

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



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## Drawbacks in Security Matters

The attack on Afghan parliament marks the continuation of terror plot unleashed by militants. The militants have already stepped up attacks on government and foreign targets in recent weeks, taking a heavy toll on civilians and Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF). The main targets of these operations will be the foreign occupiers, especially their permanent military bases, officials of the stooge regime, their military constellations, especially their intelligence, interior ministry and defense ministry officials.

The worsened condition of law and order and frequent activities of ISIS and Taliban reflects as if insurgents are running a parallel government. On the other hand the former arbitrary release of large number of Taliban inmates seems to be strengthening their might and they are signaling their presence by carrying out attacks. What is clear is that the insurgents are expanding the range of their operations. The insurgents are operating at will and quite rapidly expanding operations to parts of the country where it previously appeared to have little ability to act. It also seems that the militants are familiar with important installations, and their attacks are meticulously staged. If a wise and coordinated strategy is not pursued then control over eastern and southern Afghanistan might slip into the hands of the Taliban with no apparent ability to foil this, post US pull out. The escalating violence across the country also sparks the concern over how the large strong Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) manage to tackle security measure left alone to fight on ground.

To learn the plans put into action by government to restrain activities of militants earlier the parliamentary session briefed by security heads was hailed. NDS chief Rehmatullah Nabil, Interior Minister Noor-ul-Haq Ulumi and Maj. Gen. Afzal Aman, operation commander at the Ministry of Defence (MoD) were summoned by the WJ to inform the house about over all security, attacks on the parliament, recent recruitment in the spy-service and distribution of Computerized Identity (ID) Cards. The concerned officials underlined certain hardcore issue pertaining security affairs.

How strange to learn the cleanup operation ongoing in tribal region of Afghanistan has served the present shock wave of violence. It is agreeable to find, Afghanistan's Minister of Interior Noorulhaq Olomi accusing Pakistan's military operation ousted insurgents from Waziristan - are playing a detrimental effect on the country's security as these insurgents were simply being driven across the border. Then the question arises who would guard the border areas of Afghanistan and emplace a check over the movements of insurgents? Undoubtedly, it is the security forces that have to avert any such plot prior to its execution. It is disputed -militants easily cross tens if not hundreds of security checks carrying tones of explosives and manage to reach the high valued targets unnoticed. If the said proposition is true then credibility of interior security diminishes otherwise the weakness must be accepted and should be transformed into strength.

Superficially, a strong nexus is found between security institutions that are ready to thwart plot anywhere round the clock -the security forces are capable to respond with full might any possible attack by insurgents. Nonetheless the former continuous wave of violence highlighted serious drawbacks in security network and retarded capacity of security officials to restrain militants at bay.

Responding the query raised by MPs relative to the issue of ongoing battles in the north of the country between insurgents and security forces the security officials' affirmed the killed militants are replaced by extra militants, hardening the state of affairs. Despite, owning 350,000 strong army that outnumber militants multiply the bases of security forces falling at the hands of insurgents -is worrying. It's repeatedly heard the security personnel warring militants were not aptly supported with needed back-up that resulted in their setback -consequently a base had to be fallen to militants. This certainly marks security loophole and lack of coordination between corresponding departments.

The security officials underlining the lack of military equipments is genuine issue requiring immediate compensation. It is a worrying factor that security forces are still restricted by a shortage of equipments and air support. Particularly, the equipments needed to defuse and destroy landmines immensely required. It is a matter worth billions -the coalition forces, NATO and US withdrawing, without equipping the ANSF with preliminary military items taints the international campaign against combating terrorism. Otherwise the government has to earn these requirements from elsewhere.

This statement came at very critical time when the entire world is facing the threats from renowned terrorists of Daesh and Taliban. Nonetheless, the broader system of cooperation between security institutions, intelligence agencies and fair prosecution system, the government may cop with the challenge of multiplying insecurity. The militants apprehended must be subjected to a fair trial is a pivotal to maintenance of peace and security.

Long lasting peace can only be installed in Afghanistan provided the anti-state elements are brought to book through fair trial, holding the right culprit accountable for his deeds. In doing so the government should too consider the wages and authority of public officials serving this department, so that they should not be misled by attractive offers. The government must get itself cleared, whom to be labeled as terrorists, whom should be talked to and whom shouldn't? It should be learned that both the formation of fair laws, its implementation and regulation makes it possible for men to live together peaceably.

## The Challenges of Multiculturalism

By Dilawar Sherzai

The world of ours is embellished with variety of thoughts, feelings, perceptions and ideologies. And the same variety, many believe, is the beauty of it. However, maintaining the same variety, the challenge for the current phase of human evolution is to co-exist with harmony and peace.

No reason can stand solid for killing innocent fellow human beings; not even the differences in views and opinions. In real sense they are bound to differ in their thinking, as human beings are born with different perceptions. Every individual is bound to be different in some way or the other from others. That is what forms his/her personality. Differences in thoughts can never harm you unless they are pursued with extremist sentiments and ultimately guided to violence and terror. If others differ from you, it means you exist. They are supporting you in building you identity. There is no need of getting sick of that. And no one can ever give you the right to kill others just because they belong to a different religion, ideology or sect as long as they do not mean to harm you.

The same stands correct for groups and institutions as well, and may even be applied to religions and cultures. But, unfortunately, this concept has been vehemently ignored by the people and the violation of the same concept has led to the killing of millions of people. The differences among the people and the groups of people seem to be getting deeper instead of disappearing. The globalization process that has been expected to bring people together has not been able to maintain a harmonious multi-cultural world. The people still because of their cultural, religious and ethnic differences seem to abhor others and even get ready to launch tyrannical missions against each other.

Definitely, immigration along with the developments in communication and transportation has made it possible for the people of different cultural backgrounds to get closer to each other, which has given rise to the concept of multiculturalism - different cultures co-existing in harmony at least theoretically. Multiculturalism definitely depicts and demands higher human values, but it is difficult to manage.

There are various challenges that a multicultural society has to face. Among them acceptability is one of the most important ones. Further, the society wherein multiculturalism has to exist always generates a sort of fear of loss of national identity. This loss of national identity sometimes takes the form of political struggle through political platforms, while at other times it may take the form of violent measures. And on certain occasions it is also possible that the political parties themselves turn violent in the pursuit of their motto.

The concept of multiculturalism has not been able to implement itself thoroughly in the world. The multiculturalism has not been able to form a global ethics or a global code of conduct. It has been lost somewhere in cultural relativism. The cultures or the negatives in the cultures are accepted with the claims of cultural relativism. If the

same inclination towards cultural relativism is maintained it would be very difficult for today's world to form common values, laws or systems, which are very necessary to avoid clashes among the cultures and civilizations. Unfortunately, our today's world is moving right towards the same kind of clashes.

On the other hand this is going to strengthen the phenomenon of ethnocentrism. Though many sociologists believe that ethnocentrism, to a certain extent, is unavoidable, as every individual of group of individuals have to think from their own cultural and social backgrounds and may have a perspective of others in relation to their own cultural norms and values; however, the intensity and sense of extremism in this regard can prove detrimental for world peace and for the concept of co-existence. As the concept of ethnocentrism says that it is judging another culture solely by the values and standards of one's own culture, the ethnocentric individual will judge other groups relative to his or her own particular ethnic group or culture, especially with concern to language, behavior, customs, and religion. These ethnic distinctions and subdivisions serve to define each ethnicity's unique cultural identity. Ethnocentrism may be overt or subtle, and while it is considered a natural proclivity of human psychology, it has developed a generally negative connotation.

Anthropological studies reveal that People born into a particular culture that grow up absorbing the values and behaviors of the culture will develop a worldview that considers their culture to be the norm. If people then experience other cultures that have different values and normal behaviors, they will find that the thought patterns appropriate to their birth culture and the meanings their birth culture attaches to behaviors are not appropriate for the new cultures. However, since people are accustomed to their birth culture, it can be difficult for them to see the behaviors of people from a different culture from the viewpoint of that culture rather than from their own.

It is really fine that the different cultures in the world sustain their identity and even be proud of their historical and cultural backgrounds but they are never entitled to subjugate and devalue others cultures and values. Nonetheless, when there is the discussion of a multicultural society, there are some necessary safeguards against ethnocentrism and cultural relativism. In a multicultural society, there is a requirement of common values that do not harass human beings and violate their rights, even if the same is suggested in a particular culture.

The developed countries of the world today experience a process of multiculturalism, wherein they are facing the problems generated by extreme ethnocentrism and cultural relativism. However, none should substitute multiculturalism as it is the evolution human beings have made in their social lives. Definitely, it is time consuming and yet there is a long way to go to achieve it. For the time being states marked with multiculturalism have to introduce hard and fast rules and vigilant checks against any sort of attempt to strengthen violation of it. However, the developed nations of the world must never strive to go against it, not because the deprived nations benefit from it but because it is favorable for all the human beings. Further, this will prove them more evolved.

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## The Lagging Efforts for Resolving Kabul Bank Case

By Abdul Ahad Bahrami

Resolving the Kabul Bank scandal was one of the major promises pledged by the National Unity Government (NUG) when it was formed last year. However, despite remarkable progresses in dealing with the case, substantial challenges are remaining in place for recovering the hundreds of millions of dollars embezzled from the bank. Abdul Ali Mohammadi, legal advisor to the President, said on Sunday that \$437 million of the total \$987million stolen from Kabul Bank had been recovered, but \$578mn remained unpaid. According to Mohammadi, 24 individuals involved with the scandal have cleared their debts with the bank while 21 others have pledged to pay their debts to the bank. He added that the government has developed a persuasive procedure for collecting the money, saying that properties of those who have failed to commit for clearing their debts will be sold for clearing their debts with Kabul Bank.

The status of resolving the bank's case is indicating that it will remain a major test for the National Unity Government (NUG) in its efforts to fight the chronic and pervasive corruption in Afghanistan. So far, the government has been lagging in fulfilling its pledge to quickly resolve the bank's scandal. However, since formation of the NUG, the efforts to resolve the Kabul Bank's case has been on the right path and the government remains committed to addressing the bank's case. The Kabul Bank financial scandal emerged in 2010 when it became public knowledge that about \$1 billion was embezzled by bank executives, stakeholders and relatives of high-ranking government officials. The financial scandal was viewed as the biggest banking financial scandal of the world in the current century given Afghanistan's size of economy. It pushed Afghanistan's banking system on verge of a collapse and forced the government to seize the bank and bail it out at \$825 million to contain the crisis. Resolving the bank's case will remain a central question on whether the government is determined to effectively fight corruption at the highest levels in the government.

Initially, the process of addressing the bank's case has been marred by flawed handling of the case by the previous government as high-level figures were involved in the embezzlement. Previously during the former government led by Hamid Karzai, the Kabul Bank's special court concluded the case by sentencing two top officials of the bank to five years in prison. However, the measures taken by Kabul Bank's special court to resolve the case and bring all the accused to justice were not adequate as it failed to pursue a number of prominent individuals involved in the bank's case. Many criticized the court for failing to pursue some relatives of top political leaders and government officials who were accused of being involved in the fraud and receiving loans from the Bank.

The NUG's handling of the Kabul Bank case has been modestly praised by the public and the international community providing aid to Af-

ghanistan. In a major shift in the process of dealing with the bank's scandal, the new government of Afghanistan started pursuing all involved individuals including relatives of former government officials. While most of the people involved with the case have committed to clearing their accounts with the bank and paying their debts, the delays in collecting the embezzled money and ending the case is indicating challenges for the government handling the Kabul Bank case. The major individuals involved with the scandal are still failing to clear their debts to the bank, and it is unclear if they would be forced to repay the amount of money they owe to Kabul Bank. As part of its procedure for resolving Kabul Bank's case, the government has said it would seize and sell properties of the individuals in debts to the bank identified in Dubai and Afghanistan.

A major challenge for the government's handling of the bank's case is that prominent figures and relatives of top politicians are involved in the scandal. It is very challenging for the NUG to seriously pursue prominent figures and relatives of former government officials. NUG has been reluctant to annoy former government officials who still are powerful and have been in a way backing one side of the last year president elections who are now stakeholders of the new government. It is unclear how the government would attempt to force the high-profile stakeholders of the bank to repay their debts if they refuse to clear their debts and resist against selling their properties for repaying the bank's money. With no doubt, there are attempts from top current and former government officials to exert pressures on the NUG and influence the processing of resolving the bank's case.

Attempting to resolve the bank's scandal, the National Unity Government hopes to restore confidence of the international community and the Afghan public over the government's determination and resolve to fight corruption in the country. The major international donors of Afghanistan are hesitant to commit to provide more financial aid to Afghanistan due to the widespread corruption in the country. The Kabul Bank case has put Afghanistan under close scrutiny of the international community whether the NUG is serious in fighting corruption and fulfilling its pledges to the international donors. In the Tokyo Conference, Afghanistan committed to fight corruption in exchange the international donors agreed to continue providing aid assistance to the Afghan government and Afghanistan's security forces after 2014.

The Kabul Bank case suggests how Afghanistan is vulnerable to large-scale corruption. The National Unity Government would have no easy task of fighting corruption and bringing reforms in the country. The status of resolving the banking scandal indicates that the Afghan government still has a long way ahead to fulfilling its commitment to the international community to fight corruption. The efforts to resolve the Kabul Bank embezzlement case seems to be lagging but going into the right direction. However, there are still legitimate concerns and skepticisms on whether how the new government would be able to efficiently handle the bank case and put an end to the scandal.

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