

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



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## Extremism and Barbarism are Reciprocal

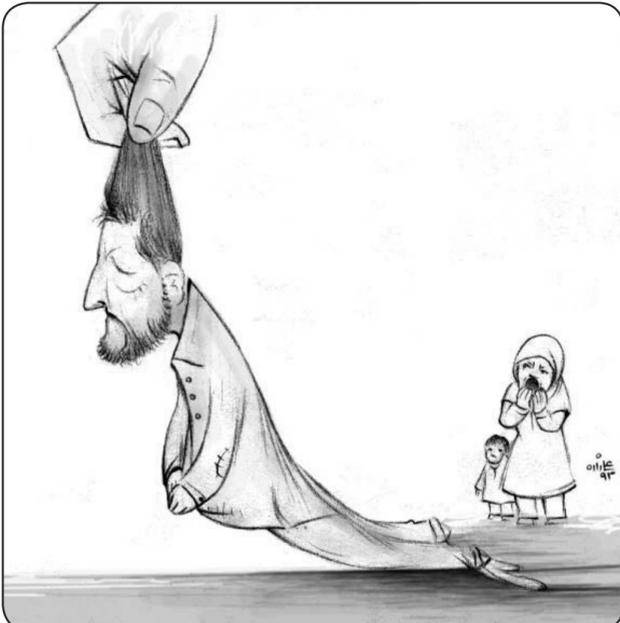
Everyone seems to agree on the severity of the crisis that threatens the peaceful, civilized and modernized world. Even in the best scenario humanitarian analysts estimate that extremism and terrorism are reciprocal and have shoddily tempered all the norms and values of human society and have spotted an appalling stigma on the credit and significance of mankind. Till now millions of the people have been massacred by terrorism and extremism around the world. In fact, there have been many sacrifices to bring transparent changes in the world, and there have been efforts to assist the deprived people to modernize and bring tranquility and prosperity among themselves but there are many people who hesitate to accept these realities because their minds are limited to the confinement of fanaticism and religious torture cells where our thousands of young people have been sordidly pushed in the deep valley of illiteracy, ignorance and viciousness. They are bound to be limited to their wells and they do not have the capacity to think anything out of it.

The tyrant and inhumane extremists suppress the people with the sectarian sentiments and tribal customs and religious traditions; they mistreat the devotion and belief of the people. Every day we come to know that plenty of innocent and impartial masses have been assassinated, the honor of the holy places have been ruined with suicide attacks, capricious strike on the processions have been made, and unfortunately holy Quran has been used in our own country to plant a bomb. So, this is the real face of extremism, barbarism, and of course terrorism. These elements do not have any faith, religion and loyalty but they have their particular goals and ambitions and even do not hesitate to translate the religion for their inhuman wicked desires.

Today the extremists due to their aggressive attitude have foxed the attention of everybody towards them; most of them are merely responsible for every kind of corruption and devastation. Especially the Islamic countries have been castigated for such violence and atrocities. The Islamic militants have been named terrorists; why? Pretty much easy to answer, because they are involved in the genocide of uncountable people in Syria, Libya, Egypt, Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan. It is quite sure that extremism is the root cause of terrorism and in all the countries mentioned above the people have been showing extremism and nothing else. They have been dodged in the name of religion and they do not use their minds to understand what they are taught. All they do is following blindly the teachings and taking the worst possible actions.

There are some so-called clergies who want to disguise the fact by claiming that extremism may lead the humanity towards the spiritual glory, but they intentionally regard the spirits of humanity while concealing their notorious characteristics, which they are applying in many parts of the planet earth. We must know their medieval practices and frustrated religious and tribal system with their obsolete and ill-intended teachings that are nothing except molesting the human beings. Carlton D. Pearson believes, "Anytime that knowledge and a version of the truth are considered to be absolute, fundamentalism is the result, whether the arena is Christianity, Islam, Judaism, or any other religious faith, as well as atheism, conservative or liberal political views, even evolution or intelligent design. Anytime our minds are closed and there is no room for dissent, we are on a slippery slope towards stagnation." Today we can easily find out the miseries and unsafe conditions which are undoubtedly the ultimate repercussions of extremism. Today the reputation and honor of our religion, and civilization is extremely in immense danger due to extremism. And the approach that is developed in the minds of the most of the people is really a matter of concern; so it is immensely important to protest against this ignorance, which has caused us rigid and poignant attitude. We are caught in the worst kind of quagmire of extremism and we do not find any way of getting out of it. The more we try to get out of it, the more we are sinking in it. We really need to know that the way we are making efforts is wrong and we need to do something else in order to get out of it. We really need to understand this clear fact that extremism has rewarded us the humiliating gift of terrorism, which is of course unacceptable for every sensible, literate and human-loving person.

David Cecil's observation can properly conclude our discussion; "It is often said that mankind needs a faith if the world is to be improved. In fact, unless the faith is vigilantly and regularly checked by a sense of man's fallibility, it is likely to make the world worse. From Torquemada to Robespierre and Hitler the men who have made mankind suffer the most have been inspired to do so by a strong faith; so strong that it led them to think their crimes were acts of virtue necessary to help them achieve their aim, which was to build some sort of an ideal kingdom on earth."



## Afghan-Pak Mutual Relations

By Hujjatullah Zia

Involving in blame game and exchanging harsh rhetoric following the escalation in militancy, Kabul and Islamabad could neither push the Taliban to negotiation table nor alleviate insurgency. The Taliban, along with Haqqani-network, continue their terrorist activities and carry out large-scale attacks, mainly in Afghanistan. It is more likely that if Afghan-Pak officials worked in tandem for combating insurgency, the result would be more fruitful. Emotional talks in political issues have widened the gap between the two states.

The blame game was not restricted in political debates but also affected the life of simple individuals and triggered public sentiments. For instance, when I was walking with a Pakistani journalist in Xinjian airport of China about a month ago, I was hurt to see that he was given cold shoulder by my own compatriot.

This reveals the fact that the political tension between Afghan-Pak officials has put its ill impact on the life of simple individuals.

On the other hand, the role of India in Afghanistan is introduced highly negative for Pakistani citizens. That is to say, India's role in this country is judged with negative presumptions and tinged with personal color rather than fact. These issues will lead to horrible consequence and all countries need to pursue factual affairs.

Recently, China has offered to take on a role as mediator between Pakistan and Afghanistan. According to a statement released by Afghanistan's Presidential Palace, Chinese foreign minister Wang Yi will visit Kabul soon and would work to discuss the possibility of setting up a meeting between the four members of the Quadrilateral Coordination Group (QCG) consisting of Afghanistan, Pakistan, the United States and China.

The four-nation group was formed in January 2016 for reconciliation in Afghanistan through the direct peace talks between the Taliban and the Afghan government.

The mutual relations degenerated as Pakistan had closed the Pak-Afghan border in mid-February this year, following a string of militant attacks that Islamabad blamed on militants hiding in Afghanistan. The closure of the formal crossing points on the 2,600km porous border was ordered after the Sehwan shrine bombing that claimed around 100 innocent lives.

Earlier this month, Ashraf Ghani lashed out at Pakistan at the Kabul Process, alleging that it is waging an "undeclared war of aggression" against Afghanistan. Last week, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and Ashraf Ghani held a meeting on the sidelines of the Shanghai Coopera-

tion Organization summit where both the leaders agreed to use the QCG mechanism as well as bilateral channels to undertake specific actions against terrorism. Recently, Pakistan State and Frontier Regions Minister Abdul Qadir Baloch also said that his country would extend its full cooperation for peace and stability in Afghanistan.

The relations between the two countries ebbed and flowed for years. The two countries sought to bring the Taliban to negotiating table and address the insecurity in one way or another.

The formation of QCG for persuading the Taliban to hold talks with Afghan government is one of the examples of mutual efforts. However, their relations ebbed away for one or another reason.

Although the relations between Kabul and Islamabad seems to thaw, there is still not much optimism since this relation remain fragile and unpredictable. For instance, the QCG was ended with the death of Omar's successor Mullah Akhtar Mansour, who was killed by the US drone in Baluchistan. It is likely that a mysterious hand seeks to worsen the mutual relation.

It should be noted that Afghanistan and Pakistan suffer painfully under terrorist activities and both are in the same boat. Militant fighters seek relentlessly to shed the blood of combatants and non-combatants in Afghan-Pak soils. In such a critical time, the two neighboring countries will have to pursue mutual interests and friendly relations rather than the blame game.

It is an undeniable fact that exchanging harsh rhetoric and pointing finger at each other will deteriorate the security situation and widen the rift between the two countries. It will never defuse the tension or alleviate militancy. The militant fighters will certainly capitalize on the issue and intensify their attacks to fuel the tension.

Before bringing the Taliban to peace table, Kabul and Islamabad need to resolve their own issue and build mutual trust. Subsequently, they will be able to design roadmap either for arranging peace talks or for launching a strong operation against the bases of terrorist networks. In brief, Afghan-Pak officials will have to sit in a friendly environment and have their heart-to-heart say about their challenges.

They must define terrorism and enemy and adopt a mutual strategy for combating it.

It is hoped that the Afghan-Pak officials will improve their relation in the best possible way so as to adopt shared mechanism for counterinsurgency and bring the militant fighters to their knees.

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## The Key Role of Media

By Sakhi Danish

Media plays a crucial role around the globe. It generates public awareness, support freedom of speech and democracy. People are widely involved in news, reports, movies, etc. and imagining modern life without media seems horrible. Modern technologies have changed the world into "the global village" and people need to know about issues going on around the world. Nations communicate and exchange their views and cultures through the media.

Access to the media and information is considered one of the citizens' basic rights.

Media supports democracy through supervising state's activities and reflecting them to nation. On the other hand, nation can convey its messages to state and officials via media. In addition to means of information and awareness, it is also means of nation-state communication.

For instance, nation needs to know about the enforcement of law by the state, and officials need to be sure whether or not the law is practiced rightly by nation. In modern world, where nations share organic relations, the social, political and economic issues in a country affect the entire region. Take, for example, terrorism, which is one of the highly challenging issues in our century.

When a country suffers from terrorism and militancy, its neighboring countries will also be prone to insecurity. All these issues are transferred by media to the public. Similarly, freedoms of thought and speech without media will be meaningless. When one's rights and liberty are violated, people are supposed to raise their voice through media.

More importantly, the key role of social media in reflecting people's thoughts and feelings is beyond doubt. Individuals express their thoughts freely and share their happiness and sadness with their friends. Besides posting their memories, they are able to post informative pages and writings. Individuals have their say on Facebook and Twitter about social and political issues and satirize officials for their shortcomings.

Currently, people are able to organize demonstrations in social media in some countries, including Afghanistan. In short, social media provides a safe and free ground for citizens to express their thoughts. Therefore, some countries fear social media and seek to prevent or restrict public access to it.

Media also plays a role in promoting security situation in a country. For example, Afghanistan is threatened with mounting terrorism and militancy. Media has to report the issue to both nation and state to keep them updated

about the threat so that the state finds out the insecure zones and tackles the issue accordingly.

Moreover, media should provide a platform for religious scholars to denounce terrorist activities and enlighten the ugly face of terrorism from religious perspective. On the other hand, media can portray the demands of terrorist groups to government and convey their messages with the aim of facilitating peace talks.

The third President of the United States, Thomas Jefferson said, "were it left for me to choose whether we should have a government without newspapers or newspapers without government, I shall not hesitate a moment to choose the latter."

To better understand the social role of media in a society, think of its impact on public morale. The media can spread both hope and disappointment in the air. It will hurt people emotionally and shatter their hope and confidence via reflecting tragic issues, murder and the cruel activities, violence and bloodshed carried out by terrorist groups.

Through maximizing the magnitude of threat verbally, media will fill the air with a strong sense of fear and panic. On the contrary, media will enhance public confidence via reflecting positive issues coloring them with hope and optimism.

In terms of economic issues, today's gigantic companies, including film-making companies, and institutions seek to get public attention and find a way to customers' hearts by advertising gimmicks. The role of flamboyant and colorful marketing for attracting customers' attention is highly significant. Hence, media is also means of marketing for company-owners, private educational institutions, actors, dancers, etc.

Media's strong influence in cultural sphere is undeniable. Nations are able to exchange their cultures via media. Today, cultural invasion is a matter of great concern for religious societies. Religious figures and traditional parents in Asia are sensitive towards western culture, since it is not in accordance with their religious values, moral standards and social norms.

They are worried about their children's susceptibility to foreign culture which is reflected by televisions and internets. In brief, the strong influence of media in private and social life and in, political, cultural, economic and social spheres is crystal clear. No one can downplay the role of media in a society and its impact in their daily life. Whether the role of media is constructive or destructive in a society, it is the readers to judge.

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