

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



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The PyeongChang Winter Olympic: A Call for Peace

It is a long time that the nuclear conflict over North Korea has been one of the hottest world issues. The nuclear conflict over North Korea intensified during the Trump's Administration and the fear of a nuclear war was imminent in the world and especially in the Korean Peninsula.

In the midst of the nuclear conflict over North Korea when the threats of war and war rhetoric had reached its peak, a candle of hope was seen in the dark sky of the Korean Peninsula; the torch of winter Olympic. Without any doubts, the PyeongChang Winter Olympic enjoys a significant position for the world in general and for the Koreans in specific. The highlight of the games was the consent of the North Korea to send its sport delegation to the South to march under the unified flag with the South Korean team. What added to the importance of these games was the arrival of Kim Yo-jong, the younger sister of North Korea's ruler, Kim Jong-un, in South Korea as the Head of the North Korea's team.

"Global Korea" Foreign Policy Strategy as a Framework for Peace

This strategy sets out a number of roles of the South Korea in terms of its Foreign Policy and describes the shared understanding concerning the proper role and purpose of the South Korea as a player in the international arena. These roles are affected by expectations of the international system with its underlying norms as well as domestic interpretations of such norms.

The "Global Korea" foreign policy initiative of the Lee Myung-bak government is the basis of Korea's foreign policy and forms the construction of its role performance at the international stage. South Korea has increased its overseas development aid and participation in peacekeeping operations based on South Korea Global. Other roles include the repositioning as a global player, a culturally relevant nation as well as an economic power.

The PyeongChang Winter Olympic in the context of South Korea Global PyongCHang calls Winter Olympic as "Peace Olympics" and a "precious opportunity" to establish peace on the Korean Peninsula. It has already changed to "Peace Olympics" at the regional level. Last year, saw heated rhetoric exchanged between the US and North Korea, with the leaders of the two countries trading insults and threatening war. As a result, the risk of a new war, a nuclear war, was closer than any other time. But North Korean leader Kim Jung-un took everyone by surprise when he said he is open to sending a team for the Olympics, adding that both sides should "melt the frozen North-South relations". This is not but the result of the Global Korea initiative.

The Global Korea and its impacts on Afghanistan

The Republic of Korea's participation in International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan continued the ROK's tradition of providing military assistance to American-led overseas conflicts. However, South Korea's participation in the conflict comes as it expands the reach of its overseas investments, political influence and development assistance programs beyond Northeast Asia. Instability may not pose a direct threat to South Korea; Seoul stands to benefit from actively participating in security and reconstruction efforts. Successful programs in Afghanistan help highlight South Korea's effectiveness in peacekeeping and providing development assistance, garnering it increased influence globally.

In addition, South Korea's peacekeeping and development assistance to Afghanistan has been one of the most successful missions in the country. Afghanistan has benefited a lot from the South Korea's support in sport, reconstruction, education, security and other sectors. South Korea's development assistance to Afghanistan is one of the most successful international contributions. Thus, these projects are the bedrock of South Korea's approach to the country. South Korean development projects have aimed to provide Afghanistan with basic infrastructure and enhanced policing governance capabilities.

Participation of Afghan athletes as honorary participants

Afghanistan athletes couldn't win a share in PyonChang Olympic. However, two athletes were invited to take part in the games as an ad hoc measure due to the persistent civil conflicts in the country and to give an opportunity to Afghanistan to show its different image to the world. This image is not a war ravaged country, but a resilient nation that makes all efforts to live in peace and to be a responsible partner of the international community.

The Pyongvhang Winter Olympic 2018 is one of the significant events that will make history. These games started in the midst of the harsh rhetoric of the United States and its allies and North Korea row that could spark a lethal war, the nuclear war. These games are the outcome of the Golabla Korea Policy that the country tries to boost its role as a middle power in the international scenes. South Korea has played a constructive role both in peace building and development in the developing countries and in Afghanistan in the Korea Global Policy. South Korea has been training our sport teams, national security forces and has implemented development projects in different parts of the country that are considered as most quality projects in the country.



Accountability is the Key to Better Governance

By Dilawar Sherzai

One of the key requirements of good governance is accountability. Not only governmental institutions but also the private sector and civil society organizations must be accountable to the public and to their institutional stakeholders. The institutions in Afghanistan, on the other hand, havelacked this basic factor which has resulted in uncontrolled corruption and mismanagement. Therefore, it can be easily observed that billions of dollars have been spent for the development of the country yet the country is not able to develop as much as it could. As a matter of fact accountability can be achieved when there is transparency and the rule of law. In a democratic country the ultimate authority lies within the people. And ultimately, the government is answerable to the people. Moreover, to guarantee such accountability the modern states have established and strengthened their political systems in such a way that people have most of the power, though indirectly. However, in our country, Afghanistan, which claims to be democratic, the people are suffering because of the lack of any sort of accountability of the government and the deprivation of participation in the affairs of the state.

One of the basic ways the people can participate in the affairs of the state is through elections. Well-established and developed election systems can provide opportunities to all the members of the society to cast their votes and have their say in the making of the government. However, in Afghanistan this basic institution of democracy has not been able to function appropriately. The proper and well-developed election process can play an important role in creating accountable government. A political party or a politician in order to be elected by the votes of the people tries to perform properly so that it gets chance of remaining in authority for a longer period of time. If the political parties and the contestants in the elections come to know that they can win the election even without the consent of the people, through illegal ways, they will never remain accountable to the people and would not care much about the public opinion. Afghan political scenario, at the moment, is facing almost a similar sort of situation.

Another issue of unaccountability arises when a system is made personality-oriented, wherein the individuals are prioritized on the basis of their actual or assumed personality traits. This property is mostly found in dictatorial and authoritarian forms of government. Such ideologies are basically the remnants of the monarchies that could be found long ago in human history. The institutions, which can play a dominant role in establishing democratic culture and accountable system, are underestimated and even ignored in such systems. Our country Afghanistan

happens to be a similar country. The democratic institutions are ignored to a great extent while the political system circulates around the personalities. Even the election system is designed in such a way that promotes personality-worship. The absence of political parties and their influence within election system have made many overlook the importance of political parties which happen to be very important institution for the growth and institutionalization of democracy.

It is necessary for accountability that not only governmental institutions but also the private sector and civil society organizations must be accountable to the public and to their institutional stakeholders. Afghan government, on the other hand, has been formed in such a way that it is difficult to hold the government accountable for its policies and actions. As a matter of fact accountability can be achieved when there is transparency and the rule of law. However, both these characteristics seem to be non-existent in Afghan society. Transparency and rule of law can be maintained when there is proper separation of power and the different organs of state can function on their own – independently. In fact, judiciary and law enforcement agencies must be capable to hold the law as the top priority matter. In Afghan political system the separation of powers is not clear and the judiciary is composed of what the government decides. Moreover, the powerful and the rich are mostly considered above the law and the poor and weak have to go through the 'quagmire of law and order system'. The present rise in corruption, which is now turning out of control, is because of the same fact that the powerful are not made accountable to the rule of law.

A thorough analysis of Afghanistan's political scenario will depict that currently the political processes are also being kept aloof of accountability along with the institutions. The current efforts for the reconciliation and reintegration processes are very much non-participatory and non-transparent. As the major stakeholders are being kept away from the processes, a sort of ambiguity and distrust is being generated within different circles and the people of Afghanistan. Moreover, there is a disadvantage of such an approach as well – it is likely to result in improper and incomplete outcomes of the processes, which will further generate controversies.

Afghan authorities have in fact kept on striving to limit the power and authority to themselves and, on certain occasions, have used the same irresponsibly. The need of time is to make the political institutions and processes accountable to the people through proper democratization of the political structure.

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Peace Negotiation – An Endless Game

By Hujjatullah Zia

The Taliban guerilla fighters continued insurgency in Afghanistan despite being toppled by the US invasion in 2001. The disintegration of their regime could not stop militancy in the country and the strategy for combating terrorism was unproductive.

The "war on terror" failed to bear the desired result and the military mission of US soldiers was reduced to advisory role in December 2014, when the bulk of foreign troops withdrew from Afghanistan. This indicated that military action could not diminish militancy in the country.

To mitigate insurgency, both Kabul and Washington sought to bring the Taliban to negotiating table via Islamabad, which was believed to carry much weight in this regard. Meanwhile, Pakistani officials promised to use their "leverage" with a view to persuading the Taliban outfit to hold negotiations with Afghan government. Sartaj Aziz, advisor on foreign affairs to Pakistan's prime minister said, "We have some influence on them [Taliban] because their leadership is in Pakistan, and they get some medical facilities, their families are here. So we can use those levers to pressurize them to say, 'come to the table'".

The inconsistency in the US strategy in terms of combating terrorism and Islamabad's pressure on the Taliban elements brought them to peace table. Pakistan hosted the first round of face-to-face talks between the Taliban and Afghan government – which was attended by the US and Chinese observers – in the resort town of Murree, adjacent to Islamabad, on 7 July 2015. The Murree talks ended with an agreement to reconvene in August of the same year. Nonetheless, the second round of talks was derailed with the revelation of Mullah Muhammad Omar's death who reportedly died in a Karachi hospital in 2013.

Subsequent to Omar's death, Mullah Muhammad Akhtar Mansour was appointed as the Taliban's leader. Mansour held out against peace negotiation and called it as "enemy propaganda".

To break the stalemate, the first meeting of the Afghanistan-Pakistan-United States-China Quadrilateral Coordination Group (QCG) was held in Islamabad on 11 January 2016. Kabul government recognized the Mansour-led Taliban faction as the group's "legitimate interlocutor" and called it to join peace process. Pakistani's former COAS General Raheel Sharif traveled to Qatar, where Taliban's political office is located, to persuade the Taliban to participate in the QCG-backed talks. However, all this was proved abortive and Mansour orchestrated deadly attacks against Kabul government – including the

attack on 19 April 2016 in Kabul which killed 64 people and wounded 347. Being considered an obstacle before peace talks, Mansour was killed by the US drone strike on Pakistani soil on 21 May 2016. This enraged Pakistani officials who called it violation of territorial integrity and stalled the quartet after conducting five meetings.

With Mullah Haibatullah Akhundzada at the helm, the Taliban took an oath of revenge and carried out high-profile attacks against Kabul government. The recent spate of attacks in Kabul – which was referred to as Afghanistan's September 11 by President Muhammad Ashraf Ghani – was a strong blow to peace talks. Following the deadly attack on January 27 near Jamhuriat Hospital in Kabul, which killed and wounded hundreds of people, the US President Donald Trump denied pursuing negotiation with the Taliban and pledged to intensify attacks against them in the current year.

The recent spate of attacks in the heart of Afghanistan also renewed the blame game between Kabul and Islamabad as Afghan officials claimed that the attacks were organized across the border. Afghan government has frequently doubted Pakistan's bona fide intention to broker peace talks and accused her of harboring the Taliban militants, which was denied by Islamabad. On the other hand, Pakistani officials believed that the revelation of Mullah Omar's death by the Afghan intelligence agency, NDS, and Mansour's death by the US drone strike were deliberate attempts to undermine Pakistani-brokered peace efforts in critical times. Thus, the ebb and flow of the blame game left a gap between the two neighboring countries and there seems no strong will for a joint cooperation since the promises for supporting shared interests did not go beyond words.

To win the war on terror, the Trump's administration, along with Kabul government, seeks to reinforce attacks against the Taliban and their hideouts and increases the number of troops in Afghanistan. In short, military action is considered the last resort to reduce insurgency in the country.

Nevertheless, the regional stakeholders are of the belief that military deal will not tackle the unmitigated insurgency urging Afghanistan and its international allies not to turn their backs on peace talks. But the decade-long futile attempts to hold talks with the Taliban narrowed the chance for parley. If the Taliban were willing to come to peace table, they would decrease militancy, which is a preliminary precondition for talks.

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