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

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After the Tragic Intercontinental Attack

The security situation in Afghanistan does not seem to be improving even after the aggressive Afghan policy adopted by the US leadership. Though insecurity persists in different parts of the country, the rise of insecurity in Kabul, particularly, in those areas that are considered high profile and that are properly guarded show that the security challenges are real and have to be solved through proper planning and honest efforts.

The lethal attack on the Intercontinental Hotel in Kabul has once again showed that the insurgents are capable enough to target even the most important of the places. Unfortunately, the attack was huge, lasted for about 17 hours and resulted in the death of around 43 people and injury of dozens of people. Many of the victims included foreigners.

Among the dead were 11 Kam Air employees, mostly foreigners. Ukranian authorities have also confirmed that 6 of their citizens have been killed in the attacks. Moreover, the other victims included the guests in the hotel, the hotel employees, and the security officials.

The attack raised many eyebrows and also many questions regarding the security arrangements that are ensured by the authorities. Ex-Jihadi leader, Mohammad Akbari in a statement said, "This incident indicates that government is weak, it's incompetent and fragile. Foreigners were also present there (at hotel) and this weakness is evident to other countries as well." Many leaders also claimed that elements inside government collaborated with insurgents to launch the deadly attack on the hotel.

Such attacks at times when there are already serious challenges that are being faced by the government regarding political stability further pose the challenges for the Afghan government and the international allies. The political rifts among the different authorities show that Afghan government is ill-prepared to face security challenges and come together for a comprehensive security policy that should be able to pose threats to the enemies. The current US policy in Afghanistan needs to be supported properly by the Afghan government wants to pursue. Otherwise, the policy will not be able to attain the desired results.

The insurgents, both Taliban and Daesh, seem to be taking advantage of the situation and making their strongholds in different parts of the country. The attacks by Daesh, in particular, have now become frequent in Afghanistan, especially in capital Kabul. Only few months earlier, Afghan officials used to deny that Daesh had stronghold in Afghanistan, but the consecutive and large-scale attacks by Daesh insurgents clearly depict that those denials were based on no authentic information. Now, the officials are not even in the position to deny the fact that Daesh is getting stronger in Afghanistan and that points towards a very bleak future as far as security and stability are concerned.

The facts and figures clearly show that the nature of insecurity would be threatening for Afghan government and security forces this year as well. Taliban and Daesh, among other insurgents, have already increased their activities. There are fears among the people in Afghanistan that their lives would once again be influenced badly by the waves of terrorism and insurgency. After the downfall of Taliban, Afghan people hoped that their lives would change and the circumstances would lead towards a better and peaceful future, but the security situation has worsen during the last years.

The response of the government in the face of the rising insecurity is really lethargic. It has been largely influenced by the differences that prevail within the ranks of National Unity Government (NUG) regarding the approach that has to be adopted to address the situation duly. The members of NUG see the issue with different perspectives and are not ready to cooperate with each other in developing and applying a comprehensive and unanimous policy to tackle the situation. This has led to misunderstandings and ambiguities in the war against terrorism on operational level as well.

Afghan government, therefore, has to get united and strive to control the situation properly. It needs to understand that as a result of decades of instability and socio-economic and political problems, the Afghan people have been suffering from myriads of problems. Coupled with the issue of insecurity, there are some very concerning issues that exist in our society and threaten the lives of the common people of Afghanistan.

Afghan government must therefore make a decisive decision to tackle the issue of the insecurity and strive to protect valuable human resources. ANDSF are vital for the peace and tranquility of the country. Though their profession requires them to be on the forefront of the war, proper strategic planning and policy making by the government officials can support them in achieving peace without having to lose many valuable lives. Moreover, proper strategies can assist the government in building its legitimacy and gaining support among the people, who otherwise seem to have lost their hopes about a tranquil and prosperous future.

The Afghan Security Challenges

By Sakhi Rezaie

As the political history of Afghanistan shows, the dominant political system in our country has not been democracy. Due to various reasons and failures on the part of all stakeholders in Afghanistan, attempts at establishing and sustaining democratic political system in the country have only lasted for short periods of time.

Since 2001, internal dynamics and international pressure and persuasion combined to push Afghanistan again towards the embrace of a political system that is based on the global principles of democracy. That attempt initiated in December 5, 2001 was again renewed through the democratic process of approving the current Afghan constitution by the consensus in January 2004 after the 2003 Loya Jirga.

However, there are tough questions and challenges, central among which is the challenge how to sustain and maintain democracy and turn it into a culture and way of life acceptable and workable for the people of Afghanistan.

This involves managing internal tendencies, especially security issues and problems that could impinge on the survival of democracy. This is a matter of national interest and importance that should be of concern to all stakeholders in our country and one that requires comprehensive and committed contribution of all groups and interests that make up the Afghan society.

In addressing the challenge to the survival of democracy in Afghanistan, it is pertinent to consider security issues and problems that have affected or capable of affecting the attitude, confidence and cooperation of all groups and segments that make up the Afghan society. Some of the major security problems currently confronting the nation that have been identified include;Regional and international conflicts, political and electioneering conflicts, socio-economic agitations, ethno-sectarian disputes, ethnic militias, boundary disputes, cultism, criminality and organized crimes and.

These challenges individually and collectively constitute threats to the peace, security and development of the country. Undoubtedly, they have implications for the continuity and survival of the nation's nascent democracy. On the other hand we also need to explore how democracy can itself be deliberately constructed as a positive response to these problems.

Since 1747 when Afghanistanwas made a nation by Ahmad Shah Durani, the country mostly has been under authoritarian governments. As a result, the security, political and socio-economic developments are security concerns that were not addressed or managed by the existing state structure at the time.

Currently, Afghanistan faces security issues that are challenging, and indeed, rattling the democratic political system. The main security challenges of Afghanistan include; terrorism as a regional and international powers tool to deter each other in Afghanistan, civil unrests resulting from a number of socio-political developments including ethnic disagreements and national resource contentions. The Afghan civil war was an example of such security breakdown resulting from failure to manage ethnic and social problems.

Recent international debates have also raised the need to see security in the broader sense as the struggle to secure the most basic necessities of life; food, fuel, medicine and shelter.

This broader human security is important for the attainment of physical and national security and overall peace and development as social unrests arising from the absence of such basic human security can indeed lead to security problems and conflicts.

It is an accepted fact that democracy in its essence implies the interplay of various interests and shades of opinions in the mode of political parties and pressure groups. This interplay must be undertaken in an open, free and fair atmosphere with adherence to such fundamental principles like tolerance, freedom of expression and freedom of choice.

Unfortunately, the activities and conducts of past and present participants in the Afghan democratic space have failed to adhere to these critical and key principles. Meanwhile, because of the opening up of the political space and its encouragement of competition in an environment where the institutions for the management and regulation of the competition are weak, the tendency for competition to escalate to violent conflict is high.

There appear to be disequilibrium between the demands for the benefit of democracy and our capacity to respond individually and institutionally to these demands.

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The Clash between Radicals and Liberals

By Hujjatullah Zia

Deadly attacks against nations make the international headlines and people suffer severely in one way or another. Their fundamental rights – i.e. their rights to life, liberty and property – are violated flagrantly and their dignity is disrespected. Streams of blood are shed every minute which means that people fall victim to the escalated war and violence.

The militant fighters have changed the world to a real dystopia for nations. Freedoms of the public are curtailed to a great extent. People lack peace of mind. They fear to be the next victims of terrorist attacks or suicide bombings while commuting. It is because militants target civilians, including women and children, in cold blood. The indiscriminate attacks continue to add to civilians' fatalities and life has turned extremely cheap. The escalated militancy has filled the air with a strong sense of fear and anxiety and made the public to lose their trust in democracy and democratic discourses.

To view social and political states around the globe, there is a fight between the proponents and opponents of democracy. The former supports democratic practices and international instruments.

That is to say, the proponents of democracy exercise tolerance and the spirit of brotherhood toward the public with the hope of forming a civil and democratic society where people could exercise their rights and liberty with peace of mind. They believe that all people are born free and equal in rights and dignity, as it is stated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), and individuals will have to treat one another with respect. If one's dignity is disrespected or one's blood is shed, the supporters of democracy raise their voice against it to advocate the rights and dignity of each individual.

On the other hand, the opponents of democratic discourse seek to spill the blood of people, treat them with disdain, and degrade them in some ways. They, who are mostly radical individuals affiliated to a militant party, claim that democracy is a modern product and in conflict with their mentality. They are not able to reconcile their radical worldviews with a democratic society. Their radical ideology leaves no room for tolerance or brotherhood. Therefore, they intend to hamper democratic moves and target people for their faith in democracy.

One will observe this fact in many societies, particularly in Afghanistan. The bulk part of the people advocate democracy and hope for a peaceful society so as to be able to exercise their rights and freedoms without barriers. They have strong faith in Constitution, which is a significant landmark in the post-Taliban Afghanistan.

On the contrary, a number of individuals deem democracy against their mindset and deep-seated traditions claiming that it will put them at stake. There are two kinds of hostile attitude towards democracy namely conservative and radical.

Although conservative individuals are not optimist about democracy, they do not campaign against it practically. They practice upon their traditional mindset and consider democracy against social norms and cultural values.

According to them, democracy will play a destructive role and jeopardize their faith and culture. The fundamental individuals and groups strongly oppose democracy and campaign against it very harshly. The radical attitude belongs to ideologues and militants.

The harsh practices of the fundamental parties hamper the process of democratization in Afghanistan and curtail the public liberty. They sow the seeds of fear and disappointment through targeting soldiers and civilians alike. The militants show no tolerance towards democratic movements for not being able to reconcile their harsh ideology with democracy, which is the product of modern world.

It is widely believed that the ongoing violence and militancy in war-ravaged country, including Afghanistan, root in radical ideology and this is the war of radicals against liberals or the war of opponents of democracy against its proponents.

The post-Taliban Constitution of Afghanistan is based on democratic principles and recognizes the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and United Nations Charter. Unlike traditional or radical mindsets, the constitution deems equal rights for men and women and rejects all forms of discriminations on the basis of one's gender, race, or beliefs.

It also recognizes the natural and inalienable rights and inherent dignity of all individuals who are urged to treat one another with respect. It is stated in article 24, "Liberty is the natural right of human beings. This right has no limits unless affecting others freedoms as well as the public interest, which shall be regulated by law. Liberty and human dignity are inviolable. The state shall respect and protect liberty as well as human dignity." In short, the hegemony of democracy prevails in Afghans' social and political life.

Nonetheless, this constitution is not acceptable for radical parties for not supporting their fundamental ideology and their narrow view of human rights. Thus, they seek to impose their radical norms and values on the public with the barrel of gun.

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