

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



June 18, 2016

## Redistributing Resources

Human beings depend highly on the environment where they live. Both the physical and socio-economic circumstances provide them the opportunity to fulfill their different sorts of requirements. Among these requirements the needs to live alive are the most basic one; they include food, shelter and certain other opportunities. It is only after fulfillment of these basic requirements that human beings are able to divert their attentions towards other objectives and goals. In fact, they would not be able to give proper meaning to their lives and will not realize themselves unless they have their rudimentary requirements properly met.

It is also very important to note that there are enough resources around the world that can fulfill most of the requirements of most of the people in the world. However, there are millions of people in the world who do not have the basic requirements. They suffer from extreme poverty and dearth of resources. Many of them die because of the same reason. This unfortunate fact leads us to think that though human beings consider themselves as the wisest of the creatures, they are not able to prove the same through their actions. They have designed modern states and systems, yet they are not able to provide their own kind even the basic requirements of life, which is really unfortunate. Only some of the people have access to most of the resources of the world while most of the people suffer from poverty.

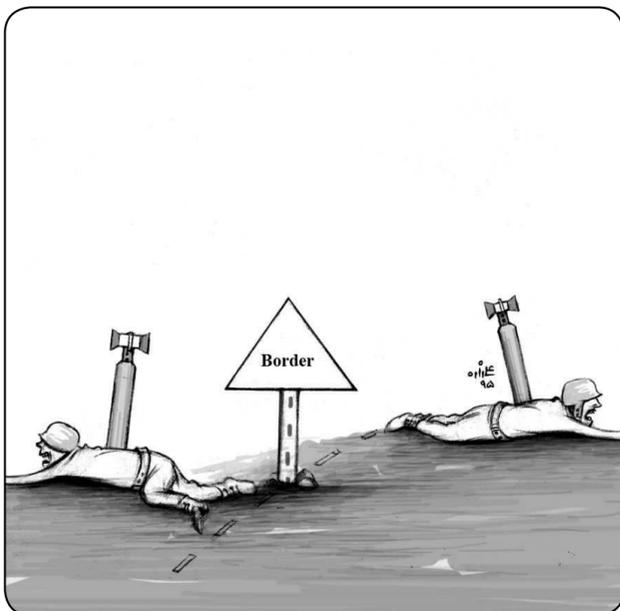
There are some thinkers who even suggest that human beings are bound to be so. Or, they consider it a necessary outcome of the evolutionary process, which they believe is based on the survival of the fittest. The ones who have acquired limitless resources just for their self-centered motives are thought to be fittest and thus the rightful winner of the competition that is prevailing in the natural world. However, they fail to understand that the distribution of the wealth and resources is basically the result of unjust economic and political systems that are designed by human beings themselves not by nature.

The nature does not discriminate between rich and poor. The fragrant breeze in the nature blows for everyone without the distinction of race, community, poor and rich. The river that flows in nature provides everyone with same bewitching scene and cold water to drink. The fountains do not recognize the strata and the economic status. And even the natural calamities; like earthquakes, floods and deadly hurricanes destroys everyone equally. However, some may have developed better defense against all these calamities by the dint of their wealth, which is because of the economic system in society developed by human beings themselves, not the nature.

It is the socio-economic and political systems in the country that split the human beings in different classes. These classes are demarcated with bold and clear boundaries. The dissimilarities found in these classes are enormous and one gets astonished to see how human beings are really satisfied with so much distinctions. The examples are not difficult to find. There are millions of poor people in the world. They have not enough food to eat, no water to drink and no cloth to wear. The economic system developed by human beings, with the intentions to fulfill their requirements, has in fact cheated them and they are at a stage of misery. The class-based system and the vivid class disparities have neutralized the capacity of human beings to fulfill their basic requirements from the unlimited resources.

The same can be observed in our own country, as well. The ruling class, that includes the political and religious leaders, the business tycoons, the warlords and the chieftains, has accumulated most of the wealth and resources while most of the poor people suffer from misery and deprivation. This ruling class is not interested in any other thing except pursuing its own selfish goals. That is the reason that poverty, unemployment, terrorism and insecurity are haunting our nation to a large extent and they are getting worse with each passing day.

Our socio-economic system has a dominant imbalance and this imbalance has further created different sorts of evils in society. There are crimes and injustices because of the same system. Poor, because of negligence and lack of basic requirements are bound to break the law and the rich, because of their authority to mock the law and order system, break it. Poor, to quench the thirst of their children and fill their stomach with few morsels of food, break the law; while the rich, to quench their thirst for luxury and adventure, break it. This system cannot guarantee sustainability and prosperity. There is a crying need for drastic changes. The imbalance has to be diminished if it is not completely eradicated. True justice should be followed and the resources and wealth should be used for the poor as they deserve it, not the rich who already enjoy all the facilities and luxuries of life.



## Taliban Play Foul in Peace Talks

By Hujjatullah Zia

The Afghan-Taliban peace process has been one of the most complicated issues within the past decade and the Taliban elements still seek to continue this political game. Despite tireless struggles made by Afghan government to bring the Taliban to negotiation table, the process has always been at a low ebb and insurgency continued unabated which inflicted casualties upon the NATO coalition forces and Afghan combatants and non-combatants. Violence and terror have been intensified within the last two years since the Taliban operated under "spring offensive" and "Omari Operation" - the issue was compounded with the emergence of the self-proclaimed Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) in Afghanistan as some members of the Taliban pledged loyalty to them after the demise of their spiritual leader Mullah Muhammad Omar.

Peace talk was also a hot debate between Kabul and Islamabad. Pakistani officials said that talk was the only viable option to gain peace and promised to bring the Taliban to peace table. As a result, in March Pakistan's Prime Minister's Adviser on Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz had said that the Taliban leadership lived in Quetta, and Pakistan was using that as a leverage to persuade them to engage with Kabul. Moreover, the Quadrilateral Coordination Group (QCG), which was formed by Afghanistan, Pakistan, China and the United States, held five meetings - the fourth meeting was held in Kabul on February 23 and the fifth one was in Islamabad on May 18 just days before the death of Omar's successor Mullah Akhtar Mansoor, who never succumbed to QCG's calls and pressures.

With Mansoor at the helm of the Taliban insurgents, Afghanistan left a bloody year behind and the graph of police and civilian casualties increased rapidly. Afghanistan's National Security Forces (ANSF) have massively suffered from the violent war that warring factions, mainly the Taliban, have fought since 2001. According to available data, until April 2015, around 92,000 people - including ANSF, US military, and Allied troops, as well as civilians - were killed in Afghanistan as a result of the war. The number will be much higher now, given the worsening security situation in 2016. Last year, the first since NATO ended combat operations, civilian casualties hit a record 11,002, with 3,545 deaths and 7,457 injuries. It was estimated that 60 percent of casualties were caused by anti-government forces including the Taliban, ISIL, etc. This year, the Taliban warned that they would "employ large-scale attacks on enemy positions across the country" during the offensive dubbed Omari Operation in honor of the movement's late founder Mullah Omar, whose death was announced last year. The Taliban outfits responded to peace calls negatively and

showed no interest in this regard despite the Quadrilateral efforts and persistence. With the Taliban's fatal attacks carried out in Afghanistan's soil, the relation between Kabul and Islamabad turned sour. Unlike his predecessor, Afghan President Muhammad Ashraf Ghani asked Pakistan in a serious tone to operate against the Taliban and do not treat the Taliban fighters, who were wounded in wars versus Afghan and US soldiers, in its hospitals.

It is believed that Mansoor's death led the peace process to stalemate and ended the glamour of hope. Contrary to this fact, Sirajuddin Haqqani, who was elected as Taliban's deputy supreme leader last month, has said in an audio message that the Taliban were not against negotiation of peace if it was held on the basis of Islamic Sharia. In response to the question that the Taliban did not favor political dialogue, he is quoted as having said, "Our Political Commission deals with the issue of negotiations. If we were opposed to talks, we would have never formed this commission. This was a consensus decision of the Taliban leadership." He called Afghanistan "a puppet administration" arguing that Afghan government had no power in implementing any decisions and international community was "forcing" his group to join the administration. He added that the Haqqani network was part of the Taliban and "Islamic Emirate is one".

Not surprisingly, whenever the Taliban undergo casualties on a larger scale and run short of aid, they signal for talks so as to mollify Afghan soldiers to decrease the operation. By now, Afghan officials must be used to the militants' untimely call for talks, which is used as war strategy rather than having a bona fide intention for peace. In another item, the militants seek to get relief under the term of peace negotiation and they will soon deny it. The question is that if the Taliban intend to resume talk, why they held out against it more than a decade and ushered in Omari Operation this year?

The vacant seat of the Taliban's leader around the peace table will never be filled the same as Omar and Mansoor's times. The paradoxical rhetoric of Haqqani, if the audio is not fake, such as "puppet administration" and inclination for talks is not justifiable in Taliban's radical ideology. Warring parties, including the Taliban, should not be let anymore operate with impunity under peace term as they played foul a thousand times and our nation is not to fall victim to this trick. Moreover, Kabul and Islamabad should end the roller-coaster-ride relation and join forces to counter insurgency and eliminate sanctuaries of the Taliban and Haqqani network as persisting calls for peace talks were futile.

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## Brexit's Impact on the World Economy

By Anatole Kaletsky

The febrile behavior of financial markets ahead of the United Kingdom's referendum on June 23 on whether to remain in the European Union shows that the outcome will influence economic and political conditions around the world far more profoundly than Britain's roughly 2.4% share of global GDP might suggest. There are three reasons for this outsized impact.

First, the "Brexit" referendum is part of a global phenomenon: populist revolts against established political parties, predominantly by older, poorer, or less-educated voters angry enough to tear down existing institutions and defy "establishment" politicians and economic experts. Indeed, the demographic profile of potential Brexit voters is strikingly similar to that of American supporters of Donald Trump and French adherents of the National Front.

Opinion polls indicate that British voters back the "Leave" campaign by a wide margin, 65% to 35%, if they did not complete high school, are over 60, or have "D, E" blue-collar occupations. By contrast, university graduates, voters under 40, and members of the "A, B" professional classes plan to vote "Remain" by similar margins of 60% to 40% and higher.

In Britain, the United States, and Germany, the populist rebellions are not only fueled by similar perceived grievances and nationalist sentiments, but also are occurring in similar economic conditions. All three countries have returned to more or less full employment, with unemployment rates of around 5%. But many of the jobs created pay low wages, and immigrants have recently displaced bankers as scapegoats for all social ills.

The degree of mistrust of business leaders, mainstream politicians, and expert economists is evident in the extent to which voters are ignoring their warnings not to endanger the gradual restoration of prosperity by upending the status quo. In Britain, after three months of debate about Brexit, only 37% of voters agree that Britain would be worse off economically if it left the EU - down from 38% a year ago.

In other words, all the voluminous reports - by the International Monetary Fund, the OECD, the World Bank, and the British government and the Bank of England - unanimously warning of significant losses from Brexit have been disregarded. Rather than trying to rebut the experts' warnings with detailed analyses, Boris Johnson, the leader of the Leave campaign, has responded with bluster and rhetoric identical to Trump's anti-politics: "Who is remotely apprehensive about leaving? Oh believe me, it will be fine." In other words, the so-called experts were wrong in the past, and they are wrong now.

This kind of frontal attack on political elites has been surprisingly successful in Britain, judging by the latest Brexit polling. But only after the votes are counted will we know whether opinions ex-

pressed to pollsters predicted actual voting behavior.

This is the second reason why the Brexit result will echo around the world. The referendum will be the first big test of whether it is the experts and markets, or the opinion polls, that have been closer to the truth about the strength of the populist upsurge.

For now, political pundits and financial markets on both sides of the Atlantic assume, perhaps complacently, that what angry voters tell pollsters does not reflect how they will actually vote. Analysts and investors have consistently assigned low odds to insurgent victories: in late May, betting markets and computerized models put the probabilities of Trump's election and of Brexit at only around 25%, despite the fact that opinion polls showed almost 50% support for both.

If Brexit wins on June 23, the low odds accorded by experts and financial markets to successful populist revolts in America and Europe will immediately look suspect, while the higher probabilities suggested by opinion polls will gain greater credibility.

This is not because US voters will be influenced by Britain; of course they will not be. But, in addition to all the economic, demographic, and social similarities, opinion polling in the US and Britain now face very similar challenges and uncertainties, owing to the breakdown of traditional political allegiances and dominant two-party systems. Statistical theory even allows us to quantify how expectations about the US presidential election should shift if Brexit wins in Britain. Suppose, for the sake of simplicity, that we start by giving equal credibility to opinion polls showing Brexit and Trump with almost 50% support and expert opinions, which gave them only a 25% chance. Now suppose that Brexit wins. A statistical formula called Bayes' theorem then shows that belief in opinion polls would increase from 50% to 67%, while the credibility of expert opinion would fall from 50% to 33%.

This leads to the third, and most worrying, implication of the British vote. If Brexit wins in a country as stable and politically phlegmatic as Britain, financial markets and businesses around the world will be shaken out of their complacency about populist insurgencies in the rest of Europe and the US. These heightened market concerns will, in turn, change economic reality. As in 2008, financial markets will amplify economic anxiety, breeding more anti-establishment anger and fueling still-higher expectations of political revolt. The threat of such contagion means a Brexit vote could be the catalyst for another global crisis. This time, however, the workers who lose their jobs, the pensioners who lose their savings, and the homeowners who are trapped in negative equity will not be able to blame "the bankers." Those who vote for populist upheavals will have no one but themselves to blame when their revolutions go wrong. (Courtesy Project Syndicate)

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