

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



June 19, 2018

## Art Promotes Colors and Sounds of Peace

There are different aspects of life and existence. Human beings need to satisfy all those aspects of life to live a stable life. These are not only linked to physical reality but also to the aesthetic, emotional and spiritual realities. In order to satisfy the latter realities, it is imperative that human beings must adopt the art as a tool. It is through art and artistic endeavors that they are able to satisfy these aspects of their reality and their existence.

Though in the modern world, the importance of science and technology has culminated, it has not been able to overshadow the importance of art and culture. Even modern art uses scientific and technological tools for its creativity and productivity. Moreover, art also has an imperative role in the development and preservation of culture and traditions.

It also imperative to realize that art searches beauty, finds it and brings it to human life. It is through art that human beings have found the real meaning of beauty and they are able to make it a reality in their lives as well. This has also gifted human beings the love for nature, for each other and for the entire humanity. It has also given them the opportunity to achieve beauty in their social life and existence and thus transform the world in a better place to live.

It is also through art that human beings get the opportunity to express themselves. Art is like a door towards the outer world. Through this door the human feelings, emotions and thoughts flow outwards. And it is not just any sort of flow that qualifies to be called as art but the skilled and the fine-looking ones that reach to the level of true art. Thus, art functions as exhaust for human's true nature, which, if closed, can cause human's true self suffocate in a solitary confinement.

The true artists are the ones who pursue true art and thus pursue beauty and refined skills. They are always innovative and creative and long for a world that is filled with love and affection. They, at certain times and in certain societies, may be considered as evils and destructive but that may be because of the standard or the criteria through which they are judged. They may be highlighting the shortcomings and the defects within the society and the societies that do not have the capacity to absorb such criticism tend to discourage the artists and the art as a whole.

Artists are a very important stratum of society and they should be encouraged to continue their work in every possible manner. They may prove to be the guides of human emotions and their aesthetic sense. They may lead human soul towards satisfaction and contentment. Human beings, in today's busy world have become very much mechanical. Their lives are mostly influenced by the routines and they are the victims of monotony. They require change and novelty and artists can support them achieve such novelty and change. Therefore, it imperative that artists must be supported so that they are able to support the society in the best possible manner.

Artists dare to dream, dare to think differently and dare to change and all these can support human beings towards a different life - a life that may be quite better than the one they are living. Therefore, the societies must respect their artists, value their work and realize their worth; otherwise, they may not be able to live life fully.

The societies that are liberal and democratic have a very favorable environment for their artists. The artists in such societies are free to pursue their skills and grow as artists and, thus, become a positive part of society and become the agents of change and progress.

On the other hand, the conservative societies that are dominated by rigid rules and extremist religious sentiments tend to undermine the artists and art. They do not have any sort of tolerance for them, neglect them and make their lives miserable.

Afghanistan is also one of the societies where the artists are not given their due rights and they do not have the role and the position they deserve. In fact, the country has been caught in so many other problems that the issues pertaining to artists and art have never been pondered upon. Now that country is moving towards a relatively peaceful era, it is important that the artists should be valued. They should be supported both by the government and the people.

Moreover, the institutions that support and promote art must be strengthened. Music, painting, acting, dance, singing and all forms of art must be given proper chance to grow and to evolve. Afghan people require them not only for erasing the memories of war and instability but also for maintaining peace and tranquility and providing satisfaction and contentment to their souls.

Artists can also provide support in embellishing the country with the color and sounds of peace and creativity, instead of bloodshed and war. They have the capacity to engage youth in constructive endeavors, instead of violence and terrorism. They can, without any doubt, put the society on the track towards sensitiveness, beauty and attraction.



## Qingdao Summit Promotes China-Afghanistan Relationships

By Liu Jinsong

On June 10th, H.E. President Ghani met with H.E. Mr. Xi Jinping, President of China, in Qingdao, China. I had the honor to attend the meeting and feel happy for two Presidents' deepening friendship year-by-year, and applauded for the consolidation and development of China-Afghanistan relations.

This is the fifth meeting between the two Presidents. Every time they talked happily just like close family members, and greatly promoted our bilateral relations. The two leaders are the steersmen of China-Afghanistan relations, injecting new energy to bilateral relations, and their focus and input in this regards can neither be replaced nor missed.

The Afghan people is the largest beneficiary of this meeting. Three hours ahead of the meeting, senior officials from China and Afghanistan signed the Protocol of Phytosanitary Requirements for the Export of Pine Nuts from Afghanistan to China, according to which Afghan high-quality pine nuts are eligible to be exported to China directly and conveniently. This is another important measure to benefit Afghan people's livelihood since the signing of saffron export protocol between two countries. President Ghani appreciated this arrangement very much and believed this measure has a big significance and far reaching impact.

The Chinese side said that China would like to import more Afghan products, including marble stone, pomegranate, carpet and so on, through the direct cargo train and flight between two countries. This reflects the deep friendship of China towards Afghanistan, in the hope of increasing Afghan farmers' income by granting better access to the Chinese market.

President Xi also welcomed Afghan side to participate in the 1st China International Import Expo which is to be held this November in Shanghai, and encouraged the Afghan side to promote its featured products export to China. The Chinese side promised to provide more convenience for the Afghan business community.

As Afghanistan's largest neighbor, China has a 400 million middle-class population and a huge market with an annual consumption of nearly 6 trillion USD. The key to Afghanistan's participation in the regional industry chain and value chain lies in how to effectively connect with the Chinese market. The Chinese government and the Embassy support Chinese enterprises to invest in Afghanistan on the basis of mutual benefit, win-win and equal cooperation. Of course, Afghanistan needs to provide a good business environment including security and etc.

President Ghani briefed the serious drought in Afghanistan and appreciated China's large amount selfless donation over the years. President Xi said that China is implementing several donation projects including affordable housing scheme in Kabul and the National Institute of Vocational Training Center. China always supports Afghanistan's reconstruction and livelihood of its people, bears in mind Afghanistan's humanitarian assistance requirement and is willing to continue providing assistance within its capability. The two leaders tasked the working levels to step up its work, make detailed donation plans and implement programs.

The two leaders agreed to maintain the frequent high-level exchanges, strengthen communication between governmental departments, legislatures, political parties as well as the military at various levels. The provincial cooperation should also be promoted. They mentioned in particular that Bamyan Province of Afghanistan has established a sister-province relationship with Gansu Province of China, and Badakhshan province in Afghanistan has also signed an agreement of intent to establish sister-province(region) relationship with Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region in China. They hoped to further promote practical cooperation at provincial level.

The two leaders discussed with interest about how to promote people-to-people exchange and cultural exchanges. President Xi said that the National Museum of Afghanistan had successfully held exhibitions on its treasures in China since last year. The exhibitions were warmly welcomed by the Chinese, for it reminded people of the glory of ancient Silk Road. China hoped to further strengthen cooperation with the Afghan archaeological and cultural communities. President Ghani immediately responded that the Afghan paintings in the 16th century were deeply influenced by China and the two countries had a long history of artistic exchanges. He hoped to have more archaeological cooperation as well as the artist training and exchanges.

Just half a month ago, five Afghan artists were invited to attend an art tour in Guizhou and Beijing of China, and held exhibitions in Beijing, which aroused great interests in the Chinese artist circle. In March this year, the Chinese Dunhuang Research Academy delegation successfully visited Kabul and Bamyan, which is deemed as a breakthrough between the two countries' archaeological cooperation. A few days ago, I presented the Afghan eminent persons some replicas of the Map of Silk Roads Landscape - Afghanistan's Part. The map has a history of nearly five hundred years, depicts locations and shapes of several ancient Afghan cities. The Map is a witness of our two countries' historical friendship along the ancient Silk Road. The two leaders emphasized that "Close contacts between the people hold

the key to a sound state-to-state relation", and agreed to strengthen cooperation in the fields of Chinese language teaching, university, think tank and etc. These are the earnest expectations of our two peoples and will further consolidate the cooperation foundation of peoples.

People-to-people bonds play an important part in the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). The two leaders talked freely about their vision towards jointly building BRI and reached a lot of consensus on policy coordination, facilities connectivity, unimpeded trade, financial integration and people-to-people bonds. President Ghani firmly supported the BRI and the SCO's connectivity plan. Afghanistan has joined the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and is coordinating with the Bank on project financing cooperation. The significant improvement in the Afghanistan-Pakistan relations and the trans-border connectivity cooperation projects discussed between Afghanistan and Pakistan also provide more options for China-Pakistan Economic Corridor's extension to Afghanistan.

The two leaders talked about security and political issues in depth. President Ghani emphasized that peace is of utmost importance to the Afghan people. Only when the peace is achieved can Afghanistan behave its geographical advantage as the premise of development. China's support in this regard was of great help to Afghanistan and would be more crucial in the future. President Xi expressed the hope of Chinese people for the early realization of peace and reconciliation, and wished lasting peace and stability in Afghanistan, hoped that Afghanistan could become a platform for cooperation among all countries. President Xi said the premise of economic development is a stable environment at home and neighboring countries. China supports the peace initiative proposed by the National Unity Government of Afghanistan, commended the temporary ceasefire announced by Afghan government and Taliban, insisted on a political settlement for the Afghan issue, and welcomed Afghanistan and Pakistan to enhance mutual trust and solve problems through new dialogue and cooperation mechanisms. China would like to positively support Afghanistan's peace and reconciliation process and establish good-neighborly relations through bilateral, trilateral and multilateral channels.

President Ghani warmly congratulated China on the successful hosting of SCO Qingdao Summit and helping SCO achieving fruitful outcomes, expressed Afghanistan's positive wish to further participate in SCO activities. The Chinese side appreciated Afghanistan's support to China's role of rotating president and expressed its willingness to promote SCO to make more contributions to the Afghan peace and reconstruction.

Last month, the SCO-Afghanistan Contact Group meeting at deputy foreign ministerial level was held in Beijing and achieved fruitful results. All parties unanimously supported strengthening this mechanism. The discussion on the Qingdao Summit as well as the Qingdao Declaration mentioned Afghan issue in a very constructive way. Afghanistan signed relevant documents with SCO Secretariat.

The two leaders also agreed to strengthen counter-terrorism cooperation at various levels, as terrorism, extremism, and separatism are common threats to both countries and the international community at large.

Both leaders said affectionately that China and Afghanistan are traditional friendly neighbors, as well as strategic cooperative partners. The two countries have always shared mutual understanding, trust and support with each other. Consolidating the China-Afghanistan relations is the steadfast national policy for the two governments. China supports Afghanistan to take advantage of geographical location and participate in BRI, to accelerate the construction of regional connectivity.

President Ghani once visited Qingdao in 1996 when he was working for the World Bank. Therefore, he is one of the very few foreign leaders who could understand the vast contrast between Qingdao's present and past. He highly praised the developments and changes of Qingdao during the past 20 years, believed the searthe epitome of China's great success of last 40 years' reform and opening-up. President Xi responded that the dramatic changes in Qingdao all lies in stability, reform and opening up.

The two leaders were both smile and in good spirits when they shook hands to farewell. Both of them said that the talk was a great one and made each other further understand mutual concerns. They determined to achieve new and greater progresses on some key issues.

At that night, I went to the airport to see off President Ghani and his delegation. President Ghani received a special gift - an album of all the photos of himself during his stay in Qingdao. He once again praised the "China Speed" and "China Passion".

The Qingdao Summit showed world the "Shanghai Spirit", which features mutual trust, equality, mutual benefit, equal rights, mutual consultations, respect for the diversity of cultures, and pursuit of common development. The spirit is a reflection of the present China-Afghanistan relations. We do hope that the speed and passion set by our two leaders, along with the "Shanghai Spirit", will contribute to the construction of the community of a shared future. *Liu Jinsong is Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the People's Republic of China to the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan*

## The Value of Government Risk Taking

By Mariana Mazzucato

Economic debates are often presented as black-and-white battles between conservatives calling for smaller government, and progressives arguing for more public spending. But this simplification overlooks the way that markets are co-created by different actors. As economic historian Karl Polanyi wrote in his classic book *The Great Transformation*, "free markets" are themselves products of state intervention. They were forced into existence.

And yet, while many in the private sector consider themselves "wealth creators" and "value creators," policymakers and civil servants have come to believe that their economic role is more passive. For many governments today, the "state" is at best a market fixer, and this notion of fixing and mending has then translated into other pretty passive words like the role of the state in simply "enabling" or "facilitating" the value creators and business.

One reason for this is that in mainstream economic theory, it basically holds that governments should only intervene when there is a clear market failure. In this view, the state should ensure a level playing field; fund things like public goods, such as infrastructure and defense; and devise mechanisms to mitigate negative externalities such as pollution. And then get out of the way, to allow the real wealth creators to actually produce value. The state might later step back in to redistribute that value that was created in business via taxation.

And when states exceed this mandate, they are accused of creating market distortions. The emergence of "new public management" theory in the 1980s led civil servants to believe that they should take up as little space as possible, because they might get easily captured or corrupted. And this actually led them to fear government failures even more than market failures.

While this thinking has caused governments to adopt some private-sector management tactics, it has also undermined confidence in public institutions and undermined governments' ability to confront modern challenges.

It wasn't always this way. In the decades after World War II, governments took risks and encouraged innovation, and were proud to do so. Many agencies were well funded and attracted top talent. In the United States, for example, collaboration between NASA and DARPA, the Defense Advanced Research

Projects Agency, actually created the Internet. While in the UK, a BBC literary project helped drive innovation in computer processors through dynamic use of procurement.

Today, however, many mission-oriented institutions have been weakened, and it's become easier for politicians to call for downsizing and outsourcing than to increase budgets and defend public-sector risk taking. But this is shortsighted. Modern government does not mean simply redistributing existing wealth or addressing issues affecting the provision of public goods. It also means co-creating value in ambitious ways in different areas. When mission-driven public-sector actors collaborate to tackle problems, they co-create new markets that affect both the rate of growth and its direction.

Furthermore, understanding the co-creation of value leads us to question the way that the term value itself is used in areas like corporate governance. We have been sold on the notion of shareholder value, which assumes that only shareholders take big risks. But is that true? And in the pharmaceutical industry, value-based pricing is used as an excuse to charge extremely high prices that the market can bear, ignoring the role of public investment in creating that value, like the over \$30 billion that the National Institutes of Health spend every year. But is that right?

Only by understanding markets as outcomes of the investments and activities of different actors can we move beyond the dogma and start asking more granular, interesting, and dynamic questions, like "what forms of public organizations will be best able to experiment and explore in areas relevant to grand global challenges around health care and sustainable energy?" As John Maynard Keynes argued in 1926 - sustained economic growth requires long-term government planning. But how to do that planning in innovative, creative, and dynamic ways, co-shaping the opportunities of the future, is the question we have ahead of us. And that means that policymakers have to start thinking big again.

*Mariana Mazzucato, Professor in the Economics of Innovation and Public Value and Director of the Institute for Innovation and Public Purpose at University College London, is the author of The Value of Everything: Making and Taking in the Global Economy.*

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

Vice Chairman/ Senior Editor: Moh. Sakhi Rezaie

Email: outlookafghanistan@gmail.com

Phone: 0093 (799) 005019/777-005019

www.outlookafghanistan.net



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