

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



March 12, 2017

## No End to the Pain and Sufferings of Mankind

The war and violence resulted in flagrant violation of human rights around the globe and a large number of people, including women and children, suffer in one way or another. The never-ending bloodshed and hackneyed words making the headlines on national and international newspapers will hardly ever shake one's conscience. The riddled and amputated bodies in a suicide bombing and hot drops of blood oozing from sliced throats seem no more than tragic plays or horror films in movies. One is unlikely to be taken aback while hearing the heart-wrenching stories of war victims, who undergo the radical ideology of militant fighters. For instance, women are raped on the grounds of their sex, ethnicity or faith and children are slaughtered like sheep.

The world faces the largest humanitarian crisis since the United Nations was founded in 1945 with more than 20 million people in four countries at risk of starvation and famine, the UN humanitarian chief has said. "Without collective and coordinated global efforts, people will simply starve to death" and "many more will suffer and die from disease". Stephen O'Brien is cited as saying.

He urged an immediate injection of funds for Yemen, South Sudan, Somalia and northeast Nigeria plus safe and unimpeded access for humanitarian aid "to avert a catastrophe".

It is further said that the largest humanitarian crisis is in Yemen where two-thirds of the population - 18.8 million people - need aid and more than seven million people are hungry and do not know where their next meal will come from.

Worst of all, in northeast Nigeria, a seven-year uprising by the armed group Boko Haram has killed more than 20,000 people and driven 2.6 million from their homes. A UN humanitarian coordinator said last month that malnutrition in the northeast is so pronounced that some adults are too weak to walk and some communities have lost all their toddlers. The terrorism, which is engendered from radical ideology and supported by mysterious hand, has changed into a global threat and inflicted heavy casualties upon human societies, mainly Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan.

The innocent individuals are believed to bear the brunt of violence in the aforementioned countries. The militants' indiscriminate killing is a flagrant violation of humanitarian law.

Stoking sectarian violence and spilling the blood of non-combatants on the basis of their caste, color and creed is a highly serious issue, which is carried out by the self-styled Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) across the country, mainly in the aforementioned countries. Reportedly, two bombs killed at least 40 people and wounded more than 100 others in the Old City of Damascus on Saturday in a rare attack in the Syrian capital, near Bab al-Saghir cemetery.

The cemetery is one of the capital's most ancient and is where several prominent religious figures are buried.

It is said that the attacks targeted civilians, including Arab visitors, who were frequenting the shrines in the area. "Preliminary statistics indicate the fall of around 40 Iraqi martyrs and 120 wounded," Iraqi foreign ministry spokesman Ahmed Jamal said in a statement, terming it a "criminal terrorist operation".

A similar attack in Damascus last year targeted one of the most revered shrines and was claimed by the ISIL group. The ISIL militants have carried out attacks of the same nature on Lal Shahbaz Qalandar shrine in Sehwan, Pakistan on January 14 and on Sardar Daud Khan's Hospital in Kabul on March 8 - as they claimed responsibility for both the deadly attacks which left hundreds of casualties behind.

ISIL is believed to be a pawn in political games and act as mercenary fighters rather than practicing upon a certain ideology. It is most likely that members of the ISIL group come from poor backgrounds and fight to gain financial support and satisfy their carnal desires through illegal means and engaging in moral corruptions. Their immoral and inhuman practices are no more a mystery for the world. But they have put on the mask of religion without having basic knowledge in religious issues; their misdeeds suggest the very fact.

It is really excruciating to see the flagrant violation of human rights and dignity whereas the democratic discourses is hotly debated in international conferences regarding the protection of human rights and liberty. On the other hand, streams of blood are shed and thousands of people are killed by warring factions. The statistics about the death of mankind suggest the fact that life has turned extremely cheap. Moreover, the unmitigated violence has led to mass exodus and poverty. Reports say that the Arab world's poorest nation is engulfed in conflict and more than 48,000 people fled fighting just in the past two months. The poignant incidents and heart-wrenching stories of war victims are stain on the collective conscience.

The almost passive role of the international community in such a critical situation is a matter of great concern. The world will have to stop playing the role of spectator and sometimes condemning the issue. There is a lot to be done so as to root out the terrorism and uphold the rights and dignity of the people regardless of their ethnicity, color or faith. There is a crying for ending the war through an effective strategy and combating insurgency.



## Ultimate Motive should be to Save Humanity

By Dilawar Sharzai

Human beings, in the struggle for their survival, have gone to every possible extreme. They, both individually and in the form of some groups, have proved the Darwin's Theory of "Struggle for survival and survival of the fittest" correct in human society as well. There have been clashes and wars among human beings for the sake of the same survival. These clashes and wars have given rise to the invention and proliferation of different sorts of weapons.

These weapons, highly modernized because of the development in science and technology, can prove fatal to thousands of people upon their use. This has already been proved by the nuclear weapons used in Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945. Though there have been considerable efforts since the incident regarding the non-proliferation movement, the world is still threatened by the uncontrollable strength of nuclear energy.

The research for the development of nuclear weapons basically started in World War II when the then powerful nations of the world turned violent in order to subjugate each other. The countries like the United States, United Kingdom, Germany, Japan and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republic all were in competition with each other to design a way to turn nuclear energy for use in evil intentions. But the only country that used it for the first time was the United States. Afterwards, USSR tested its nuclear weapon in 1949, the United Kingdom in 1952, France in 1960, People's Republic of China in 1964, India in 1974, Pakistan in 1988 and North Korea in 2006.

There are some other countries as well, which though have not gone for nuclear tests, are believed to have acquired the capability. Though the people around the world seem to have realized the extent of its destruction, they are yet to exclude the world from the possibility of a nuclear war.

Today all the major countries in the world and the United Nations Organization have been striving for some sort of Nuclear Non-proliferation. Nuclear non-proliferation is basically aimed at stopping and/or checking the growth of nuclear weapons, fissile material, and weapons-applicable nuclear technology and information by different countries.

This is more directed towards the states which are not yet recognized as "Nuclear Weapon States" by the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT). This is basically discriminatory as the countries are divided into "Nuclear Weapon States" and "Non-nuclear Weapon States".

The countries that acquired the nuclear weapons prior to 1968 are considered as the "Nuclear Weapon States" and are above any sort of sanctions, while the other countries (Non-nuclear Weapon States) which may strive to acquire, must go through sever scrutiny by those states.

The basic question at this instant is, "Why are the other countries not allowed to have nuclear weapons, as they are threatened by the nuclear power of the 'Nuclear Weapon States'?" There can be a comprehensive discussion on the matter and there can be different answers but the only idea that stands true is that the nuclear weapon in possession of any country can be a threat to the world.

The efforts to control the proliferation of nuclear weapons started soon after the World War II, as the destruction in Japan called for urgency on the part of international community to

guarantee survival in the times to come. The first step in that regard was the Baruch Plan in 1946. This Plan was named after the first US representative in the United Nations Atomic Energy Commission (UNAEC) during the Truman Administration. The Plan was too strict and called for the verifiable dismantlement and destruction of the US nuclear arsenal. It drew its contents from Acheson-Lilienthal Report of 1946. This Plan could not be put to practice. Another considerable contribution was made by US President Eisenhower through his "Atoms for Peace" proposal, which led to the education of thousand of scientist in nuclear science for the purpose of using it for peaceful objectives, but most of the same scientists were afterwards involved in the secret nuclear programs in their countries.

However, the Atoms for Peace proposal led to the creation of International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in 1957. Ultimately the efforts that followed the creation of IAEA resulted in the endorsement of Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) by the UN General Assembly in 1968, through the Resolution 2373 (XXII) and its enforcement in March 1970.

Since then IAEA has been involved (though with certain controversies) in keeping check on any sort of efforts that are made by different countries of the world regarding proliferation of nuclear weapons. But the actions of IAEA has not been considered unbiased and are believed to serve the intentions of the powerful countries of the world that mostly support it financially. Though at present there are about 189 countries that have signed the NPT, its credibility is yet to be verified considerably.

Definitely, nuclear weapons because of their capacity of mass destruction are a serious threat to mankind.

No guarantee of secure existence can be established with the inclination of the countries towards the growth and development of this evil. But the arrangement for this purpose has to be made on strong and just footings.

They should never be inclined towards the objectives of few powerful states of the world; otherwise they will be doomed to failure. Furthermore, there has to be measures carried out to have proper control even on the peaceful atomic energy structures, especially after what happened in Fukushima, Japan, as the natural disasters can really turn the favors into threats.

Currently, IAEA has focused on this issue particularly and is making sure to enhance the role of IAEA in assuring that the nations of world comply with international reactor regulatory standards, while developing their nuclear plants.

To ensure that, has adopted a policy to "organize operational safety reviews ... of one nuclear power unit in ten over a period of three years", while the plants could be randomly checked, out of some 440 operating nuclear reactors in the world. This, if backed and implemented appropriately can be helpful in keeping a check on the nuclear race.

Prior to all the arrangements to curb the proliferation of nuclear weapons, it is most necessary that the efforts made must be based on justice and they must treat all the nations of the world equally and must be for the betterment and survival of human beings. Their ultimate motive should be to save humanity not the political gains.

*Dilawar Sherzai is the permanent writer of the Daily Outlook Afghanistan. He can be reached at email.urya@gmail.com*

## The Mispriced Risk of Infectious Diseases

By Dambisa Moyo

Global business leaders and investors are largely transfixed by two kinds of risk: macroeconomic and geopolitical. In the near term, this means a focus on the US Federal Reserve's impending rate hikes and the upcoming elections in France and Germany. Over the longer term, it means awareness of structural risks like high sovereign debt, demographic shifts, and natural-resource scarcity. But there is a third, arguably more pernicious, risk lurking below most decision-makers' radar: infectious diseases. According to the former director of the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Tom Frieden, the world is at greater risk than ever from global health threats.

People travel farther and more often. Supply chains, including for food and medicines, extend across the world. A poorly treated case of, say, tuberculosis (TB) in Asia or Africa can present in a hospital in the United States within days.

Against this background, scientists are concerned about the recent uptick in epidemics of diseases such as Zika, Ebola, and avian flu. And they are alarmed by the resurgence of life-threatening diseases such as influenza, HIV, malaria, and TB.

To be sure, in terms of fatalities, recent disease outbreaks and pandemics are a far cry from past global flu epidemics. Whereas the 2003 SARS epidemic resulted in 774 deaths, and the Ebola outbreak of 2014-2015 left 11,310 dead, the 1918-1920 flu epidemic claimed the lives of 100 million people - more than five times the number killed in the world war that had just ended. Indeed, some 5% of the world's population perished.

But the risks from infectious diseases that we face today could intensify substantially, owing to the rise of anti-microbial resistance (AMR). According to the World Health Organization, "480,000 people develop multi-drug resistant TB each year, and drug resistance is starting to complicate the fight against HIV and malaria, as well." Antibiotic resistance, the WHO cautions, is now present in every country, putting patients at risk of worse clinical outcomes and at greater risk of death, while increasing the burden on health systems.

England's chief medical officer, Sally Davies, has warned that, if left unchecked, the growing impotence of drugs could be catastrophic. By 2050, she estimates, drug-resistant infections could be killing someone "every three seconds." The Review on AMR estimates that, at that point, some ten million lives could be lost each year, at a cumulative cost to global economic output of \$100 trillion. To put that into perspective, world GDP today totals \$74 trillion per year.

Yet the potential long-term human and economic consequences of AMR are not widely appreciated by the public and, in particular, by financial markets. In fact, protection from public health

threats is one vital area where markets do not deliver efficiently. As a result, it is governments that usually bear the costs of prevention and treatment.

With government budgets already overstretched, coping with the intensifying health burden from AMR will be difficult, to say the least. Yet governments are unlikely to move fast to mitigate this risk. On the contrary, experience indicates that governments often struggle to align public spending with underlying or mounting problems, such as public-health threats, until they reach a crisis point.

More people died of cancer in the US last year than in combat. In fact, last year's 580,000 cancer deaths exceed the roughly 430,000 battle deaths, on average, in World War I, World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, and the Gulf War. Yet government spending on cancer averages approximately \$4 billion per year. That is just over 0.5% of the annual military budget of roughly \$718 billion.

Of course, government budget-allocation decisions are complicated and dogged by political imperatives. The US military employs some three million people, making it the single largest employer in the world, and there is substantial political pressure from some constituencies to place the highest priority on America's military dominance.

But it is not just a matter of how much is spent; it is also a matter of when. Governments don't wait for war to break out before investing in the military. Yet they do tend to wait for crises to erupt before they invest in fighting infectious diseases.

The world spent \$15 billion on its emergency response to the SARS epidemic and \$40 billion on its response to Ebola. In 1918, the crisis response to the flu pandemic cost some \$17.5 trillion. Had countries spent more on mitigating the risk of such disease outbreaks - for example, by fortifying their health-care systems and promoting responsible use of antibiotics - those huge emergency payouts may not have been necessary. At the very least, they probably would have been smaller.

In this sense, the fight against infectious diseases closely resembles the fight against climate change. Though the threat is substantial, it is not immediate, so governments continue to pursue other priorities, allowing the threat to grow, largely out of sight. As a result, it is not adequately priced into the markets.

When the crisis finally erupts, the true scale of the threat will become clear. But by that point, it will be much more difficult and expensive to contain, resulting in far more casualties. Unfortunately, that point may be closer than anyone - government or investor - expects. (Courtesy Project Syndicate)

*Dambisa Moyo, an economist and author, sits on the board of directors of a number of global corporations.*



Chairman / Editor-in-Chief: Dr. Hussain Yasa

Vice-Chairman: Kazim Ali Gulzari

Email: outlookafghanistan@gmail.com

Phone: 0093 (799) 005019/777-005019

www.outlookafghanistan.net



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