

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



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## Security Dilemma: the Public Support as a Strategic Solution

Afghanistan has been suffering heavily from lack of security for more than 4 decades. It has witnessed and tested various governments ranging from the communist, Mujahedin, Taliban and elected democratic governments during the last 4 decades. During this period, one issue has remained, more or less, the same; lack of security. From Communist government, and before, lack of public support has been the missing element of security; lack of the full support of the people from different governments has been the main cause of the security failures of Afghan governments; All the Afghan citizens, different ethnicities, have not accepted these governments as a legitimate one. Further, as the history of Afghanistan shows nearly all Afghan rulers have faced more or less the issue of legitimacy. If we go through the history and analyze the method of resuming power by these rulers, we will find one common thing; taking power without insolvency of all the social groups. Since nearly all the rulers of the country have gained and extended their power based on an ethnic-region basis, they have tried to provide most of the resources and opportunities to those people.

### Consequences of Ethnic-Regional based governance policies

Lack of inclusiveness; A governance system based on Ethnic-Regional based governance policies, faces structural deficiencies in terms of inclusiveness; the power of such governance originates from the ethnic-region politics. It is selected and assigned to ensure the interests of a particular ethnic or region. Other people neither are integrated in the government institutions, nor does the government represent them. Such a strategic gap, not only makes the government vulnerable to foreign interventions but also shapes the mindset of the people to perceive it as an alien phenomenon. Therefore, these two factors, existing as a presumption weakness in the governance system, makes it vulnerable to rely fully on both the ethnic-region and foreign allies.

Lack of transparency and accountability; Such type of governance system neither tend nor can be transparent and accountable. Because, such a government either shall allocate almost all of the resources and opportunities to a specific ethnic or region or risk losing the support of those ones and sooner or later may collapse. On the other hand, if it keeps on with its Ethnic-Regional based governance policies, it will ultimately face the rejection of the other ethnic-regions stakeholders. A situation that creates fundamental socio-political obstacles to the government and not only undermines its authority by posing constant security challenges but undermines its legitimacy as well.

Lack of participatory mechanisms; Participation of all citizens ensures the legitimacy and authority of a government. If a government lacks such mechanisms, it will never be able to mobilize the full support of all its citizens to its strategic vision, policies and strategies. Without, the support of all citizens the government not only deprives itself of using the natural resources in different parts of the country but also will never be able to use the human resource potentials, as the most valuable and scarce resource, of a nation.

Lack of elected bodies or weak and corrupted elected bodies; this type of government usually does not support elected bodies unless they benefit its strategic objectives. The elected bodies in such government systems, in most cases are a fabricated one. The government establishes and supports such institutions to gain the vote and support of the people to empower the government to realize its ethnic-regional interests. In most cases, such institutions lack the real support of their constituents and even come to power through corrupt practices. Lacking the support of the people and relying on corrupt practices, result in weak and corrupt representative bodies that their main function would be acting as a tool for the government policies and not as a tool to represent and ensure the rights of the citizens.

Lack of security has been a strategic challenge, at least, more than 4 decades in the country. And lack of full public support has been one of the most influential causal factors of security dilemma in Afghanistan; this dilemma is the result of the ethnic-region mechanisms due to the tribal political structures of Afghanistan and the dominance of tribal culture as the main governance paradigm and governance basis in Afghanistan, that has resulted to ethnic-region based governance systems, mobilizing the support of one ethnic for the government and barring the support of other ethnic-regions from the government.

The lesson we learn from this approach is that, lack of the public support from the governments, has been the main strategic weakness of the Afghan governments in the past that not only has paved the way for foreign interventions, but also has always created a conducive environment for public dissatisfactions and opposition against the governments in the country. As a result, the NUG shall learn strategic lessons from the past and take all the measures to realize the pledges it has made to the people in terms of balanced economic development, comprehensive inclusion and distribution of all opportunities in an equal manner among all the Afghan citizens to gain their full support and overcome the security challenges of the country.



## What is Next after Fruitless Talks?

By Hujjatullah Zia

With the intensification of attacks against the Taliban fighters, militancy has decreased. The Taliban seek to continue their deadly attacks in the wake of coming under heavy offensives of Afghan soldiers, who have multiplied their military campaign against terrorists.

Within almost a decade, Afghan government frequently called the Taliban guerilla fighters and other warring parties to lay down their arms and hold negotiations. The Taliban were told that spilling the blood of civilians, including women and children, would never benefit them and they had better resolve their issues through negotiations. With the view of bringing the Taliban to negotiating table, Hamid Karzai's administration left no stone unturned. Karzai formed the High Peace Council (HPC), which was tasked to persuade the Taliban to hold talks, and travelled to Pakistan for twenty-one times to nudge the Taliban, with the help of Pakistani officials, to peace table.

After all, Karzai's administration released a number of the Taliban's prisoners, who were deemed dangerous by the US officials, to fulfill their precondition and make them stop violence and bloodshed. Nevertheless, the Taliban continued their insurgency and the released prisoners returned to battlegrounds. In short, the Taliban have constantly held out against peace process and played a foul game in this regard.

In the last days of Obama's administration, the military mission of the US soldiers decreased to advisory rule and the bulk of forces withdrawn from Afghanistan, which left the country in the lurch and filled the air with a sense of disappointment.

This issue further emboldened the Taliban to intensify their attacks which led to the takeover of Kunduz province. Meanwhile, Afghan soldiers sustained heavy casualties. The withdrawal of US soldiers also indicated that the "war on terror" did not bear the desired results. With the unmitigated militancy, it was feared that Afghanistan would change into a second Iraq. But this fact was overlooked by the US former President Barack Obama who promised during his presidential campaign to withdraw the US soldiers from Afghanistan. He fulfilled his promise despite the fact that militancy would be aggravated.

Putting tribute to the "sacrifice of blood and treasure" within the seventeen-year-conflict in Afghanistan, which was the longest war in the history of America, the US incumbent President Donald Trump sought to intensify attacks against terrorism and increase the number of US soldiers in Afghanistan. He said, "A hasty withdrawal would

create a vacuum for terrorists, including ISIS and Al Qaeda, would instantly fill just as happened before Sept. 11. And as we know, in 2011, America hastily and mistakenly withdrew from Iraq. As a result, our hard-won gains slipped back into the hands of terrorist enemies.

Our soldiers watched as cities they had fought for and bled to liberate, and won, were occupied by a terrorist group called ISIS. The vacuum we created by leaving too soon gave safe haven for ISIS to spread, to grow, recruit and launch attacks. We cannot repeat in Afghanistan the mistake our leaders made in Iraq."

Considering the escalated militancy and calling the hasty withdrawal of US soldiers a "mistake", the Trump's administration seeks to strengthen its attacks against the Taliban fighters and their hideouts. This decision is welcomed by both Afghan state and nation and fills the air with a glimpse of hope. Indeed, this is a right decision when the Taliban outfit holds out against peace parley and never stop violence and bloodshed.

On the other hand, the Taliban elements intend to increase their terrorist attacks against both combatants and non-combatants in Afghanistan. The recent attack on Intercontinental Hotel in Kabul, which was claimed by the Taliban, indicates this fact. The Taliban's hardliner leader Mullah Haibatullah is most likely to follow his predecessor's footstep - i.e. refuses to hold talks and intensifies violence and insurgency. It is believed that whether Afghan government, along with its international allies, fights the Taliban or calls them to hold talks, the Taliban will not decrease violence. Now which one will be an effective strategy to combat terrorism: military action or peaceful method?

Despite the years of efforts made by Kabul government to bring the Taliban to peace table, the Taliban elements held out against it and continued violence and bloodshed across the country. Currently, military deal seems to be the only option to be adopted by Afghan government and its international allies.

The Taliban are left with two choices whether hold talks or will be dealt militarily. The door to negotiations is still open for the Taliban, but there is no hope that they will succumb to repeated calls for peace. In such a case, the second choice will be employed. The Afghan and the US soldiers will reinforce their attacks against the militant fighters in the coming summer. But in combating terrorism, it is highly significant to eliminate the root causes of militancy such as their financial resources, particularly narcotic drug, and ideological bases. Thus, fighting terrorism without considering its roots will not bear the desired fruit.

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## Social Justice in Afghanistan

By Maryam Hashemi

One of the issues that may no one argue on is that schooling has failed systematically to serve many students from diverse backgrounds in Afghanistan. That's why social justice is a concern in education in Afghanistan and has raised many questions in the country. Who gets how much schooling is still a critical social issue. Equally vital is the type of education that children and youth receive-and who decides about such an issue. A focus on social and historical context reveals multiple inequalities which influences access to, treatment in, and outcomes of schooling anywhere including Afghanistan. As educators and citizens, we shall be concerned about the effects of persistent poverty, illiteracy, cultural imperialism, racism- and the list goes on.

I assume, teachers alone, cannot solve these injustices and inequalities. However, teaching is an inherently moral and political enterprise, and teacher's daily activities do matter in the effort to establish a more just, caring, and democratic society. Preparing and providing adequate support for teachers to engage in this intellectually and politically demanding work, therefore, is of the utmost importance in our country.

### Why teaching for social justice?

It needs to be given more thought and time because it points to a positive vision, an end-goal to strive for, and an issue that we will never be able to fully attain it because conflict as a result of power imbalances is inherent to human societies and that the frameworks for seeing and evaluating the issues of injustice that follow from power asymmetries are contested and in flux.

The current arrangements might be seen as satisfactory today might be tomorrow's burning social justice issue. Partly because teaching for social justice names a vision that will always be contested and provisional, it is vital to seeing teaching as a verb.

This highlights that teaching for social justice is also a process; it would be self-defending for educators to employ unjust of harmful practices in service of their vision of a better, more just and humane society. A society that everyone regardless of race, religion, language, place of birth and ethnicity will be treated equally and receive the same educational facilities.

Thus, the phrase teaching for social justice contains an ambiguity that I understand. One interpretation focuses on a curriculum that aims to make students aware of injustices, inform them about various social change strategies and conditions, and motivate them to work to fight those injustices.

Another interpretation, equally important, focuses on

modeling social justice through equitable classroom and school practices, including assessment and governance. Experience show, tensions and contradictions will arise. Therefore, experts argue that posing critical questions about the challenges of translating an anti-oppression approach into practice is vital.

### Countering cultural imperialism

One form of oppression is cultural imperialism, a social phenomenon that has long history in Afghanistan. Based on this approach the dominant group's experience and culture reigns as common sense, the unquestioned norm. The oppressed group is stereotyped and portrayed as "the other", which leads to the other's being ignored and - paradoxically and simultaneously singled out and vilified. As such, this approach has been one of the dominant strategies in the country and the current high level of illiteracy, poverty and numerous conflicts is the outcome of such injustice approach in Afghanistan.

### Countering Marginalization

Marginalization means exclusion from "useful participation in social life", including school. In Afghanistan we may no longer formally segregate students by race, ethnic, gender, and language, although through streaming, ability grouping, and related practices, this still happens informally.

Also, due to the lack of adequate funding for all regions and the students with disabilities and impairments, still students are partially or fully excluded from full participation due ability (physical, psychiatric, or developmental). Such marginalization is unjust because it hampers the opportunity to exercise capacities in socially defined and recognized ways.

Strategies that teachers can use to counter marginalization include: 1) Challenging assumptions in texts and discussions that serve to exclude groups of students; 2) devising class activities that allow for greater inclusion; 3) creating assignments that allow for the exploration and articulation of alternatives; and 4) fostering supported integration and de-streaming.

### Conclusion

The phrase social justice is a social phenomenon that ensures equality among all the people living in a specific geographical area. The experience and historical memory of our country show a dark side of the social justice background in Afghanistan. Different social groups in Afghanistan have been deprived of their rights including education and it call for urgent strategic actions of government to further expand scope of access to its basic services including education for all regions and the students with disabilities and impairments.

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