

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

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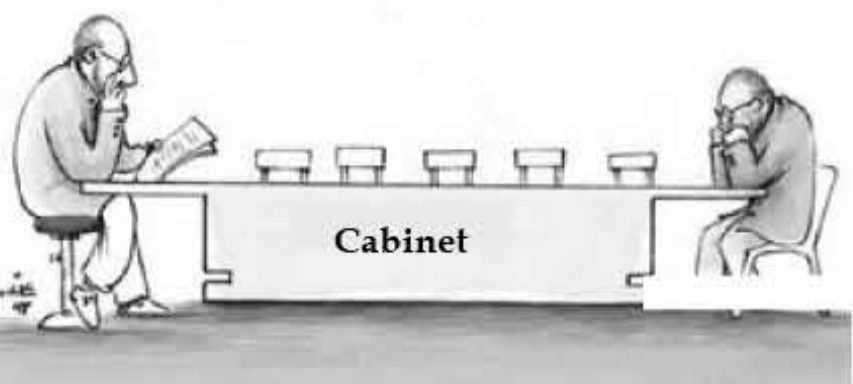
Incumbent Government Should Stand Firm to Awaiting Issues

Afghanistan is a nascent democratic state, governed by ruling elites, consisting of state institutions; judiciary, executive, legislative body, media and large standing army making it unbeatable. Following successful formation of unity government, the masses begin to eye the proper resolution of multifaceted problems, waiting their fates for long. There is some problem with cabinet formation given an all-encompassing government usually comes across similar problem. The government must go past this stage, to enter into next stage of getting across problems. Some of the pleading problems are highlighted below. Afghanistan faces daunting challenges - poverty is one of the challenges pressing it hard. 36% of 30m population lives below poverty line including endemic poverty and lack of human capacity, insecurity weak governance and institutionalized corruption; opium exports equal to 22% of gross domestic product; rampant gender inequality; and policy, regulatory, and institutional constraints that have limited effective growth in public and private sectors. The government that assumed the office must work out a tangible plan, downsizing the problems. The dream of a progressive Afghanistan could not materialize even subsequent to installation of democratic setup. Our beloved motherland passes through diverse security, political and economic troubles. Every problem has got its own dynamics and demands a variant solution. Putting cognitive abilities into practice the public officials can reduce the size of problems if they can't eradicate them. The politicians representing their electoral constitution not necessarily should come up to the expectation of their Electoral College but to the voice of faithfulness and sanity. Afghanistan faces multifaceted issues. After a decade long period of rule, the government couldn't avert the escalating graph of despondency. Neither the rule of law, administrative accountability enforced nor elimination of social ills, terrorism and corruption materialized. However, the politics of allegation and counter allegation was well exercised worth seeing. Sometimes foreigners were accused of evil practices sometime international community, the government remained the icon of achievements. High ranked public officials senior politicians involved in bank scandals and corruption, Taliban involved in sever human rights violation, were not brought to book and that seemed not the government's concern or priority. Consequently, multiple unresolved problems were left to the new government.

Despite countless challenges left to the new government to face, financial management will be the biggest problem pleading immediate attention. To provide a sustainable back-up to its financial needs, the government relies on loans accompanied with handsome amount of interest. According to finance commission head, the total loans amounted 2 billion Afghanis which were received from World Bank (WB) nine times, Asian Development Bank (ADB) 14 times, once from IMF, Islamic Development Bank (IDB) four times and Saudi Arabia Monetary Agency two times. A good amount is earmarked for interest of these loans. The international community lending a helping hand by providing aids to Afghanistan should be relied the most that can be done by establishing better relationships with them. The government can only get rid of these loans and interests by executing short term and long term plans, playing supportive role in hasty growth of business. Additionally, there are many other recommendations the international community anticipates of Kabul government to get done earning their confidence for future funding, amongst which maintenance of human rights stand prior. It should be learned that Afghanistan cannot develop without a sustainable economical road map drawn and implemented that grants them financial independence. The state of self reliance can only be achieved when heavy investments are made in the field of human resource developmental programs. In addition to financial independence, Afghanistan is in dire need of socio-political assistance and trained official in all fields of human endeavors. Any country extending selfless services must be warmly received. In that pursuit a cordial relationship must be developed and tried to preserve the previous ones. Afghanistan was pushed to directionless avenues of battered relation with international community, which will not certainly serve Afghanistan's interest.

Law and order and security concerns remain to be another obstacle on the way to successful Afghanistan. The government must enforce rules that will make it possible for Afghans to live together without conflict. Harmony promoting education and equitable distribution of resources and services narrows down the differences whilst paving the way for peaceful coexistence. There is a documented existence of law and with negligible application or prejudicial application, serve none's interest. Seeing the worsened state of affairs, sometimes one reaches to conclusion that "might is right and haplessness is curse". In our beloved country, seemingly, the militants and none-state actors have grown to an extent that easily evades the loosely held net of law and order and turn triumphant.

The government and public officials must now realize that the dream of a vibrant, progressive and developed Afghanistan can only materialize provided that a handsome amount of budget is allocated for education, health, infrastructure and governance. We must learn it that a healthy, literate and well governed Afghanistan is a secure and developed Afghanistan.



Fearing Challenges Await Afghanistan

By Hasibullah Bashar Dust

In fact, the most positive news in 2014 for Afghan nation was the political front with a landmark power-sharing agreement between Abdullah Abdullah and Ashraf Ghani in September to create a government of national unity. This represented the first democratic transfer of power in the history of Afghan people and also marked the end of the post-9/11 Hamid Karzai's leading period.

However, since their agreement, three months have passed by, yet there are still ifs and buts in forming the new cabinet. The President, breaking his own deadlines three times, has not been successful to make a single permanent appointment except that of his national security adviser and many more have been dismissed. Three months after his inauguration, the economic growth is near zero due to the reduction of the international military aid shortfalls and security challenges have remained alarming.

Both CEO and President are too vulnerable against their promises made to the people during their campaigns. They are too busy in fighting for power sharing in forming the new cabinet, and have forgotten to realize that our security forces suffer and the nation is bleeding due to rise of violence. Taliban insurgents still rock the capital, Kabul and other major cities and towns with their high profile terror attacks.

The new government has completely failed to bring any reasonable changes since past three months, except the rise in terrorist attacks. Now, the withdrawal of the U.S-led troops from the country at this fragile point of time has created another big tension because the Afghan National Security Forces are not fully ready to shoulder the security responsibility. Only advising and other short-term assistance will not respond to the current and future challenges. There is frustration going on based on the capability of the new government and level of violence in the country that once again the state may fall in instability. There have been persistent claims when the war on terror was launched in Afghanistan that the Taliban would not survive against our power. The United States Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld on Nov. 6, 2001 claimed that the Taliban and Al-Qaeda would not survive more than a year. They would be eliminated before the deadline. Yet, they have fought a resilient insurgency against NATO and Afghan forces for 13 years, with violence now at record levels countrywide and Taliban now call the U.S-led withdrawal from Afghanistan a clear indication of their defeat and disappointment. Their statements come when the Taliban are in great rise and gaining grounds, starting from northeastern parts of the country to the capital, Kabul.

Given the facts, the situation is turning grimmer, as the government is too busy over forming the cabinet and the U.S-led war against Taliban and Al-Qaeda has formally ended. One of main crisis is the worsening security situation that puts the whole nation into grave concerns. As a result, the nation has mixed feelings about the drawdown of foreign troops and its aftermath. Many believe that the Taliban and Al-Qaeda whose power was once underestimated by the U.S think-tanks have finally defeated the world's most powerful state over their mission in Afghanistan. For the time being,

their steady confrontation with U.S-led war has changed the prospects of U.S's political dialogue toward Afghanistan. Observing the ground realities, the question is, "How the Afghan nation will overcome the upcoming devastating challenges with its only 350,000 less capable police and military forces in the absence of foreign troops and insufficient funding? It means that the new year can be a very difficult period with heavy challenges for National Unity government. Since 2001, the fast-growing economy has become steadily more dependent on foreign aid. There has been already a fall-off in overall foreign aid levels, following the draw-down of international troops. Their presence in the battlefield was not only ensuring good security situation but also provided a security umbrella under which some of the aid agencies have operated in recent years. There has been only very limited success in economic diversification since 2001. The concern is that the economy becomes increasingly dependent upon drug exports, such as opium and heroin as aid is reduced.

The government needs to change their focus from cabinet a little to other paralyzing crisis too. Both the leaders need to respond to the questions of the people and bring little order to the security challenges and economic devastation. In order to overcome the upcoming challenges, government officials will need to focus on overcoming corruption, poverty, radicalization, illiteracy and the money brought by the need to grow illegal drugs in regions must be tackled to demolish the funding resources of Taliban, where there is much economic alternative. Thus, the leaders themselves need to assert their authority over administration, government and officials. There is also the reality that officials have been errant in failing to change their long-standing culture of corruption where policing and justice were distributed on the basis of one's ability to pay. It is this laissez-faire attitude that made the security forces open to infiltration by Taliban supporters, resulting in the high rate of civilian casualties and police alike.

No doubt, the country stands at a historical crossroads which could see significantly greater destabilization, as it has been warned by American political experts. The nation is already going through a fearing insecurity challenges. The security situation is likely to be rocky in the coming weeks, especially after the winter ends when the Taliban had stepped up operations in previous years.

The nation will experience unexpected consequences if the National Unity government does not consolidate its power and legitimacy and preserve some of the fragile gains in the country, acquired since 2001. There is also a prospect of significantly greater security instability in the country which will intensify the pressure on the economy and the new government will need to respond back accordingly.

They need to be little more committed and dedicated in forming the new cabinet before further devastation hits the country's both economic and political fragile setups. The government authorities must take precautionary steps before the Taliban offensives begin.

Overall, let us now greet the end of NATO-led combat mission in Afghanistan who fought against Taliban and its alliance to establish peace and stability in the country. From now on, it is up to the Afghan nation to respond accordingly to the upcoming challenges to defend the little gains and stand united for the good of their own fate.

Loneliness - A Troublesome Issue

By Hujjatullah Zia

What should young people do with their lives today? Many things, obviously. But the most daring thing is to create stable communities in which the terrible disease of loneliness can be cured." - Kurt Vonnegut

I sometimes feel very lonely. I've even thought that I suffer from depression. Alas, my loneliness doesn't last very long and neither do the feelings of doom and gloom. Usually, I am back to my chipper and ambitious self in 24 hours.

How do I bounce back? I sob as if a loved one has passed on. It's a dark, heavy and ugly cry. But it helps me release all the fear and doubt that I carry and rarely speak of.

One trouble with most of us is that we don't use the resources within ourselves. We are all neglectful of powers that we share as our human birthright, capacities for distraction from ourselves, for intelligent enjoyment, for receiving and giving. Through lack of mental and moral and spiritual exercises our souls shrink and shrivel and break out into maladies that almost inevitably include the feeling of misery and isolation usually described as loneliness. If we were properly related to ourselves and to the world we should never lack for company and we should never be lonely.

I remember vividly when it was reported by BBC that Sarah Shourd's mind began to slip after about two months into her incarceration. She heard phantom footsteps and flashing lights, and spent most of her day crouched on all fours, listening through a gap in the door.

That summer, the 32-year-old had been hiking with two friends in the mountains of Iraqi Kurdistan when they were arrested by Iranian troops after straying onto the border with Iran. Accused of spying, they were kept in solitary confinement in Evin prison in Tehran, each in their own tiny cell. She endured almost 10,000 hours with little human contact before she was freed. One of the most disturbing effects was the hallucinations. "In the periphery of my vision, I began to see flashing lights, only to jerk my head around to find that nothing was there," she wrote. "At one point, I heard someone screaming, and it wasn't until I felt the hands of one of the friendlier guards on my face, trying to revive me, that I realized the screams were my own."

We all want to be alone from time to time, to escape the demands of our colleagues or the hassle of crowds, but not alone and alone. For most people, prolonged social isolation is all bad, particularly mentally. We know this not only from reports by people like Shourd who have experienced it first-hand, but also from psychological experiments on the effects of isolation and sensory deprivation.

We've known for a while that isolation is physically bad for us. Chronically lonely people have higher blood pressure, are more vulnerable to infection. Social support is psychologically powerful. Actual, university level scientific studies have found that human beings are intensely social creatures, and that if they don't feel socially supported they become more at risk for not only stress, but also physical health problems as well. So, it's no surprise that those that feel that they're not socially supported - whether they have no friends, or they have many friends but don't feel supported by those friends - can feel anxious.

"The immune system has to make a decision between fighting viral threats and protecting against bacterial invasions because it has a fixed fighting capability. In lonely people who see the world as a threatening place, their immune systems choose to focus on bacteria rather than viral threats. Without the antiviral protection and the body's antibodies produced against various ills, the result means a person has less ability to fight cancers and other illnesses. Those who are socially isolated suffer from higher all-cause mortality, and higher rates of cancer, infection and heart disease."

A research conducted by Cole and Dr. John Cacioppo shows that social isolation can push blood pressure up into the danger zone for heart attacks and strokes. It undermines regulation of the circulatory system so that the heart muscle works harder and the blood vessels are subject to damage by blood flow turbulence. The research further indicates that loneliness can destroy the quality of sleep, so that a person's sleep is less restorative, both physically and psychologically. Socially isolated people wake up more at night and spend less time in bed actually sleeping.

One is recommended to make sure that s/he is trying to stay as active and busy as they can, and never allowing themselves to succumb to that feeling of being alone on purpose. When one is alone, s/he should give themselves things to do, including puzzles, books, funny shows on TV, and whatever else they can find to lessen their anxiety further. Staying busy is a useful way to keep their mind off of their anxieties. I believe that the best way to get rid of loneliness is to commune with our Lord with tearful eyes and to polish our souls in solitude. Sometimes we need to be with our own. Let us make use of our solitude as the poets who produce the best poems in their solitude. Hence, although isolation and keeping distant from social life is injurious, yet we can use it in our own favor.

Hujjatullah Zia is the newly emerging writer of the Daily Outlook Afghanistan. He can be reached at outlookafghanistan@gmail.com

Chairman / Editor in Cheif: Dr.Hussain Yasa

Vice Chairman: Kazim Ali Gulzari

Phone: +93 799 005 019/799 408 271/777 005 019

E-mail: mail@outlookafghanistan.com, outlookafghanistan@gmail.com

Address: V-137, Street 6, Phase 4, Shahrak Ormeed Sabz, Kabul, Afghanistan