

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



June 15, 2016

Mining Sector Requires Attention

Recently, it was disclosed publically that Taliban militants in Afghanistan benefit much through illegal mining. Mining sector that can be a hope for Afghanistan and its people, is turning into a funding source for the militants, which is really very much unfortunate.

Members of Badakhshan provincial council has recently disclosed that smuggling of lapis lazuli and illegal extraction of semi-precious stone in the province is the main revenue source for anti-government militants in the area.

Abdullah Naji, a member of Badakhshan provincial council said in a statement, "Afghan President issued a decree last year where he banned the illegal extraction of lapis in Badakhshan. Meanwhile, this illegal business is (also) going on in Panjsher province. This should be banned in other provinces as well. Government should pay attention to this matter."

However, the attention of the government seems to be diverted towards other concerns. And, this is not limited to the extraction of lapis lazuli; in fact, the whole mining sector seems to be suffering from the lack of attention by the government. The mining sector in Afghanistan, if boomed properly, can serve as a hope to boost Afghan economy to a large extent. Many years of instability and wars have influenced Afghan economy negatively. The involvement of international community in Afghanistan generated some hopes that Afghanistan may be able to stand on its own in the times to come. However, it would need to learn to live on its own. The complete withdrawal of international security forces from the country may raise various challenges for Afghanistan as far as the financial support and economic stability are concerned. Nonetheless, the country has to rely on its own resources and among them the mining sector can, undoubtedly, play a tremendous role.

According to certain calculations by US, Afghanistan may possess mineral deposits worth USD 1 trillion, which is really very large and includes the minerals like gold, iron ore, uranium and precious stones including emeralds. Unearthing all these mineral resources and processing them so that they are ready for use or export would definitely require large factories and a large number of human resources, which would provide the unemployed youth of the country an opportunity to avail employment.

Country's rich mine sector would ensure bolstering each and every sector of the country during the next 20 years but a proper administration is needed to protect the sector. It is really very imperative to understand that the large mineral reservoirs that remain untouched in our country can solve a large number of our problems but we are not able to avail such opportunity and mostly the way we administer it or plan to administer it is responsible for it.

It is really necessary that the legislative and administrative mechanisms in the country must strive to formulate and pursue the laws and policies that are for the benefits of the country and that involve the consultations and advice from the technical and professional persons.

It is an undeniable fact that the natural resources of the country have yet to be unearthed and there have not been even very basic work done in this regard. So, everything has to be started right from the very inception and that would require a lot of hard work and dedication. Hopeful expectations in this regard have to be backed properly by determined and practical measures; otherwise intention may end up in smoke.

Currently, Afghanistan has been highly dependent on international support to run its economic system. In the post withdrawal period there are possibilities that the international aid entering the country may reduce considerably. Though the international community has made promises that the support for the country may continue till 2024, the international political and economic circumstances point towards some other.

On the other hand the security situation in the country has been going through a deteriorating trend. The terrorism seems to be rising in some of the most important parts of the country and the security situation still remains a question mark. Threatened by insecurity major projects regarding the mining sector have been postponed. The ones that have been started are lagging behind their schedule. The international investors are losing their interest as they do not feel that their investment would bring fruit in such uncertain circumstances.

In such circumstances, development of a strong mining sector seems a herculean task. The mining sector is not just about digging the minerals out of the earth. It includes a complete development of an infrastructure. It involves complicated processes, machinery and latest technology.

Definitely, generations of instability have incapacitated Afghanistan to work on these resources but at the same time it would require, at least a generation if not generations of stability to bring these resources in use. It is not impossible; neither there should be pessimism in this regard. The important point is to remind the people of Afghanistan and most importantly the Afghan authorities to analyze the socio-political and politico-economic conditions rationally and try to comprehend the challenges appropriately.

After the challenges are understood appropriately, measures can be carried out to find out proper solution of the challenges. It is really encouraging that there are expectations from the mining sector, but these expectations must not be converted to fantasies rather they should be changed to realities through prudence and positive attitude.

Reaction of Leading US Presidential Candidates on Attack in Orlando

By Zahir Akbari

Donald J. Trump on Sunday June 14, 2016 sought to capitalize on the mass shooting at a gay club in Orlando, reiterating his controversial call for a temporary ban on Muslim migration to the United States and criticizing Hillary Clinton for what he claimed was her desire to "dramatically increase admittance from the Middle East."

In a demonstration of his willingness to flout convention and engage in a style of demagogic politics rarely displayed by a presidential nominee, Mr. Trump claimed he had warned of the sort of terrorism that marked the shooting, which killed 50 and was one of the worst in the country's history.

"I said this was going to happen — and it is only going to get worse," Mr. Trump said in a statement, arguing that Mrs. Clinton's presidency would mean "hundreds of thousands" more Middle East migrants.

"And we will have no way to screen them, pay for them, or prevent the second generation from radicalizing," said Mr. Trump, the presumptive Republican standard-bearer.

The suspected gunman, Omar Mateen, was an American who claimed to be motivated by extremist online, and was the son of an immigrant probably from Afghanistan. But there are so many unanswered questions to be clear. But it seems to be impossible as he (the clue) has been killed before to light the ambiguities.

In a separate statement on Twitter, Mr. Trump said that the rampage in Orlando "is just the beginning" and noted that he "asked for the ban" on Muslim immigration to America. He has made his hard line against Muslims central to his campaign, and, even after becoming the presumptive nominee and turning to a broader electorate, refused to fully back off from his call to temporarily halt Muslims from traveling to America.

Hillary Clinton in a statement the very same day said that "we need to redouble our efforts to defend our country from threats at home and abroad" and called for more stringent restrictions on guns.

Mr. Trump has faced widespread condemnation for this stance from both Mrs. Clinton and numerous Republicans, but, as he did again, he has said such vigilance was necessary and that the country "can't afford to be politically correct." To this end, he said Mrs. Clinton should quit the presidential race if she proved unwilling to acknowledge that the attack in Orlando was the result of "two words: radical Islam."

Mrs. Clinton did not use that phrase or respond directly to Mr. Trump's broadsides. Her campaign instead sought to use the event to diminish their Republican rival. "This act of terror is the largest mass shooting in American history and a tragedy that requires a serious response," Jennifer Palmieri, Mrs. Clinton's communications director said that: "Donald Trump put out political attacks, weak platitudes and self-congratulations."

Mrs. Clinton, the presumptive Democratic presidential nominee, initially responded with caution Sunday morning after early reports about the assault, offering her thoughts to those affected "as we wait for more information." But after President Obama spoke in the afternoon, and called the Orlando killings an "act of terror," she issued a longer statement echoing the president. "This was an act of terror," Mrs. Clinton said.

In her statement, Mrs. Clinton said "we need to redouble our efforts to defend our country from threats at home and abroad," focusing on the threat of terrorism. Further down in her statement, she called for more stringent restrictions on guns.

"Finally, we need to keep guns like the ones used last night out of the hands of terrorists or other violent criminals," she said, taking up the call many on the left made in the hours after the attack. Mr. Trump, who made no mention of access to firearms in any of his comments, said Mr. Obama should resign for his own refusal to say "radical Islam."

The White House declined to comment on Mr. Trump's demand for the president's resignation. And repeatedly accuse Obama of being somehow sympathetic with radicalized Muslims.

A tragedy in the middle of a presidential race would typically force restraint on candidates. But this tradition has largely vanished in the era of the superheated, social media news cycle, where mass shootings immediately set off debates about access to guns and, if the perpetrator is Muslim, Islamist terrorism. And if the Orlando massacre was a test of how willing candidates and their supporters are to pursue partisan attacks in the aftermath of horrific violence, Mr. Trump left little doubt about his willingness to push the boundaries of the country's public discourse.

It was a vivid illustration of how little heed Mr. Trump pays to traditional political standards, whether it is on how campaigns are waged or on the kinds of positions he embraces. But there were few Republicans criticizing him for his Muslim ban proposal.

It is unclear whether Mrs. Clinton will use her speech to forcefully confront Mr. Trump. Mrs. Palmieri, the campaign aide, said Mrs. Clinton would discuss "steps she would take to keep the country safe" in the coming days and another aide said the candidate intended to refashion her address to focus on the terrorism in Orlando.

What is clear is that the shooting will reorient the race for at least the next days. Mrs. Clinton was supposed to hold a campaign rally with President Obama in Green Bay, Wis., on Wednesday, her first joint appearance with the US president. But she quickly postponed the event after the severity of the shooting became clear.

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Living Purposeful life

By Ahmad Shah Karimi

Man is the highest fruit on the tree of evolution. It is for man to realize his position in nature and understand the true meaning of life. To know the purpose of life, one will first have to study the subject through his experience and insight. Then, he will discover the true meaning of life. Knowing the purpose of life simplifies it. It defines what a man should do and what not. The purpose becomes the standard that a person uses to evaluate which activities are essential and which are not. Without a clear purpose mankind have no foundation on which they base decisions, allocate their time, and use their resources efficiently. Therefore the man probably tends to make choices based on circumstances, pressures, and his mood at the moment. People who do not know their purpose try to do too much-and that causes stress, fatigue and conflict. Furthermore, knowing the purpose focuses one's life. It concentrates his effort and energy on what's important. He becomes effective by being selective. Without clear purpose, he will keep changing directions, jobs, relations or other externals-hoping each change will settle the confusion or fill the emptiness in his heart. He thinks, maybe this will be different, but it does not solve the real problem-a lack of focus and purpose.

There are several prerequisites to the discovery of the purpose of life. First, everyone must understand the nature of man and the nature of life. Next, they keep their mind calm and peaceful through the adoption of a religion. When these conditions are met, the answer will come like the gentle rain from the sky.

The nature of life

Most people dislike facing the true facts of life and prefer to lull themselves into a false sense of security by sweet dreaming and imagining. They mistake the shadow for the substance. They fail to realize that life is uncertain, but the death is certain. One way to understanding life is to face and understand death which is nothing more than a temporary end to a temporary existence. But many people do not like even to hear of the word "death". They forget that death will come, whether they like it or not. Recollection on death with the right mental attitude can give a person the nature of existence. In addition, thinking about our own death surprisingly has a lot of practical advantages. One those benefits is that it forces us to zero in what's actually important in our lives and what's just frivolous and distracting. Besides understanding death, we need a better understanding of our life. We are living a life that does not always proceed as smoothly as we would like it to. Very often, we face problems and difficulties. We should not be afraid of them because the penetration into the very nature of these problems and difficulties can provide us with a deeper insight into life.

The nature of religion

To understand the real purpose of life, it is advisable for a person to choose and follow an ethical-moral system that restrains a person from evil deeds, encourages him to do good acts, and enables him to purify his mind. For simplicity, we shall call this system reli-

gion. Religion is the expression of the striving man: it is his greatest power, leading him onwards to self-realization. It has the power to transform one with negative characteristics into someone with positive qualities. It turns the ignoble, noble; the selfish, unselfish; the proud, humble and the cruel to kind. Religion teaches a person how to calm down the senses and make the heart and mind peaceful. According to Islam the purpose of life is worship of One True Almighty God of the Universe [Allah in Arabic] as a primary goal or aim in life provides a believer with everything he needs to succeed in both this life and life after death. Further, it states that this life is a one-time opportunity to achieve everlasting happiness in the Hereafter. Every moment has a great potential if positively utilized to raise status in the sight of our creator. Strong faith and good deeds bring peace and comfort in this life, in the grave and hereafter. On the other hand, coming from spiritual meaning of life to somatic one, the aim in life varies among individuals, as an artist may aim to paint a masterpiece that will live long after he is gone. A scientist may want to discover some laws, formulate a new theory, or invent a new machine. A politician may wish to become the president. Or another person aims to serve humanity by creating something. However, when if asked that why they aim such, they will reply that these achievements will give them a purpose in life and make them happy.

Human Nature

One has to learn how his/her mind can be developed to its fullest potential so that its true nature can be realized. As yet, human being is still wrapped in ignorance. He/she does not know who he/she really is or what is expected of him/her. As a result, misinterpreting everything and acts on that misinterpretation. It is not conceivable that our entire civilization is built on the misinterpretation. The failure to understand existence leads to assume a false identity of a bloated, self-seeking egoist, and pretend to be what isn't or is unable to be. Human being must make an effort to overcome ignorance to arrive at realization and enlightenment. One can be enlightened if he/she wakes up from the dream that is created by his/her own ignorant mind, and becomes fully awakened. He/she must realize that what he is today is the result of an untold number of repetition in thoughts and actions. He/she is not ready-made: he is continually in the process of change that his/her future lies, because it means that it is possible for to mould character and destiny through the choice of actions, speech and thoughts.

To sum up, there is nothing quiet as potent as a focused life, one lived on purpose. The men and women who have made greatest difference in history were most focused. If a man wants his life to have impact, he should focus on it, and does the things which are based on his values and can bring a genuine outcome in his life as well as in his fellowmen's life.

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