

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



December 24, 2016

Afghan Youth can Change the Future

Though different sorts of problems have dominated the Afghan society, the performance, vigor and the spirits of Afghan youth have never disappointed. Among difficulties and disappointments it is encouraging to find many of them motivated towards education and positive life and hopefully if they are given the chance to reign over the important institutions, they will be able to bring about many positive changes. Their recent role in media, modern education and information technology has convinced many that they have the potential to guarantee a prosperous future but there should be more efforts on the part of government for their improvement so that they are able to compete on the regional and international levels and become confident enough to stand on their own.

Highlighting the same fact, First lady Rula Ghani on Thursday, December 22, while addressing an exhibition of computer science projects by students from around the country, encouraged the country's younger generation to develop their talents and use them to build Afghanistan's future and not to underestimate their abilities. "We have good memories and the country's citizens have more talent. You should believe in your talents and stand on your own feet," Rula Ghani said in her speech.

The exhibition was held at the Ministry of Higher Education where students from different universities displayed their projects in information technology - including software programs and hardware gadgets.

Such exhibitions are really important and they will support the youngsters to display their talents. It is also an opportunity for the government and private institutions and business firms to observe their talents and help them in finding careers as per their capabilities. There are many public and private organizations that require students with modern and practical education and through such events they can pursue their purposes.

Educated youngsters will be motivated if they find that their talents are being observed and being valued. The developed countries of the world have a great respect for the contribution of youth and the educational institutions, particularly the universities play a dominant role in their societies. Most of the youth are hired directly from the universities and they do not have to run after the jobs once they complete their education. The coordination between the educational institutions and public and private institutions are very strong and they fully understand one another's requirements; therefore, they prepare accordingly and do not have to face the issue of unemployment to a large extent.

Currently, Afghanistan is producing many educated youth but it should also have mechanism wherein these youth are compensated in their own professions; otherwise, their education may be wasted. Afghanistan has the opportunity of making maximum benefits from its youth as its 60 percent population is below the age of 25. Many of them have the tendency to bring about positive changes in the society as they seem tired of instability and war. However, there are many others who have been victimized by the ongoing conflicts and instability and do not see any hope to come out of the quagmire. However, Afghanistan has an opportunity to use such a large number of human resource for a better tomorrow. Without the contribution of the youth in Afghanistan it would be very difficult to see a healthy transition towards a democratic country and better economy as youth can have the real understanding for such a system and can work for it.

They are being educated within a system that at least have some sort of structure and function, while the old generation did not have such an opportunity as they were going through civil wars and chaotic instability.

However, without a comprehensive strategy it would be really difficult for Afghanistan to make any achievement regarding the development and the improvement of the youth and their roles within the society. Afghan authorities need to design comprehensive policies in this regard and also design the ways to achieve them. Promises alone and separated actions would not bear any fruit and the youth would remain in the situation that is not favorable for their growth and capacity enhancement.

Afghanistan has to prepare itself for providing higher education based on modern techniques and methodologies, better exposure opportunities, and ultimately job opportunities to this large number of people, which is the only way to make them play positive role. Every year a large number of youngsters complete their education and strive to find employment so that they are able to earn a livelihood and at the same time support their families and country. Some of them even turn to social evils and particularly they are recruited by the terrorists as they are not able to find proper job opportunities elsewhere. Therefore, they should be provided chances so that they are able to play a positive role in the society instead of becoming a burden or part of problem.



Government Needs to Deal Seriously with Migration of Youths

By Asif Ghaznawi

Germany has sent back 34 Afghan refugees to Kabul. German officials have said that more Afghan refugees would be deported according to an agreement between Germany and Afghanistan. German interior minister; Thomas de Maiziere has said that one third of these Afghan returnees deported because of crime and offences they had committed. Meanwhile spokesman of Ministry of Refugees and Returnees, Islamudin Jorat, has told reporters that according to EU tripartite declaration, more Afghan refugees whose asylum requests rejected, will be deported. At the same time German Federal parliament 'Bundestag' opposed the requests to stop deportation of Afghan refugees and the ruling party also stressed to pursue the program of sending back asylum seekers. Asylum requests of more than twelve thousands of Afghan refugees rejected by German government and a group comprising 50 expatriates will soon be returned to Afghanistan.

Since unprecedented influx of migrants to Germany from the beginning of 2015, more than one million asylum seekers from different nations entered Germany. After Syrian refugees, Afghans were the largest group who sought refuge their and their number has been estimated more 15,000.

Afghan Government promised to help returnees going to their provinces; but does it help these men to resettle and resume normal life? They endured adversities and spent their money in order to reach European countries and to find safe place; but now after a long and arduous journey they are back at zero point. Refugees themselves of course are unable to change decision of Germany and other countries; to stay in Europe they need support of concerned international agencies and Afghan government. Kabul seems heedless to repatriation of migrants; though deputy minister of Refugees and Returnees' Dr. Alima said that "according to memorandum of understanding between Afghanistan and EU-states return of Afghan refugees from Europe will be voluntary, gradual and the capacities to receive them will be considered."

But unfortunately some places in Afghanistan are still unsafe and residents are daily facing threats; thought government seems unwilling to say this openly.

Over forty percent of people especially youths in Afghanistan are unemployed; development projects and programs by government so far could not have decreased unemployment. "Optimism to future among Afghans has slipped down to its lowest." According to Asia Foundation's recent survey in Afghanistan showed this and the main reasons are corruption and unemployment. This survey was conducted from August to September this year and 12 thousand people across the country participated. Though, according to report the interest among Afghans to migrate came down this year; but it

does not mean that economic situation has got better. Most of the ministries did not spend their development projects' budget as they had been instructed to do so and as a result many ministers were disqualified by Wolesi Jirga (Lower House of Parliament).

In the meantime another research shows that 70% of Afghans are not satisfied with activities and works of parliament. According to the report by Freedom House; an Afghan NGO, Legislators have been accused to help increase corruption. Corruption is of course one of that biggest challenges in Afghanistan. Afghan youths complain as well that recruitments in government offices are not done on merits, to be recruited in any office one need to have close relationship with ministers, legislators and other government high officials. Surveys show that most of Afghan migrants have left their country because of unemployment and lack of opportunity. Deportation of these people certainly increases the burden on government and families of deportees. It is while the returnees' fate is unknown and they are bearing with them big psychological pressure and tension of being rejected as asylum seekers and financially crippled. This situation might drag them to addiction or other social perversions. Most of these migrants sold all their valuable belongings or borrowed money to reach Europe and now it is too difficult for them to recover and compensate losses.

Government of Afghanistan, as sole authority, to defend and support Afghan asylum seekers is obliged to talk to European countries where migrants sought asylum to show maximum generosity and sympathy with refugees and act upon their commitments to international humanitarian laws. They are expected at least not to deport asylum seekers by force.

Fighting corruption and creating job opportunities are two main and major tasks of the National Unity Government. These two sections must be put in high priority; success in fighting corruption and creating employment guarantees success in restoring security and fighting insurgents. To crash rebel groups only by military means is not sufficient; government needs to invest on development projects more and more to accomplishing these missions. This is the only way to prevent Afghan youths from leaving the country. Afghan youths need work and job and if it is available here, they surely would not risk going abroad through illegal and dangerous ways. Thousands of our youths left schools and universities in recent years to migrate to Europe, Australia and other countries. It is a great misfortune for Afghanistan that its youths who has, strength and energetic forces leave schools and universities to go to other countries for better opportunities. Why these opportunities and better future should not be created here?

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The Coming Brexit Tragedy

By Mark Leonard

This past year changed everything, except how governments think. Nowhere is that more apparent than in the pre-negotiations for Brexit. With both sides ignoring the far-reaching implications of Donald Trump's election as US president - namely, the decline of the liberal world order - the process seems set to produce a tragedy for the United Kingdom and the European Union alike. Judging by the behavior of British Prime Minister Theresa May's diplomats, one might believe that Brexit is the only real uncertainty nowadays.

Indeed, they seem convinced that their only imperative - beyond protecting the unity of the Conservative Party, of course - is to secure as many benefits for the UK as possible. Because the government's Brexit negotiators are assuming that they can count on continued global growth, they are focused on securing a bigger piece of the pie for the UK. And because they also assume that the liberal international economic order will endure, they expect that, once "liberated" from the shackles of the EU, the UK will find eager partners with which to sign trade deals. Finally, the Brexiters seem unconcerned about the security implications of going it alone, because they assume that the United States will maintain its role as global policeman, not to mention continued protection from NATO. That's a lot of assuming. But the British are not alone in thinking that nothing has changed. In Brussels, EU institutions - and European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker in particular - still regard a Brexit-triggered Euroskeptic domino effect as the biggest threat to the Union. In such a context, the goal of the EU's Brexit negotiators would be straightforward: make clear that being a member of the European club brings substantial benefits, and that leaving carries substantial costs. That is the logic that drove EU Council President Donald Tusk to declare that the UK has two options: hard Brexit or no Brexit.

It is also the logic behind member states' refusal to engage in pre-negotiations or to accept a transitional arrangement. But this logic is for the world of yesterday - and even then, it didn't quite work. During the Greek crisis, the EU's strategy was to decide the terms of a deal and tell Greece to take it or leave it. If Greece tried to negotiate, the EU made the conditions progressively less attractive, until the pressure was too much to bear. Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras and his then-Finance Minister Yanis Varoufakis were shocked by the EU's intransigence during the 2015 negotiations, in which it, too, had much to lose.

Nonetheless, Tsipras took the deal - and the Greek crisis is still not resolved. Despite this experience - and the fact that the global environment is even less stable now than it was then - the EU seems set on employing the same negotiating technique today. Already, Michel Barnier, the EU's lead Brexit negotiator, has presented the UK government with a

€50 billion (\$52 billion) bill to cover pensions and other obligations until 2030. British politicians do not believe EU officials really mean it, but they do.

The UK and the EU are now locked in a deadly dance, one that may well continue until time runs out.

The result will be even worse than a bad Brexit; it will be a non-negotiated Brexit, in which the UK doesn't leave the EU so much as it falls out of it. Beyond causing severe economic damage to both sides, such an outcome would generate so much acrimony that the two sides would find it next to impossible to work out arrangements in myriad other areas, such as territorial defense and counter-terrorism, trade and sanctions, international diplomacy, and climate change. There is no moral equivalence between the self-defeating slipshodness of post-Brexit Britain and attempts by the EU to defend a European order that has been painstakingly built from the ruins of World War II and the Cold War. But both sets of response could contribute to the same tragic result: a Europe stranded in Trump's new Hobbesian world order.

The reality, outside the Berlaymont and Westminster snow globes, is that Europe's holiday from history has been brought to an abrupt end. Trump's protectionism-tinged trade policies are likely to take a serious toll on global economic growth. And his attacks on international institutions are likely to undermine peace and cooperation - with potentially devastating security implications. Contrary to what the British government may like to believe, it is the EU, not NATO, that is most critical to its security. NATO is currently confronting serious challenges. Beyond Trump's apparent lack of interest in upholding US responsibilities to the bloc, NATO members - from the Baltics to Turkey - are under pressure. In any case, the EU, not NATO, has driven the biggest foreign-policy successes in recent decades, from the pacification of the Balkans to the Iran nuclear deal to the response to Russia's annexation of Crimea.

Though Trump's election has impelled the EU to agree to a permanent structure for defense cooperation, the incoming US administration's overall effect on European security will not be positive. It is time for Brexit negotiators to accept reality - and change their game plan accordingly. The British cannot continue to pursue negotiating tactics that erode the foundations of the very system from which they expect to benefit. And the EU must back away from its harsh stance, however understandable it may be.

John Maynard Keynes once noted that "practical" people - those who believe that they are "exempt from any intellectual influences" - in fact "are usually the slaves of some defunct economist." Today, Britain and the EU have become the slaves of defunct thinking. If they do not break their intellectual chains, they will secure for themselves nothing but more misery. (Courtesy Project Syndicate)

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