

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



June 25, 2015

“Let’s Develop our Lives without Drugs”

June 26th will be observed as International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking. By resolution 42/112 on December 07, 1987, the UN General Assembly decided to observe the day as an expression of its determination to reinforce action and collaboration so as to attain the goal of an international society free of drug abuse. This resolution, in the aftermath of the report and conclusions in 1987 International Conference on Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, recommended further action and measures.

The day will be observed by many countries in the world under the theme of “Let’s develop our lives, our communities, our identities without drugs” (suggested by United Nations Office on Drugs and Crimes - UNODC). It is really important that the day should be observed with complete enthusiasm and commitment to guarantee practical measures to curb the menace of drugs as the lives of millions of people are at stake.

Afghanistan is one of the countries that have been greatly influenced by drugs. The day can be observed by different institutions and authorities in the country to highlight the actual facts regarding drug production and addiction and reiterate their commitment in fighting this evil.

We are faced with the reality that Afghanistan is not only among the leading countries in producing and trafficking drugs but also using it. There are thousands of youngsters addicted to different types of drugs and their number is increasing with each passing day. It is now another threatening reality that children and women are also caught in drug addiction and they do not find any way of countering this menace. They, as a matter of fact, use it as medicine to fight against cold weather and also as sedatives to fight against pains that are caused by different diseases.

It is now widely accepted that the poppy cultivation and its smuggling are linked with the networks of organized crime in the country that further extends to international mafia and drug dealing and they have their strong backers in the international drug market and national authorities who appear to be guardians of the nation. But one of the most alarming and unfortunate facts is that they have their links with the terrorist networks in the country. The growing insurgency and expanding networks of terrorism suggest that the terrorists have strong financial support from drugs. This situation is really very much intimidating. This is going to devastate the lives of the people of Afghanistan in various ways and unfortunately no break in it seems very much likely - at least not in near future as the statistics show that there has been and there will be increase in the opium production in the country if not handled properly.

The situation would not be difficult to handle if it was limited only to farmers but the fact is that the farmers are not alone to benefit from the rising prices and the rise in production; rather farmers take a negligible part of it while most of the income goes to the networks that manage its filthy business. And it is not concealed from knowing minds that the terrorist networks have a lion’s share in such income. So, it means that with the growth in the production of opium, there will be considerable increase in insurgency from the terrorist networks that are already in the process of gaining strength. Moreover, it has also been observed that the cultivations mostly take place in the areas where Taliban seem to have more control. It is believed that most of the cultivation is concentrated in southern Afghan provinces, and heartland of the Taliban-led insurgency, where the government does not seem to have much control.

This clearly suggests that there is connection between the poppy business and the growing insurgency. Definitely, the poppy business in Afghanistan is well knit in the larger network of organized crime. But unfortunately, the measures that have been carried out to counter the growth of this menace have not been comprehensive and serious. It is even believed that the important figures are involved in backing this business that should, otherwise, have the responsibility to counter them. And the growing corruption and negligence of responsibility in the country does not let the government notice such realities. Though Afghanistan has been under international pressure to take notice of growing poppy cultivation, it is yet to hit the bull’s eye in this regard. Moreover, there have been technical and financial assistance from the international community to help Afghanistan eradicate this evil, but most of it goes to the pockets of rampant corruption.

So, the menace of poppy cultivation is determined to influence the country in various ways. It, on one side, is making drugs available to a large number of people, who are both intentionally and unintentionally becoming addict to it and becoming responsible for giving birth to different social problems. On the other hand, it is providing the fuel for insurgency as it is bound to benefit the terrorist networks in the country that largely depend on such sources of income after losing support from elsewhere. Government authorities in this regard have to get very much serious and try to take concrete steps to make sure that the production is reduced to a considerable extent. Destroying the crops is one of the most practical steps at the present scenario and can to a very great extent discourage the poppy cultivation but it has certain complexities with itself. For the long-lasting solution it is preferable that the government must try to facilitate the farmers and landowners the opportunity of growing alternate crops. Moreover, corruption, in this regard, must not be tolerated in any condition.

The Spirit of Ramadan!

By Asmatyari

Contrary to pursuit of common good -occasionally the presumption of self interest turns a fabulous portrayal, tarnishing the shared interest of human community. This trend unregulated by clearly defined bindings, has let us wander at abysmal traditionalism. Being hammered from the single perspective of worth of social or religious undertaking -great often it is seen the real perspectives of an undertaking is shun in ignorance. The peripheral deeds deemed gigantic in disguise, executed do not earn us salvation. Consequently, we suffer the brunt of problems demanding variant way out.

We dislike to be cheated but do not spare a single chance of defrauding. It is witnessed; occasionally one fabricates hundred of tales to justify his fallacious standing. We exercise hypocrisy, avoid responsibilities, commit social ills, discriminate on the racial, ethnic and religious grounds, display dishonesty, undertake adultery and hoarding -still claim to be the sole follower of righteous course. It is auspicious dictum shared by all contemporary scholars, “Do unto others as you would have done unto you”. This is a deep-seated guiding principle straightening our ill-drive social affairs.

It is during this month that Muslims fast. It is called the Fast of Ramadan and lasts the entire month. Ramadan is a time when Muslims concentrate on their faith and spend less time on the concerns of their everyday lives. It is a time of worship and contemplation. Hence, fasting is more than remaining hungry and thirsty for the sake of Allah. During the fast of Ramadan strict restraints are placed -primarily abstinence from eating or drinking during the daylight hours. Smoking and sexual relations are also forbidden during fasting. At the end of the day the fast is broken with prayer and a meal called the iftar. In the evening following the iftar it is customary for Muslims to go out visiting family and friends. The fast is resumed the next morning.

It is observed while fasting we lag behind implementing the very principle of Islam within our lives. For instance, the people are found fighting, swearing, arguing, lying or cheating. Conversely, the qualities such as miserliness, greed, laziness, selfishness and apathy for the suffering are also deepens in our lives. We do consider self-restraint from having anything will systematically earn us good deeds at the fullest. In Ramadan the feeling of generosity fade away from amongst the people and rarely an individual gives from their pockets and hearts to those less fortunate. Factually the month of Ramadan is the call for re-deeming our worldly affairs -nonetheless things go reverse. The social policing is worth noticing; people finding a person having something to eat is subjected to harsh treatment irrespective of the reason that drive him do so -while many social evils rampant go unnoticed.

We see that bribery and corruption are growing up speedily and development in the government department like, offices, law, police station and other places -where people go to solve their problems. Getting in the public department can not let a person undone unless he pays for the task to be done -hence hardening

social affairs of masses make up anyway. Since this immoral practice continues for the whole of the year -resultantly it has acquired acceptance amongst the ordinary people, and is not deemed unethical and antireligious. Bribery has thrived to a degree; the public officials go on with this heinous practice in this holy month of Ramadan too. Despite observing the ritual fasting; the ill practices are executed. We have to learn that bribery is not only antagonistic to Islamic teachings but also stops the way to progress, development and better future. Another, social ill is the escalated graph of nepotism that goes unnoticeable -deteriorating the very fabric of social cohesion. The government officers favor their relatives without applying to deserve. As a result incompetent people make their way in prominent offices.

Another ill-practice commonly observed in this holy month is hoarding. The lust of owning greater amount of money diminishes the distinction of right and wrong. To draw a handsome amount in some trader in collaboration with concerned public officials hoards huge quantities products of daily use; like sugar, wheat, grain, onion, potatoes and other things. When the scarcity of such items is created, and demand is increased they begin to sell them at the desired price. Sometimes, they hoard some medicines and they do not supply in the market, when they see that, these medicines are not available in the market then, they sell these medicine at higher prices. This trend of evil practice does not end here; some people and traders mixed cheap and harmful commodities in the daily use things like milk, pulses, flour, honey, spices and many other things. They play with the life and health of the people for the money. Just for money they sell some foods and drinks whose are injurious for health like, many soft drinks and ice cream sold by street vendors. The sanctity of this month does not refrain such people from doing that forbidden deal.

If we sit to ponder, on the social aspect our daily affairs; we come to witness people bringing unfair means into practice, use procrastination, and evade responsibilities despite owning public position, marks in-depth injustices. The query, why does not the country supplied with large number of public institutions and officials bond to execute public affairs 24/7 do not meet the growing demand of masses -depicts the loophole in the system. If an officer in a department, a judge in a court of law, a manager in a factory, or any person in authority is unjust, the country can not make it way to eternal progress. Even, these evils does not reverse to decline in this holy month, is thought provoking summit. Taliban who champion fighting Islamic cause is found turning down the Holy Koran instruction of not unleashing terror in this sacred month of Ramadan.

It is erroneously deemed, fasting is ritual demanding mere prohibition from drinking and having meals. However, the truth is contrary, incriminating Ramadan rationalizes our deeds -the prior most consideration, urges us for moderation and righteous deeds. The deeds that generate aura of love and compassion, encourages us for shared interest of humanity surrounding every individual as the self-centeredness entity should be reimbursed to the society -is the spirit of Ramadan.

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Peace Negotiation - A Futile Attempt

By Hujjatullah Zia

Pakistan would play a constructive role in promoting peace and security in Afghanistan that could best be achieved through a process of national reconciliation undertaken and led by Afghans themselves - said Maleeha Lodhi a Pakistani political scientist, on Monday following a terrorist attack on the Afghan parliament. Acknowledging that terrorism remained a common challenge, she said that Pakistan had condemned the recent rise in violence in Afghanistan, including the “atrocious” attack on the Afghan parliament, and reaffirmed Islamabad’s commitment to cooperation with Kabul in fighting the scourge. Ms. Lodhi spoke after the quarterly briefing by Nicholas Hayson, Special Representative of the Secretary General and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), in which he urged the international community to work towards lasting peace and reconciliation by facilitating direct talks between the Afghan government and armed groups. Ambassador Lodhi affirmed enhanced engagement between Pakistan and Afghanistan based on the principles of non-interference, preventing the use of territory to attack the other country and treatment of each other’s enemies as common enemies, as agreed by Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and Afghan President Ashraf Ghani during the Pakistani premier’s recent visit to Kabul.

On the other hand, India’s Congress President Sonia Gandhi also condemned the attack on the Afghan parliament, calling it a “heinous attempt by fundamentalists to subvert democratic forces”. She added that “The Congress and indeed the entire country stand by the people of Afghanistan.”

With a powerful bombing targeting the Afghan parliament in Kabul on Monday morning, coupled with a Taliban advance on the northern town of Kunduz, the Taliban militants have shown that its offensive capabilities are very much intact. The symbolism has not been lost, with the Afghan Taliban suggesting they can strike at will. This fatal attack, that the responsibility was claimed by the Taliban, left at least five dead and 31 wounded behind - reports say.

Decades of war and occupation have brought little to Afghanistan apart from death and destruction. With the fall of the Taliban regime following the US-led invasion in 2001, stability has remained elusive as the militant movement has challenged the government in Kabul.

Although a considerable number of Afghan officials push for peace talk, yet I believe that the Taliban will play their usual game in this regard. The sporadic negotiation for peace in Afghanistan, which becomes the limelight every once in a while,

will be as futile as ever. As a result, the Afghan ex-president Hamid Karzai left no stone unturned to bring the Taliban into the table of negotiation and traveled to Pakistan for 21 times, but all the attempts were proved abortive. Therefore, it would be far effective if the international community reinforce the counter-terrorism campaigns rather than facilitating for the peace talk - which has never born the desired fruit.

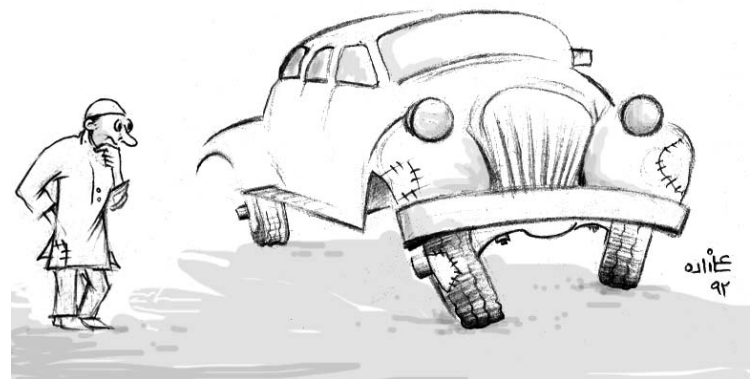
Meanwhile, Haji Muhammad Mohaqiq, the Second Deputy of Chief Executive Dr. Abdullah Abdullah, has expressed doubts that any progress has been made in the peace process after a recent meeting with Taliban representatives in Oslo. He said, “There were five individuals from the Taliban, and there was no discussion or exchange of words. In this conference, only views were presented; there was not a major difference since the past”. On the other hand, Taliban leaders have said the opening of an office in Doha is a critical first step toward peace negotiations. Contrary to Mohaqiq’s doubt about a fruitful peace talk, Afghan officials express optimistically in this regard and will allow the Taliban to reopen their office in Qatar.

I believe that the officials’ trust upon the Taliban is baseless. The Taliban’s dual acts - compounding their offensive and voicing for peace negotiation - reflect their mala fide intentions. Since they have always fouled in this endless game, Afghan officials must learn from the past and do not give the chance a thousand and one time for their foul play. To be candid in this respect, the Taliban must cease their attacks first and it must be the government’s precondition. After all, the Taliban ragtag militants lack a central command and their supreme leader Mullah Omar does not carry much weight. For instance, reports say that a number of the Taliban militia has discarded the Taliban’s membership and pledged allegiance to the Islamic State (IS) in Afghanistan.

In case of peace negotiation, Pakistan can play a highly significant role, however she has not taken a practical or effective role in this regard. As it was mentioned previously, Hamid Karzai’s repeated and tireless travel to Pakistan was all in vain. Condemning terrorist acts targeting Afghan people cannot heal the wounded hearts of the victims’ families, so it is better Pakistan cooperate with Afghanistan strategically and put her concerns and integrity into practice. Similarly, the international community should also proceed to anti-terrorist campaigns.

The only strategy for the eradication of Taliban militants and preventing from greater influence of the Islamic State group is deal with them militarily. Undeniably, violence and aggression run in their blood and they bear insatiable thirst for trampling upon the rights of the public. It would be naïve of the Afghan government to spend further time and energy on peace talk - that will never come to fruition.

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