

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



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## A Society is Orphan without Intelligentsia

A society that fails to understand its problems and find out proper solution to them is a lost society. Such a society remains confused and, therefore, saunters aimlessly in the dark corridors of ignorance. It is really vital for a society to understand the basic issues that it faces. It also needs to identify the top-priority matters that hamper its progress and development. Without identifying its problems, it is very difficult for a society to figure out proper solutions. As far as the issue of designing proper solutions to certain problems are concerned, there is not always an easy and smooth sailing. Certain well cogitated and experimented alternatives have to be carved out and then their proper benefits and costs have to be analyzed. Moreover, they have to be analyzed as per the political and social circumstances and checked whether they are feasible in all those respects. Focusing special attention on all these tasks and diverting the attention of the people towards them is the task of intelligentsia within a society. Intellectuals are basically the consciousness of the society and in certain ways they are also its conscience. They have to figure out the actual problems and then identify the ways to address them. Therefore, they are of utmost importance for a society and their value has to be realized by its every member. Nevertheless, in our society that the values of the commodities are gauged as per their appearance and external worth; people only see the material benefits they can gain from them. And they seem to be very hasty in order to gain such benefits. In such a scenario it is really difficult for them to develop any sort of interest for poetic thoughts and philosophical discussions. If they have the authority, they will definitely declare thinking and curiosity to learn as crimes - crimes that have no other punishment except death. It has to happen in a society where, though, philosophy and literature have some sort of respect but they do not have the capacity to fulfill the requirements of the society. It is claimed that they have neither cured any sick person, nor have given food to the poor; however, they themselves have been convicted and punished and given a poison to drink; therefore, they try to remain silent. In the modern technological and scientific world, people do not find any achievement of philosophy and literature, as they are not directly involved in inventions and discoveries. They do not seem to need any poet or philosopher in their routines and daily activities; therefore, it is not possible for them to realize their importance and their status. However, this sort of thinking is not only business-oriented but at the same time it is logically incorrect. If everything in the society is measured as per their capacity to fulfill the temporary material benefit, the whole system of the society would collapse and the whole world would become nothing else except a market, where people can only sell and buy commodities. Though, the world has almost been turned into a market, there is still some respect for values and ethics, which can be a ray of hope in complete darkness. The most tragic and unfortunate aspect of this sort of thinking is that it does not try to see the actual reasons of the incidents and happenings. The whole society, based on the same sort of thinking, starts accepting the material advancements as miracles and tends to neglect all those pillars on which the building of all these advancements is placed. If the modern technological and scientific era is analyzed, there would be few ideas of some thinkers and few thoughts of certain intellectuals and today's materialistic advancement is based on the same ideas and thoughts. It has to be understood that the material advancement itself is not an achievement; rather it is a source to satiate the psychological and spiritual thirst. While, the wisdom and the experience, which are shared through philosophy and literature, are the real achievements - the real creativity of human capacities. And, on the other hand the attitude of the society towards such wisdom and experience is nothing more than a bad joke. And a bad joke can never be considered a solution to the issues and problems of life. Our societies really need intellectuals. It is really weird to note that the intellectuals are totally dependent on society and their favors, whereas, the society should depend on them and seek their favors for proper guidance. If there is any relation between the real beauty in nature and the society, it is because of the intellectuals. If there is no intellectual in a society, such a society is really orphan, as far as aesthetic sense and spiritual guidance is concerned. It is really important that in a society the intellectuals must have the authority to set the standards; only then the society can have balanced development and advancement. The advancement then would not be limited only to the materialistic aspects but would also include the emotional and the aesthetic aspects of life. Accepting that the intellectuals and writers must have the most reputable status in the society; it is important to ask whether they have really fulfilled the requirements of being the real intellectuals and have they proved themselves deserving enough for such elevated position?



## Challenges Continue Unabated

By Hujjatullah Zia

People live in a pathetic state. The security crisis and economic stagnation have paralyzed their life. The simple individuals are the main victims of conflicts carried out by warring factions. A large number of families have been displaced internally from restive parts of the country. Moreover, the larger part of the country suffers from unemployment and economic challenges. The current economic slumps embitter not only the old men - who sweat from dawn to dusk to make the ends meet - but also the businessmen. After all, abducting, threatening and killing national investors and businessmen for money, discourage them from investing in the country. The nascent democracy is not a panacea for the Afghans' political problems. People fall the victims of militancy to a large extent. Violence and bloodshed have been increased since the drawdown of NATO troops and emergence of the Islamic State (IS). The intensified terrorist attacks carried out by the Taliban militants led to great casualties across the country, mainly within the two last years. The indiscriminate killing of the civilians is a matter of great concern. I do agree with Hobbes who believed that wickedness runs in man's blood. The macabre story of the sufferers will fill you with strong disgust. Our freedoms are curtailed on a large scale on the grounds of sex, color, race and belief. For instance, you will be in cultural chains for being female, your life will be in great jeopardy for belonging to a minority ethnic group and your blood will be of no value for nurturing particular beliefs such as disagreeing with the radical's fundamental ideology. If we further politicize freedom and view the Taliban ideology in this regard, the Taliban were utterly against this discourse. Their closed frames of mind were once put into practice in Afghanistan which led to innumerable challenges. Schooling and social activities were ban for females and males were supposed to dress up and wear beard as the Taliban militants. Transcending their parochial mindsets was tantamount to perishing your own life. The insurgency, however, continues unabated. Last month, Taliban bombers killed more than 30 people and wounded about 70 in twin blasts in a crowded area of the city during the afternoon rush hour. The Taliban militants, fighting to oust foreign forces and bring down the US-backed government, claimed responsibility for the Jan. 10 attack. Moreover, at least 20 people were, reportedly, killed and 38 more were wounded on Tuesday in a bomb blast in Kabul City which reflects the Taliban's strong will for militancy and negative answer for peace talks. Seemingly, the country will sustain turbulence and economic recession unless a thorough and serious counterterrorism

strategy is planned by regional and international communities. The foreign officials have confessed that the US-led NATO anti-terrorism strategy failed in Afghanistan. But I believe that the "war on terror" gave counterproductive result - the emergence of the Islamic State (IS) groups reflects the very bitter fact. Prior to 9/11 attacks, Afghanistan was in the grip of the Taliban's militancy, however now it is threatened by both Taliban and IS insurgents. Since the maxim of "live and let live" is totally meaningless in the Taliban's mindset, let's talk about the practical realities being practiced across the country. The hackneyed phrases on newspapers' headlines about violation of the individuals' freedoms reflect the bitter facts going on in our community. The unmitigated militancy, which leads to combatant and non-combatant casualties, makes a wall of mistrust between state and nation. Undergoing war and violence, a large number of Afghan people flee the country - this reflects the government's failure and insufficiency. Ill-fatedly, our nation's bleeding wounds seem to be festered despite the democratic system. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights has uncovered the reason behind violence and violation of men's rights and dignity and also suggests the prescription for healing the men's chronic wounds as it states, "Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world. Violating Human rights and dignity will continue unabated unless we listen to the call of our conscience and uphold code of ethics in individual and social life. In the same way, men's natural dignity - which is also mentioned in religious texts - should be considered seriously regardless of people's ethnic backgrounds. Additionally, the state has to put its peremptory law into practice transparently so as to prevent from flagrant violations. To mitigate the militancy, it is believed that military deal would be an effective mechanism to tackle the issue and the government will have to intensify counter-insurgency and reinforce the Afghan soldiers. After all, there should be no room available for ISIL to incubate in the country and spew forth its venom. In addition, the seminaries should be registered and come under the watch of the government so as not to change into hotbed of radicalization. The world, particularly the neighboring countries, should join force against militancy carried out by any terrorist networks. In short, there should be less talk and more actions by the officials. Afghan people are highly exhausted from war and bloodshed and economic constraints and pray to have their bread and butter in a peaceful environment and have their fundamental rights protected. Hujjatullah Zia is the permanent writer of the Daily Outlook Afghanistan. He can be reached at zia\_hujjat@yahoo.com

## Successive Attacks Persist in Afghanistan

By Muhammad Zahir Akbari

Following the twin blasts targeted parliament which left nearly 40 killed and more than 100 wounded, a suicide bomber detonated his explosives near the Supreme Court building in Kabul on Tuesday afternoon, killing 20 people and wounding at least 48 others including dozens of women and children. It is also said that a number of wounded are in critical condition and have been taken to the Kabul Emergency Hospital. The attacker was on foot and detonated his suicide vest packed with explosives near the employees and other people as they were coming out of the main court building, the deputy spokesman for interior ministry Mr. Danish said. Eyewitnesses said it was a powerful explosion that shook nearby buildings and that most of the casualties had been civilians. No group has claimed responsibility for the attack yet. However, Taliban targeted government judicial workers in the past since the execution of six convicted insurgents last May. The insurgents have been at war with government for 15 years and have increasingly targeted the judiciary since the execution of six convicted insurgents last May; As shortly after the executions, a suicide bomber targeted a minibus carrying court employees in Kabul during the morning rush hour, killing 11 people in an attack claimed by the Taliban, which called it an act of revenge. In June, three Taliban fighters stormed a court building in the eastern Logar province, killing seven people, including a newly appointed chief prosecutor, before being shot dead by police. In a similar incident an explosion occurred in the same place - killing 17 people and injuring 39 others In June 2013. It is also simultaneous with a roadside bombing in Farah province in which a top government official was killed. Abdul Khaliq, the top official in the Khak-e-Safed district, was on his way home from the mosque when he was killed. Reportedly, responsibility for that attack was claimed by the Taliban. The Taliban controlled most of Afghanistan before being driven out of power following the terror attacks in the US in September 2001. The group continues to carry out attacks across Afghanistan aimed at destabilizing the U.S.-backed, elected government. The U.S. military has handed off primary responsibility for security in Afghanistan to the Afghan government, although thousands of U.S. forces remain there in mostly advisory and support roles. President Ashraf Ghani has strongly condemned the suicide bombing; in a statement issued by the presidential palace, Ghani said the attack was inhumane and an unforgivable attack. He said: "By this act the enemies of the Afghan people once again showed their enmity towards the people." Ghani also sent his condolences to the victim's families and wished the wounded a swift recovery. CEO Abdullah Abdullah also condemned the incident. Writing on his twitter account he said: "I condole with the families of the victims in today's terrorist attack in Kabul. The

blood of our people isn't cheap and won't be wasted." Thus, U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres also condemned the suicide attack. "Those who are behind bombing and other such despicable acts must face justice," spokesman Stephane Dujarric said at U.N. headquarters in New York. "Indiscriminate attacks against civilians, including employees of the judicial institutions, are violations of human rights and international humanitarian law and cannot be justified." According to a separate report in Kabul, UN proclaimed 2016 was the bloodiest year for Afghan civilians since the war began in 2001. Last year there were 11,418 civilian casualties, including 3,498 deaths. The rise in casualties is a result of the Taliban slowly gaining ground across the country, with fighting creeping closer to residential areas after the large-scale withdrawal of foreign combat troops. According to SIGAR, a US congressional watchdog, an estimated 28.7% of Afghans live in territory fought over between government forces and the Taliban, in the winter, when fighting in the battlefields slows, the Taliban have been known to increase their attacks on larger cities. In the past 12 months, Kabul in particular has become more dangerous, with 77% of civilian casualties from suicide and complex attacks in 2016 occurring there, the UN report said. Considering the growing insecurity crises in Afghanistan it was expected to be an urgent agenda for the new USA administration while President Trump has paid the least attention on Afghanistan. Repeated bids to launch peace negotiations with the Taliban have failed and a fierce new fighting season is likely to kick off in the spring. However, Afghanistan recently welcomed the Pentagon's decision to deploy some 300 Marines to Helmand, where American forces engaged in heated combat until their mission ended in 2014. While Trump has given the Pentagon 30 days to come up with a new plan to defeat the self-described caliphate, there has been no similar order for Afghanistan. It's unclear if the White House simply wants to maintain Obama administration policies to bolster Afghan forces and keep some U.S. troops in the country for counter terror missions. On the other hand, Moscow has started to play a major role in the country preparing a conference of leading regional powers while Western powers are not included. Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov confirmed Moscow would host a meeting in mid-February with representatives from Afghanistan, Pakistan, China, Iran and India during a press conference with his counterpart from Kabul Salahuddin Rabbani. Lavrov reiterated Moscow's stance that "the Taliban must be included in a constructive dialogue" to help find a solution to halt worsening violence in the war-ravaged nation at a time the Islamic State group has expanded its presence. Mohammad Zahir Akbari is the permanent writer of the Daily Outlook Afghanistan. He can be reached at mohammadzahirakbari@gmail.com

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