

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



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Negotiations as Conflict Management: A Model for a Win-Win Approach to Conflicts

Afghanistan is a country with persistent conflicts. If one may go through the history of the country, will come to a common conclusion that every government more or less has been facing them; Conflicts. If we only have a glance at the 3 past years, at least had 4 deadlocked political conflicts; refusal of the presidential election results, tensions on the mechanisms of power distribution between the two winning teams, conflict between the President and his first vice president and tensions between the ousted Balkh provincial governor and the central government. I assume, the roots of all these conflicts lie in political economy, as one of the core causes of the political tensions, in our country.

Thus, this article is an analytical study of the political economy of Afghanistan as one of the main causes of conflict here. The widely accepted generic definition of the term "political economy" means "the political basis of economic decision making and economic basis of political decision making. In other words, it means the way in which economic resources are generated and used by participating segments and actors, internal and external, located in specific areas characterized by so-called internal conflicts, to ensure their own existence and extend their own political and economic privileges.

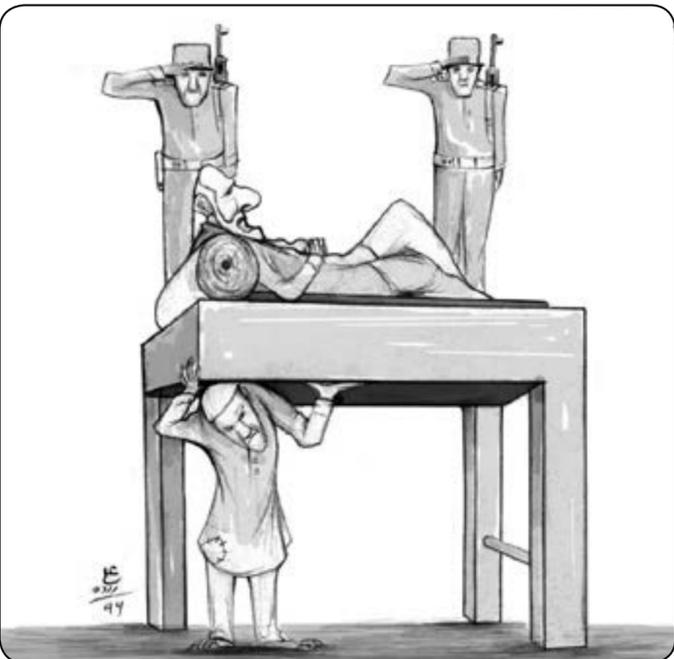
In this article, I would like to use the concept of conflict transformation as the framework for analysis. Conflict transformation is a process in which a conflict changes in scope and scale, both in intensity and geographic space, actors involved, the "casual factors that move and ignite the conflict and its consequences. To be precise, conflict is a dynamic phenomenon. The types of conflicts that I am concerned with in this article are purely domestic conflicts. Considering the current conflict between the central government and Ata Mohammad Noor, the provincial governor of Balkh province is typical example of this type of conflicts. No external actors or actors were involved in the beginning. However, as more often than not, the dynamic of the conflict quickly expands the borders of the country drawing neighboring countries, regional powers and even super powers to it. As we witnessed, this conflict at the beginning was considered as an internal issue between the central government and Mr. Noor, the provincial governor of Balkh province, but then it transformed to an ethnic conflict and later transformed to a wider circle, an alliance conflict, that made the powerful chief of police of Qandahar, to react against it; later it transformed it to a national issue and made Mike Pence, The US Vice president, to react on it and to call the National government to seek ways to resolve it through negotiations. Analysis of Political economy of conflicts shall encompass diverse forces both in terms of the root causes and in the negotiation context. The economic political forces that give rise to the tensions include personal ethics and endemic corruption. As Afghanistan is a country prone to various conflicts, it is necessary for the government institutions and authorities to review the root causes of these conflicts in full scale and a comprehensive manner. It also calls them to go through the successful lessons of other countries and develop tools and mechanisms to manage conflicts more strategically; a win-win one process. This include:

Conflict Management: The process of Scenario Definition

The process of creating conflict scenarios forms part (a) of the definition of conflict management. "deliberate action taken to identify and define relevant conflicts in an unbiased manner." Unbiasedness is an issue that we most often lack in identifying the conflicts and their root causes; such an approach has always enflamed the tension in our country. To do it in a fair manner, the negotiators shall develop a list of conflicts under two headings— "content" and "process. Based on this, the negotiators shall elaborate the tensions with patience and in a strategic manner to make a fair decision both at the macro and micro levels.

Tension Management: Items (b) and (c) — Dealing with conflicts

At these phases, the negotiator shall consider any calculated action that alters the balance of conflicts or shapes their influence, or any calculated attempt to avoid action that would influence conflicts. The consequences of such acts have been so dear for our country; in some specific conflicts in the past years the government has established a certain group to negotiate according pre-established biased agendas and the negotiations not only have had no fruits, but have resulted to overall misunderstanding and suspiciousness to agendas and proposals among the conflicting parties. To deal in a comprehensive manner with the conflicts, the negotiator shall consider the national interests at the macro level and the personal interests at the micro level of the conflict. In our country, a mechanism to ensure is to consider the Constitution as the "role of the game" and elaborate the various aspects of the conflict resolution according to the overriding principles set by it. To sum up, Afghanistan as a multi-ethnic country is prone to various conflicts. Political economy plays a central role in enflaming and igniting these conflicts by various enablers including, ethnic, religion, regional, etc. To manage these conflicts, the government institutions and authorities shall have a realistic understanding of the causes and consequences of the conflicts. They can do this through studying the root causes of the conflicts in Afghanistan and also go through the lessons learnt in other countries. Equal distribution of all opportunities and managing the conflicts in wise and calculated manner not only reduce the severe consequences of the conflicts, but results to mutual understanding and improving the social cohesion in the country. Applying a win-win strategy and negotiation model based on the constitution ensures a lasting political stability in the country.



Welfare of the People is the State Responsibility

By Dilawar Sherzai

In the present times, mostly among the developed nations, there is a greater emphasis on the positive role of the state, because it is now clearly realized that the influence of the state permeates all our relations, even those of the personal nature. Every state must ensure that all the citizens are provided their basic rights and requirements of life. First of all, the state should create conditions for the growth of free individuality and personality of its citizens. The function of the state is not merely the business of the policeman, of arresting the criminals or of ruthlessly enforcing contracts but of providing for men equal chances, as far as possible, of realizing what is best in their intellectual and moral natures.

State must protect and promote the welfare and well-being of the individuals by preserving law and order. But this is not enough. Mere protection of the rights of an individual and enforcement of his duties do not exhaust the list of its functions. Every state now espouses the cause of the economically and socially weak, so that the mere requisites of health and decency shall not be denied by accident or misfortune or incapacity to any member of the community.

Furthermore, modern state now assumes the duty of promoting general welfare. It is now clearly realized that the state is a collective body and not a joint-stock company of the privileged class. It should promote social conditions for the welfare of all. It is now universally recognized that society cannot be happy, prosperous and progressive if some people suffer from the pangs of hunger or are illiterate, ignorant, unhealthy and miserable. Modern society is becoming collectivistic.

Hence modern state can no longer be individualistic, as it was in the nineteenth century. It is now recognized that state should interfere and regulate social and economic lives to promote general welfare. Hence the sphere of state activity should extend to new fields of social and national life for there are many things of general well-being which are not provided by the efforts of individuals and associations either because their private efforts are insufficient or they are incapable of doing so.

The state should be the custodian of the future of the nation. It must conserve what the nation has now, and use its resources in a sustainable manner not to deprive the future generations of them. The state with its command on the resources and its universal reach, can build for the future in ways that no partial organization can exert. It should

develop a long term vision and strategies

which their benefits to be shared by the future generations. Individual or private enterprises do not undertake it because it is selfish, its resources are limited and its methods haphazard and it aims at immediate gain. The state does not suffer from such limitations or short comings. While private enterprise cannot risk its limited resources in long-term projects, the state can undertake ambitious plans and schemes of conservation and development, as it possesses abundant resources. It can develop national economy by planning and building industry and agriculture by undertaking industrial and scientific research and discovery and encouraging such higher activities of life as science literature and art. In short, it can promote culture and civilization.

It is important to understand from another point of view that human personality in general cannot develop freely without the external conditions of social living which are of universal concern in view of the acknowledged objects of human desire. These conditions are peace and order, protection, safety and prosperity.

The state must maintain peace and order not because it is a sort of universal policeman but because in peaceful and orderly atmosphere alone each individual can rise to the full stature of his personality. In other words, man develops his individuality and personality only when the state regulates the dealings of the citizens with one another, prevents confusion and chaos, maintains the rights of its citizens and enforces their duties. The state should maintain order not for the sake of order but for the higher ends of protection, conservation and development.

Modern state cannot become merely police-state as the laissez faire wanted it to be. It is a positive state, for it actively creates conditions of human development and welfare. Analyzing our government approach based on perspective, we find that there are many shortcomings that it needs to reconsider in order to make Afghanistan better place for living in.

The responsible authorities in this regard should take positive steps to provide the people of Afghanistan with their minimum basic requirements so that they are able to strive for the realization of their personalities in an atmosphere of peace, tranquility and justice. It is their right and no one should neglect them their due rights.

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Will Issuing Fatwa against Terrorists Mitigate Militancy?

By Hujjatullah Zia

The Taliban militants have exercised their dogmatic beliefs, which have been against religious principles and moral values. The harsh practices of the Taliban for more than two decades in Afghanistan had no Islamic basis. Streams of blood have been shed as a result of the attacks and suicide bombings carried out by the Taliban outfit. They have been widely involved in anti-religious practices.

The Taliban have been violating the rights and dignity of people on a large scale. They showed respect neither to religious sharia nor to ethical code. For instance, Afghans suffered severely under the Taliban and a scores of people were killed in cold blood for no particular reason. Initially, the Taliban sought to observe religious tenets to some extent; however, their war was colored with sectarianism and ethnicity at the end of its regime in Afghanistan. Therefore, a large number of individuals were killed on the grounds of their race, color, and creed. The Taliban had to employ this strategy in the wake of lacking soldiers so as to recruit on the basis of race and ethnicity. In other words, ethnic tendency outshined religious tenets in the war waged by the Taliban.

The Taliban's involvement in cultivating and trafficking narcotic drug reveals their indifference to Islamic tenets. Cultivating narcotic drug, which is against Islamic sharia, was and is supported by the Taliban militants.

Similarly, the Taliban's attitude toward women has no Islamic basis. Women have been treated as pariahs and had to stay within the four walls. They have been considered as object to satiate the carnal desire of men. Women have been flagellated and punished harshly in desert court. Their inherent dignity was disregarded.

In short, the misogynistic view of the Taliban was contrary to Islamic tenets. Now, the Pakistani religious ruling has issued a fatwa (religious decree) against suicide bombing. In a book titled Pakistan's Message published by the government, more than 1,800 Pakistani clerics representing various Islamic sects declared suicide bombings to be forbidden under Islamic principles.

They also called for a complete ban on violence in the name of jihad by non-state groups.

"This fatwa provides a strong base for the stability of a moderate Islamic society," Pakistani President Mamnoon Hussain wrote in the book, adding that Pakistanis can "seek guidance" from the fatwa "for building a national narrative in order to curb extremism in keeping with the golden principles of Islam."

This fatwa is a positive move toward combating terrorism but should have been issued many years ago. Perhaps this fatwa will make some of the ideologue militants to hesitate their way; however, militancy will not be ended. The Taliban only claim themselves right and seek to act against any religious or political circles that are having their say against their practices and ideology.

The Taliban followed the same act in Afghanistan. For example, a number of religious scholars came under attack in Herat province after leaving a meeting held to condemn the Taliban's harsh and anti-Islamic practices. Similarly, a great religious scholar Abdu-RabRasul Sayyaf has constantly denounced the Taliban acts and called them against Islamic sharia. He also challenged the Taliban to have a face-to-face debate if they could prove their acts and ideology in harmony with Islamic tenets. Nevertheless, the Taliban plotted against him rather than holding debate.

Meanwhile, the Taliban has targeted mosques several times. They have killed people while worshipping. A simple person who walks in the street knows that shedding one's blood in holy mosque without sin is against Islamic sharia. Although Afghan religious scholars condemned the Taliban's acts several times, it could not mitigate insurgency in the country.

It is believed that scores of Taliban's members do not necessarily fight on the basis of their ideology but for their political and financial interests. On the other hand, many others are not able to change their dogmatic mentality and any words contrary to their beliefs will fall on their deaf ears.

Now that Pakistani clerics have issued fatwa against suicide attacks following the demand of Pakistani officials to campaign against terrorism, the effectiveness of this fatwa is in doubt. The question is that why have Pakistani scholars issued this fatwa too late? This is the responsibility of all mullahs and muftis to condemn an anti-religious act as soon as they notice. But this fatwa indicates that the act of those scholars is more political than religious.

To fulfill their responsibility, all religious institutions and council will have to participate in combating terrorism and denounce their acts on time. They must campaign against all kinds of violence, mainly militancy, occurring in any parts of the world. All religious scholars need to denounce the ongoing violence and bloodshed carried out by militants. They are to continue their campaign through speeches, newspapers, magazines, and etc.

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