

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



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Joblessness Fuels Terrorism

Afghanistan is going through a crucial juncture of its history wherein it needs to be resilient enough to survive and then start its journey towards a prosperous future. However, doing so would require the country to be serious about some of the major problems that it is facing. Among them economic instability is the most dominant one. It is the failure of economic system what would ultimately invite other issues and may make the country suffer unbearable loss.

On the other hand, if the country is able to strengthen its economic system, it can guarantee a better future and a dignified survival. Definitely, the support from the other countries would not last forever and ultimately Afghanistan would depend on its own economic system to support it. Therefore, it is wiser to take some important steps towards making economic improvements and reforms so that the country is able to stand on its own.

Within an economic system, human resource plays a key role. And, the best economic system is the one that is able to make use of this resource. A developing and improving economic system would always provide job opportunities to the people so that both can benefit from each other. If the economic system generates job opportunities for the people, the people, in return, can support the economic system to achieve its objectives. Moreover, both can participate in the overall development of the nation.

On the other hand, if the economic system is stagnant and highly dependent on support from other countries, like that of Afghanistan, it cannot provide job opportunities to its people and, therefore, its people would be jobless and they would not participate in any sort of positive and productive activities; rather they would be pushed towards social evils; which should be a matter of great concern for the government authorities.

The government needs to understand that joblessness is one of the most serious issues in the society. It turns the valuable human resource into idle beings. Qualified people having nothing serious to do are compelled to think otherwise and find ways of making both ends meet through the means which may not be legal or mainstream. They are thus pushed towards crimes, corruption, and in case of Afghanistan terrorism. In fact, in Afghanistan one of the main reasons of terrorism is joblessness.

Though most of the countries in the world today face the issue of joblessness, the underdeveloped and the developing countries suffer from this menace to a large extent. As, the basic infrastructures in such countries are not developed and they lag behind in the process of industrialization, they are not able to create ample financial and developmental opportunities; therefore, new jobs are not created, which generates challenges for the authorities to compensate the ever-increasing population. The number of the capable people who have required qualifications and can work increases but the society and systems cannot compensate for them appropriately and, therefore, they become a part of the detestable unemployment.

It is not only because of the lag in the industrial revolution but joblessness has also to do with lack of determined and honest efforts to create job opportunities for the people.

The agricultural societies, though may not be on the top regarding the industrial development, can also play a great role in creating opportunities for the qualified people. Some of the developing societies in this regard have taken some great initiatives and they have been successful as well.

Therefore, it is also important that there should be determined and honest efforts to create new and innovative opportunities so that more and more of the human resource can be brought to work.

Afghanistan needs to take the issue of joblessness seriously. Though insecurity and terrorism are important, the most important issue being faced by the country today is poverty and joblessness. There are direct links between the insecurity and joblessness, which are neglected altogether. Unfortunately, behind the hyped news of terrorism, the issue of joblessness has become less important. However, it deserves as much attention as the growing insecurity and terrorism and even more than that.

This issue should be dealt immediately by Afghan authorities because it is becoming as the root of many other social issues in the country. The social problems like insecurity, immigration, drug addiction and crimes are mainly because of joblessness. If there are people who deserve to be working somewhere but are not provided the opportunity, there is huge likelihood that they will opt to join the ranks of the terrorists, become drug addicts and commit crimes or plan to migrate. Therefore, the Afghan government must deal with this problem on top priority basis. The issue of joblessness is more dangerous and urgent than the issue of insecurity and terrorism.

Having solved this issue, Afghan government would be a huge step



Living in 'the Global Village'

By Hujjatullah Zia

When a new flu infects one human being, all are at risk. When one nation pursues a nuclear weapon, the risk of nuclear attack rises for all nations. When violent extremists operate in one stretch of mountains, people are endangered across an ocean. And when innocents in Bosnia and Darfur are slaughtered, that is a stain on our collective conscience. That is what it means to share this world in the 21st century. That is the responsibility we have to one another as human beings," these words were spoken by Barack Obama in Cairo, Egypt, in a speech titled "A New Beginning".

The outpouring of violence and bloodshed around the globe left all individuals at the mercy of threat. Terrorism is a serious challenge in the modern world. The extremist groups target civilians and soldiers alike on the grounds of their accidental backgrounds and spread fear and hatred.

The widespread violation of human rights and dignity springs from radical ideology. The systematic and unmitigated militancy changed the world into dystopia. Peace remains a dream for some nations.

No wonder, the lack of spirit of brotherhood and religious tolerance is the main reason behind the deadly practices of the fundamental groups. That is to say, racial superiority and parochial mindset have put a yawning gap between the radical ideologue and the world. On the one hand, the ideologues discriminate people on the basis of their race, color and creed, curtail their freedom and shed their blood. On the other hand, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) declares that men and women are born free with equal rights and dignity and must be able to exercise their rights without fear and anxiety.

It adds that "disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts" throughout the history and the men's natural and inalienable rights and dignity will have to be held in high esteem.

The world is considered to be a single entity and all nations are affected with a change happening in a corner of the world. For instance, the proclamation of a "caliphate" in June 2014 in Iraq, has challenged the entire globe and no nation is immune to the venom spew forth by the self-proclaimed Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL).

Similarly, the Taliban, that emerged from seminaries situated across the Afghan border, and Al-Qaeda created political turmoil around the region. The tragic story of Aylan Kurdi - a three-year-old Syrian boy whose image made global headlines after he drowned on September 02, 2015 in the Mediterranean Sea - is a second example.

This incident outraged the human conscience and it was an ineradicable "stain on our collective conscience". It reveals the

fact that a single tragedy, in any corners of the world, will shake the public conscience.

To decrease violence and carnage and alleviate the sufferings of mankind, the people of the United Nations affirmed the UDHR. The philosophy behind affirming this Declaration was to promote respect for these rights and freedoms and by progressive measures, national and international, to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance, both among the people of Member States themselves and among the people of territories under their jurisdiction. Perhaps, thousands of national and international conferences are held annually to strengthen peace and prosperity. The democratic discourses aim to uphold human rights and reduce violence. Despite this fact, terrorism and insurgency continue unabated and violate human rights globally. The dream for utopia and society void of carnage and brutality has not come true.

No wonder, all nations, are susceptible to terrorism. Muslims are believed to bear the brunt of insurgency. In other words, people of all faiths and backgrounds are unacceptable in the radical ideology of warring factions and deserve to be killed without in iota of mercy - this is currently practiced by militant fighters.

The indiscriminate killing of men, women and children is a great cause for concern for the world.

In short, when a Syrian boy is drowned in the Mediterranean Sea, when a woman is lynched by an angry mob in Afghanistan, when individuals fall victim to terrorism in Orlando and Beirut, Paris and Nice and St. Etienne-du-Rouvray, France, Germany, Japan, Egypt, etc., the feelings of the public will hurt and such incidents will be regretted regardless of the victims' race and religion.

The human societies are embroiled in war and bloodshed/cold war. Besides terrorism, there are many threats to human societies, mainly nuclear and chemical weapons. As far as I am concerned, writing a list of human rights and approving it publically will not lessen violence and the anguish of mankind unless it is supported by a strong international sanction. The global threats must be eliminated by the international community.

The first panacea for the bleeding wounds of human society is combating terrorism - since it is believed to be the greatest menace to the human rights and humanitarian law - and eradicating all its sanctuaries, the hotbed of radical mentality and its supporting factors.

We live in "the Global Village" and have to respect the rights and liberty of all nations and nurture religious tolerance. After all, we have the responsibility to reduce the sufferings of our fellows.

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Hope for Global Health in 2017

By Melvin Sanicas

Looking back on 2016, there may not seem to be much to celebrate. In terms of global health alone, the year appeared to be one of unrelenting tragedy. Beyond stories of hospitals in conflict zones being bombed, the Zika virus emerged as a growing threat. There was also the proliferation of antibiotic-resistant microbes, or "superbugs," the continued revival of yellow fever, and the reemergence of polio in Nigeria, which had previously been declared polio-free. Hopes for a respiratory syncytial virus vaccine were dashed. And in Europe, the incidence of alcohol-related deaths increased.

But, buried among all of the bad stories, there were some inspiring developments in global health in 2016.

The first took place in Tanzania and Mozambique, where African giant pouched rats, which had previously been trained by the Belgian NGO APOPO to detect landmines, were repurposed to help in the fight against tuberculosis (TB). The rats undergo a thorough training process, in which they are introduced to various stimuli, shown how to interact with people, and taught to detect TB in samples of sputum (mucus that is coughed up from the lower airways). The rats can detect TB with almost 100% accuracy, though they cannot distinguish between normal and drug-resistant strains.

A second positive development was the creation of the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI). The emergence of infectious diseases (like Ebola, chikungunya, Zika, and, previously, SARS, swine flu, and MERS) typically highlights the inadequate capacity of public-health systems to build up defenses quickly.

CEPI aims to change this. Its members - which come from international organizations, governments, industry, public and philanthropic R&D funders, academia, NGOs, and civil-society groups - will work to develop new vaccines that can prevent emerging infectious diseases from becoming epidemics.

The third positive development of 2016 was the progress made in combating malaria. Deaths from malaria have been on the decline for years. In Africa, which faces the world's highest malaria mortality rates, the number of victims dropped from more than 800,000 per year in 2000 to roughly 400,000 last year. Moreover, European drug regulators approved the first licensed human vaccine against malaria - RTS,S, or Mosquirix - in 2015, after nearly three decades of research and development. It will not necessarily be smooth sailing from here: researchers have noticed that the vaccine's effect weakens over time, and it is only 4% effective over a seven-year period.

But the vaccine remains a major breakthrough. Reflecting its lifesaving potential, the World Health Organization has secured funding for an initial trial phase; beginning in 2018, the WHO will roll out RTS,S in pilot programs that would test its real-world efficacy in Sub-Saharan Africa.

There is more good news on the vaccine front: a herpes vaccine for shingles has been developed. Shingles, a viral disease characterized by a painful skin rash with blisters, is caused by the

reactivation of the chickenpox virus within a person's body. If the rash involves the eye, vision loss may occur. Some people develop ongoing nerve pain, which can last for months or even years. The new vaccine is significantly more effective than the one that is currently available, which reduces the risk of contracting shingles by only about 50%.

Dengue fever, too, is now vaccine-preventable. Dengue, ranked by the World Health Organization (WHO) as the world's most significant and fastest-growing mosquito-borne viral disease, causes nearly 50 million infections every year. But, in 2016, the first - and, currently, the only - dengue vaccine, Dengvaxia, was approved in 12 countries. Dengvaxia has received endorsements from key medical societies, at the national and regional levels. The recommendations are consistent with the WHO's position paper recommending that countries with a high burden of disease consider the introduction of the vaccine as part of an integrated dengue-management program.

As if that were not enough, we now have an Ebola vaccine, too. An experimental vaccine tested on humans has been shown to provide 100% protection against the disease. Though no regulatory authority has approved it yet, it is viewed as so powerful that an emergency stockpile of 300,000 doses has been created for use in the event of another outbreak.

Diseases for which we do not have vaccines have also been beaten back. For example, HIV infections and deaths have stabilized, despite rapid population growth in Africa. This is a testament to the tremendous effort that has been made to fight the HIV/AIDS epidemic, through prevention, education, and treatment programs. To maintain progress against the epidemic, the global health community must sustain these efforts.

Furthermore, the Americas are now almost free of river blindness, a parasitic infection spread by black flies that causes itching and, in severe cases, vision loss. Guatemala has been declared free of the disease, meaning that, in the Americas, only one remote area in the Amazon remains affected.

We are also one step closer to eliminating lymphatic filariasis, also known as elephantiasis. Caused by the filarial worm, elephantiasis is a parasitic infection that can cause horrific swelling of the legs and scrotum. This year, Cambodia, the Cook Islands, Niue, and Vanuatu received acknowledgement from the WHO for having eliminated lymphatic filariasis as a public-health problem.

Also on the brink of eradication is guinea worm, a nasty tropical parasite that spreads via contaminated water. According to the Carter Center, one of the organizations leading the effort to eradicate guinea worm, there were around two dozen cases in the first ten months of 2016. Guinea worm is now on a path to becoming the second human disease ever to be eradicated.

As we begin 2017, it is important to recognize the public-health victories that we have achieved. However bad things may seem and however heartbreaking the hurdles are, there are plenty of reasons to remain hopeful - and to keep working for a better, healthier future. (Courtesy Project Syndicate)

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