

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



January 30, 2018

Time for a Comprehensive Security Policy

In recent weeks, the security situation in Afghanistan, particularly in the capital Kabul, seems to be on the rise. Saturday's attack, that was carried out by the insurgents through an ambulance that was full of explosives, has proved the fact that the security situation in the country needs to be handled with serious and prudent measures. In fact, a comprehensive policy that must have both the short-term and long-term measures must be devised that should involve all the security institutions and expert opinions and initiatives, along with the consent of different stake holders.

Since US announced its policy regarding Afghanistan, the Afghan government must also highlight its policy outline that should correspond to the one that is devised by the US and both of them must support each other in compiling a strategy that can understand not only the nature of the insurgency but also provide workable solution to the present scenario. Unfortunately, the nature of the response to the growing insecurity and insurgency by the Afghan government has been emotional. It starts with condemnation of the incidents after they occur and mostly end with blames and accusations of foreign involvement in the incidents. Though condemnation is necessary, and it is also necessary that the country must recognize its enemies and friends within regional and international spheres, a comprehensive security policy must entail something more: it must involve comprehensive analysis of security situation, and must chalk out practical measures to counter the challenges both in the short run and long run.

At the same time, during the process when the policy is being formed, it is imperative that different institutions and stakeholders must be taken into confidence, they should be involved in the matters that relate to them and they must not be designed only because of the pressure of the situation. Rather, they must be designed with the will to provide solution to the present problems and must make them acceptable to the people who are going to implement them.

This will also ensure the proper awareness regarding the tasks that different authorities and institutions have to perform. Since, there is no comprehensive security policy, different institutions and authorities do not see eye to eye with each other as far as the solution is concerned.

The security agencies are not fully aware of the responsibilities that fall under their ambit. In some cases, they have been found blaming one another after incidents and the real issue or the real responsible authority or institution can never be identified and measures cannot be devised for improvement. Another vital consideration in this regard is that there should be a will to stand for change. There should be a point at which the authorities and institutions must recognize that 'enough is enough' and they need to change the status quo so as to bring improvement. Saturday's attack must open the eyes of the authorities and must compel them to realize that there is no more room for tolerance, and they need to get really serious for better solutions.

Saturday's attack resulted in the death of about 103 people, injury to around 235 others. The casualties included many police officers. As per the statement by Interior Minister, Wais Ahmad Barmak, there are 30 police officers among the wounded; however, the number of police officers among the dead was not disclosed. It is, however, imperative to realize that this attack was carried out only a week after the deadly attack on Intercontinental hotel that resulted in death of around 22 people, which included foreign nationals as well.

Though Interior Minister, in his statement, said, "All security forces are working together to fight insurgency and they all hold themselves responsible for the (Intercontinental) hotel attack and Saturday's deadly bombing. All security institutions are working hard to eliminate threats. However, there had been no negligence or recklessness on the part of security forces in yesterday's (Saturday's) bombing." Nevertheless, either it is because of the negligence or the incapacity of the security agencies that the insurgents have been able to carry out attacks as lethal as the recent ones in the areas of the capital that are considered very important and are properly guarded.

Saturday's attack must open the eyes of the authorities in Afghanistan. They should realize that they have to change things if they are really interested in ensuring a better and safer Afghanistan for the people; and even for the security forces themselves. Emotional responses are no more acceptable; there has to be a comprehensive policy that must be able to address the actual security issues.

That policy must correspond to the US's Afghan policy and must involve the different stakeholders in Afghanistan. It must also be the product of the suggestions and involvement of different security institutions and most importantly, it must be designed and followed with honest intentions of addressing the issue of insecurity and terrorism.



If there is Any Person to Suffer, it's Not Child

By Liu Jinsong

1. May the children stay away from violence and realize their dreams
2. Children are hopes of a nation
3. Panda is a best friend of Afghan children
4. If there is anything to be impoverished, it's not education; if there is any person to suffer, it's not child
5. The Belt and Road Initiative let the Afghan and Chinese children's dream fly

Last week, I was invited to attend the opening ceremony of the kindergarten of Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan. I was glad attending this event, because I feel energetic and young staying with the children, also because I am a father. My little son is the same as the boys in the kindergarten, lovely and naughty.

Children are treasures for their parents and their families. More importantly, they are the future of their country and nation. Helping the children is the greatest goodness, while harming the children is the utmost badness. Every time I heard of the casualties of the Afghan children in violence, my heart bled. As a father, I could share my Afghan friends' feeling, hope the children could go to school and back home safely and could be safe, happy, and healthy both physically and mentally at school.

It won't be long for children to play without annoyance. When they grow up and get married, they will leave their parents and have their own families. So, we should cherish the time when we can accompany our children, and try our best to create a good and peaceful environment for the children's studying and living.

All parents of the children in the kindergarten are diplomats, and also my colleagues. We are all proud of our careers, because we are emissaries of peace, trying our best to serve our home country, striving to create a peaceful and harmony external environment for our children.

Diplomats also have their own annoyance. Because we have to go abroad and change residences frequently, separating from our families. Due to various reasons, I cannot bring my boy to Kabul and live with him together, and neither can many of my colleagues in the Embassy. We can only talk to them by phone. While seeing the children go to the neighboring kindergarten cheerfully accompanied by their parents, we feel warm on the scene and sad on ourselves. We deem the children as our own. Their happiness makes us happy, and their sadness makes us sad.

In my memories, my family was poor when I was a child, and I did not have any toys except a wooden horse made by my father. At that time, I could not fulfill myself every meal. There was only one meal of mutton each month. Thus, when finding the children enjoy the "Made in China" beautiful and practical cribs, toys and electric appliances, I felt very happy for them. Children should enjoy better living conditions than their parents, also more and larger dreams.

The realization of children's dream requires a peaceful environment far from war, violence and drugs. The forty-year experience of China's reform and opening up demonstrates that, domestic stability, economic development, unity among different ethnic groups as well as work with one heart and one mind of different political parties are the premise of everything. Only if the country's stability and development

is achieved can its people enjoy a small family with enough safety, sense of gain, and happiness. The Chinese people are sincerely helping Afghanistan to achieve political reconciliation and economic reconstruction, and hoping to help children of our two countries to realize their dreams through the Belt and Road initiative, which can boost employment, knowledge, wealth and safety.

There is an old Chinese saying that "If there is anything to be impoverished, it's not education; if there is any person to suffer, it's not child". During the past few decades, the Chinese government made great efforts in promoting education.

The education funds have exceeded 4% in GDP and 15% in financial expenditure. Every year, there are about 8 million students graduate from universities, more than one fifths of the university students of the world are in China.

China attaches great importance to the compulsory education in rural areas, and tries its best to promote pre-school education, special education and online education, and popularize high school education, in the hope of making sure every child could enjoy an equal and qualified education.

By far, China is still a developing country, and Chinese people are still not rich enough, witnessing many kindergartens and schools are still very shabby. However, as a responsible major country and friendly neighbor of Afghanistan, China has already offered a lot of help for Afghan youth within its capacity, such as aiding the construction of Kabul University, National Vocational Training Center in Kabul, primary schools and orphanages in remote provinces, donating textbooks, inviting Afghan children with CHD to China for free treatment and so on.

The emergency aiding of rice and shelters from China have already made Afghan children feel the warmth of timely help as "offer charcoal in time of snow".

Most importantly, according to the consensus reached by leaders of China and Afghanistan, China will train 3,000 Afghan professionals of various fields in five years from 2015 to 2019, with 2,300 people trained by 2017, and 1,073 Afghan professionals went to China for training last year alone. In the coming years, there will be 170 outstanding Afghan youths going to China for studying under the Chinese Governmental Scholarship for every year. They come from different ministries, provinces and ethnic groups, with the vast majority of them in their twenties.

They are using "Chinese knowledge", "Chinese science and technology" and "Chinese experience" to benefit the Afghan society. The "Chinese path" is proposed to adjust measures based on local conditions, and give the Afghan people more options to realize their dreams, other than impose wills on others.

I told the children in the kindergarten of the MFA of Afghanistan that the Chinese people are full of benevolence, and China and the Chinese Embassy are genuine friends of Afghan children. China and Afghanistan are just like good friends from childhood. We help each other, share weal and woe.

We never quarrel, let alone fight with each other. The Chinese giant panda is familiar and loved by many Afghan children. While showing cute and smiling, she is a best friend of children! I wish all Afghan children safe, healthy and happy, and could realize the dream of embracing Pandas in China as soon as possible!

Liu Jinsong, the new Chinese Ambassador to Afghanistan

How Terror Attacks on Public Spaces Can Trigger Public Anxiety

By Sakhi Rezaie

An explosives-packed ambulance blew up in a crowded area of Kabul on Saturday, one of the biggest blasts in recent years, that killed at least 95 people and wounded 158 others. This is the second deadly attack of the Taliban terrorist group in Kabul during a week. This attack, as usual, triggered chaotic scenes and incited the public anger at the government and security institutions as failing to ensure the public security.

The question that may raise here, is why the terrorist groups attack on the public spaces? What Strategic objectives they achieve by these attacks?

As our experience show, these threats not only endanger public spaces, they also have serious implications on the private innermost workings of everyday people's psyches. This phenomenon is one of the critical fields of sociologist research and research findings show terrorist attacks can effect everything from the way people think, behave to the way they vote. Many researchers have documented the effects of terror attacks on their victims' mental health.

And their findings show that survivors most often experience post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety and depression directly. The indirect effects of these attacks, including the stress of an attack can impact people, even in other provinces and other countries. Also, research findings show that just watching news coverage of the attacks can produce "substantial stress symptoms" among the people who did not have any physical connection on the attacks.

In our country, it poses critical questions in terms of the real will of the government to counter the terrorist groups among the people. It acts the as the best tool for the terrorist groups not only distancing people from the government, but also disappointing them from the international community.

Terror Attacks, or the perceived threats from the terrorist attacks, can also make the politics of the people more conservative. Because, the conservatives are motivated by fear in a way that liberals are not. To say that, it makes the people to reserve their attitude due to becoming more socially conservative. It

causes people not to peruse their social liberties for security concerns in the aftermath of an attack or due to fearing of going under an attack.

Terror attacks can change the way people view the world. Terrorism attacks are one of the issues that have got the researchers to call for greater access to medical intervention to document the link between the terrorism and anxiety. Though, the long term effects of terror attacks are not always visible, they have changed the way people behold the world.

Terrorist groups maximize their achievements through modern technologies

Whenever there is a terrorist attack in Afghanistan, our social media is full of hatred and criticism of the government in general and the security institutions in specific. No body, doubts that it is the duty of our government to ensure the security of the citizens, including the public spaces and the security institutions is the government's apparatus to maintain security of all the citizens in the country. However, as it was mentioned earlier, creating a gap between the people and government is one of the most top objectives of the terrorist groups and their regional and tams-regional supporters. Because, by doing this, they not only weaken our democratic system but also show how their conservative system is effective.

Targeting the public spaces by the terrorist groups has direct and direct implications including anxiety, stress and depression. The terrorist groups use these tactics to disappoint the Afghan people and the international community of improving the situation in the country. Indeed, it is the legitimate right of the people to ask the government to ensure their security and criticize it, if it fails to provide the minimum basic service including the security to them. However, it is the responsibility of the citizens to keep in mind not to let the terrorist groups to use them as their pressure tools against the government of Afghanistan to ensure the strategic interests of their regional and trans-regional supporters by making the Afghan government make concessions or alter its policies under pressure.

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