

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



July 04, 2019

Afghans Need to Learn 'Art of Living Together as Brothers'

The world has figured out the main reason behind war and conflict and the foundation of freedom and justice as it is stated in the preamble of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that "recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world" and "disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts".

If the fundamental rights - rights to life, liberty and property - of individuals and nations are respected and protected regardless of their religious, racial, and sexual backgrounds and they are not held in contempt, peace and justice will emerge. On the contrary, discriminating or humiliating an individual or nation on the basis of their caste, color, and creed will lead to violence and conflict.

"To save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind", all members of the human family have to "reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person" as the UN Charter puts it.

Violations of fundamental and inherent rights, freedoms, and dignity of people are the main reasons behind the ongoing regional and global conflicts. That is, the bulk of individuals, involved in conflict and militancy, deem themselves superior based on their faith, race, or color of skin. For example, the militant fighters and terrorist networks spill the blood of people on the basis of their faith and consider themselves religiously superior.

Jean Jacques Rousseau said that "man is born free, but he is everywhere in chains". Although all individuals are born free, their freedoms are curtailed in one way or another, which is also conducive to violence. For example, to view Afghanistan, women's freedoms are restricted largely in the wake of tribal code of conduct and traditional culture. That is to say, violence against women stems from cultural tradition and misogynistic mindset, which rule mostly the tribal belts. The social, cultural, and political activities of women are restricted and their rights are violated on the basis of their gender. To pave the ground for a peaceful co-existence and violence-free society, freedoms of individuals should be respected. Both men and women have to be able to enjoy their freedoms.

Violating the inherent dignity of mankind will lead to serious violence. In religious communities, people would bargain their life for their honor and dignity. For example, honor killings, which rule many religious communities, are aimed at saving the honor and dignity of a family at the cost of their family members' lives. Thus, violating the dignity of an individual will result in violence. To support peace and peaceful coexistence, all individuals and members of human family have to respect the inherent dignity of people.

To mitigate regional and global conflict and pave the ground for peaceful coexistence, members of human family and people need to respect the inherent rights and dignity of all individuals and promote the spirit of brotherhood. It is self-explanatory that lack of religious tolerance and discriminating people on the grounds of their faith and race are the key factor in the ongoing violence and conflict in Afghanistan. Religious radicals and terrorist networks kill people and trample upon their rights, liberties, and dignity for their faith and race.

Meanwhile, cultural traditions compound the ongoing violence. Afghan women bear the brunt of violence as a result of traditional culture and tribal code of conduct, as mentioned before.

To mitigate violence and conflict in Afghanistan, the members of all ethnic groups need to embrace one another with patience.

Moreover, all citizens have to practice upon the law and constitution. According to the Afghan constitution, endorsed following the collapse of the Taliban regime, all men and women are equal in rights and dignity regardless of their racial and sexual differences.

In a traditional community like Afghanistan, the Ulema Council has to spread tolerance and acceptance and reform the radical culture. The clerics have to preach against hatred and intolerance.

Afghans have to learn "the simple art of living together as brothers", to put in the words of Martin Luther King, and respecting the rights, liberties, and dignity of all individuals so that they could live in a society void of violence and conflict.

Public Reaction to the Deadly Attacks on Kabul City

By: Mohammad Zahir Akbari

Last Monday, at 9am, a group of Taliban militants launched a complex attack by detonating a frightful bomb close to Gulbahar Township in 16th district of Kabul city. The attack involved a vehicle bombing and gun assault on an Afghan defense facility, also damaging nearby civic and cultural centers and a primary school, with reportedly killed about 40 people and injured at least 100 people while dozens of young school children and civilians were also included. As reports quoted, the Ministry of Interior said the Taliban militants took position inside one of the buildings in Gulbahar Township following the explosion. The militants started opening fire on people and the defense ministry installations.

Given the ongoing peace talks in Qatar, this attack was fully unexpected to most people, and so severely condemned the event. While according to other group of people, especially Afghan experts, it links to the improvement of the Qatar peace process. As Khalilzad kicked off his seventh round of talks with the Taliban official on Saturday this week hoped to produce significant result, but lasted for four days without any clear result. However, according to some sources both sides have likely agreed about holding intra-Afghan talks on July 7-8 in Qatar. Therefore, both government and Taliban militant group are trying to have upper hand in the ongoing peace talks and war has been extremely intensified with improvement of peace talks.

According to the Defense Ministry statement, at least 151 Taliban militants were killed in counter-terrorism operations during the past 24 hours across Afghanistan as said on Tuesday. Other official reports inform of a vast series of operations comprising Faryab, Badghis, Paktiya, Maidan Wardak, Ghazni, Takhar, Helmand, Kapisa, Khost, Logar, Nimroz, Herat, Balkh and Sar-e-Pul provinces. However, when comparing the two war completions between government and Taliban, Taliban have showed more atrocity against civilians. According to previous reports, they were responsible for absolute majority of civilian casualties as repeatedly blamed for war crime. No reason or no religious teachings permit the killing of small school children and other civilian. Though Taliban claimed attacking on the Ministry of Defense Logistics Center, the vicinity of the target area there is just a residential area.

Overall, the latest attack on Kabul city has severely exasperated people led to harsh criticism against security forces. In fact, one of the main roots of public discontent from government is too much tolerance against Taliban. Unfortunately, the foundation of this tolerance was laid down by the previous government when the members of the group were called dissatisfied brothers. The term "dissatisfied brothers" were not just a word added into the political terminology of Afghanistan, but a wrong foundation laid down in dealing with the murderers of the Afghan

people and bloodthirsty creatures who did not think of anything other than murder and an unblemished desire for bloodshed and destruction. Undeniably, it should be acknowledged that the current government has changed its policies against government but still there is appeasing policy in some parts of the state.

Moreover, the Afghan public opinion also dissatisfied from the tolerant policy of United States against Taliban. In the first decade of US-Taliban war in Afghanistan, when the president of United States issued order of attacks against Taliban and All-Qaeda, Taliban was quickly removed and Afghans enjoyed a few years of tranquility. This had created much hope and optimism among Afghan people but now with increasing growth of Taliban people have completely disappointed. Many people believe that this failure is not due to the weakness but due to the soft policy adapted against Taliban. Therefore, we must give people the right to hate this situation with expressing their feeling through criticism against the dreadful situation.

The other parts of people's concerns relate to the untimely withdrawal of international troops from Afghanistan. In this situation, if they leave Afghanistan a lone, it will really change the country to Harvard of Terrorism. The Monday attack on Kabul not only dissatisfied everyone, but also disappointed people expressing that peace is not possible with this group. With posting death bodies and casualties pictures in social media networks everybody considered the atrocity as war crime. If one fairly judge about the latest event in Kabul and massacre of innocent civilians and injuring 50 children, no one should be optimistic against this group.

In public opinion, Taliban did not leave any place at the heart of people; many Afghan people say that they can accept any systems other than Taliban because showed a very unforgettable brutality in Afghanistan. These shows that the Taliban have become more hated than ever and even those who, somehow, have sympathy with this group have been shocked by the waves of public hatred. What is to be learned from all this hatred is that peace with such creatures is impossible. If we impartially and fairly judge about the depth of this issue, then the Taliban's attack on the innocent children and civilian of Kabul and shedding blood of 50 school students are not acceptable.

Given the bilateral and multilateral agreements with international community, especially United States, Afghan people have more expectation in regard to the essential issues of Afghanistan. Handing over the country to the hand of these creatures that is not committed in any rule and regulations might be a great mistake. While according to some analysts peace talks with Taliban are essentially useless and we need to talk to the real Taliban.

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Europe Must Answer the Climate Call

By: Christiana Figueres

In early 2015, the European Union became the first major economy to set a post-2020 target for limiting greenhouse-gas (GHG) emissions. By committing to reducing emissions to at least 40% below 1990 levels by 2030, the EU initiated a global movement that culminated in the adoption of the Paris climate agreement later that year.

EU leaders are currently discussing the bloc's approach to the United Nations Climate Action Summit this September, which UN Secretary-General António Guterres hopes will serve as a political launchpad for a new round of commitments to cut GHG emissions.

The European Council must get the ball rolling, by adopting the 55% reduction target that the European Parliament endorsed in March. This is a time for bold action, not incrementalism. Recognizing that the initial targets fell well short of what was needed, the Paris agreement requires participating countries to revisit their earlier commitments every five years. Governments have committed to strengthening their targets to reflect their "highest possible ambition," and the first such revision is due by 2020.

According to the UN, around 80 countries have already indicated that they will ramp up their climate commitments at this year's summit. Recent announcements by the United Kingdom, Japan, New Zealand, Chile, Finland, and Costa Rica show that these governments have heard the call. And China and India, two of the world's largest and fastest-growing economies, have confirmed that they are ahead of schedule in meeting their initial targets, which suggests they could deepen their commitments over the coming year. The EU must seize the moment and take advantage of emerging opportunities to decarbonize the global economy even faster.

The scientific consensus on climate change underscores the danger of complacency. Global average temperatures are already 1°C higher than in the pre-industrial era, and are continuing to rise by 0.2°C per decade. A world that is 1.5°C warmer is just around the corner; if we continue along an irresponsible path, warming of 2°C or more is inevitable.

As the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has made clear, economic growth in a world that is 2°C warmer will be much slower than in one that is 1.5°C warmer. And it

should go without saying that the impact of rising sea levels, raging forest fires, acidifying oceans, and extreme weather will be more severe, more regular, and far costlier.

The IPCC finds that, to avoid the worst, global GHG emissions must be cut by 45% below 2010 levels by 2030, and then to net zero by 2050. Yet, despite repeated warnings from climate scientists, global emissions are still rising, including in Europe. As the UK and Irish parliaments recently acknowledged, following protests by young people around the world, we are facing a climate emergency.

For its part, the EU is working on a plan to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050. But while long-term decarbonization strategies are welcome, they are no substitute for short-term measures, and they should not be considered a panacea for global warming. Timing is everything, and without a transformational effort to halve global emissions by 2030, we will not be able to count on a safe future.

Fortunately, the EU is well positioned to lead the way. New renewable-energy and efficiency targets established last year have put the bloc on track to reduce emissions by 45% by 2030, compared to its 2015 target of 40%. Better yet, there is strong evidence that the EU could go even further. A recent report by Climate Action Tracker finds that bigger cuts in GHG emissions from the EU's electricity sector, residential buildings, and passenger road and rail transport systems would reduce total emissions by 52% by 2030.

It is important to remember that pursuing even more ambitious emissions cuts would not imply an additional burden. On the contrary, it would provide a pathway for economic renewal, improved quality of life, and reduced energy poverty, which currently afflicts 50-125 million Europeans. According to the Climate Action Tracker report, emissions reductions in line with a 1.5°C warming target would create 350,000 more jobs by 2030, particularly in the wind- and solar-energy sectors. We could not have secured the Paris climate agreement in 2015 without the EU's leadership in setting early, ambitious targets and in helping to bridge diplomatic differences. Now, it's crunch time, which means that Europe must rise to the occasion once again.

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