

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



July 08, 2017

## Attaining Democracy

Democracy is considered to be the best form of government, but it is also the most difficult to attain. History shows that though democratic system of government was formed in many countries, it failed in several of them and ultimately turned into something close to dictatorship. Therefore, it is important to comprehend that there are certain conditions that must be achieved and maintained by the societies to acquire true democracy. Enlightened citizens are the most important prerequisite for democracy. In fact, democracy and enlightened citizenship go together. In democracy, the citizens must be alert and enlightened or properly educated. They should be motivated and aware enough to participate actively in public affairs. They should be ready to stand firm for their rights and resist any infringement on their freedom. Simultaneously, they should pursue their duties honestly. They should consider their selfish interests secondary to national or collective interests. They must be helpful, unselfish and nationalistic. Closely linked to active citizenship is the character and capability of the common masses. It is basically the character, attitudes and behavior of the common men that take democracy towards a success or a failure. In democracy, common men must be sufficiently interested in public affairs and must comprehend them. They must not be won over by emotions. Then again, their opinion, to a certain extent, should be based on sound practical ruling, broad-mindedness and unselfish devotion to public welfare. They should actively participate in the affairs of the government of his country. A democratic government is well-maintained through active criticism. Therefore, every citizen must be ready to protest and criticize the injustice and tyranny of the government, for democracy thrives when the people are eloquent; it breathes its last when they are dumb and voiceless. Furthermore, the people should be ready to fulfil their functions in minor spheres of life with eagerness, honesty and skill. Every man should be keenly interested in the welfare and happiness of his fellow-men and ready to help overcome the difficulties. In other words, civic sense is a necessary condition for the success of democracy.

It has been justly believed that the price of democracy is eternal vigilance. A democratic society demands much from its citizens. The people should be alert, vigilant and active in order to preserve their democratic institutions and enjoy their rights and liberty. When the people are indifferent, inactive and indolent in public matters, crafty politicians, clever demagogues, rich plutocrats and such other enterprising persons capture political power and abuse it for their selfish ends.

Along with vigilance and intelligence, democracy needs a spirit of tolerance and a sense of responsibility among all its citizens. Tolerance and the spirit of give and take are essential for democracy. Democracy is necessarily a rule of the majority. But if the minority party or parties are irreconcilably opposed to the laws and policy laid down by the ruling majority, democracy would fail to work; hence the need for tolerance or a spirit of give and take. It relies on the methods of peaceful persuasion. It presumes an agreement on fundamentals acceptable to all citizens, whether they belong to the majority or minority parties. They may agree to disagree but not to disunite. Democracy is in daily practice the acceptance by the minority of the majority rule.

Education is indeed the first requisite for the success of democracy. Education is necessary to make common citizens good, intelligent, honest, active, responsible, public-spirited, tolerant and vigilant of their rights and duties. Education, at least, up to secondary level should be free, universal and compulsory and should be such as to equip the citizens for the performance of their civic duties and responsibilities. Democracies demand not only the passive consent of the citizen but also his active and constant participation and cooperation which should be the end of a democratic educational system. It must make him thoughtful, intelligent and critical person who would be bold enough to criticize the government, tolerant of the views of his opponents and honest enough not to abuse public office for selfish ends.

Democracy requires organization and leadership. Indeed, the problem of organization and leadership is more urgent for democracy than for other forms of government; firstly, because modern democracies are vast and complex societies, and, secondly because democracy is inherently a government by and for common men and women. Ordinarily, common citizens are neither adequately educated nor sufficiently interested in public affairs and problems. They also do not have enough time or leisure to devote themselves to public matters. Hence the need is to inform and educate them, to arouse their interest and to organize them for public action. This important task is performed by political leadership. In order to fulfil this task, the leaders must themselves be honest, intelligent and public-spirited. They must be men of initiative, imagination and courage who can see and foresee the needs of the people and problems of their country. Moreover, they must dwell among the people in order to understand their needs and difficulties. They must also be self-reliant, honest and responsible persons.

Keeping in consideration the above requisites, Afghan authorities and people must work for democracy in the country as without acquiring them, it would be really impossible to attain true democracy or even to dream about it.

## Demands and Realities of Afghanistan and NATO's Decision

By Zia Danish

A sustainable support to Afghanistan has been stressed in the meetings of NATO's defense ministers in Brussel. The NATO's secretary said in a press conference that the state members were committed to support Afghanistan and would not let it be changed into the safe haven for terrorist groups.

On the other hand, the US defense minister said that the withdrawal of foreign forces from Afghanistan in 2014 was a cursory decision and emphasized on resending US troops to the country. Besides being welcomed by many individuals at home and abroad, the strategy of sending more troops to Afghanistan has triggered a sense of concern and called unnecessary by some neighboring countries. However, Afghan government welcomed the decision of the NATO's defense ministers in Brussel. Afghanistan has urged NATO and the US that the fresh forces should play supportive and advisory role and equip Afghan soldiers. It seems that all demands of Afghanistan were considered in the recent NATO meetings and its secretary asked Pakistan to target the safe havens of terrorists in its soil.

The Demands of the National Unity Government and their Reflection in Brussel Meeting:

Besides demanding the support of international community for war on global terror, Afghan government believes that sending military forces will not put an end to security crisis. According to the government, supporting and equipping Afghan forces on the one hand, putting political pressure on terrorist backers and targeting the sanctuary of terrorists across the border on the other hand, will ensure security.

Based on the information sent to the media, increasing commanders, equipping the air force and eliminating the sanctuaries of terrorist networks across the Afghan border were Afghanistan's demands from the US and NATO.

The number of military forces being agreed to be sent to Afghanistan is not clear and depends on the declaration of the US strategy. However, NATO has stressed the forces will be sent for training and boosting the capacity of Afghan soldiers. The troops will also support air forces and Special Forces based on the four-year Afghanistan's security plan which is in accordance with the demands of NUG.

The Realities of Afghanistan and NATO's Decision:

The opinion that only military action will not alleviate the challenges in Afghanistan has many supporters at home and outside. Multifaceted mechanism for tackling

the crises should be adopted and it should be noted that there is a need for strong military forces for sustainable security in Afghanistan.

Moreover, the past decade and half, in addition to the country's historical realities, show that the presence of foreign forces will not be able to break the deadlock. Therefore, it will more effective if Afghanistan shoulder the security issue with the support of international community. It is has been realized that the presence of foreign forces will lead to regional sensitivities and Afghanistan stresses on fulfilling its responsibilities by itself despite paying heavy casualties.

Politically, Afghanistan ushered in making great efforts to make the international community and mainly neighboring countries and the region realize the nature, aspect and objectives of the war in Afghanistan and join forces to put an end to the threats.

The Outlook on Security and War on Terror in Afghanistan

The security situation is perilous in Afghanistan and more than twenty terrorist groups, including civil militant fighters, are operating actively for deteriorating the situation and creating chaos. The graph of combatant and non-combatant casualties is on rise since the militants changed the tactic of war recently. Disturbing the society's mental piece, targeting citizens across the cities, triggering mistrust between state and nation, and shattering discipline are parts of their tactic.

The resistance of Afghan security forces and their great sacrifices are appreciable in combating terrorism. The Special Forces had great achievements within the two years and changed the battles in favor of the state. Despite having lack of equipment, the Afghan air forces also inflicted heavy casualties upon the militants and barred them from gaining the upper hand.

The Afghanistan's four-year security plan is being implemented and we will witness considerable changes in security institutions in the process of time. Moreover, the international community were said to send equipment to air forces and support to Commander Forces. The state leaders seek more actively than any other time to form a political consensus.

Hence, based on measures were and being adopted in the country and the continuation of international support to Afghanistan, the outlook on security is likely to be promising in near future and the security situation will develop gradually.

Zia Danish is the permanent writer of the Daily Outlook Afghanistan. He can be reached at the outlookafghanistan@gmail.com

## The Gap between Afghan's Real and Ideal Life

By Hujjatullah Zia

There is a wide gap between the ideal world of Afghanistan's Constitution and realistic life of Afghan nation. The rights and liberty of people are considered natural, inalienable and inviolable constitutionally. The state is committed to observe the United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and form a civil society void of violence and bloodshed. Distinction and discrimination on the grounds of race, color, creed and gender have no room in the law. Upholding human rights, empowering women and strengthening democracy are stated explicitly. Freedom, including freedom of speech and thought, and human dignity are "inviolable".

In the criminal sphere, persecution is forbidden as it is stated in article 29, "No one shall be allowed to or order torture, even for discovering the truth from another individual who is under investigation, arrest, detention or has been convicted to be punished. Punishment contrary to human dignity shall be prohibited." Similarly, soliciting confession or testimony under pressure is not valid. In brief, the criminal code is also based on democracy and in accordance with international instruments.

Since the UDHR is recognized by the state, all human beings are born free with natural rights and should be able to exercise their fundamental rights - i.e. the rights to life, liberty and property - without fear and barriers. "No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment," as it is said in article 5 of the UDHR. No one should be discriminated and "all are entitled to equal protection against any discrimination". The equality of human beings in rights and dignity are stressed both in Afghan Constitution and UDHR and the state is supposed to respect and protect them.

The aforementioned facts are highly ambitious. In the real life of Afghan people, human rights and dignity are violated in one way or another. For instance, the administrative corruption in government's apparatus has been a strong obstacle before implementing law. People are oppressed and humiliated with impunity. Some corrupt officials do not value the rights of individuals and discriminate them on the basis of their money.

The rule of law is marginalized and reduced to written document rather than being practiced in real life. Those who claim to implement the law, such as police officers

and some authorities, are the main law-breakers. You can simply take the parliament, for example. The legal period of parliament, which is the legislative power in a government, was terminated two years ago and the state had to conduct election, but it is still being run without legal basis. Do you not think that it is a violation of law by the state? What about the legal basis of forming National Unity Government (NUG)? If the election was transparent and without rigging, there was no need for forming such a government.

To view the issue from the next perspective, the rights and dignity of men and women are trampled upon by warring parties. For example, the Taliban conduct a desert court to punish women without referring to Afghanistan's law. Women are humiliated and tortured in desert courts in the worst possible way.

Worst of all, people are killed on a massive scale and their freedoms are curtailed by militant fighters. Reports are replete with human fatalities and tragic stories happening to the nation. The "inviolable" rights and liberty are violated and nation suffers from militancy. Hence, a "civil society" where people were promised to exercise their rights freely and taste the sweet fruit of democracy remains no more than a dream.

The events taking place in the real life of Afghans are a slap in the face of democracy and Constitution. The democratic discourse debated hotly following the collapse of the Taliban regime and establishment of a government based on public election, went no more beyond words. With the escalation of militancy in recent years, democracy is likely to be moribund and the hope for a civil society has been shattered. Do you think that people should hope for better when policemen turn to law-breakers and judges turn to criminals?

The gap between the ideal ambitions of law and real life of nation is extremely wide. Approving a democratic constitution and conducting election do not reflect democracy. The country must implement this law and conduct a transparent election in accordance with the law. The state will have to bridge this gap between ideal and real life through enforcing law and protecting the rights and liberty of citizens. Turning a blind eye to the society's realities will deteriorate the situation and put the abilities of the state under serious question.

Hujjatullah Zia is the permanent writer of the Daily Outlook Afghanistan. He can be reached at zia\_hujjat@yahoo.com



Chairman / Editor-in-Chief: Moh. Reza Huwaida

Vice-Chairman: Kazim Ali Gulzari

Email: outlookafghanistan@gmail.com

Phone: 0093 (799) 005019/777-005019

www.outlookafghanistan.net



The views and opinions expressed in the articles are those of the authors and do not reflect the views or opinions of the Daily Outlook Afghanistan.

