't have the required populous authority and strong background. This sorry state of affairs should be corrected by government of Afghanistan at the earliest possible time or demise of Afghanistan will take this country to a path leading to complete destruction.

Mohammed Gul Sahibzada is the permanent writer of the Daily Outlook Afghanistan. He can be reached at mohammed.g.sahibzada@gmail.com

Reviving Civil Disobedience

By: Jan-Werner Mueller

With populism and authoritarianism on the rise around the world, there has been considerable talk of "resistance," especially in the United States. A rather broad term, resistance could refer to everything from supporting opposition candidates to the life-threatening work of those who went underground to sabotage Nazi occupations during World War II. Such vagueness is helpful, if one wants to appeal to as many citizens as possible; but it can also cloud one's thinking when weighing how best to achieve concrete goals.

As it happens, there is a more precise alternative to "resistance" that is rarely mentioned nowadays: civil disobedience. In theory, civil disobedience should be an effective weapon against populists. But, in practice, it faces two formidable challenges. First, there is a widespread misunderstanding of what civil disobedience actually entails. And, second, changes in the media landscape have made it harder to convey the message of civil disobedience to a broad and diverse audience.

The American philosopher John Rawls offered the classic definition of civil disobedience in the early 1970s. Simply put, it means overt law-breaking, but in a conscientious, nonviolent manner aimed at persuading fellow citizens that a law ought to be changed because it is unjust. In Rawls's formulation, those who commit acts of civil disobedience should be prepared to accept the penalties for doing so.

Today, even protests that do not break any laws are often decried as "uncivil" or too "divisive" for an already polarized society. When citizens confronted politicians during US Supreme Court Justice Brett Kavanaugh's confirmation hearings, they were decried as a "mob." Even fellow liberals have admonished the Black Lives Matter movement for being too aggressive. And the noisy demonstrators who have gathered in Budapest to protest against Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's increasingly authoritarian government have been dismissed as "liberal anarchists." In each case, the "civil" in civil disobedience has been conflated with civility, as in politeness or general respectability.

For his part, Rawls was adamant that any law-breaking be undertaken "within the limits of fidelity to the law." He was echoing Martin Luther King, Jr., who argued that one who breaks the law in the name of civil disobedience "is in reality expressing the very highest respect for the law," by highlighting its fundamental injustice in such a way as not to foreclose on future cooperation with one's fellow citizens. Thus, King believed that, "one who breaks an unjust law must do so openly, lovingly, [...] and with a willingness to accept the penalty."

That invocation of love should not be taken to mean that civil disobedience must be non-confrontational. A highly sanitized and sentimental historical accounting of the 1950s and 1960s might seem to suggest that the civil-rights movement succeeded merely by appealing to arch-American political principles of freedom

and equality. In reality, part of the movement's strategy was to seek out confrontations with police and defenders of white supremacy. These clashes generated images of white brutality that made at least some whites reconsider their unconditional defense of "law and order" under Jim Crow.

In a recent study of protest movements spanning more than a century, social scientists Erica Chenoweth and Maria J. Stephan show that tough but nonviolent confrontation has been twice as likely as violent alternatives to bring about its stated goals. According to their data, sustained participation by a mere 3.5% of a population can be enough to achieve fundamental political change.

Yet the history of the US civil-rights movement also points to a novel problem in our age. Rawls, King, and other defenders of civil disobedience took it for granted that the message - an appeal to principles of justice - would reach a majority of citizens undistorted. But today, the public spheres in many countries have become so fragmented and partisan that King's idea of "national opinion" now seems nonsensical.

As a recent groundbreaking study by three Harvard University scholars shows, the US has become home to a deeply insular "right-wing media ecosystem" in which all "news" is immediately reframed to confirm the identity of right-leaning citizens. And in semi-authoritarian contexts like Orbán's Hungary, media are now completely dominated by government-friendly actors. Under such conditions, most appeals to what Rawls called a "public sense of justice" will be sidelined, severely distorted, or silenced altogether.

Accordingly, potential practitioners of civil disobedience should not allow themselves to be caught in a trap of politeness and respectability. When opposition politicians recently disrupted the proceedings of the Hungarian parliament by blocking access to the speaker's podium and heckling Orbán to his face, they were accused of attempting a putsch. In fact, they were merely shining a spotlight on the fact that the national assembly is no longer a normal representative body passing legitimate laws.

Still, aspiring disobeyers will have to account for the increasingly fragmented and polluted nature of the public sphere. Sometimes, that will mean engaging fellow citizens directly on the street, in the marketplace, or even through door-to-door canvassing. In other situations, it will mean live-streaming acts of civil disobedience and hoping that authoritarians' brutal methods will be exposed to a large enough audience through social media. And on still other occasions, it will mean pushing for structural changes, such as a return to the Fairness Doctrine by broadcasters in the US.

Civil disobedience would certainly be more effective in a less distorted media landscape. But it still represents one of the most effective forms of democratic "resistance" available.

Jan-Werner Mueller is Professor of Politics at Princeton University. His latest book is *What is Populism?*

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.