

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



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Challenges of the weak system of democratic civilian control of the armed forces

The national security forces day was just observed in Afghanistan. During this event the role of armed forces is usually admired and the sacrifices of them are highlighted. However, highlighting the sacrifices of the national forces or admiring their outstanding role in maintaining the national security and public order is one side of the story; we must highlight the critical challenges these forces face as well in order the Afghan government address them in a sustainable manner. Weak System of Democratic Civilian Control of the armed in the country is one of the strategic challenges in the security sector. This problem is the root of some of the critical problems in the security sector that are discussed below:

Weak Effectiveness in security provision:

Afghan citizens expect the system of democratic civilian control provide the clearly defined and professional chain of command the armed forces need to fulfill their responsibilities effectively. This can strengthen strict discipline and internal control mechanisms personal or corporatism decision-making. However, they do not see and feel the impacts of such a control in the armed forces. As a result, the armed forces perform their duties poorly and discipline among the armed forces is not much observed.

Political neutrality:

According to this notion the civilian control shall provide the operational independence that the armed forces need to be effective, while acting upon the orders of the political authority of democratic civilian government. Ensuring this requires professional and committed armed forces officials and a strong national government widely supported by the people. To be honest, in the current context of Afghanistan there are tough challenges to realize these two points in our country, though there has been good progress in these areas in Afghanistan.

Human Rights Protection:

A strong system of democratic Civilian shall control and provide the institutional resources, discipline, training and oversight required to prevent and discipline human rights abuses against the people. However, our security have come short of them due to presence of powerful war lords and wide spread corruption among the security sector institutions. If the government wants to address this problem in a practical manner, it not only must appoint the professional officers as at the higher levels but also act seriously against those who are involved in corruption and other illegal activities in the security sector of Afghanistan.

Accountability:

A system of democratic civilian control shall establish checks and balances on the state's use of military force and hold civilian and military leaders and officials accountable for their decisions and actions. This is one of the most challenging issues in Afghanistan. The country occupies the fourth place in the ranking of the most corrupt countries announced annually by the transparency International. However, corruption in the security is more prevalent than the civil public sector. Indeed, the NUG has taken some bold measures to tackle corruption in the security sector, including the Ministry of the Interior Affairs. These measures include initiating civilianization in the MOIA, appointing the chiefs of police districts on merits, etc. However, to tackle corruption in a systematic manner requires the officials of the security forces to act in the limit of the boundary of law and avoid preferential policies. In other words, they shall not make the anticorruption policies a tool to sideline their rivals or change it to a tool to replace their own relatives under the pretext of countering the corrupt people.

Legitimacy:

A good system of democratic civilian control shall ensure a high level of credibility in the performance of the armed forces and thus increases public confidence, trust and legitimacy in the country. This is one of the weaknesses of our security forces that require more attention to be addressed. Afghanistan faces tough security challenges, and every now and then there is a terror attack in the country and our security forces have not been able to prevent such attacks while they have taken different measures to counter such attacks. One of the main causes of this phenomena is that our security forces have not been able to ensure the legitimacy of the government among all the Afghan citizens and the terrorist group misuse this weakness as an opportunity and not only recruit from among the people but also plan and implement their plots using this vacuum. As a result, our security forces shall ensure high level of credibility in their performance and further improve their relations with the people to gain their support fully.

Responsiveness:

A good system of democratic civilian control shall allow for more representative and participatory processes of national security policy-making, which make security provision more responsive to the distinctive security needs of all men, women. Policy development is generally weak in Afghanistan and especially in the security sector of the country. Parts of these issues go to the low capacity in policy making in the security sector and the security nature of these institutions has restricted them to include the various security stakeholders including the civil society to be part of the policy development process in these institutions. Therefore, the security institutions shall rethink their policy development approaches and involve a wide range of security stakeholders in the security policy development process in order to develop an applicable security policy in the country to be supported by their stakeholders.

Observing the national security forces day is a good opportunity to highlight the vital role of the security forces in our country and appreciate their sacrifices. However, it is also a good opportunity to assess the problems these forces face and call the government to address them properly in order to have a more popular and legitimate security forces in our country.



Improving Legitimacy Through Welfare Services

By Dilawar Sherzai

It is one of the most important responsibilities of a government that it must make efforts to provide the basic requirements of life to the people; particularly, to those who are in dire need of such requirements. Doing so will not only support those people, helping them to live their lives properly, but it will also play a role in improving the legitimacy of the government. The people will then start believing the government, and their trust on the promises and initiatives of the government may improve. However, if the government is not able to deliver even on the fronts that are the most rudimentary in nature, the consequences may be terrible for the condition of the people and also the legitimacy of the government.

As Afghan government has not been able to deliver well, the concerns of the people and their skepticism about the future of the country seem to be on the rise. They are losing their confidence on the government and do not expect much from it. It has also given rise to a sense of indifference on the part of the people to do good for the society as a whole. Finding the responsible individuals doing nothing worthwhile, the poor and deprived people seem reluctant to do what they could possibly do on their own for improvements in the country. As a matter of fact, the leading individuals have not been able to set any exemplary guideline for others to follow. They have been involved in pursuing their own self-centered objectives.

The skepticism and negative opinion that the people have developed regarding the performance of the government is not because of their political differences with the government; rather most of it has to do with the incapacity of the government to do something worthwhile in sectors like economy, security and corruption. Since the withdrawal of international forces from Afghanistan and decrease in the international support for country's economic challenges, the government should have concentrated properly towards improving the country's economic system and making efforts to make Afghanistan self-sufficient, at least, in certain factors, but the government has not been able to do so. Even today, Afghanistan stands dependent on international support for most of its expenditures as the businesses have not been able to flourish as much as they should have; and the people are very well aware of all these facts.

As far as security is concerned, there is nothing hidden from the people as they are the ones who mostly suffer from the consequences of lingering and, in certain cas-

es, increasing insecurity. They are the ones who die and get injured when the insurgents attack them directly or indirectly. Therefore, they do not seem satisfied with what is being done to control the growing insecurity in the country. Majority of Afghans have become increasingly more skeptical about peace efforts. High Peace Council (HPC) has failed to make a breakthrough in peace talks with insurgents and no tangible outcomes have been achieved.

Same is the case with the efforts regarding corruption. National Unity Government (NUG) made some huge promises during its initial days and there were expectations that something would ultimately happen but the government took no time in forgetting those promises. And, it is the reason that corruption is still one of the main issues in Afghanistan and it is also hampering the progress in other sectors. For example, one of the reasons that the country has not been able to achieve something worthwhile in the field of security and economic development is corruption. And, the common people have to suffer the consequences to a great extent. Moreover, they also believe that government is not doing enough to eradicate corruption; thus, losing their confidence on the performance of the government in this regard as well.

It is really difficult to make any achievement in any sector as long as there is prevailing corruption there. Before making efforts to improve different sectors, the first step should be discouraging corruption in every possible manner; otherwise, nothing would be achieved.

NUG requires doing an immense amount of work if it wants to restore its image and its legitimacy. Providing services and the basic requirements to the people is the most important factor in enabling the government do so. If it does not have enough resources, at least, it can show through its willingness and resolve that is really serious in solving the problems of the people. If it is able to improve its legitimacy, and people start supporting its efforts, there are possibilities that the nation, as a whole, can fight against different challenges and may even stand victorious against them. If the legitimacy is lost, the possibilities of distrust and anarchy may multiply. People may be diverted towards crimes, vices and chaos. Therefore, the government must make efforts for the welfare of the people and improve its legitimacy for better chances of progress and development.

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The Cancer Threat To Africa's Future

By Danny A. Milner

CHICAGO - One of the most pressing public-health challenges in Africa today is also one of the least reported: cancer, a leading cause of death worldwide. Every year, some 650,000 Africans are diagnosed with cancer, and more than a half-million die from the disease. Within the next five years, there could be more than one million cancer deaths annually in Africa, a surge in mortality that would make cancer one of the continent's top killers.

Throughout Sub-Saharan Africa, tremendous progress has been made in combating deadly infectious diseases. In recent decades, international and local cooperation have reduced Africa's malaria deaths by 60%, pushed polio to the brink of eradication, and extended the lives of millions of Africans infected with HIV/AIDS.

Unfortunately, similar gains have not been made in the fight against non-communicable diseases (NCDs), including cancer. Today, cancer kills more people in developing countries than AIDS, malaria, and tuberculosis combined. But, with Africa receiving only 5% of global funding for cancer prevention and control, the disease is outpacing efforts to contain it. Just as the world united to help Africa beat infectious disease outbreaks, a similar collaborative approach is needed to halt the cancer crisis.

Surviving cancer requires many things, but timely access to specialists, laboratories, and second opinions are among the most basic. Yet, in much of Africa, a lack of affordable medications, and a dearth of trained doctors and nurses, means that patients rarely receive the care they need. On average, African countries have fewer than one trained pathologist for every million people, meaning that most diagnoses come too late for treatment. According to University of Chicago oncologist Olufunmilayo Olopade, a diagnosis of cancer in Africa is "nearly always fatal."

Building health-care systems that are capable of managing infectious diseases, while also providing quality cancer care, requires a significant investment in time, money, and expertise. Fortunately, Africa already has a head start. Past initiatives - like the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria, the US President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, and the World Bank's East Africa Public Health Laboratory Networking Project - have greatly expanded the continent's medical

infrastructure. National efforts are also strengthening pharmaceutical supply chains, improving medical training, and increasing the quality of diagnostic networks. Still, Africans cannot face down this threat alone. That is why the American Society for Clinical Pathology, where I work, is cooperating with other global health-care innovators to attack the region's growing cancer crisis. We have teamed up with the American Cancer Society (ACS) and the pharmaceutical company Novartis to support cancer treatment and testing efforts in four countries: Ethiopia, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda. Together, we have brought immunohistochemistry, a key diagnostic tool, to seven regional laboratories, an effort we hope lead to more timely cancer diagnoses and greatly improve the quality of care.

To complement these technical efforts, the ACS is also training African health-care professionals how to carry out biopsies and deliver chemotherapy. That initiative, funded by Novartis, is viewed as a pilot program that could expand to other regional countries.

Finally, our organizations are advocating for enhanced cancer-treatment guidelines in national health-care planning efforts, protocols that we believe are essential to improving health outcomes. These initiatives are in conjunction with other undertakings, such as a joint ACS-Clinton Health Access Initiative program to broaden access to cancer medications.

When the world took notice that infectious diseases like HIV/AIDS, polio, and malaria were ravaging Africa, action plans were drawn up and solutions were delivered. Today, a similar global effort is needed to ensure that every African with a cancer diagnosis can get the treatment they need. Now, as then, success depends on coordination among African governments, health-service providers, drug makers, and non-governmental organizations.

There is no place on Earth that is immune from the dread of a cancer diagnosis; wherever the news is delivered, it is often devastating to recipients and their families. But geography should never be the deciding factor in patients' fight to survive the disease. Cancer has been Africa's silent killer for far too long, and the global health community must no longer remain quiet in the face of this crisis.

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