

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



July 28, 2016

## Government's Promises and Corruption

One of the factors that have been hampering the international community to support Afghanistan is corruption. So much support and assistance have been provided to Afghanistan but little has reached to the common and deserving people; most has been devoured by corruption. There have been many promises by the government and the relevant authorities but little has been done in this regard. The government, therefore, requires doing something serious about the corruption if it is interested in receiving any support from international community.

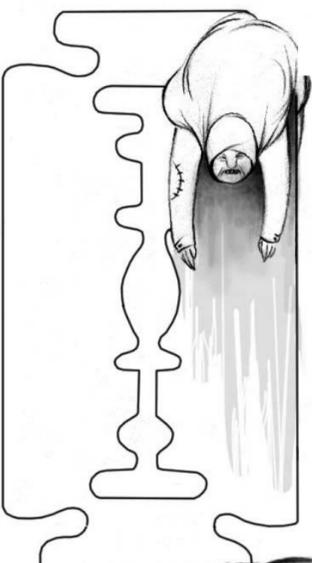
There are reports that as the Brussels Summit on Afghanistan is less than three months away, the Afghan government is apparently expediting efforts to define a more robust and coherent anti-graft policy aimed at restoring trust between the country and its strategic allies in order to secure their continued financial, military and moral support in the years ahead. On Wednesday, President Ashraf Ghani's deputy spokesman Shahhussain Murtazawi assured the nation of government's commitment to fighting the trend by defining more inclusive anti-corruption measures ahead of the Brussels Summit in October. He said that all government institutions are expected to outline their anti-corruption policies at a special meeting on Thursday. Referring to government's counter-corruption strategy, corruption monitoring groups have cautiously welcomed the announcement. It is not something really different as such promises have been made by the government many times but no tangible action has been taken. Mostly, such steps are taken so as to convince the international community that something is really happening to control corruption in the country but soon after the conferences and meetings, the promises are forgotten and the actions are halted. The different bodies or the organizations that are formed they keep continue receiving funds but show no evident performance.

The Independent Joint Anti-Corruption Monitoring and Evaluation Committee (MEC) head, Yama Turabi pointing to the same fact, said in a statement, "The Afghan government takes such initiatives before every summit, but when the summits are concluded, government also stops its efforts and this is not a good approach." There is no way the government can defeat corruption through empty promises and theories. In the last few years, it has grown into a gigantic issue and it has penetrated deep within Afghan society. Almost all the institutions and most of the individuals are influenced by it on daily basis. The Afghan people, so as to get their different tasks done from different government institutions, pay bribes on daily basis. In fact, most of the people think that there is no other way of getting their work done except corruption.

Though in its early days National Unity Government (NUG) made some promises that it would do something regarding corruption but it seems that the promises have been forgotten. Mostly, NUG blames insecurity for the lack of attention towards other issues particularly corruption, but it fails to realize that controlling corruption should be one of the main steps towards improving security. Without defeating corruption or controlling it, it would be really difficult to fight insecurity. Any effort for confronting insecurity would end up in smoke if the intentions, processes and personnel are corrupt and this has been happening in most of the cases. NUG, therefore, needs to understand the link between the two and prepare itself to eradicate the cause first.

It also needs to do the same as far as political and economic stability are concerned. Afghanistan cannot continue its journey towards a politically and economically stable society unless it takes a bold step against corruption. As John F. Sopko, the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) says, "It is true that the governing coalition in Afghanistan remains fragile. As Director of National Intelligence James Clapper recently testified, in 2016, the Afghan government faces the risk of a political breakdown. But we at SIGAR are convinced that the dangers of letting corruption run rampant are greater than the risk of disrupting the entrenched practices of Afghan officials."

Afghan government, therefore, needs to have a comprehensive strategy in dealing with the situation; otherwise, it would further destabilize the society. Corruption basically generates a sort of injustice within the society and adds to the grievances and difficulties of the people. Those who deserve are not awarded because of corruption and they ultimately take steps to make up for their rights through illegal ways. The large bulk of assistance that were given and received in the name of the poor and needy people of Afghanistan, never reached them and their lives still remain miserable. Finding government officials gaining advantages that are meant for the poor people, make the people question the legitimacy of the government and they, ultimately, decide to join the opposing forces. With the rampant corruption threatening the stability, security and legitimacy of Afghan society, there is no other option for the Afghan government to take quick and effective measures to control it, while US must make serious efforts in this regard as well. Otherwise, expecting any progress without curbing corruption would be nothing more than a day dreaming.



## The Philosophy Behind Violence and Disorder

By Hujjatullah Zia

A strong sense of tendency towards breaking social norms or legal restrictions is felt among the individuals. Some simply transcend public values, which are deeply embedded in society's culture, however, a number of ideologues trample upon legal obligations through perilous acts. For instance, members of the insurgent groups pay no significance to moral or legal standards and feel an insatiable desire for breaking them.

With the current unmitigated militancy and inclination towards violence and bloodshed, one will be taken aback to see that the individuals aged 20 - 30 form the larger part of the insurgent groups. To know the motives behind this social phenomenon, we need to consider their backgrounds within families and society.

Sociologically, there are many reasons behind this fact: (1) Based on theory of "social control", which is dominant in criminology, the main reason behind disorder in a society is lack of social control. It suggests that man feels a natural tendency towards evils, and lack of control will facilitate the path for greater disorder. (2) However, "social acquiring" suggests that the individuals learn deviant behaviors through social interactions based on certain process. In other words, deviation and criminal behaviors are acquired via socialization rather than being natural. This theory considers the role of media very essential in poisoning the minds of a society and desensitizing the breaking of accepted norms or redirecting their motivation to social deviation. (3) "Social pressure" states that a spate of structural pressures in a society, such as social deprivations, economic constraints, etc., forces people into violating law and regulation. For instance, one will resort to breaking law or violent behaviors for failing to gain his/her dreams, being humiliated in family or society or simply deprived of a luxury life unlike his/her next-door neighbor. As a result, since there are enough social welfares and facilities in industrial societies, they will hardly encounter groups of radical revolutionists. Therefore, the poor countries will be mostly in grip of insurgent radicals. In addition, "labeling" is also a sociological theory and states that a number of individuals are inclined towards perilous and criminal acts for being labeled so by society or by members of their families. Ill-fatedly, some like to label others negatively and analyze their actions through their personal tastes. It is believed that labeling one "criminal" will make him/her criminal, based on sociological analysis, and the person will commit crime for being labeled so. Psychologists also believe that if parents label their child "lazy", s/he will not get a good position at school and this word will linger in the child's subconscious mind for long time. Moreover, being la-

beled will underestimate one in the eye of the public and reflect a negative picture of him/her to the society. So, when one is labeled as "criminal" or "deviant" s/he will nurture a keen interest in breaking law and regulation. If we consider the status quo, lack of control is widely felt in the society. It is believed that if Afghanistan had a stronger government with higher military equipments, the citizens would not suffer terrorism and insecurity as they do now. A number of criminals and terrorists are at large despite breaking law constantly. In another term, the criminals are hardly prosecuted and this is one of the reasons behind the rise in violence and crime. In addition, the state law is not implemented thoroughly and some commit crime with impunity. Indeed, lack of "social control" plays a highly destructive role in a society. It goes without saying that the Taliban fighters are socialized in madrassahs, which are the hotbed of radical ideology, mostly outside the border. They are not born criminal but brainwashed and acquire violent exercises through the means of socialization.

Similarly, scores of the youths, who join the militants, come from deprived families. Failing to meet their dreams or enjoy equal chances and opportunities as other citizens, the lump in their throats grew stronger and, ultimately, forced them to join terrorist networks. They can hardly tolerate others enjoy a better life and greater facilities or walk with their friends while they are deprived of these blessings and assets. The immoral acts of the self-styled Islamic State group, who declared "Jihad-e-Nikah" to satiate their carnal desires through religious terms, unfold the very same fact. To put it succinctly, members of the IS group succumbed to sexual orientations but under the false mask of religion - they violated the sanctity of religion for personal desires. Hence, their tendency towards breaking legal and religious obligations seemingly stem from social pressures namely deprivation. They are the primary factors which need to be addressed. To mitigate social disorders, the state has to ensure that the law is implemented thoroughly and criminals, including the militants, are not at large. Simultaneously, schools, seminaries and other educational centers are supposed to be under the cautious watch of the state so as not to poison the minds of the individuals. Thirdly, the government should work on developing the economy through exploiting resources and mines, enhancing commercial relations, establishing industries, etc. The bulk of the challenges will be resolved in the country if the said steps are taken seriously. It is worth saying that all the three issues are to be dealt with at the same time so as to form a society void of or with little violence.

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## Civil Society Against Terrorism

By Dominique Moisi

After the terror attacks in Paris last November - a carefully coordinated series of assaults carried out by multiple attackers, resulting in 130 deaths - there was intense pain and fear, but also a spirit of unity and resilience. By contrast, since the Bastille Day massacre in Nice - where an attacker, having received help from five men better described as criminals than as radical Islamists, barreled a truck into a crowd, killing 84 people, many of them children - the dominant feelings seem to be impotence and anger.

The French are now frustrated and anxious. They are used to some semblance of security in their cities, which have long been bastions of knowledge and art, not sites of relentless terror. They want to feel safe again - whatever it takes. These feelings are entirely understandable, but they don't necessarily contribute to effective decision-making.

The "whatever it takes" is the problem. If people feel that their leaders are failing to protect them, they may turn to more radical alternatives; already, populist and even overtly racist political parties are gaining traction in France and elsewhere. Urged on by such forces, people may even decide to take the law into their own hands.

But the authorities already have a lot on their plate. Trying to protect a population from terrorist attacks while upholding the rule of law is, after all, a very difficult task. Individuals, particularly those with mental disorders and a broad interest in violence, can become radicalized quickly, as occurred with the Nice attacker. They may not have committed any crimes, nor established actual ties to terrorist groups, before launching a major attack. Given this, the French authorities can provide no guarantee against further attacks.

This is not to say that the authorities should not be pushed to improve their prevention and response tactics. There is plenty that can and must be done to strengthen security in France and elsewhere. But the ultimatum that some French are now implicitly presenting - guarantee absolute security or watch us cast aside the rule of law and basic principles of openness and equality - does more harm than good.

The French, like all people, deserve to feel safe walking down the street, going out to dinner, enjoying a concert, celebrating a national holiday, and just living their lives. The question is how to restore that sense of security at a time when the risk of a terrorist attack cannot be fully eliminated. The answer lies with civil society. Ordinary citizens should become more alert to the signs of radicalization, and more educated on how to respond. People should be encouraged to report the possible radicalization of those close to them to the relevant authorities, whether psychiatric professionals or the police.

The goal is not to revive McCarthyism, with people making unsubstantiated accusations against neighbors and friends. Rather, it is to create channels through which people who recognize radical or violent leanings in someone they know

can report their concerns. Beyond giving law enforcement a chance to prevent a serious attack, such contributions from civil society could help to reinforce citizens' willingness to leave anti-terror operations and policies to the authorities. This model has worked for Israel. Despite regular exposure to terrorist attacks, Israelis retain a sense of relative security, owing partly to the ability of civil society to contribute to their own safety. As a result, citizens are willing to respect what Max Weber called the state's "monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force."

Of course, France is not on the verge of collapsing into chaos, with vigilantes attempting to take on the terrorists. But the relentless fear-mongering of populists, together with genuinely terrifying, tragic, and infuriating experiences, is undermining people's better judgment, causing them to fall prey to inflammatory rhetoric. And with a presidential election set for next spring, there is strong incentive for self-serving politicians to use the victims of Nice as instruments of campaign strategy.

This cannot be allowed to happen. If the French ultimately succumb to fear, electing populist bigots, the struggling Islamic State (ISIS) will have scored a major victory - one that could potentially lead to a reversal of fortune for it.

And, make no mistake: despite what the populists say, ISIS is losing. Its territory is dwindling, taking with it the dream of a new caliphate spanning the Arab world. But ISIS does have a last-ditch strategy to prop itself up: rapid recruitment. And that effort would receive a major boost from further intensification of anti-Muslim rhetoric or, worse, the election of those who would turn rhetoric into policy.

Already, ISIS recruiters are achieving success, even as the group loses control of cities and provinces in Syria and Iraq. From Orlando to Istanbul to Dhaka, ISIS has found plenty of supporters who are eager to kill in its name. Most recently, two ISIS-affiliated suicide bombers blew up a peaceful demonstration in Kabul, killing 80 and injuring more than 200.

But as long as the "enemy" in the West remains united and principled, ISIS cannot emerge victorious. For France and others, the key is collective action, both at home and abroad, which will require improved links between internal and external security agencies, together with greater risk awareness within civil society, along Israeli lines. Add to that continued strikes against ISIS sanctuaries, and the dream of the caliphate will soon be dead.

It's bad enough that terrorists want to take our lives; the last thing we need is populists taking our souls. Regaining control over our lives and our destinies means being realistic. Instead of demanding a return to a time before terrorism, we must become more alert to the risks it poses - not only to our safety, but also to our values and commitment to the rule of law - and do our part to minimize them. (Courtesy

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