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Year of Peace, Democracy and Development

The 1398 solar year has been named as the year of Peace, Democracy and Development by President Ghani.

The reason behind it, is that peace talks between the US Representative Khalilzad and Taliban envoy is underway to put an end to the 40 year conflict in the country.

In this article we would highlight some important aspects and interlinks between these three crucial concepts.

Peace

Immanuel Kant the German philosopher introduced the theory of "perpetual peace" in the field of academics in the year 1795. This theory states that a state can only ensure peace only if its civil constitution is "republic" and the consent of the citizens are required in matters of war and peace. Naturally the citizens are opposing to declare war, while favoring to ensuring sustainable peace.

In the entire history of Afghanistan, transfer of power between the Afghan leaders has never been peacefully and it has been through violent means, which has resulted in regime change or a total collapse of the state in anarchy. The first instance of peaceful transfer of power was only in the year 2014, when power was transferred from former President Hamid Karzai to the current President Ashraf Ghani.

The current democratic setup in Afghanistan which was established in 2002 has prevented the repeat of the violent struggle for power and representation of the 1990s which was resulted in a bloody civil war, but violence is not stopped in the country. Taliban are avenging violence against the state since 2001, when their theocratic regime was toppled by the International Coalition Forces. Although this model has the capacity to accommodate different views and diverse identities. As a responsible and democratic state the Afghan government has left the doors open to all the groups to participate in dialogue and negotiation to resolve differences peacefully, at the same time it has also use legitimate force to protect citizens from harm in the last 17 years.

Afghanistan needs an immediate push for peace and development to end suffering and put the Afghan people on a path to progress. Afghanistan faces a major and the Government has to pursue both an inclusive peace process and economic growth against the backdrop of an intensifying insurgency.

To ensure peace in Afghanistan the neighboring countries shall be warranted that their own stake is recognized in the process, while at the same time recognizing that the Taliban can be a part of the country's long-term future. In fact, Afghanistan, its neighbors and international community shall make peace their new and absolute imperative. In fact, Afghanistan's most important battle ahead, is the one for a lasting peace.

Democracy

Afghanistan as a state can survive if it is strong and democratic. When survival of the state is at stake, it is the ideas that may save the country from falling apart. The crux of this idea which has been proposed for the survival of Afghanistan is the continuity of the current model which is democratic and its source of its legitimacy being drawn from the Afghan People, and the functionalist approach to foreign policy of the current Afghan government which is to maintain peace through cooperation and common interest of all countries in the region, while currently the mechanism to maintain peace in the region is through arms race and deterrence.

As the research shows that poor democracies surpass poor autocracies on nearly every economic measure of consequence. Studies offer evidences that democracies are more stable: they are less likely to fall into armed civil conflict, experience humanitarian catastrophes, or breed international terrorists than are authoritarian countries.

Development

Afghanistan's economic and development forecast is informed by the prospects for achieving peace and reconciliation. Peace enables Afghanistan to maintain its national security, strengthen government control over territory, and combat the spread of terrorism, to invest in professionalizing and increasing the effectiveness of the armed services. It enables the government to provide a better future for Afghan people and their families. By restoring peace in Afghanistan, we will have confidence in a state that is well-governed through laws and institutions, provides a voice for the people to hold their government accountable, and delivers quality services. Furthermore, peace enables the government to secure the nation's future by conscientiously stewarding natural resources and investing in our children's health and education.

In a nutshell, we call on the Afghan Government, together with the international community, to work hand-in-hand to make a discernible change in the lives of all Afghans by reaching to a sustainable peace so they feel the upward lift of economic and social progress. And in this endeavor, it is necessary to incorporate social welfare dimensions of development in the development policies of the country, indicators such as life expectancy, infant mortality, and girls' education, on which democracies dramatically excel.

Toward a New Global Charter

By: Carl Bildt

In August 1941, even before the United States had entered World War II, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill and US President Franklin D. Roosevelt met secretly off the coast of Newfoundland to discuss how the world could be organized after the war. A similar feat had been attempted at Versailles just over two decades earlier, but it had clearly failed.

Churchill and FDR's assignment resulted in the Atlantic Charter, which established a set of shared principles and institutions that still define the international order eight decades later. In 1944, the Bretton Woods conference laid the groundwork for the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and other global financial institutions; the establishment of the United Nations soon followed. The defeated Axis powers were transformed into dynamic democracies with market economies, and were integrated into the new global system, while stability was maintained through cooperative security structures spanning the transatlantic and Pacific theaters.

Then came China's economic reforms, starting in the late 1970s, and the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, whereupon the dream of truly global multilateral governance as envisioned in the Atlantic Charter could start to be realized. In 1995, the Bretton Woods-era General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade was replaced with the World Trade Organization, and in under two decades, trade as a share of global GDP has grown from around 40% to over 70% (owing in no small part to China's accession to the WTO in December 2001).

During this golden age of multilateralism, globalization, and social and economic development, more than one billion people were lifted out of extreme poverty, and democracy became the global norm. But it is clear that the second decade of the twenty-first century has marked the advent of a different era. Memories of the international order's formative years, and of the tragedies that made it necessary, have faded with the passing of generations. New powers have emerged to challenge Western dominance within an increasingly multipolar context. And the recent proliferation of authoritarian regimes has raised questions about the future of democracy.

Though the basic structures of the post-war order remain in place, they are being hollowed out in the face of Russian revisionism, Chinese assertiveness, US disruption, and European uncertainty. With the goal of revising the principles of the Atlantic Charter for this dangerous new world, two prominent think tanks, the Atlantic Council in the US and the Center for Global Governance Innovation in Canada, recently convened policymakers and thinkers, including me, from 19 different countries.

When attempting to draft a new set of shared principles,

the biggest challenge is in deciding whether to make them applicable just to the world's democracies, or also to the likes of Russia, China, and Saudi Arabia. Obviously, democracy is by far the best way to ensure that individual rights are respected; but the debate also should be open to those advocating different values and interests. In our case, we wanted to produce a document that would resonate both in the "classical West" as well as in Brazil, Algeria, Iran, India, Indonesia, and Vietnam.

Our deliberations resulted in a Declaration of Principles that we issued at the Munich Security Conference last month. "Inspired by the inalienable rights derived from our ethics, traditions, and faiths," the declaration reads, "we commit ourselves to seek a better future for our citizens and our nations. We will defend our values, overcome past failures with new ideas, answer lies with truth, confront aggression with strength, and go forward with the confidence that our principles will prevail."

The full declaration comprises seven statements under the headings of "freedom and justice," "democracy and self-determination," "peace and security," "free markets and equal opportunity," "an open and healthy planet," "the right of assistance," and "collective action." In each area, our goal was to set down principles that might serve as the tenets of a new consensus after an inclusive global debate.

The declaration is not merely a restatement of previously held beliefs. Environmental issues clearly have become more prominent than they were before, and questions of sovereignty must be reframed for an increasingly interconnected and interdependent world. Concerns about how prosperity is shared both within and between countries have gained significant currency.

But basic values such as respect for individual rights remain fundamentally important, as does the belief that "governments that answer to their citizens and respect the rule of law can best address inequity, correct injustice, and serve the good of all." Indeed, governments ignore this proviso at their peril.

As the fruit of a year's worth of discussions and revisions, the declaration has received broad support from different corners of the world. But our goal is to start a larger debate, not to have the final word. We are under no illusions that it will rival the Atlantic Charter in terms of its historical impact. But nor do we have any doubts as to the urgency and necessity of a new discussion about the basic principles of global governance. Without such a debate, the old order will continue to decay, to be replaced by a Hobbesian jungle ruled by sheer power and narrow self-interest. We all know how that turned out last time.

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The Cataclysm and Inferno

By: Dr. Faisal Ali

There was incessant usage of doggerel in the social media about the confrontation and escalation of tensions between Pakistan and India a few days back. The rancour exhibited by the electronic media of both the rival countries added more saffron to the vituperation and invective. Today, the puerile language on both sides of the line of partition is a euphemism for avocation that has sidelined the mendicant and execrable condition of the downtrodden communities of both countries.

Soon after independence in August 1947, both of these nations haggled over the issue of Kashmir. The dispute of possible solution was portrayed as controversial issue due to acrimony and fallacy of strategic depth that resulted in the failure of both the countries to achieve the goals of creating egalitarian society. The net result of Kashmir dispute is petrifying and pestilential scenario that now haunts the people of both countries in the form of nuclear war. Such type of future conflict arises some serious questions that need to be answered. First, who will pay the external debts and debt services that have trapped both of these states? Second, who will be victorious during nuclear belligerency? The reply to all these questions is that the real winners in such situation shall be International Financial Institutions (IFIs) and all other countries

that can try each and every effort to make these two countries docile. Perhaps, the subcontinent will be re-colonized again by someone else or become a ground for proxy wars for other nations. According to this writer, this is the time for the leaders of both countries to ponder over the future consequences of any gory and sanguine confrontation. In spite of spending too much money and energy on war efforts and military capabilities, these two countries should fight against interest and usury based fractional reserve banking, poverty, unemployment, corruption, embezzlement, terrorism, drug trafficking, energy crisis, child sexual abuse and environmental issues. The prosperous future of both India and Pakistan lies in the early and peaceful solution of Kashmir dispute. The Horseshoe Falls that straddle the border between USA and Canada are not only touristic destinations but are also the economic income machines for the human race on both sides. The same can also be applied to the beautiful valley of Kashmir on both sides by making it a neutral touristic destination. It is hoped that the tomorrow of today will bring a new aurora of hope and blessings to the region.

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