

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



June 26, 2016

## International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking

June 26 is observed as International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking. The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) set this day through the resolution 42/112 in December 1987. The basic objective behind observing the day is to reinforce action and collaboration to attain the goal of an international society free of drug abuse.

This year the day is being observed under the theme, 'Listen First', which is an initiative to increase support for prevention of drug use that is based on science and is thus an effective investment in the well-being of children and youth, their families and their communities.

In April this year the UN General Assembly in its Special Session on drugs marked a vital breakthrough in achieving the goals set in the policy document of 2009 "Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem", which defined action to be taken by Member States as well as goals to be achieved by 2019. It is important to see the countries follow these goals earnestly and achieve them on time as getting late on the issue would have severe consequences for the future generations.

UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon, in his statement for the day, has said, "On this International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, I call on countries and communities to continue to improve the lives of everyone blighted by drug abuse by integrating security and public safety with a heightened focus on health, human rights, and sustainable development."

Ban Ki-moon's message particularly fits for Afghanistan, as the country is largely influenced both by drug abuse and its trafficking. It is really important that the country should make efforts to change the lives of those who are influenced by this menace and at the same time divert attention to important sectors like health, human rights and sustainable development.

However, it would not be an easy fight for Afghanistan as the country has an established trend of drug addiction and its trafficking. There are many people, mostly youngsters, addicted to various types of drugs and their number is snowballing with each passing day. One of the most threatening fact is that many children and women are also in the list of addicted and they do not know any way of coming out of this quagmire. Actually, they use it as medicine to resist against severely cold weather and also as tranquilizers to fight against different sorts of diseases.

It is no more a secret that the poppy cultivation and its trafficking in Afghanistan are interconnected to the national and international networks of organized crime with the supporters in the international drug market and national authorities who should otherwise be the protectors of the nation. The most disastrous facts is that they have their associations with the terrorist networks in the country. The rising insurgency and growing webs of terrorism depict clearly that terrorists have got immense financial support from drug trafficking. This should alarm the whole nation as it would shatter the lives of the people.

It would not be difficult to control the situation 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 all the informed individuals know that the terrorist networks have a lion's share in such income. Thus it implies 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.

In short, the menace of drug abuse and trafficking is influence the country in various ways. At one instance, it is making drugs available to the common masses, who are, mostly out of ignorance, becoming addict to it and standing responsible for generating various social problems. At the other instance, it is proving to be 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 connection, have to get very much serious and try to take tangible measures 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; try to control it trafficking and treat the addicted in the best possible manner so that they are able to rejoin positive social life. In addition, corruption, in this regard, should never be accepted, as it has already become a major problem for the country.



## Britain's Democratic Failure

By Kenneth Rogoff

The real lunacy of the United Kingdom's vote to leave the European Union was not that British leaders dared to ask their populace to weigh the benefits of membership against the immigration pressures it presents. Rather, it was the absurdly low bar for exit, requiring only a simple majority. Given voter turnout of 70%, this meant that the leave campaign won with only 36% of eligible voters backing it.

This isn't democracy; it is Russian roulette for republics. A decision of enormous consequence – far greater even than amending a country's constitution (of course, the United Kingdom lacks a written one) – has been made without any appropriate checks and balances.

Does the vote have to be repeated after a year to be sure? No. Does a majority in Parliament have to support Brexit? Apparently not. Did the UK's population really know what they were voting on? Absolutely not. Indeed, no one has any idea of the consequences, both for the UK in the global trading system, or the effect on domestic political stability. I am afraid it is not going to be a pretty picture.

Mind you, citizens of the West are blessed to live in a time of peace: changing circumstances and priorities can be addressed through democratic processes instead of foreign and civil wars. But what, exactly, is a fair, democratic process for making irreversible, nation-defining decisions? Is it really enough to get 52% to vote for breakup on a rainy day?

In terms of durability and conviction of preferences, most societies place greater hurdles in the way of a couple seeking a divorce than Prime Minister David Cameron's government did on the decision to leave the EU. Brexiters did not invent this game; there is ample precedent, including Scotland in 2014 and Quebec in 1995. But, until now, the gun's cylinder never stopped on the bullet. Now that it has, it is time to rethink the rules of the game.

The idea that somehow any decision reached anytime by majority rule is necessarily "democratic" is a perversion of the term. Modern democracies have evolved systems of checks and balances to protect the interests of minorities and to avoid making uninformed decisions with catastrophic consequences. The greater and more lasting the decision, the higher the hurdles.

That's why enacting, say, a constitutional amendment generally requires clearing far higher hurdles than passing a spending bill. Yet the current international standard for breaking up a country is arguably less demanding than a vote for lowering the drinking age. With Europe now facing the risk of a slew of further breakup votes, an urgent question is whether there is a better way to make these decisions. I polled several leading political scientists to see

whether there is any academic consensus; unfortunately, the short answer is no.

For one thing, the Brexit decision may have looked simple on the ballot, but in truth no one knows what comes next after a leave vote. What we do know is that, in practice, most countries require a "supermajority" for nation-defining decisions, not a mere 51%. There is no universal figure like 60%, but the general principle is that, at a bare minimum, the majority ought to be demonstrably stable. A country should not be making fundamental, irreversible changes based on a razor-thin minority that might prevail only during a brief window of emotion. Even if the UK economy does not fall into outright recession after this vote (the pound's decline might cushion the initial blow), there is every chance that the resulting economic and political disorder will give some who voted to leave "buyers' remorse."

Since ancient times, philosophers have tried to devise systems to try to balance the strengths of majority rule against the need to ensure that informed parties get a larger say in critical decisions, not to mention that minority voices are heard. In the Spartan assemblies of ancient Greece, votes were cast by acclamation. People could modulate their voice to reflect the intensity of their preferences, with a presiding officer carefully listening and then declaring the outcome. It was imperfect, but maybe better than what just happened in the UK.

By some accounts, Sparta's sister state, Athens, had implemented the purest historical example of democracy. All classes were given equal votes (albeit only males). Ultimately, though, after some catastrophic war decisions, Athenians saw a need to give more power to independent bodies.

What should the UK have done if the question of EU membership had to be asked (which by the way, it didn't)? Surely, the hurdle should have been a lot higher; for example, Brexit should have required, say, two popular votes spaced out over at least two years, followed by a 60% vote in the House of Commons. If Brexit still prevailed, at least we could know it was not just a one-time snapshot of a fragment of the population.

The UK vote has thrown Europe into turmoil. A lot will depend on how the world reacts and how the UK government manages to reconstitute itself. It is important to take stock not just of the outcome, though, but of the process. Any action to redefine a long-standing arrangement on a country's borders ought to require a lot more than a simple majority in a one-time vote. The current international norm of simple majority rule is, as we have just seen, a formula for chaos. (Courtesy Project Syndicate)

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## The Teaching Profession in Japan

By Mohammad Zahir Akbari

Japanese teachers are an essential element in the success story. Japanese society entrusts major responsibilities to teachers and expects much from them. It confers high social status and economic rewards but also subjects teachers to constant public scrutiny.

Because Japanese culture views the school as a moral community and a basic training ground for becoming a good citizen, teachers have broad responsibility for moral education and character development and for instilling fundamental Japanese values, attitudes, and "living habits" in students at all levels. These responsibilities are equal in importance to the academic roles of developing student motivation and helping students meet the high academic standards required for success in secondary school and university entrance examinations.

Teachers are expected to infuse cultural values throughout school activities and to be concerned about students' lives both in and out of school. Their efforts and influence often extend into the home and the community.

Long an attractive profession in status terms, the appeal of teaching as a career has heightened further during the past decade because of a substantial increase in remuneration. The average salary of teachers is now higher than that of other public employees and compares favorably with salaries of other professionals in the private sector. Competition for entry into the profession continues to be intense. The 200,000 applicants now vie annually for approximately 38,000 vacancies in the public school system.

No recent survey adequately compares the prestige of the teaching profession to other professions and occupations. However, a 1975 Japanese study of social stratification and social mobility provides evidence on the situation at that time. It included relevant data on the prestige ranking of elementary and lower secondary school principals and elementary teachers.

According to the 1975 survey, elementary principals and teachers ranked 9th and 18th in public esteem, out of 82 occupations. Principals' prestige was higher than that of department heads of large corporations, public accountants, and authors. Elementary teachers enjoyed higher prestige than civil and mechanical engineers, white collar employees in large firms, and municipal department heads. University professors were ranked third, below court judges and presidents of large companies, but above physicians.

Japan's school system is staffed by approximately 1,000,000 full-time teachers at the elementary and secondary levels. In addition, about 99,000 teachers served in preschools under the Ministry of Education, about 38,000 in schools for the blind, deaf and otherwise handicapped, a total of about 50,000 in technical colleges, special training schools and miscellaneous schools, and another 128,000 in universities and junior college. To be notified that the distinctive difference of Japanese teacher to traditional teacher is to act as a teacher and a researcher, as well. Teachers must hold a degree from an institute of higher education. Any higher education institution, including junior colleges, can provide teacher training as long as their courses satisfy the Ministry of Education's requirements and the Ministry has approved the syllabus. Prospective teachers must take a National Entrance Examination in order to be considered for admission into

an undergraduate teacher education program. This exam assesses candidates in five fields: Japanese language, foreign language, math, science and social studies. National universities also often administer their own examinations alongside the national exam. While in training, prospective teachers must take courses in both subject areas and pedagogy, and are evaluated by an experienced teacher under the supervision of a principal. After graduation from a teacher education program, teachers must undergo a three-week teaching practicum. Primary and lower secondary school teaching candidates must also complete a one-week nursing internship. Prefecture boards of education also typically require a prospective teacher to pass several tests before being hired. These often take the form of proficiency tests, interviews, or essays, and examine a candidate's pedagogical and subject area knowledge; the interview also usually includes a demonstration lesson. Once teachers have been hired, they undergo a one-year induction period. During this period, they are supervised by a senior teacher and do not have access to all teacher benefits, including membership in the teachers' union. Upon successful completion of this first year, they become full teachers.

There are different legal requirements for certification to teach in preschool, elementary school, lower secondary school, and upper secondary school. For preschool, elementary, and lower secondary teachers, the basic qualification for a first class certificate is a bachelor's degree. The basic qualification for a second-class certificate is 2 years of study (the acquisition of 62 credits) in a university or other postsecondary institution. For upper secondary school teachers, the basic qualification for a first class certificate is a master's degree. The qualification for a second-class certificate is a bachelor's degree. The first class certificate is now the preferred credential at all levels.

Japan Teachers Union: No account of the teaching profession or postwar educational development in Japan would be complete without attention to the Japan Teachers Union (JTU), Nikkyoso in Japanese. The JTU is the dominant organization of educators (there are a number of smaller ones), the second largest public sector union, and a very influential member of Sohyo, the General Council of Japanese Trade Unions. The JTU has been an active force in educational and political matters for almost 40 years. It has been at odds with Monbusho on most matters during virtually the entire period. The government has often been characterized as "conservative" and the union as "radical." Neither label is necessarily helpful in cross-cultural translation. Fundamental philosophical differences between the government and the JTU transcend the education sector. The government views teachers as neutral professionals who perform a duty for the government, while the JTU regards teachers as workers and participants in broad political and economic struggles. The JTU interprets its relation to the government in labor-management terms and takes strong stands on many government policies, including sensitive domestic and international matters that have little or no relationship to education.

At as last matter, the educational experience of Japan indicates that Education is the foundation of all infrastructures; peace and security, economic development, cultural issues and so on... depend to education. Good educational strategies can lead to economic growth,

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