

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



March 30, 2016

Afghanistan Needs to Develop its Economy

Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI) said on Tuesday, March 29, that Afghanistan's exports have increased by 30 percent in 2015 compared to 2012, while imports that remain 14 times higher than exports decreased by 12 percent.

ACCI officials said Afghanistan's exports level was not satisfactory and argued imports decreased because of poor economy condition of Afghans and the cut in international aid.

Afghan authorities need to understand that the role of economy is very much vital. It is as important as circulatory system within a human body. As without circulatory system blood cannot be pumped through different parts of the body, in the similar fashion without economy, money and other basic requirements of life cannot reach to different parts of a country. Most of the other systems in the country, like social and political systems are highly dependent on the economic system. Therefore, it is vital that Afghanistan must maintain strong economy so as to have stability and integrity.

There are different aspects of an economic system. Businesses play a vital role within an economy. If within a system there are consistent investments and different businesses, the system is on a track towards development and prosperity. Since the very inception of human society, human beings have required businesses so as to have their requirements fulfilled. Throughout human history, businesses have taken different forms and characteristics and today have reached to a very advanced form. From the barter system to today's advanced era when the businesses are taking place online, there has been a series of different practices, but the vitality of the business has never been lost.

The under-developed and developing countries of the world that need to establish strong economic system require evolution and nourishment of different businesses to a large extent. The authoritative people in such societies have to make sure that the way to the businesses is paved properly.

There are different pre-requisites for businesses and investments to flourish. Among them stability and security play a dominant role. If different systems within a country are stable and there are not major fluctuations every now and then, the ground is said to be ready for the investors and businessmen to jump in and establish their businesses. Businessmen want consistent outcomes from their investments and they abhor seeing political and social changes disturb their businesses. The evil like insecurity also plays major role in discouraging businesses and investments. Different incidents of terrorism and killings compel the businesses to shut down, and frighten the investors to invest. The societies marked with insecurity do not have consumers going to the markets and enjoying the luxury of shopping different products.

Afghanistan is one of the same kinds of country where insecurity and uncertainty have been influencing the economic life to a large extent. Both national and international businessmen are not readily willing to invest in all the sectors and they do not see positive prospects of their businesses. As insecurity and uncertainty have been overwhelmingly influencing the country, the development in the basic infra-structure has been meager.

The doubts and uncertainties of the Afghan market have made the international investors to think thousand times before they take an initiative to start their businesses in the country. Though there are great opportunities in Afghanistan and the country is blessed with different types of mineral and other natural resources, the economic infra-structure has not been able to get enough attention. Apart from that there are other factors as well that have been influencing the economic system of Afghanistan. The insufficient and unfavorable business laws are also one of the issues affecting Afghan economy. There have to be strong business laws governing the society and controlling the business. The laws should not only safeguard the rights of investors and businessmen but also make sure that the competition within the system is maintained on strong and fair footings. The evils like monopoly based on unfair competition must be tackled properly and there should be strong bodies that control the prices within the markets, which at the present are non-existent and the businessmen are fixing the rates on their own.

Afghanistan needs to have strong economy so as to survive in the post withdrawal era. The international aid and assistance that have been coming to the country for the last some years will be diminished and Afghan economy will be tested to a large extent. The country has to start from the basic infra-structural development and have to reach to a stable economy, wherein the businesses are able to function without any fear and inconsistency. An environment has to be developed that can be galvanizing for both the national and international investors. Moreover, the golden opportunities wherein Afghanistan can exert maximum and can get the best outcomes from must be discovered and they should be strengthened so as to push the country towards self-sufficiency. On the other hand, the businessmen and investors must also keep the national interests in their consideration while they establish their businesses and start getting the outcomes from them. They have to keep this in their minds that the society as a whole has certain rights that have to be fulfilled by them.



The Issue of Human Rights

By Hujjatullah Zia

Human rights are commonly understood as inalienable fundamental rights to which a person is inherently entitled simply because she or he is a human being and which are "inherent in all human beings" regardless of their nation, location, language, gender, ethnic origin or any other status. They are applicable everywhere and at every time in the sense of being universal and they are equal in the sense of being the same for everyone. They require empathy and the rule of law and impose an obligation on persons to respect the human rights of others. They should not be taken away except as a result of due process based on specific circumstances, and require freedom from unlawful imprisonment, torture, and execution. It is believed that human rights contain a wide variety of rights such as the right to fair trial protection against enslavement, prohibition of genocide, free speech or right to education. Moreover, there is disagreement about which of these particular rights should be included within the general framework of human rights. Some thinkers suggest that human rights should be a minimum requirement to avoid the worst-case abuses, while others see it as a higher standard.

What is special about us is our humanity, our being human. As humans, we can think and articulate thoughts; we also have a sense of right and wrong, which is our conscience.

Equality does not mean that we are all the same. Each of us is different in our own special way. But we also have the common qualities that make us all humans. So each of us should be treated with respect and dignity and treat others in the same way. In another term, all human beings have real dignity simply because they are persons/entities with a natural capacity for thought and free choice. All human beings have this capacity, so all human beings are persons. Each human being therefore deserves to be treated by all other human beings with respect and consideration.

Moreover, it should be considered that to be born free means that all people have an equal right to freedom. But freedom does not mean that we can do anything we want, nor can freedom for some mean limiting the freedom of others. Though we are born free, we live in a community that functions because there is an understanding among its members. In short, it has rules and requires responsibilities. Human rights and dignity are not something that we can bestow or take away from another person. It is intrinsic to our existence. What we can do is enter into relationships that respect our mutual human dignity. When respect for human dignity forms the basis of our relationships.

A number of standard individual rights are significant to ethnic minorities, including rights to freedom of association, freedom of assembly and freedom of religion. Human rights instruments also include rights that refer to minorities explicitly and give them special protections. For example, the Civil and Political Covenant in Article 27 says that persons belonging to ethnic, religious, or linguistic minorities "shall not be denied the right, in community with other members of their group, to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practice their own religion, or to use their own language."

Ill-fatedly, the flagrant violation of human rights and dignity are rampant around the globe. The armed insurgents spill the blood of innocent civilians on the grounds of their creed, color, sect and sex. Women are subjugated to men in patriarchal societies and child labor from the break of dawn to the fall of dusk in poverty-stricken countries. Similarly, the ethnic minority groups suffer sectarian violence, mainly triggered by terrorist insurgents - who also sow the seeds of fear and mistrust between East and West via infiltrating to Western countries. As a result, Afghan nation suffer painfully by the insurgents and their rights and dignity are violated to a great extent. Human rights instruments emphasize that all people, including women and members of minority ethnic groups, have equal human rights and should be able to enjoy them without discrimination. The right to freedom from discrimination figures prominently in the Universal Declaration and subsequent treaties. The Civil and Political Covenant, for example, commits participating states to respect and protect their people's rights without distinction of any kind, such as race, color, sex, language, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth, or social status.

The fact is that we too often dehumanize our brothers and sisters or shut our ears when they cry out. Failure to recognize the human dignity of each and every person opens the door to all manner of violence and injustice. But how can we truly make human right and dignity the cornerstone of our relationships?

This question is especially pertinent when we reflect on our relationships with people we may never meet; people who suffer in the far corners of the world and whose names we do not know. Although we may never meet, we still share the same planet and its gifts. These gifts are not simply for our own personal use but are entrusted to us by our Creator for the flourishing of our human family. We are increasingly aware that our actions in one part of the world can affect people who live far away from us. We are interconnected. Hence, we have to cherish our humane characteristics.

Hujjatullah Zia is the permanent writer of the Daily Outlook Afghanistan. He can be reached at zia_hujjat@yahoo.com

Bracing for a Heightened Taliban Insurgency

By Abdul Ahad Bahrami

As Afghan security officials were briefing MPs on Monday, March 28, Taliban sent a loud message by firing four rockets at the parliament's new compound, signaling deterioration of security ahead of their spring offensive. The firing came as an outright justification for the MPs who were grilling the officials over deterioration of security situation across the country. The officials in the ministries of defense, interior and the National Directorate for Security reassured the house regarding the preparations of the security agencies for responding to the upcoming Taliban violence which is expected to start within coming weeks. The officials said the Taliban were bracing for start of their seasonal fight and aim to take territories and seize or disrupt key highways.

The firing at the parliament's compound came as a symbolic attack by the Taliban at a time when the officials were explaining their anti-insurgency plans for this year and how the security agencies are going to cope with another peak of Taliban offensive. However, aside from the overall security developments and the deterioration of situation, the rocket firing demonstrated a major security gap for Kabul and the key government agencies' compound in the capital. The Taliban have long been targeting major security and government installations which serve their propaganda and psychological wars. It is highly questionable that the government is still falling short of providing sufficient security to the parliament which has come under attacks of the militants in the past as well.

With the start of the spring season, the Taliban are bracing for launching another round of their seasonal offensive against the Afghan security forces. The officials of the security agencies told the MPs they are preparing for conducting a nation-wide security operation against the Taliban aimed at taking the war to the Taliban's grounds and disrupting the insurgents' war preparations. Despite the assurances, there are high uncertainties and concerns over the preparedness of the Afghan security forces in event of an extensive and large-scale Taliban offensive this year. The test, however, is for the Afghan government forces whether they will be able to effectively counter Taliban offensives and deter the militants during the year and prevent them from having permanent and momentary wins.

The Afghan security forces suffered some key weaknesses during the counterinsurgency efforts last year. The Taliban demonstrated high capabilities in shifting their war strategies aimed at making military gains and, in the meantime, stretching the government forces.

This was while the Afghan security forces lacked the resiliency and capability to adapt to the changing circumstances and match the shifting strategy of the Taliban. While the Taliban aimed to open many fronts in the north and south of the country to stretch forces and resources of the Afghan army and police forces, the government operated in a reactive way and struggled to repulse the Taliban offensive and roll back their wins. The security agencies were not prepared for fight-

ing on several fronts, and therefore, responded in chaotic manner to many of the major Taliban offensives in the north and the southern provinces.

In many areas, where government forces experienced setbacks, there were visible lack of robust military leadership and lack of coordination between army units and their headquarters. However, lack of leadership at the highest levels and the lower ranks are criticized as the Achilles' heel of the Afghan security forces.

There is a common belief that lack of leadership at the highest levels of the relevant security ministries resulted to poor leadership of the military in the fight against the insurgent groups across the country. Afghan security agencies are preparing for another year of anti-insurgency campaign while all the three key security ministries and directorates are led by caretaker officials. There has been growing calls in recent months for the government to resolve the stalemate of the leadership of the security organs and end the disarray in governance of the security and defense institutions.

However, there are no signs that the national unity government will be able to end the long-lasting limbo in which the leadership of the Afghan security agencies are.

The government needs to realize that the army and police forces would again demonstrate poor performances in absence of ministers who can better manage the security agencies in the fight against the insurgent groups. The situation would in no doubt further deteriorate if the government fails to appoint the relevant ministers and empower the security agencies in the campaign against the Taliban.

The stalemate of the peace efforts is another factor for another heightened season of war and violence this year. With failure of the peace overtures, both sides have started fresh efforts to make preparations for launching offensives and counteroffensives when the weather gets warmer.

The Taliban is believed to have refused to come to the peace negotiations to wait for a better time when they will have more gains on the battleground and more advantages on the table of negotiations. This year seems to be a year of decisive battle on the ground between the Afghan security forces and the Taliban who aim to gain more grounds. The Afghan officials say that regional intelligence are helping the Taliban to expand their operations and gain territories across Afghanistan.

The outcome of this year's battles would have crucial impacts for the future peace efforts.

The peace initiative will remain stalled for an uncertain period of time and does not seem to restart until this year's season of war determines who is going to have more gains on the battlefields. The government needs to mobilize the Afghan security forces and redouble efforts to better equip them for tackling the insurgency in 2016. The government should waste no time for boosting the leadership and improving morale of the forces by appointing the relevant security ministers.

Abdul Ahad Bahrami is the permanent writer of the Daily Outlook Afghanistan. He can be reached at ahad.bahrami@gmail.



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



The views and opinions expressed in the articles are those of the authors and do not reflect the views or opinions of the Daily Outlook Afghanistan.