

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



January 20, 2015

Political Will needed for the Prosperity of Afghanistan

On the outset of 2015, the increasing insurgencies around the globe, and fanatic approaches towards the domestic issues in the Islamic countries and international subjects serve as great alert to the current circumstances. Terrorism, war, violence and insecurity have totally beleaguered the people in many parts of the world.

In the growingly violent environment, leaders of the terrorist organizations have taken the form of so called religious leaders and speak out with religious tone and style. The conception originates from terrorist acts and sectarian violence. Taliban, ISIL and like minded militants groups have been targeting several religious groups whom they call as infidels.

Why should we, after more than 13 years of battle and suffering, still anticipate a bloodier year, which remained unpleasant for Afghans and international forces alike. Are they so weak that they cannot avoid these bloody fate or there other mysteries this lingering and catastrophic conflict? Certainly, Taliban and other insurgent groups are not so strong not to be defeated.

Rule of law projects and civilian works remain vital to contributing to establishment of authority of Afghan government across the country. Military operations will not lead to durable security unless they are followed by good governance and providing the people with opportunities to savor in benefits of the government's presence.

Over the last few years, government's weakness and inability to deliver public services to its citizens has been one of the factors that have emboldened Taliban insurgency. While military offensive is necessary to defeat the irreconcilable militants, the fanatic fringes, not willing to break links with Al-Qaeda network and ISIL (Daesh), development and welfare projects remain key to changing the minds of those locales who have been under the control of medieval style of Taliban rule.

Many analysts are of the view that now a the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) has taken the control of the security in Afghanistan will face not only a "resilient and growing insurgency" and that there is a crisis of confidence among Afghans - in both their government and the international community - that undermines international community's credibility and emboldens the insurgents. Although the International forces withdrew from Afghanistan still Afghans have chance to reach prosperity and free themselves from lingering sufferings, they must continue to seize the presence of international community wisely by helping the development projects.

Continued distrust in the government and international community will plunge them into irreversible crisis for good. Obviously, Afghan people do not support the presence of Taliban and its associates in Afghanistan, so, in order to drive them out to pave the ground for modern life and development, local people must do their best to contribute to this end. Local elders and Shuras must take the lead in this regard. Only a developed and modern Afghanistan will get rid of external interferences and continued tragedies.

Although there are reason why Taliban and like minded groups are getting strong with the passage of time and one of the main reasons is that Afghan government with the help of international community could not able to cut the source of their income. Militants earn hundreds of million by cultivating poppy while Afghan government say that International community did not work seriously to defeat this menace. It is extremely ridiculous. We are addicted to international assistance, even for things that we can do ourselves easily. But in the case of the mighty profitable business of opium production, a strong political will of the Government is more important than the international assistance. What alternatives could be there? If you go back to the history of opium production in Afghanistan, it is not older than the conflict starting from the time of Soviet invasion. The mainstay of Afghanistan economy has been agriculture for centuries, and the opium is a very new phenomenon that has started with all the political motives behind. And a solution is also based on the political will of the Government, which has been very soft in the so-called war against drugs.

The common mass population is very conservative and strict with faith. A strong religious campaign against the poppy crop production being Haram can make a big difference. Before 40 years ago, there were no poppy crop, and people could live the life standard they are living today. Basically with availability of a strict policy implementation and strong legislation will reduce the opium production, as farmers know the alternative themselves. It is very simple to blame the poor peasants for poppy production, while the opium mafia groups are the real profiteers of this business. And the lack of political will by the Government has very much behind that. The international community has been ignoring the war against opium, being very soft. The US in particular has turned its eye from opium trade and mafias involved, otherwise it is not that impossible to make Afghanistan an opium-free state in a couple of years.

In fact, the people of Afghanistan must learn to take the responsibility for their life and country. The misery in this part of the world will not end unless the people themselves start working to eliminate it.

Nation-Building

By Dilawar Sherzai

The United States has spent billions of dollars since 2001, fighting two wars in vastly different places. A small portion of this effort has been dedicated to what has commonly been called nation-building. In fact, U.S. mission has been a mixture of both state-building, which further develops the institutions of government, and nation-building, which constructs roads, schools and other projects. This approach is not entirely new, but these initiatives have become an important and accepted paradigm for the conduct of war in this century. Generally, in Iraq and Afghanistan, the United States has engaged in limited state-building rather than nation-building. U.S. efforts, so far, have concentrated on building the security infrastructure. This infrastructure of military and police serves to provide security and prop up U.S.-friendly governments rather than build the political and economic infrastructure for sustainable economic reconstruction and democratic institutions. In the 20th century, the United States made a name for itself in the nation-building business in Europe and Asia. But these efforts have been superseded in this century by a unilateral and, at times, questionably moral enterprise, exemplified in U.S. actions in Iraq and repeated, mistake for mistake, in Afghanistan. U.S. involvement in nation-building endeavors began after the Second World War. Early efforts in Germany and Japan were largely successful and morally justified. The actions were based on the need to protect many countries, including U.S., from the domination of an ideology that lacked respect for the moral value of individuals and the collective value of states. The successful nation-building experiments in Germany and Japan, however, did not serve as a proto-type for Afghanistan and Iraq. The modern concept of humanitarian intervention to be used along with military force began during Bill Clinton's presidency when he sent troops to Somalia. The presumption was that the United States had no vital interest in Somalia but felt compelled to help on moral grounds. However, nation-building in Somalia failed for lack of resources. In Kosovo and Bosnia, however, U.S. had modest successes in nation-building with better resources. As U.S. endeavors into nation- and state-building gained acceptance, scholars and practitioners have advanced a number of theories about the conduct of nation-building and the importance of specific factors for success. James Dobbins, for instance, considers nation-building to be "the use of armed force in the aftermath of conflict to underpin a transition to democracy." Francis Fukuyama outlines the consensus on the practical steps for nation-building: re-establishing security, reconstruction of political authority, and economic and political development. While these goals are reasonable, they are difficult to achieve. Each component in nation-building depends on several factors, with the most important being the moral component for why nation-building is being conducted in that country.

Stabilization and economic reconstruction are essential but even more so is legitimacy. Acceptance of occupation by the local population figures in many theories of nation-building. This is as much a moral principle as a pragmatic consideration. And yet the moral legitimacy of the enterprise, reflected in local acceptance and participation, has often been an afterthought, as was the case in Iraq. Larry Diamond, who first supported and then became disenchanted with the war in Iraq, eventually recognized that the "deep Iraqi suspicions of American motives combined with the memory of Arabs' historical confrontation with Western colonialism and their resentment of the U.S. stance in the Israeli-Palestinian struggle to generate a massive legitimacy gap for the occupation." Complicating matters further, it took the United States nearly two years to bring indigenous Iraqis into the structure of their newly formed government. Questionable intentions, combined with faulty execution, made a mess of U.S. forays into nation-building in the dawn of this new century.

Nation-building in Afghanistan has barely materialized, despite the toppling of the Taliban in 2001. The United States neglected nation-building in Afghanistan and provided little, if any, resources for it at the beginning of the war. In contrast, the United States committed 25 times more money and 50 times more troops per capita in Kosovo than in Afghanistan. Only in the tenure of Obama administration, has U.S. leadership seemed to remember that counterinsurgency requires nation-building and the resources necessary to achieve such a goal. As America looks at many difficult options in Afghanistan, Americans should learn lessons from mistakes made in Iraq, while also attending to the vast differences between the two countries. One key mistake was to ignore the rebuilding of the destroyed social fabric and economic infrastructure of Iraq and focus almost exclusively on security forces. Today, Iraq is no more stable - or economically prosperous - than it was in the first months after the war in 2003.

This failure in nation-building occurred even though Iraq had several advantages that made success more likely, including a large, educated professional class and a civil administration. In contrast, Afghanistan has neither a large educated professional class nor basic modern infrastructure. Iraq can rely on large oil revenues, while Afghanistan does not produce much for export except for opium. Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as other Muslim nations, have had a brutal experience with foreigners for centuries. This experience has led Iraqis to be inhospitable to foreign troops. The simple fact that Iraqi culture cannot thrive with foreign boots on the ground escaped many supporters of the war in Iraq. The result has been continued resistance, even up to the spate of recent bombings. Currently in Afghanistan, partially because of the brutality of the Taliban, its population was not as virulently opposed to the U.S. presence as the Iraqis. However, the lack of a full understanding of the cultural context may still lead to fatal mistakes.

Although early on U.S. advanced the notion of self-government, in practice the Karzai government remained a "puppet to American interests", some analysts say. This arrangement robbed the new Afghan government of its legitimacy. The presence of resources is absolutely essential in a place like Afghanistan. Unfortunately, despite the rhetoric of Marshall plan for Afghanistan, this was the most poorly resourced American venture into nation-building in more than sixty years. Can nation-building, as it is currently conceived, convert a tribal nation into a modern state? Does the United States have the resources, manpower and will to sustain such an effort? Nation-building efforts in Afghanistan seem to fall into two equally ill-advised categories. Some advocate nation building at the point of a gun. Others suggest the best way to build a state is to abandon the country, and leave it to the citizens to build their own state. But for nation-building to succeed in Afghanistan, the United States must find a third way between force and indifference. Nation-building in Afghanistan should have three pillars. First, the nation-building effort should have an international face, with participation by the UN and other countries in the region, rather than the United States and NATO alone. Second, the United States should maintain the maximum number of troops possible in Afghanistan while maintaining the right to disrupt Al-Qaeda and like minded groups' bases. Third, the effort should concentrate on training the local population for self-sufficiency, so that Afghans are able to manage their country and develop institutional infrastructure. The Afghan people must have a large stake in shaping and running their country. Assistance programs paid for by the fund would operate outside of these host nations. A minimal number of technical trainers and advisors, accompanied by security forces, would be sufficient for internal operations. Efforts should focus on building schools, roads, hospitals, and other primary components of infrastructure.

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Selfishness - A Satanic Character

By Hujjatullah Zia

The human being who lives only for himself finally reaps nothing but unhappiness. Selfishness corrodes. Unselfishness ennobles, satisfies. Don't put off the joy derivable from doing helpful, kind things for others.

A self-centered and selfish person lives only for himself. He does not know how to love and respect others. He argues over small matters and his life becomes but an endless journey in unhappiness.

Everybody is bound to be selfish from time to time. Although many elements of our society may encourage it, selfishness just hurts other people, sometimes at little to no personal gain. A selfish person also ends up losing friends or loved ones because no matter how charming or interesting a selfish person may be, a relationship with a selfish person is hard to maintain. A truly selfish person would never consider the possibility that they are selfish.

Most of us have a hard time with criticism, but at the same time, we know somewhere deep down that some criticism is necessary for improvement.

But selfishness rejects any sort of criticism. This is the person who completely flips out when someone criticizes them, for anything. They assume a true friend of theirs is a person who focuses only on their positives and ignores their negatives. So, when someone offers helpful critique with the full intention of helping them, they interpret it as scorn and disrespect.

Most are familiar with the story of Cain - how God rejected his sacrifice while accepting that of Abel, his brother. Cain, jealous of his brother and having no regard for anyone but self, murdered his brother.

Walking a mile in another man's shoes can change your life for eternity. Of course, you won't be able to actually do this, but you can put in the effort into thinking about the other people around you and considering how they might be feeling in any given situation. Consider how your mother, your friend, your boss, or a random person on the street may be feeling before you take action, and you may find that the world is not as clean cut as you thought it was. The more you practice empathy and wondering what other people are going through, the sooner you'll be able to give up your selfishness. For example, before you start yelling at your waitress for giving you the wrong order, think about how she might be feeling. She might be tired from being on her feet for ten hours in a row, overwhelmed from having to work too many tables, or just

feeling sad about something else; is it really necessary for you to make her feel terrible just to get what you want.

Selfish people cringe when someone else goes in the spotlight because they always want it for themselves. Well, if you want to stop being selfish, then you have to not only give up the spotlight, but you have to enjoy letting other people take it. Stop trying to be the bride at every wedding and the corpse at every funeral and let other brides have their time in the spotlight. Be proud of other people for achieving things instead of wishing it was you. Let go of feelings of jealousy or bitterness and relish in the success of others. If you're always wishing to be the one who is the most successful, then ask yourself if you're missing something in your life that keeps you from being content with what you're achieving.

People who are selfish are always thinking that their way of living life is best and that anyone who tries to give them feedback is just trying to do them harm or has ulterior motives. Sure, you can't believe all of the criticism that comes your way, but if you focus enough, you might see that a lot of people are telling you the same thing. You can even work on asking for feedback when you're struggling instead of just accepting it when it comes your way. That takes strength of character.

Being part of a team is a great way to become less selfish, whether you're on a project for work, part of your school's debate team, or a member of a bowling league in your community. Just being part of a group and learning to balance the needs of each individual member with the needs of the whole group can help you realize how important it is to give up some of your selfishness. Being a leader of this team can help you become even less selfish. You'll see that the needs of any group can be more important than the needs of any individual, and that some compromise is inevitable for making people happy.

Overall, selfishness devours one's virtue and ruins his/her morality. A selfish act will be poignant to our friends and hurt their feelings easily. When we focus on our own benefits at the cost of others' resentments, we may be deprived of their kindness and friendships. Hence, to avoid being loathed, we are supposed to practice upon the Golden Rule and nourish our personality with humanly characteristics. The more selfless and sociable we become, the more we will be loved and the more friends we will find. So, let us kill selfishness in ourselves so as to revive virtue and morality.

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