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How to Curb Crimes?

Currently, Afghanistan is suffering from myriads of problems and among them the rising rate of crimes is a dominant one. The persistent insecurity and instability have provided the opportunity to the criminals to take full advantage. Moreover, the prevailing circumstances – the snowballing poverty and unemployment, growing injustice and unreliable law and order system – are further pushing the people towards crimes and corruption. It is always important to see that there is a prominent link between poverty and crimes. There are many people who commit crimes only because they are not able to feed their families or they are capable of fulfilling the ever-growing necessities of life.

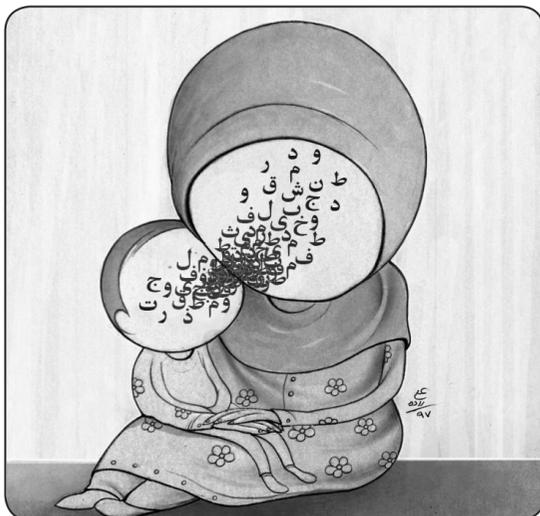
The important point is to realize that though poverty is one of the basic reasons of why people commit crimes, it is not the only reason. It can be observed that the criminals are mostly rich and have connections with authoritative people in the society. Moreover, there are criminals among the ruling elite and they commit huge crimes and never brought to justice.

Thus, there are different reasons behind the crimes that are committed within a society and they are not always evident to us. What is evident is the outcome of the crimes as it directly influences the people. Whether there is a murder, robbery or a kidnapping, the effect is very direct and can be felt by the victims, their relatives and other people who come across those crimes. These impacts of the crimes disturb the normal social life and may prove to be a ripple that can generate more crimes and disturbances within the society. Therefore, it is important to safeguard the society from these influences and control the crimes in the best possible manner.

Two types of strategies can be effective in this regard – short term and long term strategies. The short-term strategy is basically carried out by the law-enforcement system in the society that works through the institutions of courts and police. Law-enforcement system within a society basically works on the principle of identifying the criminals, bringing them to the justice and punishing them. The countries with weaker law-enforcement systems suffer to a large extent in providing justice to the alleged criminals. Such societies also suffer from lack of providence of timely justice. The system of courts is not very efficient. There are many cases that take many years in courts and yet remain undecided. The people who are influenced by such cases experience a complete change in their lives, which is from bad to worse and by the time they reach to justice, their lives are already destroyed. It has been also observed that the cases that belong to influential people are pursued immediately while the ones that involve the ordinary people are kept in files and they never reach to the courts.

And then there are detention centers that, in fact, do not transform the criminals into useful citizens, which is the basic philosophy of them. They, on the other hand, turn them into bigger criminals and if unfortunately, which mostly happens, there is a person who has been punished wrongfully; such a person becomes a true criminal after leaving the detention center. Unluckily, Afghanistan is one of the same types of countries that suffer from weak law-enforcement system. Though there has been much development in this regard, serious concerns still prevail and raise questions about the system. The police force in Afghanistan is still in the preliminary stages and it really requires years of attention and support to reach to a truly professional stage. There are many areas in the country where the police do have enough penetration and where they cannot reach to crimes and criminals. Then there are many areas wherein the people still go to traditional courts, which are dominated by religious and tribal leaders instead of going to the courts that are established by the government.

There is a great margin of tireless efforts for the improvement of detention centers as well. The basic facilities that the prisoners get are in no way enough and the environment is not very much healthy. Even within the detention centers the criminals are able to keep their communication with the outside world and are able to lead or to participate in their unlawful activities. It is really imperative to keep in consideration that the law-enforcement system can provide short-term solution to the crimes. If a society is really interested in controlling them there should be a long-term strategy that must deal with the basic reasons of the crime and try to nip the evil in the bud. There should be efforts to work on efficient administration, better economic condition, political stability, good governance, providence of basic human rights and control of corruption. Justice should reach to all the people of the society alike and the citizens must not feel alienated from the society. Moreover, there should not be discrimination as far as practical implementation of the criminal law is considered. Law should not serve the rich alone as is happening in many societies of the world; rather all should be treated equally in this regard.

**Saudis' Yemeni Headache Won't Go Away If and When the Guns Fall Silent**

By: James M. Dorsey

These are tough times for Saudi Arabia. The drama enveloping the killing of journalist Jamal Khashoggi and the brutal way in which it was carried out have captured public attention. In reality, however, Saudi Arabia's real problems began earlier as a result of its conduct of the Yemen war.

Saudi interference in Yemen that culminated in military intervention pre-dates the four-year-old war. Yemen has long been perceived by Saudi Arabia as a threat. That threat went far beyond current Iranian support for the Houthis. In fact, it was Saudi divide-and-rule tactics in Yemen, changing Saudi attitudes towards the Houthis and Saudi Arabia's global campaign to promote anti-Shiite, anti-Iranian strands of ultra-conservative Sunni Muslim Islam that helped pave the way for the current Yemen crisis.

It is only half a century ago that the Houthis were part of a Saudi effort to confront Arab nationalism. As an aside, Saudis and Israelis cooperated already then with Israeli military aircraft dropping weapons for the Saudi-backed rebels that included the Houthis. The deterioration in Saudi-Houthi relations accelerated just after the turn to this century when the Saudis funded the opening of a Salafi centre on the outskirts of the Houthi capital of Saada. The centre constituted not only a challenge to the Houthis but also to the power of the Houthi leadership. It successfully appealed to the socially disadvantaged as well as youth who were attracted by Salafism's egalitarianism, resented the power of the older generation and saw puritan Islam as a vehicle to challenge the traditional hierarchy. Fear of the Wahhabi/Salafi encroachment fuelled the Houthi's armed fight against the government of then President Ali Abdullah Saleh, his Saudi-backed successor Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi, and ultimately the Saudis themselves, which led to the kingdom's military intervention in Yemen in March 2015.

To initially counter the threat, the leadership of the Houthis, Zaidis who are Shiites with practices more akin to Sunni Muslim ritual, turned to Iran for support in religious education, a development that further angered the kingdom, and laid the groundwork for a war that has devastated a country that already ranked as one of the world's poorest.

The Saudi intervention was, however, about more than just confronting an Iranian proxy on its doorstep. For one, if anything, it was the intervention that really drove the Houthis and Iranians closer to one another. Even so, the Houthis remain an opportunity in a far broader Saudi-Iranian rivalry rather than a strategic target for the Iranians.

The Salmans, the king and his son, have since coming to office and despite the emergence of Donald Trump, taken to new heights a far more assertive foreign and military policy that was initially crafted by their predecessors in response to the popular Arab revolts in 2011. Make however no mistake, Saudi Arabia's new assertiveness is not a declaration of independence from the United States even if the kingdom is expanding its international relations as is evident in Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's recent tour of Asia. On the contrary, Prince Mohammed made that very clear in multiple interviews. His goal was to force the United States to reengage in the Middle East as the best guarantor for regional stability. The Saudis appear to be operating on the basis of Karl Marx's Verelendungs theory: things have to get worse to get better. That is the part of the backdrop of the stalled military intervention in Yemen. Dangling Iran as the real threat emanating from Yemen serves the Saudis' purpose.

In doing so Saudi Arabia, has proven to be driven. It is a drive that is fuelled by a perception that Iran poses an existential threat to Saudi Arabia. In fact, that may not be incorrect, certainly from the perception of the monarchy and its ruling family.

Saudi Arabia dazzles with the billions of dollars gained from oil exports that it is able to invest overseas and the investment opportunities it creates in the kingdom itself. But the truth of the matter is that long-term Saudi Arabia's future is not that of a regional hegemon.

Saudi regional leadership, even if it has been tarnished in Yemen in military and reputational terms, amounts to exploitation of a window of opportunity rather than reliance on the assets and power needed to sustain it. Saudi Arabia's interest is to extend its window of opportunity for as long as possi-

ble. That window of opportunity exists as long as the obvious regional powers – Iran, Turkey and Egypt – are in various degrees of disrepair. For now, punitive economic sanctions and international isolation take care of Iran. And that is what bites. Iran may not be Arab and maintains a sense of Persian superiority, but it has like Turkey and Egypt assets Saudi Arabia lacks: a large population base, an industrial base, a huge domestic market, a battle-hardened military, a deep-rooted culture, a history of empire and a geography that makes it a crossroads. Mecca and money will not be able to compete. Add to all of this two factors. The Islamic regime came to power in a revolution that preceded the 2011 Arab revolts by 32 years. Moreover, the Iranian revolution toppled a monarch not a president and an icon of US power in the Middle East.

Perhaps, more importantly, if one disregards the sanctioning of Iran, it is Iran rather than Saudi Arabia that is likely to shape the future energy architecture of Eurasia. Oil, in terms of demand is a diminishing commodity. If the long-term future is renewables, the medium term will be shaped by gas. Iran has gas, Saudi Arabia does not, at least not the kind of gas it can export. In fact, Iran, has the world's second largest gas reserves. Again, disregarding the sanctions, Iran would have in the next five years 24.6 billion cubic metres available for annual piped exports beyond its current supply commitments.

If, indeed, Iran poses an existential threat to the rule of the Al Saud family that it cannot eliminate and at best contain with the support of the United States, the question is what Saudi Arabia's goal in Yemen is as well as in its broader rivalry with Iran. There are those who coherently argue that Saudi Arabia's goal in Yemen may have initially been the roll-back of Houthi advances with their occupation of the Yemeni capital Sana'a and large parts of Yemen, destruction of Houthi power and forcing them into a situation in which they would have had to accept a Saudi-dictated end to the war.

Four years into the war, that is not a realistic goal. Short of that, the question is how sincere Saudi and for that matter UAE interest is in finding a way out of the war. It is conceivable that short of outright victory, Saudi Arabia would want to keep Yemen weak and the Houthis militarily on the defensive. That is at best only sustainable in the short term. Fact of the matter is that the reputational damage Saudi Arabia has suffered is starting to hurt witness measures taken by the US Congress and Germany's decision to halt arms sales to the kingdom. Conflicts are only ended, if not resolved if the pain of continuing the conflict is greater than the pain of ending it. In Yemen, Saudi Arabia could well be nearing the inflection point.

The problem is that even if the United Nations mediated peace talks ultimately produce an end to the war, Yemen, if anything, will pose in the post-war era an even greater and more real threat. Yemen for much of post-World War Two history has been an after thought in the international community if it sparked a thought at all. Yet, what a post-war Yemen will represent is a devastated country that largely needs to be rebuilt from scratch, a country whose traumatized population has suffered one of the world's worst humanitarian disasters and will need all the after-care that goes with that.

Beyond the taking care of the most immediate humanitarian issues, there is little reason to believe that investors and governments with massive aid packages and offers of reconstruction will be knocking on Yemen's doors. Like in Syria and Libya, the risk is of the emergence of a generation that has nothing to look forward to and nothing to lose. In Yemen, that generation is likely to deeply resent what it perceives Saudi Arabia has done to their country. If Saudi Arabia, long saw Yemen as the Gulf's most populous nation with a battle-hardened military that needed to be managed, that new generation is likely to put flesh on the skeleton.

Its not a pretty picture to look forward to. And it is one in which the damage has already been done. Having said that, its never too late to try to limit the damage, if not reverse affairs. That however would take the kind of courage and vision that Prince Mohammed and others in power elsewhere in the Middle East have yet to demonstrate.

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The Accidental Atlanticist

By: Mark Leonard

Two Americas were represented by two different vice presidents at the Munich Security Conference this year. Between them, former Vice President Joseph Biden certainly received the warmer reception, but Vice President Mike Pence may have unwittingly emerged as the savior of transatlantic relations.

In his address, Pence duly championed his boss, US President Donald Trump, as the "leader of the free world." But the "free world" he described was scarcely recognizable to the Munich audience. In the world Trump wants to lead, America is not the exceptional power, but merely a normal country putting its own interests first. By that logic, it is only reasonable to break from multilateral institutions that allow weaker countries to free-ride on American largesse.

In keeping with this vision, Pence used his speech to demand that Europeans spend more on defense, and to extol the virtues of the Trump administration's trade war against China. But the climax came when he enjoined Europe to get in line with the US in suspending the 2015 nuclear deal with Iran – the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) – and restoring sanctions on the Islamic Republic.

According to Pence, Iran is plotting another Holocaust, for which Europeans will bear partial responsibility unless they stop undermining US sanctions. This warning came on the tail of a US-hosted conference in Warsaw, which was designed to drive a wedge between European Union countries and derail the bloc's efforts to salvage the JCPOA.

Pence spoke for the America that works to divide and weaken Europe. The other America, represented in Munich by Biden, views the Trump administration's actions as an "embarrassment." In his speech, Biden described an America that does not want to turn its back on allies and that values democracy, the rule of law, freedom of the press, and a close partnership with Europe based on shared "human decency."

Biden ended his remarks to great applause, declaring, "We will be back." Was he referring to an outward-looking America, or to a future Biden presidency? Many of those present hoped for both.

The rapturous applause following Biden's appearance was markedly at odds with the awkward, stony silence that followed Pence's address. The contrast was reminiscent of the early 2000s, when disillusioned transatlanticists took refuge in The West Wing, wherein the cerebral character of President Josiah Bartlet (played by Martin Sheen) stood in stark contrast to George W. Bush and his administration's disingenuous brutality.

But such escapism yields only false hope. Rather than being lulled into complacency by Biden's reassuring words, Europeans would be better off heeding Pence. Only by growing up, paying its way, and clarifying its goals can Europe repair the transatlantic relationship and ensure a healthy and durable partnership.

The fact is that Europeans and Americans have long lied to themselves and

each other about the extent of their common interests and values. European and US strategic interests have been diverging at least since the end of the Cold War. America rescued a hapless Europe in the Balkan Wars of the 1990s. But by the time of the Kosovo War at the end of that decade, Europeans had begun to wake up to their responsibilities. In the 2008 Russo-Georgian War, and in the conflict in Ukraine since 2014, it was Europeans, not Americans, who led the diplomatic response and imposed the strongest sanctions on Russia.

Moreover, Europe is the only party ever to have mobilized in the name of collective defense under Article 5 of the NATO treaty. Following the terror attacks of September 11, 2001, Europeans sent forces to distant wars in the Middle East, over which they had little control.

In hindsight, it is clear that those wars destabilized Europe's neighborhood and, eventually, Europe itself. America's exclusive focus on counterterrorism left war-torn Middle Eastern countries with fragile governments, or none at all. And in recent years, Europeans have increasingly borne the costs in the form of terrorism and influxes of refugees.

As for the US, many of its 320 million citizens no longer understand why they should have to protect 500 million Europeans, who live, after all, on a relatively peaceful and prosperous continent. They know that their country is in an escalating competition with China in the Indo-Pacific, and are thus shocked that Europeans would join the Chinese-led Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank. Ultimately, Europeans are left between a rock and a hard place. They, too, want to push China harder on trade and investment issues. But the best way to do that is through the World Trade Organization, which the Trump administration is actively undermining.

The divergence in values is no less pronounced. For their part, Europeans support international institutions, rules-based arrangements, and multilateralism generally. But America has always been ambivalent about treaties and institutions that might constrain its sovereignty or defy its objectives.

While Trump and Pence crudely state what today's America wants, Biden is selling a vision of America that it no longer obtains. The US government does not have the American people's consent to act on the world stage as it once did. While Americans still recognize the importance of sustaining US economic and military primacy vis-à-vis China, they appear to have rejected the elite consensus on trade, defense spending, and diplomacy.

The transatlantic partnership will always be Europe's most important relationship. But it can last only if both sides take responsibility for their own affairs. The alliance would be immeasurably stronger if it were based on an honest assessment of each side's interests and values, rather than on quaint illusions of fellow feeling.

Pence's blunt speech in Munich may have been painful to hear; but one hopes that it will bring an end to European complacency and point the way to a renewal of transatlantic relations on realistic terms. If that turns out to be the case, Pence will have won the title of transatlantic hero – whether he wants it or not.

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