

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



July 19, 2017

## Number of Drug Addicts on the Rise

It is really tragic to note that neither the production of poppy, nor the curse of drug addiction have been controlled in Afghanistan. Therefore, serious concerns are prevalent both about the use of drug money for terror financing and the increasing number of drug addicts in the country.

On Tuesday, July 18th, counter narcotics department revealed in a report that the number of drug addicts in eastern Nangarhar province has increased by 60 percent in the past six years. The department linked growing addiction to poverty, insecurity, easy access to drugs, migration and lack of awareness.

This shows the seriousness of the situation that is being promoted by the drug addiction. It is imperative to note that drug addiction, at first, victimizes the addict; but later on, the drug addict destroys public morale, health, safety or welfare of the family and society as a whole. The drug addicts become dependent upon the drugs in a short duration with gradual increase in the intensity of its use. It is generally believed that the dependence on drug is favored more by regularity of administration or the dose or method of administration. The addict becomes dependent on drug as he is on food. Furthermore, so long as he receives the usual daily supply he does not apparently look as an addict.

Even the intimate friends and the members of the family may not notice this habit. However, if an addict does not get the daily supply, clear symptoms known as withdrawal or distress of abstinence symptoms will appear within 10 to 12 hours.

The addict would become nervous and restless and might develop acute stomach cramps and his eyes might water and nose run. Later on, he might stop eating and start vomiting frequently, lose weight and have muscular pains in the back and legs. At this stage the addict may develop shakes and at this stage if he does not get the supply he is in for mental and physical torture. The addict would go to any length to get the supply of drug to relieve the suffering of withdrawal distress. Once he gets the drug, he would appear normal again.

This physiological and psychological dependence on drugs, with the stage being set for the withdrawal syndrome, makes the addict a serious problem for himself, the family, friends, peer group, relatives and the society at large. As the tolerance of drug is developed by the addict more and more supply is taken to relieve the physiological and psychological symptoms of withdrawal distress. In this way, habit is established, which becomes very difficult to break.

And, once the addict is totally into the drugs, the miseries start visiting him frequently. Unfortunately, the misery does not remain confined to him alone. He can then transfer the same addiction to others. As, he is not committed or fails to commit to leave drugs, he may urge others to use it, particularly those who are his friends or in his company. It can be observed that mostly the addict practice the use of drugs in form of groups as the groups use may facilitate them even further. Drug addicts can, afterwards, create many other social issues. Their family lives are disturbed and their relatives are influenced by them to a large extent. If the addicts are married and have children the repercussion may break the whole family.

The wives of the addicts mostly suffer the most - they are beaten, their money is stolen and their whole lives are made a hell by their addicted husbands. Their children, on the other hand, remain without facilities and mostly grow up in the atmosphere of violence and discomfort.

Considering the influence of the drugs on the people in our society, it is imperative to design some effective measures to control the situation. Historically speaking, many efforts that were made to treat addiction in the past proved to be unsuccessful. Such efforts were mainly confined to medical and clinical treatment, or punitive measures through law and confinement of the addicts in the prisons.

It is important to design other means to solve the issue. Most importantly, the addicts should be considered as human beings and not criminals or the rejected class of population. They deserve sympathy, love and affection rather than hatred or rejection. They should be treated as patients rather than deviants for the purpose of their rehabilitation into the normal society. The solution must be perceived in the right perspective as it takes place in social situation of primary groups and its solution be sought in the social interaction.

It is very well-said that prevention is better than cure. The teenagers must be watched with great care that their needs, feelings and social requirements are met by the primary groups in a desired and acceptable manner. They may not bank on negative primary peer groups for the unmet social, economic, political and emotional needs. This is the locus of the point that interaction groups of the teenagers should be such that they produce normal and trouble free individuals.



## Political Tension Soars between Afghan Officials

By Hujjatullah Zia

Political cleavage emerged between Afghan officials within the government apparatus has filled the air with a sense of anxiety for both state and nation. With the growing discontent, a number of Afghan authorities and political figures have recently formed a coalition under the term of Etilaf-e-Nijat-e- Afghanistan (coalition for Afghanistan's rescue) and a new political party titled "Mehwar-e-Mardum-e-Afghanistan" (core of Afghan people). In 2014 election, the National Unity Government (NUG) was formed based on a political agreement between Ashraf Ghani and Dr. Abdullah Abdullah after a protracted serious discussions. Based on this agreement, Ghani became the president and Abdullah the Chief Executive Officer (CEO). Although this agreement was not supported constitutionally in Afghanistan's presidential-parliamentary system, it was said that a Loya Jirga (Grand National Assembly) would be formed after two years to consolidate Abdullah's position on the basis of law. The CEO showed great tendency in changing the country's structure into parliamentary system that would pronounce him as prime minister and extend the realm of his power more than president. Currently, Afghanistan's political system is combined of both presidential and parliamentary characteristics.

For instance, the president is elected via general election by nation's votes. However, ministers are selected by parliamentarians' vote of confidence and they are responsible before the parliament, which represents the nation's will.

MPs are entitled to impeach and even incapacitate ministers in case of not being proved qualified. So, the former reflects presidential characteristic, whereas the latter is derived from parliamentary system. But legally, there is no room for CEO or prime minister and Dr. Abdullah's dream did not come true after two years acting as CEO based on mutual agreement. Now the point is that the NUG was formed after a long tension and discontent among officials and political parties. This agreement was celebrated by Afghan nation after waiting for months impatiently since the Independent Election Commission (IEC) was not able to declare a final result, which was a strong blow to its reputation.

The political tension within the government apparatus resurfaced every now and then. That is to say, the tension within the government's body on the one hand, and escalated militancy and economic constraints on the other hand put strong pressure on the NUG. With the Taliban's deadly attacks and suicide bombings which inflicted

heavy casualties upon civilians and emergence of self-proclaimed Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) that stoked sectarian violence prompted the nation to raise their concerns and utter their dissatisfaction. In brief, the mounting insecurity and mass unemployment created a rift between state and nation, too. The exchange of harsh rhetoric among government officials and accusing one another in one way or another widened the nation-state gap and led to a strong mistrust. With the formation of recent coalitions, the tension among officials hit rock bottom and political conflict has reached its peak. Three prominent officials and former Jihadi leaders namely the First Vice President Gen. Abdul Rashid Dostum, the Second Deputy to CEO Haji Mohammad Mohaqiq and Balkh provincial governor Ata Mohammad Noor formed the Etilaf-e-Nijat-e- Afghanistan coalition alleging that Afghan President monopolized the power - which was denied by presidential palace. Few months after being declared as the First Vice President, Dostum voiced against presidential palace claiming that he was sidelined from political decisions.

The crux of tension between Dostum and presidential palace emerged when the former Jowzjan provincial governor Ahmad Ishchi filed petition against Dostum claiming that he was jailed and harassed sexually by Dostum and his bodyguards. The issue went viral in national and international media that defamed Dostum seriously. To cut it short, he denied legal justice and took a trip to Turkey. His case is remained unaddressed. In reaction to recent statements made by Mohaqiq and Noor against the government, the presidential palace said that those who accuse the state are also members of the government's body and perhaps they did not fulfill their responsibilities either. They have to discuss their corrective strategy with the state, Ashraf Ghani maintained. Some political pundits believe that Ghani has not monopolized power but, unlike the Afghan former President Hamid Karzai, he gives no concession to warlords, which might be the main reason behind the current tension.

It is feared that the public will be the main victims in this political tension that may change into a worst-case scenario and do more harm than good. Despite a sense of mistrust between state and nation, the war-weary Afghans deem the opposition parties - the aforementioned coalitions - in conflict with status quo in this critical time as the country is beset by a number of greater challenges. To sum up, the nation is not optimistic about the coalitions since such movements were doomed to failure in the past without a palpable result.

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## The Gulf crisis: Fake news shines Spotlight on psychological warfare

By James M. Dorsey

Revelations about two incidents of Gulf-related fake news shine a spotlight on a long-standing psychological war between the UAE and Qatar that preceded the Gulf crisis, as well as the two states' seemingly repeated and competing interventionist efforts to shape the Middle East and North Africa in their mould. In the latest incident, US intelligence officials asserted that the UAE had orchestrated the hacking in May of Qatari government news and social media sites in order to post incendiary false quotes that were attributed to Qatari emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani.

The UAE and Saudi Arabia declared their six-week-old diplomatic and economic boycott of Qatar on the basis of the hack despite Qatari denials of the quotes and an investigation involving the US Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). US intelligence reported that senior UAE officials had approved the hack on May 23, a day before it occurred. The UAE has denied the allegations.

The US allegations came less than 24 hours after Reuters was forced to withdraw a report that six members of the Saudi-UAE-led alliance had asked world soccer body FIFA to deprive Qatar of its 2022 World Cup hosting rights after it turned out to be fake. The story was widely carried by international media and news websites and constituted the basis of an analysis by this author. It was not immediately evident who was responsible for the false report. The two incidents nevertheless highlight different strategies of the Gulf's small states, buffeted by huge war chests garnered from energy exports, to project power and shape the world around them, including the current Gulf crisis. At the core of the differences lie diametrically opposed visions of the future of a region wracked by debilitating power struggles; a convoluted, bloody and painful quest for political change; and a determined and ruthless counterrevolutionary effort to salvage the fundamentals of the status quo ante.

The UAE together with Saudi Arabia views autocracy as the key to regional security and the survival of its autocratic regimes and has systematically sought to roll back achievements of the 2011 popular Arab revolts that removed from power the leaders of Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Yemen who had been in office for decades. As a result, the UAE has allegedly backed regime change in a number of countries, including Egypt and reportedly Turkey; supported anti-Islamist, anti-government rebels in Libya; joined Saudi Arabia's ill-fated military intervention in Yemen; and in the latest episode of its campaign, driven imposition of the boycott of Qatar.

In contrast to the UAE, Qatar has sought to position itself as the regional go-to between and mediator by maintaining relations not only with states but also a scale of Islamist, militant and rebel groups across the Middle East and northern Africa. It moreover embraced the 2011 revolts and supported Islamist forces, with the Muslim Brotherhood in the lead, that emerged as the most organized political force from the uprisings. Qatar's support for the Brotherhood amounted to aligning itself with forces who were challenging autocratic Gulf regimes and that the UAE was seeking to suppress, prompting allegations that Qatar was supporting terrorism defined as anything opposed to autocratic rule. The hacking of the Qatari websites in May and the fake soccer story were but the latest instalment in the psychological war between the two Gulf states. The UAE and Qatar have been waging a covert war in the media and through fake NGOs even before Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Bahrain first withdrew their ambassadors from Doha in 2014 in a failed bid to get Qatar to change its policies.

The UAE, the world's largest spender on lobbying in the United States in 2013, sought to plant anti-Qatar stories in American media. To do so, it employed California-based Camstoll Group LLC that was op-

erated by former high-ranking US Treasury officials who had been responsible for relations with Gulf state and Israel as well as countering funding of terrorism. Under the contract, Camstoll would consult on "issues pertaining to illicit financial networks, and developing and implementing strategies to combat illicit financial activity." In its registration as a foreign agent, Camstoll reported that it "has conducted outreach to think tanks, business interests, government officials, media, and other leaders in the United States regarding issues related to illicit financial activity." Camstoll's "public disclosure forms showed a pattern of conversations with journalists who subsequently wrote articles critical of Qatar's role in terrorist fund-raising." The New York Times reported. Camstoll reported multiple conversations with reporters of The New York Times, The Washington Post, The Daily Beast, Dow Jones News Wires, Financial Times, Bloomberg News, CNN and the Washington Free Beacon.

Qatar's response to the media campaign against it was illustrative of its ineptitude prior to the current Gulf crisis in fighting its public relations and public diplomacy battles, clumsiness in developing communication strategies, meek denials of various accusations, and failure to convincingly defend its controversial policies. In a bid to counter its World Cup critics, Qatar contracted Portland Communications founded by Tony Allen, a former adviser to Tony Blair when he was prime minister, according to Britain's Channel 4 News. The television channel linked Portland to the creation by Alistair Campbell, Blair's chief communications advisor at Downing Street Number Ten and a former member of Portland's strategic council, of a soccer blog that attacked Qatar's detractors. Britain's Channel 4 reported that the blog projected itself as "truly independent" and claimed to represent "a random bunch of football fans, determined to spark debate."

The broadcaster said the blog amounted to "astro-turfing," the creation of fake sites that project themselves as grassroots but in effect are operated by corporate interests. The blog stopped publishing after the television report. Qatar also thought to undermine UAE efforts to tarnish its image with the arrest in 2014 of two British human rights investigators of Nepalese origin who were looking into the conditions of migrant labour. The investigators worked for a Norway-based NGO, the Global Network for Rights and Development (GNRD), that was funded to the tune of €4.2 million a year by anonymous donors believed to be connected to the UAE.

Founded in 2008, GNRD was headed by Loai Mohammed Deeb, a Palestinian-born international lawyer who owned a UAE-based consultancy, and reportedly operated a fake university in Scandinavia, according to veteran Middle East author and journalist Brian Whitaker who took a lead in investigating the group. GNRD said it aimed to "to enhance and support both human rights and development by adopting new strategies and policies for real change."

In 2014, GNRD published a human rights index that ranked the UAE at number 14 in the world and Qatar at 97. Heavy criticism of the index persuaded the group to delete the index from its website. GNRD, moreover, consistently praised the UAE's controversial human rights records with articles on its website on the role of women, the UAE's "achievements in promoting and protecting the family, environmental efforts, care for the disabled and its protection of the rights of children. GNRD was closed following police raids in 2015, the confiscation of \$13 million in assets, and charges of money laundering that have yet to be heard in court. Norwegian investigators said that UAE diplomats had fought hard to prevent the case going to court.

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