

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



March 11, 2017

## China's Role in Fighting Terrorism

The echoes of the attack on Sardar Mohammad Daud Hospital in Kabul still resonate in the atmosphere as different countries and organizations condemn the attack as one of the most callous one. As per the latest news report 50 people were killed, including 38 Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF) and 12 civilians and 91 others were wounded that included 61 ANDSF members. The attack was claimed by Daesh that seems to be gaining strength in Afghanistan and the security experts believe that they are going to pose serious security threats to the country this year along with the Taliban militants. Like many other countries and organizations, China's Foreign Ministry also denounced the attack and said that Chinese government would continue to firmly support the unremitting efforts of the Afghan government and people to fight terrorism. Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Geng Shuang said in a statement, "We are shocked by the terrorist attack and strongly condemn the act. We express deep condolences and sincere sympathy to the victims and their families.

China will continue to firmly support the unremitting efforts of the Afghan government and people to fight terrorism and safeguard national stability and security."

There is no doubt in the fact that Chinese role will be pivotal for Afghanistan to fight terrorism. China, being the strongest of the countries in Asia, can lead Afghanistan to reconstruction, development and peace. It can play a role in pressuring the regional countries to play a positive role in supporting peace in Afghanistan and, at the same time, its role will be pivotal for bringing Taliban to negotiation table so that a lasting peace could be achieved in the times to come. Fortunately, China seems ready to take up this role.

China, on many occasions, has called for a regional cooperation to tackle the issue of terrorism. It through Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and through its bilateral relations with regional countries has always demanded heightened efforts to curb terrorism. As China is looking forward to establishing strong networks of trade and business with South Asian and Central Asian countries through 'One Road - One Belt' initiative, peace and tranquility in the region would be of immense importance for future. As Afghanistan plays an important role in this initiative therefore, it stand important for China to seriously consider the security situation in the country.

From Afghanistan's point of view, it is of utmost importance that a country like China should support it in its war against terrorism. As most of the international troops have withdrawn and the remaining have taken the role as trainers, Afghan security forces and Afghan government would be faced with serious security challenges. The last year experienced the largest civilian casualties and there are fears that this year the fighting season would be threatening for Afghanistan, therefore, it is vital that Afghanistan seeks Chinese support through these tough times. Chinese support is also imperative for Afghanistan in many other ways. China can also have an immense role to play in the economic stability of Afghanistan and promoting the business and financial self-sufficiency of the country. China is not the largest donor country to Afghanistan, but China's aid is sincere and without any political conditions. In the 1950s and 1960s, although China was not better off at that time, it still built some aid projects such as Parwan Irrigation System and Kandahar Hospital for Afghanistan, which still function well in promoting the livelihood and welfare of local people. In recent years, China has been actively supporting the Afghan peaceful reconstruction.

China had provided more than 1.6 billion yuan of grants, trained more than one thousand professionals in all fields through bilateral and multilateral channels, provided over 10 batches of goods and materials, built important projects such as Jumhoriye Hospital, Teaching Building of Chinese Language Department and Guest House of Kabul University, National Center of Science and Technology Education, and Multi-functional Center in the Presidential Palace for Afghanistan.

All of these have played effective role in promoting the development and people's livelihood of Afghanistan, and gained praises from all walks of life of Afghanistan. China has also committed to provide 2 billion Yuan of grants to Afghanistan till the end of 2017, and train 3000 professionals in various fields up to 2020. China has clearly shown the willingness that it will not leave Afghanistan's hand at this crucial juncture, wherein it is in dire need of both political stability and economic support.

At the same time, it is important to note that the announcement of around USD 3.5 billion by Metallurgic Corporation of China for the development of Aynak Copper mines is another important contribution that can have a lasting impact on the overall economy of Afghanistan.

Apart from economic and political support, China has always continued support for Afghanistan in different other sectors as well. Education and capacity building have been among the most important ones. China currently provides many scholarships to students in different fields of study. In short China's role is important for Afghanistan's peace, reconstruction and other sectors.

It is significant for Chinese people as they are expanding their business and looking forward to integrating the whole region. A more secure region will be crucial for further development of trade and wellbeing.



## ISIL Continues Militancy

By Hujjatullah Zia

Following the deadly attacks in Pakistan, on February 16, which killed and wounded more than two hundred people, the self-proclaimed Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) carried out an attack of the same nature on Sardar Daud Khan Hospital in Kabul, on March 8, which killed and wounded more than 100 individuals, including doctors. The ISIL group claimed responsibility for both the incidents. Afghan nation left deadly year behind and loyalists to ISIL were involved in sporadic attacks and sectarian violence across the country. Although this group is losing ground in Syria and Iraq, it intends to strengthen its basis around Afghan-Pak border.

The ISIL group, which practices upon radical ideology, is believed to seek foothold in tribal belts where locals tend to accommodate them for two main reasons: first: since the residents of the tribal areas have grown up with tribal traditions, which are mostly against the law, they are inclined in violating law and might embrace radicalism especially when being tempted or threatened.

Secondly, there is already a gap between tribal areas and the central government and tribal councils are likely to play more crucial role than the state. For instance, many cases regarding women are decided by tribal leaders and enforced in desert court rather than going to legal court. Of late, it has been reported that the Taliban outfits stoned a woman to death and flagellated a man in desert court in Warduj district of Badakhshan province. So, it is not only the ISIL but many warring outfits are more active in tribal areas.

These attacks indicate that the group has an operational presence in Kabul that is beyond the "nascent" stage. The group seems to have gained the capability of carrying out fatal attacks on an occasional basis in the capital, although not at a sophisticated level yet. Sending two bombers to blow themselves up in a crowd of civilian demonstrators, or two attackers dressed as police and equipped with hand grenades and guns, plus suicide belts, into a mourning crowd, attacking hospitals with doctor's uniform, or carrying out an attack on foreign security contractors in a minibus do not require a high level of complexity.

However, the execution of such attacks does need some level of confidence and precision of planning, as well as adequate logistics and surveillance.

These attacks are also an indicator that the group has recruited a certain number of dedicated and experienced fighters in the capital.

The ISIL also sought to stoke sectarian violence across Afghanistan through killing the ethnic minority groups, including women and children. In recent decades, compared to most conflicts in the Muslim world, Afghanistan has stood out for the absence of such fratricide.

ISIL, during the short period since its emergence, has, however, showed no hesitation in stepping into this un-mined area. While the Ashura and July 2016 attacks in Kabul are the most remarkable examples of sectarian violence by ISIL, the overall sectarian trend that is emerging since the group's advent has been much wider.

The ISIL's attack in southern Sindh province led to high tension between Kabul and Islamabad as Pakistani officials lashed out at Afghanistan. In other words, Pakistan's knee-jerk reaction resulted in the closure of Afghan-Pak border and Pakistan's mistreatment with Afghan emigrants. Similarly, Pakistan fired missile in Nangarhar province which was a flagrant violation of territorial integrity.

With the Wednesday's attack in Kabul, some political pundits believe that putting pressure on the emigrants will not tackle the issue and state that Pakistan must take serious actions against the militants.

Since the ISIL has gained foothold in Pakistan soil, Pakistani officials accepted earlier the facts that a network of "facilitators" paved the way for the militants. A number of the Taliban fighters pledged allegiance to ISIL group following the death of Mullah Omar - which led to splinter group - and played as catalyst for the emergence of this group both in Pakistan and Afghanistan. Indeed, both Pakistani and Afghan nations suffer from mounting insurgency and religious minority groups have sustained heavy casualties inside and outside the border.

In a nutshell, the two countries are embroiled in violence and bloodshed. Up to now, warring factions played its role successfully in creating gap between the two countries. Perhaps, it is one of the fighters' projects to engender tension between Kabul and Islamabad to that they will not agree to join forces in eradicating their sanctuaries.

It should be noted that many seminaries are changed into hotbed of terror and there are also some seminaries in Afghanistan which spread radical mindsets. Both the countries will have to check the text books cautiously and register all the seminaries.

It is believed that "a tooth for a tooth and an eye for an eye" will be the only effective option, if not the best, regarding all warring factions, mainly the ISIL group. The government should revenge streams of blood being spilt every day which fill our nation with outpouring of grief. Moreover, Pakistan should also launch a strong military action against all warring factions.

The only way for mitigating militancy is nothing other than joining forces against the militant fighters. It is hoped that the two countries tackle the mistrust in a diplomatic way and adopt effective strategy in eradicating terrorism.

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## 8 March and the Diminishing Critical Approaches to Slogans of

By Nasim Ebrahimi

8 March, which was recognized with special identity and goal in the political-social history of women, has faded. Currently, its original identity is hidden under patches of cloud and layers of other social-political changes of societies. 8 March is the day of women's critical and objectionable approach to their social and political conditions under the states and societies. Firstly, this day was being celebrated as "Labor Women's Day" concentrating economic, social and political conditions of women under states. But now this day has left its originality to extinction.

In 1909 in New York, for the very first time, a demonstration for fairness was run in the memorial of Labor Women Union's strike, but later was named Labor Women's Day and was celebrated in a number of countries.

However, along with passage of time this critical approach of the Day has been alternated by a more sentimental approach and so far, this day is being celebrated based on the alternative approach.

In 1997 it was proclaimed as the day for Women's rights and world peace by UN and has been celebrated by the member countries.

For the time being, in various countries including Afghanistan 8th of March is celebrated with a sentimental approach rather than the critical approach to women's position. Now this day is typically celebrated to express sentimentalities and emotions for women rather than to reflect women's real wants and demands. 8th of March, which is considered the reflection and creation of feminist literature, no longer contains this perspective and lacks the feminist view.

Celebrating women's day was once to address women's conditions and real demands based on feminist perspective, but now is reduced to mere slogans. Although the day being celebrated, women are looked at only as "mother", "sister", and "spouse" or .... Having viewed women this way, the men consider it their sentimental obligation to protect them. Women themselves expect the same thing and never move to make a change in the view. This day is celebrated while so many are blissfully unaware of the goals and demands for change that are intrinsic to this day.

Except for the media hullabaloo, in the context of society and amongst women this day has no place to celebrate.

Surprisingly enough, most participants in the celebrations are men than women. It has rarely happened that women address women's wants and demands on this day. What compose the formal programs for celebrating this day are presenting statistics and violence rate data, plus giving presents to women.

Instead of establishing a feminist discourse, celebrating this day has become a tradition for the governmental administrations and other institutes.

Nevertheless, celebrating this day is more sloganism than a real commemoration. Women's rights activists and women themselves play no bold role to write the content of such programs. They have retreated to slogans and models than to programs and perspectives. Speaking of women's political and economic perspectives is at a minimum while these perspectives must be pivots on this day.

The substantial amounts spent to hold such programs have had the minimum effects but with no effects generally. If we take a glance at the programs and expenses for celebrating this day, we won't see remarkable achievements at the end of the day.

Nonetheless, there has been rise in the rate of violence against women, but there has been no in-depth study of the causes and solutions to it. They have given it a stereotypical definition saying that traditional perspective and close society are the main causes of violence while it can't be rational and realistic.

On the other hand, to what extent women's participation in economic, political and social activities has increased? And what have been the effects of such programs? It bears no response. The reason that strictness of the family or social limits imposed by men deprive women of their participation in public areas isn't realistic. Instead there are other reasons to this.

From the other side, we witness the birth of a literature that features women as only being brutalized, but there is no voice of change of the situation shouted by the literature. This type of literature not only not pays more to the real challenges and solutions but also adds the problems and hardships. By holding sloganized programs that carry no critical approach we can't overcome the current situation. Reducing the critical approach of a great social movement to slogans and sloganism is a mark of decadence of wants for change of situation that leaves us in deep depth of darkness and unfillable social gaps.



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