

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



December 26, 2018

Better Societies Have Better Values

A society is recognized by its values and standards. Better societies have better standards in every facet of life; nonetheless, it is arguable what better standards really mean. The standards that are humane, based on the well-being and development of the society as a whole and that are as per challenges raised by the socio-political circumstances are mostly thought to be better than the ones that do not uphold them or negate them. On the other hand, relevance to the context does not always stand for perfect and positive standards. For instance, in contemporary modern world, modernity is one of the agreeable standards but it cannot be concluded to be positive. Setting universal standards for the societies of the world is always a difficult task as cultures and social settings differ and even contradict. However, the main point is to comprehend that the standards that depict the actual position of human beings; their positive role and behavior – the one that is sensitive to the well-being of others, care and kindness for the fellow beings, true encouragement for science, arts, creativity and innovation are basically the ones that must be fortified and protected. Today's human beings are led astray. They have become materialistic excessively and saunter aimlessly in their spiritual life. They are unable to realize the true purpose of their existence and are turned into beings that they are not by the conditioning of systems and circumstances. They are caught at a position where they are the cause of their own infamy and annihilation. They urge for love, affluence, pleasure and material comfort and they are prepared to pay any price for it. This urge has given rise to a man who flawlessly fits in today's materialistic societies but may not be successful in achieving the requirements of being a true human.

A cursory look at the standards in our society are necessary at this instance. Our society is well-known and easily recognized because of its egotism and bigheadedness. Inequitableness and discrimination are the commonly acceptable behavioral trends. If a person brings another person anguish for his own benefit or if a person betrays another person, it does not seem to be weird as it is normal exercise within our society. Since the socio-political settings and the objective conditions have paved the way for such types of actions and thinking, imagining something different would be ridiculous. As the rule of the race is to thrust others back so as to win the race in any way; therefore, victory kisses the feet of those who follow this rule in its exact form. Considering today's society, it can be claimed that a person who is not cunning and self-seeking is principally unwise. Alternatively, the crafty evils cannot be censured, too. As a matter of fact, in our society, when a person does an evil act, he is not all the time guilty for it.

On the other hand, the kindness and service to others are not responded in the way they should be. The people are so much accustomed to wrongdoing and cunning behavior that even if they receive sincerity and kindness, they are able to respond it properly. They may even think that they are being flattered and therefore their response is mostly a discouraging one.

In this society, if a killer is not a relative to the prey, it is really odd. Attachment, adoration, belief, uprightness and devoutness are the values that are only important to few of the people; else, these are only words which the people of our society use so as to conceal the crimes of their conscience and the evils of their intents. We are mainly bounded by lies and false exhibition and if we are able to defend our truth, it would be a great accomplishment. Nevertheless, the company and ownership of truth is truly wearisome. It involves bearing seclusion and accepting the responsibility of being dissimilar. Yet, it is not something to be discouraged about. A human can be disenchanted from another human but should not be disenchanted from humanity, because human beings live for a definite period of time but humanity has always lived and will live persistently.

The significant point is to deliberate why the kind of society, wherein a person has to lead another person by going over his cadaver, should not change. Why should not we modify the system wherein human beings do not need the sustenance and collaboration of others for the improvement of society in its entirety, but need for their selfish benefits? There is something utterly wrong with the society that does not have love and brotherhood as its standards but inspires the people to have negative rivalry so as to own as much material coziness as possible. The society we reside in is in desperate need of true humanity, true affection and true warmth.



A Good Neighborhood is a Great Treasure (last Part)

By: Liu Jinsong

As friendly neighbors connected by mountains and rivers, in the past millennia, China and Afghanistan have enjoyed friendship, mutual trust and mutual help rather than suspicion, dispute or war. We have thus developed an emotional bond. At the welcome reception in honor of Afghan King Mohammed Zahir Shah and his Queen in 1964, Chinese President Liu Shaoqi talked about the Afghan people's brave fights and victories against powerful enemies in the previous hundred years and the Chinese people's admiration for their heroic spirit and glorious achievement in safeguarding independence. The King replied that the Silk Road connected China with the West through Afghanistan and that in ancient Afghan books, China was described as the cradle of a glorious civilization. He cited an Afghan poem on the beauty of China and expressed Afghan people's support for the Chinese people's brave struggle against foreign invaders. The King also praised our friendship was the best model for two neighboring countries with different social and political systems. These eloquent speeches by the two heads of states half a century ago still inspire us today.

China and Afghanistan are not only a community of common interests and shared future but also partners in the fight for stability against terrorism. East Turkistan Islamic Movement (ETIM) members engaging in terrorist and secessionist activities in Xinjiang are seeking shelters in Afghanistan, posing a great threat to China, Afghanistan and other countries in the region. Afghanistan is China's only neighbor still suffering the turmoils of war. The Afghan people yearn for peace, stability, independence and self-strengthening. The Chinese people have the same desire for you.

China firmly supports the "Afghan-led, Afghan-owned" peace and reconciliation process and the peace initiative and roadmap for reconciliation proposed by H.E. President Ashraf Ghani. In recent years, China has done a lot to advance the peace talks. The Chinese side hopes that all relevant parties bear in mind the interests of Afghan country and nation, move closer towards each other, enhance mutual trust and open the peace process at an early date so that the Afghan people will suffer less and soldiers will bleed less. We hope that all stakeholders persist in multilateralism rather than unilateralism. Try scratching rather than stabbing in each other's back. Join hands to act responsibly and according to popular desire. Security must be mutual and common as it should not be achieved at the cost of other countries' security. China was, still is and will always be the supporter, promoter and facilitator of the Afghan peace and reconciliation process. We insist that mediation efforts must be peaceful, just and constructive. We harbor no selfish interest, play no favoritism and spare no effort in this endeavor.

As a developing country, China provides assistance to Afghanistan within the best of its ability. The key to peace and reconciliation in Afghanistan is not in our hands. The role of China is important yet limited. But one thing is for sure: China will play a more active role in the settlement of regional and international hotspot issues in Afghanistan

and elsewhere. This is our responsibility and an expectation by other parties. China has a sincere desire for whatever is best for your country and treats Afghanistan as an equal. We have no intention to seek any geopolitical interests, foster any agent, interfere in the internal affairs, impose our will or market our political or economic model here. China is a country of sunshine. It is open and aboveboard in all its actions in Afghanistan. We befriend all parties here. This I believe is reason why the Afghan people trust and feel close to China.

China regards Afghanistan as an important partner in taking forward the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) connecting the two ends of the Eurasian continent and designed to restoring glory to the ancient Silk Road. It will help Afghanistan to make better use of its geographical and resource advantages and regain its status as a hub of regional transport and trade. A bit of fragrance clings to the hand that gives flowers. The BRI, although a Chinese initiative, belongs to all countries including Afghanistan. It is a path to mutual benefits and win-win. China and Afghanistan have signed an MOU and are discussing about specific cooperation projects.

In the past few years, the Chinese people have overcome numerous difficulties and made critical contributions to peace and reconstruction in Afghanistan at the cost of lives. Terrorists attacked the Chinese Consulate General in Karachi, Pakistan on 23 November, sounding an alarm for all relevant countries. Security is the foundation of development and life is the premise of friendship. We need Afghan friends to take care of the security of all Chinese and our Embassy in your country and break any terrorist plot to undermine China-Afghanistan friendship.

China encourages, welcomes and supports the improvement of relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan, which is in the fundamental interest of these two friendly countries. As a Chinese proverb goes, "A friendly neighborhood is a treasure." Afghanistan also has similar words of wisdom: "Guests often come and go while neighbors are always there". China, Afghanistan and Pakistan have established the Trilateral Foreign Ministers' Dialogue Mechanism. It is our hope that the mechanism will help Afghanistan and Pakistan to develop dialogue, build up mutual trust, and improve relations and that it will contribute to enhanced trilateral political, economic, cultural and security cooperation.

Next year Afghanistan will celebrate its 100th anniversary of independence. The presidential election will also take place. The Afghan people are going through an extremely important and challenging historical period. As the Afghan saying goes, "the water of life could only be found in the darkness." I firmly believe that the Afghan people with centuries-old civilization can take their destiny into their own hands, win the peace and strive for their dreams. In this process, the Chinese people, your brothers of the same mind, will always be there to help.

Prophet Mohammad taught us, "Seek knowledge, even if it is as far away as in China." I warmly invite all friends to visit China. The country is not far away. It is by your side.

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

We will not Go Back to the Past

By: Mohammad Zahir Akbari

The sudden and hasty decision of Donald Trump to withdraw more than half of American troops from Afghanistan provided a hasty and turbulent debate throughout the country. From the low level of society up to the high authorities, analysts, media and even the at the international level there are discussion about its probable implications. Amongst the reactors, the Afghan parliament and some of political circles deeply expressed their concerns and warned of its negative impact on the fragile condition and gained achievements. Truly, this is a genuine danger for the 17 years achievements and current complicated situation of the country.

The sudden and hasty decision of the President of the United States also shocked many inside the United State and, to some extent, he offhandedly spurred this debate. Pentagon warned as the quick decision of Trump would put the Afghanistan's achievement in danger. He also announced to withdraw the US forces from Syria which opened a vast chasm within the U.S. ruling circles. Resignations from the Trump administration and ensuing denunciations are calling the attention of the masses to the heated conflict. The top echelons of the Democratic Party and corporate media "talking heads" are in an uproar of opposition. They are attacking Trump for "caving in" to Iran and Russia and allegedly endangering their national security – by which they mean he is harming U.S. interests.

But what has reflected in Afghanistan media was more overwhelming and inconsequential. The Taliban became overconfident and declared that the international community is accepting their demands and their existence in Afghanistan. Some of the neighboring countries who have supported the group in recent years also got excited about the decision and interpreted it as humiliation for the United States. Some of the jihadi circles and family parties who used to sit on the ready table over the past years and recently they have felt deprived of those benefits are pleased to be in the mood to think about the interim government and division of political spoils. For this reason, they have seriously sought the government to negotiate with Taliban. The government opposition groups have also become happy without thinking about the consequences of Taliban return, and they are eagerly waiting for changes at any cost.

These dogmatic stances show that political understandings regarding country's issue are still in its childhood and very shallow in the country; the partial withdrawal of U.S. troops from Afghanistan does not mean an end to the Pentagon's militarism and end of U.S. wars in Afghanistan or end in the region. The U.S. military has 170,000 troops stationed outside the U.S. in 150 countries, in more than 800 overseas bases. Nearly 40,000 are assigned to classified missions in locations that Washington refuses to even disclose. Because the Pentagon has continually renamed and shuffled its forces in the Middle East, it's impossible to know how many troops are on standby and how many are

on rotation.

Herein, it seems that the government reaction was more reasonable and to a large extent proportional to the general attitude of society. However, some of the expressions against Taliban were very weak, suppliant and pragmatic. But what has come in the analytical and strategic reaction of the second vice president has created many hopes. For the first time, people feel that the government is not willing to deal with the Taliban at any cost, and is not ready to sacrifice the achievements of the past several years for the sake of so-called peace process which is not accordance with the demand of Afghan people, but the will of others. Since the Taliban were called unhappy brothers by the previous government, unfortunately the public credence has been decreasing.

It should be pointed out that the government's behavior against Taliban has been in a way that has always raised public suspicions about itself. Unfortunately, over the past years and even since the beginning of the failed peace process with the Taliban, it has been unevenly comported with them without any achievements for the government and the people of Afghanistan. All these compartment and high expenditures in the infamous peace process have brought nothing but distrust and gap between people and government and causing more frustration and dismay. Now, it seems that government has noticed this issue, and this is a positive step towards general convergence and defense of the achievements and human values.

In general, the government's response to Trump's recent decision regarding withdrawal half of the US troops from Afghanistan and launch of multilateral peace talks is "We do not go back to the past. The provisions of this recent position with appointment of two strong security officials were what many people have been looking for and expected from the government. Today, all those who believe in the human rights and democratic values are opposed to any process that destroys these values and achievements; and as a result, no one is ready to return to zero point of the past.

The current values and achievements that have come about were the product of tens of years of bellicose struggle that the Afghan people paid heavy cost to earn. It is very clear that the Taliban group is not content with anything but the closure of the human values enshrined in the current constitution of Afghanistan. Therefore, the only way for the people and the current government of Afghanistan is to stand against the illegitimate demands of the Taliban and to prevent from returning to the black era. We should not go back to the past under any circumstances and never submit everything to the Taliban. This is the only legitimate and humanitarian demand of all the people of Afghanistan articulate in unison, "We will not go back to the past."

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