

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



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How Can Governments Ensure Governance?

Favorable, fair, and effective governance is clearly one of the most dominant factors for sustainable development. Today good governance is also a key to sustainable development. Honest and competent governance effects every aspect of one's life from the protection of our basic human rights to food and water security. Governance is more than just government, it includes everything from an impartial and efficient judicial system to schools and healthcare, to an economic system that offers job security and a living wage. Its foundation is a strong and vital civil society. The impacts of poor governance are severe. Ineffective or corrupt governments can allow, or even promote, resource depletion and environmental destruction. They can distort and disrupt local and national economies, impoverishing citizens as well as frightening away investors. In extreme cases, poor governance leads to civil or international conflict. This conflict perpetuates a cycle in which all the components of a healthy civil society are destroyed, and government itself loses connection with its people. In industrialized nations unresponsive, careless governance produces equally devastating results: the apathy and disengagement of its citizens. People adopt a "why bother?" attitude about politics and government. Stronger institutions of governance can manage more effectively the interdependence between economies and eco-systems. In such a way, capable governance can develop lasting solutions to key environmental issues such as global climate change, ozone depletion, and associated health risks. There are many ways to strengthen governance. One of them is to create conditions supportive of democracy such as literacy, a free press and flow of information, and gender and class equality. Nations can recognize and train effective leaders at all levels. Pioneering organizations have also created ways of identifying and publicizing corrupt behavior and then insisting on accountability. Effective economic development that benefits all segments of society is also an essential ingredient in strengthening governance. The benefits of good governance range from an enhanced quality of life for all citizens of each nation to a more responsible, accountable relationship with the environment. A strong and healthy civil society carries with it an almost automatic assurance of reduction in poverty. And, most importantly, the spread of good governance within nations will ultimately lead to diminished conflict and greater possibility of peace between nations. The three interconnected parts that constitute the governance are the state, civil society organizations, and the private sector. The media also plays an essential role in effective governance by enhancing communication among all sectors. Key factors in determining the quality of good governance are responsiveness and involvement. Good governance means that stakeholders or beneficiaries feel like they have a voice in what affects them and that their particular interests are recognized. In both the developing and industrialized world, civil society is the most important building block in this process. It is made up of everything from community centers to credit unions to cultural organizations. Governance is the glue that holds a society together. In prehistoric times, isolated bands of hunters and gatherers had little need for complicated governance. But as people settled in one place and agricultural societies grew in size, legal and political systems grew in response. The more complicated and diverse the society, the greater the need for effective governance: this could range from an all-powerful monarch to a very inclusive, participatory democracy. Of the nearly 200 sovereign nations of the world at the beginning of the 21st century each has some kind of political system. All the nations of the world have within them components of good and bad governance. Developing countries-many of them former colonies - often have inherited a top-down system of government in which politicians and civil servants see no need to be accountable to their constituents. The result is often system-wide corruption from the lowest village headman to head of state. All citizens suffer as a result, but none more than the poor peasant who has the greatest need for services like health care and education. Ineffective, corrupt governments do little to prevent resource depletion and environmental degradation. Without accountability to their citizens, they often reach economic agreements that offer short-term profits but have a devastating effect on the local environment. There is also little provision for governmental oversight of the activities of corporations and, even if there are laws and rules to protect the environment they are often not enforced. Effective governance rests on a dependable revenue base. Without adequate funds to pay civil servants and maintain basic services, a nation risks collapse. Many countries of the world have never been able to rely on tax revenues to meet their budgetary needs. Citizens simply don't pay their income taxes or the government may impose taxes and duties that are inequitable and punitive. Outside the economic sphere, bad governance impacts the quality of life of everyone in a country, from the poorest peasant to the most privileged. Not only are human rights disregarded or enforced inconsistently, but also essential services as well as adequate food and clean water simply don't reach those at the bottom of the socio-economic ladder. In matters of food and water security the interests of the political elite are served and the rights of majority often disregarded.



Collusion of Terrorist Groups with Organized Crime Groups

By Zia Nizam

Today's life terroristic crimes are present as a challenging phenomenon in different parts of the world, consistently conflicting governments and people in the area. In addition to the incapability and weakened ruling power of government, hostile interventions of other countries, as well as the bad governance are other important factors supporting financial interests of the terrorists that they obtain by allying with organized criminal crime groups. They use these benefits to sustain their criminal and banditry activities and sustain their leaders' welfare. With the continuation and prolongation of the wars, these groups have created a mechanism to generate incredible income through their criminal activities. A large number of experts, political analysts and scholars, believe that the perpetuated and prolonged wars of terrorists are based more on their financial interests rather than on the ideological beliefs and ideals of the belligerents and/or their thoughts and opinions. ISIS occupied vast areas in Iraq and Syria, controlling oil and gas reserves, banks, antiquities, and cultural heritages as well as the capital of the people of these areas. In 2014, more than \$ 100 million was spent on oil sold by smugglers to neighboring countries. One of the usual, obvious, and evolving practices of this terrorist group is the inhuman and barbaric act of hostage-taking, which brought them more than \$ 20 million revenue from ransoms. Similarly, the group earned huge amounts of money through looting of banks, markets and business centers, and theft of their assets, cash, and other expensive items. Furthermore, they gained a big amount through sales of historical art crafts and antiquities of museums and goods in the stores of occupied areas as well as selling of properties and grains of the people. These spoiled objects are mostly smuggled and sold to foreign countries by the mafia organizations.

Other sources of money for this group are the abduction and sale of girls and women as sex slave, for instance, Boko Haram is doing it on a regular basis (kidnapping children and young girls collectively from schools and use them sexually and finally sell). According to the Al-Arabia news agency report the ISIS group after capturing Mosul (the major city in northern Iraq and the second-largest city in Iraq) was robbing and looting the banks and large supermarkets in the city and gained around \$ 430 million. ISIS then became the richest terrorist group in the world according to the report. Because at the time ISIS wealth and cash assets were estimated at around \$ 900 million. Though, ISIS cash and non-cash assets totaled several billion dollars. ISIS also controlled Syria's oil-rich regions in Dhir al-Zur province which sold a barrel of oil for \$ 12, one fourth of the market price, to the smuggler groups which brought enormous wealth for the terrorist group. Of course, the revenue from the sale of oil and gas were considered to be the main source of income for this group. In addition, ISIS were publishing fake bank notes, passports and other important securities in its domain, through which in addition to the aforementioned documents received monetary gains too. The al-Qaeda network has several branches and sub-networks that also include a number of extremist terrorist organizations.

Most of these branches have independent financial resources, earning income through illicit activities such as drug trafficking, kidnapping for forced marriages, blackmailing and other illicit and illegal transactions which are accomplished with close cooperation of organized criminal groups. Revenues and income of these groups are dramatic from the ransom they obtain by releasing hostages mostly from Western nationals, which amounts to millions of dollars.

This practice is more prevalent in North Africa. Al-Qaeda is also directly involved in drug smuggling. The main source of income for terroristic groups in Pakistan, Central Asia, Africa and Latin America comes from smuggling and trading of narcotics especially heroin (the book Funding Evil by Rachel Ahratfeld).

Al-Qaeda's partnership with smuggling drug crime groups in South American countries, which work closely with the Mexican drug cartel, has its roots in early 1990s. They transfer drugs from Colombia to European countries, and sometimes even to the United States. A report by delegates of United Nations presented to the Security Council of UN (Feb 2015) on the relationship of Taliban with organized crime group indicates that the Taliban are expanding their relationship with drug traffickers, illegal mining groups, smugglers of Precious stones and kidnapers. The report added that the revenues from these illegal channels with the cooperation of the mafia groups has led the group to become more sustainable and accustomed to such issues and, therefore, are not interested in the peace negotiations with Afghan government. In this report UN Security Council is recommended to expedite the disruption of the Taliban ties with criminal networks and revealing information about Taliban Figures by imposing sanctions on them. The report also explains that the Taliban have invested heavily in various companies for the purpose of money laundering and, in addition by imposing illegal extortion on trade centers, have gained incredible revenue. According to the above mentioned report the Taliban are involved in mining directly or acquire forced extortions from mining permission holders and receive about \$ 14 million annually in exchange for securing and facilitating the illegal extraction of rubble of Jagdalak in Kabul.

The report also reveals that the Taliban directly receive two-thirds of the Chromite mine in Paktika province, and since 2005 they have earned \$ 16 million ransom from releasing of foreign hostages, who were mostly Westerners.

The report states that the Taliban group in the eastern and southern provinces of Afghanistan played a significant role in the export of timbers, including the four-sided timber of Archeh, and by cutting down trees and destroying natural forests and green areas greatly damaging the economy and the impact has inflicted severe environmental damage on the country.

According to the New York Times Taliban's revenues and incomes from drug trafficking are on the increase. The Taliban, in addition to the huge revenues earned by smuggling and obtaining

these-called (on their own words) taxes, Oshur and Zakat (kinds of religious tax), they have shares in a number of Heroin processing labs in some parts of Afghanistan, a value adding process in which opium is turned into Heroin which is, then, sold at an extremely high rate. Therefore, their share and dividends from this revenue and income is remarkable and significant. It is estimated that there are 500 drug processing laboratories currently active in Afghanistan, and about 25 of these laboratories have been destroyed by international air strikes while sequel of these attacks continues. In addition to other causes and factors the followings are some factors which have contributed in prolongation of the wars against terrorism and terrorist groups: presence of Taliban sanctuaries in Pakistan and extensive support of this country and other countries from Taliban as well as those of the hostile organizations and individuals of those countries (mostly Persian Gulf countries); vast corruptions in the region and in Afghanistan; incapable and law breaching governances; presence of conflicts and hostilities as well as miss coordination and disagreements within the government; and the issue of significant revenues and incomes of armed Taliban earned by drug trafficking and other illicit means with cooperation of criminal networks. Thus, in order to overcome and to succeed in the fight against terrorism a decisive fight with restrict follow up should be carried out at regional and country level against this profit seeking criminals and their horrible organizations while their leaders are mostly accustomed to secure places enjoying luxurious life style. Because, the relationship between terrorist groups and criminal organizations becomes more and more powerful and operational day-by-day who are preferring and utilizing the economic aspects of the war rather than the ideological aspects of it, therefore these groups are reluctant about reconciliation and peace. From the moment these criminals have transformed the war into an everenduring and lasting war, whose victims of evil deeds are selected from the unaware and poor people of Afghanistan. These enduring wars have caused the country with ever increasing and unbearable destructions and have blocked all kind of constructive initiatives as well as halted, if ever possible, the economic-social growth and developments. Of course, there are direct involvement of interventionist countries in Afghanistan's instability, as it cause the perpetuity of the wars which allows them to follow their strategic goals and push the wars outside their borders. Another United Nations report states that the Taliban are increasingly treating narcotics trafficker as their "godfather" rather than the waiting government, which shows that they support the criminal networks merely for securing their economic interests.

In December 2017, the Executive Director for the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in a report to the United Nations Security Council noted the deterioration of the situation in Afghanistan as a result of the production, trafficking and use of narcotics, the issue that previously was not paid attention to. The report recommends that more attention should be paid for this issue by international community otherwise the role of the criminals, anti-government groups and illicit economy increases and will lead to further increase in the instability of Afghanistan and cause chaos and insecurity in the region. The author recommended also recommended that a comprehensive and decisive fight should be undertaken against criminals by disrupting the financial channels of them from narcotics and other illicit means. It is necessary to deal with drug users seriously and consistently, and the legal prosecution of the perpetrators and confiscation of their assets should be according to the laws, serious and decisive without any exception and compromise.

It's obvious that day-by-day the relationships between terrorists and organized crime groups are developing and reinforcing each other, one plays the supporting role and the other the donor role. In this way, terrorist organizations are moving toward self-sufficiency, and their great benefit from these means makes them more likely to destabilize Afghanistan and other countries where there is a vacuum of power.

It is certain that the persistence of instability and lack of rule of law in these countries as well as the continuation of conflicts for their illegitimate interests are for the benefit of these terrorist groups and they will never retreat willingly from their positions; for them compromise, reconciliation, cease-fire, and other similar phenomena are meaningless. Therefore, a serious struggle, durable pursuit and unabated strife against these groups should be at the top of the duties of the governments, especially of the government of Afghanistan. It is obvious that the existence of rule of law is the main battle against organized crime groups. But enforcement of the law and the development of sovereignty on terrorism, organized crime, drug traffickers, armed Taliban, or ISIS are not possible or effective by solely telling or propagating against them, instead it requires well-thought programs and action to be effectively implemented.

Prior to the operations it is necessary to carry out a comprehensive political-religious campaign with all armed forces to convince them for defending their homeland. If their sacred homeland is at risk of division/seceding none of them will be safe from harm and destructions, they should be convinced that discriminating sentiment will destroy their homeland otherwise it is impossible to compensate and regrets may not help. Those who promote different kinds discriminations in fact they are helping the enemies. The armed forces of Afghanistan must be vigilant of any kind of discrimination not to allow it create divisions and dispersion as well as protect only people and religion with full unity. With such an approach it is possible to conquer the uncultured enemy and lead the country to peace, stability, prosperity and development.

At the same time to facilitate the triumph against terrorism the fight against organized criminal groups that finance terrorism should be vigorously pursued in order to make these organizations weaker and weaker.

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