

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

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Electoral Reform Ascertains Vibrant Democratic Afghanistan

Afghanistan requires a legitimate and functioning government committed to implementing a comprehensive program of reform to empower the Afghan constitution, thereby making the values of the Constitution a daily reality for the people of Afghanistan. Stability of the country is strengthened by a genuine political partnership between the President and the CEO, under the authority of the President. Electoral reforms are also a major part of the agreement between then presidential candidates Ashraf Ghani and Abdullah Abdullah after last year's disputed presidential election. It was the September 2014 agreement, the twin head of state and government agreed to electoral reforms to ensure that future elections are credible. Without making needed reforms the unity government would exercise extra-constitutional authority until electoral reforms are made before conducting parliamentary and district council polls.

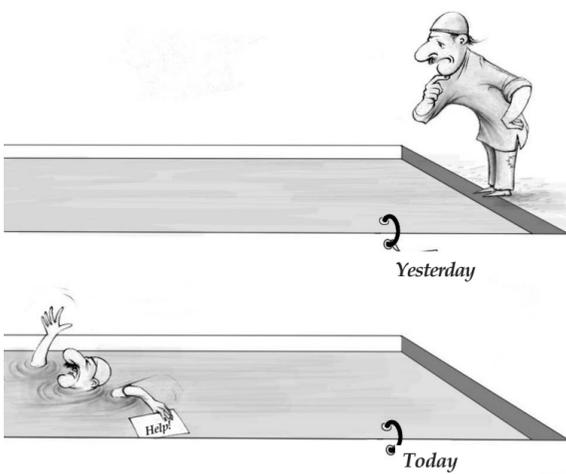
Many local and international election advocates have repeatedly raised their concerns saying the government is less interested in reforms—a conflicting approach to reform in this sector is the underlying evidence to the aforesaid issue. It is not the members of civil society who raises concern over delay of reforms—the members of Wolesi Jirga members too expressed concerns over the delay in electoral reforms, urging the two leaders to set aside their differences in the larger interest of the country. How would the country decide and head towards the future undertakings provided the essential reforms are not made; the role and responsibilities of individual descended to corresponding situations are not clarified. It is undeniably comprehensible—the slot of chief executive is yet to be legitimized following required amendments in the constitution.

Earlier, the US and German special representatives for Afghanistan and Pakistan have stressed the need in electoral reforms without further delay. Identically, the Afghanistan Contact Group (ACG), Daniel Feldman, the US special representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan, stressed it was necessary that the elections were acceptable to everybody in Afghanistan. In that pursuit the installment of electoral reforms commission stand out to be prior most duty of government. In the light of loud criticism over 2013 election result the National Unity Government (NUG) evolved following a broad based consensus—the fate of lifelong stability of NUG is decided by the mutually agreeable electoral reforms. It should be ascertained that 2019 presidential elections would meet all the critical requirements on credibility and liability provided the National Unity Government implements its commitments for bringing electoral reforms. Responding at the mounting pressure of civil society and international reform advocate institutions, earlier the government formed electoral reform special commission that would assume the due course of action making the upcoming parliamentary and local council election credible and the business of government well defined and implementable. The commission was assigned to bring about fundamental changes to the electoral system and build trust between the people and government. Doing so, President Ashraf Ghani issued a decree announced the 15-member special commission choosing female lawmaker Shukria Barakzai as the head of the commission and Sediqullah Tawhidi the deputy head. Nonetheless, the CEO's office has opposed Ghani's appointment of Shukria Barakzai as the head. As a result, the commission has not formerly started working. This is patent move underscoring the underlying differences between president and the CEO—seems to be predominantly the clash of interest than the crucial changes.

Conversely, a deliberate controversy is imminent to surface subsequent to formation of Head of electoral reform commission although Independent Election Commission of Afghanistan owns a head. In the presence of one commission what would be the status of other commission is hitherto to be decided. What would be the area of jurisdiction of these commissions is shun in ambiguity? Commissioners of the Independent Election Commission (IEC) are fighting off calls for them to be replaced while insisting that, at this point, they are the only ones who should be making changes to improve future elections. This controversy is an addition to the one existing between political elites.

It is witnessed when everyone is talking about electoral reform; the internal strife really boils down to a struggle for control of the electoral bodies and, ultimately, the design to turn the outcome of upcoming elections as par expectation. This is not the only conflict emerging on finalization of head of reform commission, history recorded clash of interest on account distribution of important ministries between the variant stakeholders. Beleaguered amongst controversy the issues of national interest pushed to background—there are certain diplomatic issues are too lingering their fates.

In order to ensure the stability of National Unity Government and easing power-sharing agreement calls for the convening of a Loya Jirga within two years to consider amending the Constitution to create the position of an executive prime minister. Loya Jirga is a special type of Jirga that is mainly organized for choosing a new head of state in case of adopting a new constitution. Subsequent, to disputed election result of previous election the office of Chief Executive was created whose constitutional status is yet to be affixed by Loya Jirga and the two houses of parliament. Likewise the impartiality of future elections depends upon the degree of requisite reforms are made. The dream of vibrant, developed and prosperous Afghanistan can only come true when the required reforms are installed in constitutions and duly implemented.



Afghans – The Victim of Radical Ideologies

By Hujjatullah Zia

Afghanistan has been the hotbed of different ideologies throughout the history. Our nation has witnessed liberal and radical movements. However, both bore bitter fruits which were toxic to the Afghans' social and cultural norms. Similarly, the ideological tendencies wrecked irreparable havoc on the political infrastructures and inflicted mortal wounds on our people. We underwent great affliction amidst war and violence originated in radical mindsets.

Our nation suffered painfully under Taliban for their megalomania and fundamental worldwide. It is an undeniable fact that the Taliban militias nurtured a set of extreme beliefs and imposed it on people at the point of gun. In other words, their radical stereotypes – masked in piety and devotion – preyed upon Afghan men, women and children. The unmitigated insurgency carried out by the Taliban militants continued in spite of their downfall. The mercenary militias and seminary's ideologues are striving to foment troubles through playing with the life of our nation. Their lethal acts of terror still lead to great casualties.

Meanwhile, the threat of radicalism has been augmented via emergence of the Islamic State militant groups in the country. Seemingly, Afghanistan is on the verge of witnessing worse ideology being carried out by the IS militants. Since the Taliban's Supreme Leader Mullah Omar does not carry much weight in recent years, the Taliban insurgents have pledged allegiance to the Islamic State to lengthen their political and economic life.

The drawdown of the NATO forces on one hand and the emergence of the Islamic State on the other hand will lead to a high instability in the country. If the government and NSTO troops do not join forces to counter terrorism with stronger determination, Afghanistan will have to be on the alert of horrible consequences. Precautionary measures should be taken by the Afghan government to prevent from further influence of the IS militants and let not Afghans fall victims to this lethal ideology.

The day-to-day macabre stories of the terrorist victims add insult to the historical injuries of our people. Our old wounds are being infected by the poisonous ideologies of the newly emerging militants. To our unmitigated chagrin, we have never been put in the process of therapy for our bleeding hearts root in three decades of war and carnage.

After the fall of the Taliban's regime, Afghans hoped to breathe a sigh of relief in the absence of terrorism. They were tantalized by liberty and democracy. Men and women flocked to ballot boxes with high ambitions. They believed to gain bona fide peace through their ballots. However, their dream did not come true. The Taliban ragtag militants

were regrouped and sent back to continue their deadly acts of terror. US President Barack Obama said on Memorial Day that "Afghanistan remains a very dangerous place". Indeed, if this country be changed to the ground of ideological practices, people will not be safe from the poisonous effects. History shows that an innumerable mass of our people lost their lives and our cultural, political and economic infrastructures were havoiced via radical ideologies. To put it succinctly, our nation has been the sacrificial lamb of ideologies and fundamental mindsets within three past decades.

Liberal movements did not bear the desired fruit either, for being in conflicts with the public's social and cultural values. As a result, the King Amanullah Khan's liberal movement was strongly repressed. He failed to gain national favor to establish the western product, but with good intention, in our land. However, history still reveals a period of liberal ideology being practiced in the country. But this could not bring honor to the nation either. So, the fact is that our soil is highly prolific but was sowed the seeds of poisonous ideologies which led to great murders. Our enemies, especially the radicals such as the Taliban, exploited this land against our national interests. They shed the blood of our nation in our own land. Is it the end of the story?

No way, as it was mentioned previously, the Islamic State militants are preparing to put their own radicalism into practice in the country. Their ideology – archaic frames of mind practiced under the aegis of piety – is more extreme than that of the Taliban's style.

There must be no room for the radical ideologies in Afghanistan anymore to victimize our people. Afghans are not doomed to suffer violence and bloodshed. We must learn from the history and do not let it repeat. Constitutionally, the government is liable to "strengthen national unity, safeguard independence, national sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country; establish an order based on the peoples' will and democracy; form a civil society void of oppression, atrocity, discrimination as well as violence, based on rule of law, social justice, protecting integrity and human rights, and attaining peoples' freedoms and fundamental rights; strengthen political, social, economic as well as defense institutions...."

Since presidential elections are national landmarks after the downfall of the Taliban's regime, the current democratic system should mitigate the public challenges. We will have to be able to breathe in peaceful climate and practice our rights to life, freedom, etc. Afghan children must not inherit violence and lack of patience from the past generations. Hopefully, our officials will do their best to curb the challenges and root out terrorism from the country. I emphasize that Afghans are not fated to suffer war and violence and Afghanistan must not be used as a ground for radical ideologies.

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Putting an End to Endless Sufferings!

By Asmatyari

The man is entitled to be the supreme creature given his superior mental capability owes a peculiar attribute in his inferior body. Deeds are executed in the light of perception thought-out in one's mind based on sensational judgments. The mental supplement involving rational discourse is never brought into practice that enables man learn beyond the limits of superficial sensory perceptiveness. The sensory learnability of man lies within a restricted limit; nevertheless his mental perceptiveness is boundless and is at par with excellence.

Most of the problems, we encounter on daily accounts are associated with a flawed understanding of the root causes of the quandary and flawed strategies leading to its proper solution. Consequently, efforts are exercised in the pursuit of extraneous vague goals, even then an appropriate way out fall short to be devised. Thus, we keep on oscillating between the issue and the disingenuous course leading to reprehensible solution.

Indiscriminate and faceless owing of the worldly discoveries is one of the persona Muslims bears. The mismatched references are superfluously used in order to justify their intellectually bankrupt state. The claimant for every invention left them in superiority complex and hollowness, turning their innate aptitudes plagued and dysfunctional. On the other extreme, years long propaganda against modern scientific education is also propagated that sought a credible support and appreciation from many well learned individuals.

One of the degenerative understandings, commonly witnessed is an objective view of the issues. It has always been effortless, holding someone else responsible for our erroneous deeds. We have all turned professionals in disowning the ill-consequences, some of our ill-strategized feat brings. We spare not, any opportunity to earn credits for other selfless undertakings. Conversely, we are reluctant to own the responsibilities for a self done, fallacious accomplishment.

Muslims exert greater effort on preserving absolute religious dogmas, tradition without being contemplative to coincide it with demands of changing contemporary world. We draw distinction between God's words and deeds. Religion has turned a collection of congested beliefs in which no timely and compatible interpretation stands permissible. Religion anchored on dogmatic interpretation annuls creativity and innovation and unwaveringly dictates the political and social arena of our daily undertakings—thus completely restraining advancements with changing world and grooming circumstances. The conservative elements have always taken measures to curtail the collective success and prosperity of the society terming the innovative developments anti-religion. They have always struck at emotional nerve of their adherents; intellectually kept in dark, denied access to scholarly approach thus made an unnatural bond to the forged prescription.

We could not draw a clear distinctive line between licit and illicit deeds. The plague of narrow-mindedness has worst affected us to the level that our ill deeds are fortified to the height of truth and others good deeds appears forged to us. The poison of biased understanding injected into the bloodstream of society has maligned their moderate disposition to extreme one. Freedom of thought, providing a sound basis of intellectual progress is not only given the status of ill recognition but also out of religion.

With the advent of Islam, Muslims showed a marked progress in every field of human endeavor, particular scientific studies. Muslim scientists succeeded inventing scores of inventions ranging from medical, engineering, chemistry, mathematics etc. They evolved and succeeded by keeping pace with time. Nonetheless, the day Muslim empire turned into center of power play in the bid to conquer throne marks the beginning of endless turmoil—we witness. It is since then, the downfall began—provided many scientists were forced to flee or bear the brunt of brutality having been accused of sacrilegious deeds; which were the rational interpretation of natural phenomena.

Even till date, majority if not all, Muslim scholars deem modernism in discord with Islam while reaping the fruit of modern inventions themselves. Every invention did face countless restraints before befitting in Muslim dominated societies. The inventions like radio, telephone and television etc, hardly earned acceptance only when the illusion of being anti-Islamic sank. At present DNA samples from crime scene gives confidential clue to most wanted criminals and likely can be used to discover the blood relation.

The objective view of the issues has unnecessarily, left our sentiments supra-vulnerable to humiliations and disgraces. Any plot set to soar our emotions letting us exercise evil deeds, without the cognition of its far reaching ill-consequences—succeeds, leaving us disadvantaged. It should be learned, two wrongs never make a right. An evil motive supplied with recklessness, might plot to make a vocal or otherwise attack on a well held religious value or figure, will never earn a disgrace to either of the value or the figure. It is a deliberate excuse to harm the feelings by sowing the seed of religious or ideological discord. Retaliating identically by torching the sacred places and disregarding others' religious values and figures will not earn virtues and dearness—it certainly is an unpardonable and condemnable deed.

The aristocratic, despotic regimes and absolute rule instilled in most of Muslim countries—the ruling class steers the fate of the nation, consequently the pages of history are filled with blunders individuals committed and the nation is left to reap for generations, no one realizes.

The system directly supporting, promoting and protecting injustices seem unlikely to extend space to talent, competence, capabilities, as an alternative recommendation, inducement and influential financial status help earning preferential societal position. Nonetheless, the whole functionalities of the flawed system escape apprehension—they are subjugated to practiced system not the constitutional provision because of despotic brought up. The culprits of Kabul bank swindle to date, escape detainment and prosecution because of having influential ties. It is imperative that constitutional safeguard is provided to hapless citizens seeking justices over authority and power abusers. The injustices cracking the socio-political fabric of society and widen the societal divide across ethnic lines, must be curtailed. The politically under-privileged ethnic group rendered vulnerable with increasing the sense of insecurity and should be given in confidence. May the custodians of illusive slogans come forth to fight against all these social evils, injustices, biases and human rights violation? The thoughtlessness multiplied our complications and thoughtfulness offers a permanent way out to it.

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