

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



May 01, 2016

## Peace is Paramount

Afghanistan has been suffering from the horrors of wars and instability for decades now. These have made the people undergo great misery; therefore, most of the people are now tired of the circumstances and they keep on longing for peace. The common people in Afghanistan require nothing more than peace today as the situation is once again turning instable and insecure. People on many occasions expressed their hatred for insecurity; however, their voices have never found keen ears.

In a similar expression a number of civil society activists on Friday conducted a rally in Kabul - dressed in colorful costumes. Their objective was to bring some cheer and a message of peace to Kabul as the constant violence was a terrible drain for people. They also called on insurgents to end their violence and join the peace process. It is really imperative that such movements should be appreciated and there should be more efforts by all the responsible members of the society for the promotion of peace and tranquility. It will also have a positive impact on the social psychology and development of stability and social order.

Peace also stands paramount for the development in a society. Sustainable development would only remain a distant dream if there is no peace. Many basic issues would remain unsolved and would never gain attention if the society does not feel safe and secure. And, there is ample evidence from the history as well that should be enough for the nations to comprehend the worth of peace and shun their attitude of war.

Wars have only misery to offer. They can never be won by any one. All those groups or countries that have fought wars have only received destruction. Even if some of them have proved themselves more powerful than others, they have done it after a series of sacrifices on both sides. Wars have always offered devastation to human civilizations, massacred guiltless human beings, brought miseries and pains, which should be enough lesson for human beings to come to their senses.

When a society pursues war, there are many important requirements that are neglected and most of the energy and efforts are dedicated to making a nation ready for launching war and strong militarily. Weird, but true that there are many countries in today's world that would not utilize the resources of the nation for improving the standard of the living of the people but would prefer spending them generously on acquiring modern weaponry. This clearly depicts that what human beings pursue is their own destruction; unfortunately, they remain naïve enough to comprehend it.

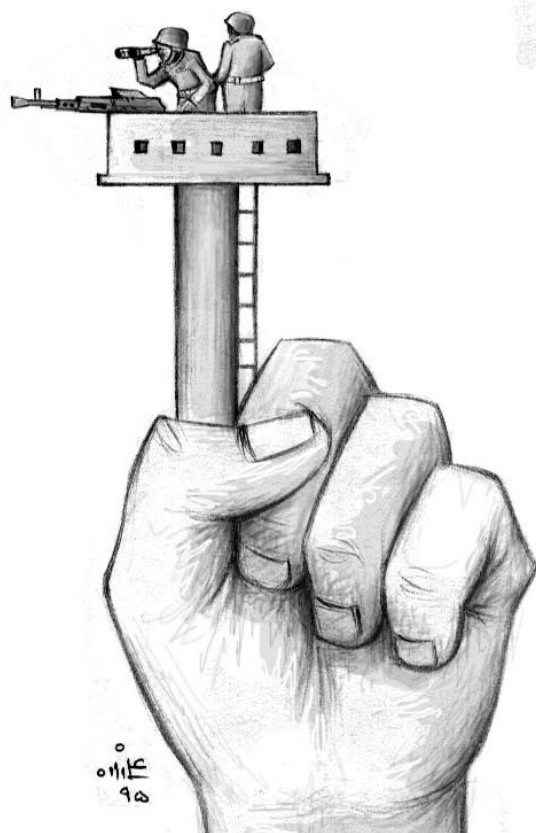
In this regard it is important to have a look at the quantity and quality of modern weaponry that human societies have collected in modern world - they have the capability to raze human beings from the surface of the earth completely. The extent of weapons of mass destruction available for the service of the modern nations can even destroy the entire earth several times.

Knowing all these facts, it is really weird that there are thinkers who suggest that peace can only be acquired through wars and, therefore, wars are thought to be necessary in human societies.

This is the biggest and the most unforgivable misconception human beings have ever had. War does not and cannot guarantee peace; destruction is in its true nature. Even if war brings any sort of peace that is only after the entire human civilization is destroyed completely. Such peace that would be achieved at the worth of human annihilation is hard to be justified.

For promotion of peace and tranquility within human society, it is important that there should be efforts both on collective and individual levels. The international organizations can play an influencing role in promoting peace in the world. They can bring the world leaders together and strive to coordinate strong relations among the nations of the world based on the theory of cooperation and collective existence. They can also strive to introduce ban on the proliferation of the destructive weaponry and careless utilization of atomic energy.

On the individual level, human beings can use their characteristics of compassion and love to reduce the possibilities of war and establish peace. As Dalai Lama XIV had rightly observed, "World peace must develop from inner peace. Peace is not just mere absence of violence. Peace is the manifestation of human compassion". There is no doubt in the fact that human beings are loving beings. They have a heart, which knows to beat and to feel affection towards other human beings. They can be all ears to the beating of their hearts and can observe how peacefully and in a perfect order they follow one another, neither to dominate nor to beat but to support one another and in the process support the entire heart which then ensures life.



## Political Leadership

By Dilawar Sherzai

Leadership is a necessary social phenomenon. In a society different people live together, with different habits, attitudes, ideas and interests and yet have to be organized for some common purpose or common goal of life, there leaders will necessarily arise. Nothing can be acquired if there is no organization; but organization creates leaders and the led. Leadership basically means the hierarchical or organizational supremacy of a person or group of persons. The leaders give unity of purpose to a large number of people by organizing them into a single whole for the achievement of certain definite purposes or ideals, whether of the leaders or of the followers or of both. The nature of purposes and ideals determines the nature of leadership. A political leader is one who occupies such a position in a party so as to exercise more influence upon activities, purposes or programs than any other of its members. The phenomenon of leadership in politics and state is not a simple one. It is influenced by several factors - psychological, social, political and historical. The psychological factors are the personality, the intellectual qualities, the moral spirit and valor, imagination, clear vision, will-to-power, perseverance, or the gift of discipline. Thus leadership depends upon qualities of head and heart and also of hand, especially in the past ages when men had to fight or cut their way with their swords to the front. Among the social factors are the habits and customs, beliefs and attitudes of the people, their social relations and organizations. The political factors are the nature and structure of the state, the laws and the rights and liberties granted by the laws or aspired by the people, the kind and organization of political parties and the political ideas, attitudes and philosophies which prevail among them. The historical conditions are the conditions of war or peace, victory or defeat, social system and social evolution or the progress in culture and civilization and the problems and dangers which confront the nation and the country at home and abroad in the past and present. All these factors and forces will determine the kind of political leadership that will arise in a country and at a particular period in its history. A people have always a kind of leaders in deserves. There are, however, various kinds of leaders; party leaders, parliamentary or legislative leaders, executive or administrative leaders and above all the builders of state, such as statesmen, prophets, or revolutionaries and visionaries. The party, parliamentary and administrative leaderships are of routine and usual type, while the statesmen, prophets, revolutionaries and visionaries are rare phenomena which may change the destiny of their nations.

The increasing rigidity of party organization, discipline and control is both the cause and effect of the rise of leaders in the modern political parties. Modern parties are mass organi-

zations. They seek to enroll and enlist as many people as its members and supporters as possible. In order to win elections effectively, manage government and solve the problems confronting the state, the party must be led by someone who can achieve these ends. He becomes the party leader. He is its spokesmen before the people. He explains and defends its policies and programs to them. He shows the party the way to victory. He cannot, however, dominate it. A good party leader is not its boss but its spokesmen. His function is to give voice to the aims and ideals for which the party stands. He is aptly described as 'an uncommon man of common opinions'.

Government is basically a leadership phenomenon. It consists of the rulers and the leaders. Like every other machinery, governmental machinery needs a man at the steering wheel. Whatever may be said of the state in theory, in practice it means the government, which means a group of persons whose decisions are legally binding on the community. But government is a complex machinery, consisting of three distinct parts - the legislature, the executive and the administrative departments. Each part requires different types of leaders as each one has its own distinct nature, purpose and functions.

The selection of political leaders is effected differently in different states. In parliamentary democracy, it is made through popular election as well as the work in the legislature. The first test of a political leader is the election. But the real test is his skill and superiority as revealed in facing the questions and criticism in the parliament, where he faces a watchful opposition. In popular elections, a mere 'showman' or an 'orator' might succeed. But when he stands to address the parliament, he may soon be deflated, for it tests not his skill in public speaking but also his ability in handling technical, personal and political issues under the gaze of an opposition which will exploit any sign of weakness or failure. Those who survive this test become the real political leaders of the government. For this selective reason, the cabinet system with parliamentary responsibility of the ministers and two-party system is found to be the best means of choosing government leaders.

Then among the political leaders are the bed-rock of the government, the administrators, who run the administrative departments.

Whereas the governmental leaders need initiative, imagination, vision and a spirit of innovation, the administrative officers need qualities of routine, specialization and integration. They are adept in their own fields. They must be men of acumen and intelligence. Good administrators are men of wide social understanding and intellectual vigor. They are capable of finding the best method to transfer legislative policy into administrative practice.

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## Living in a Democratic Country?

By Hujjatullah Zia

I live under a democratic government when my rights and dignity are honored, when my nation's blood is not spilt on the grounds of their caste, creed and color and when my words and practices are tolerated among the public. Democracy lets people speak their minds and shape their own and their children's futures. That so many people in so many different parts of the world are prepared to risk so much for this idea is testimony to its enduring appeal. Similarly, Afghans made great sacrifices to embrace democracy and exercise their rights in a safe environment. In the post-2001 era, many assumptions have been made about the benefits of democracy in Afghanistan. International assistance had focused on the re-establishment of representative democratic institutions, such as a presidential system, bicameral parliament, and provincial councils. However, little attention has been paid to Afghan perceptions of democracy. Indeed, far from unquestionable, the benefits of democracy are not universally acknowledged among Afghans.

First, many Afghans are disappointed that the outcomes of democracy, the high expectations of the social and economic development that democracy would bring, along with increased security, have not been met.

Secondly, the under-performance of elected representatives in democratic institutions has served to consolidate the gap between people and government, and has not proved to be a means through which the interests of the majority of citizens can be addressed.

It is well known that the word "democracy" originates from Ancient Greece and means 'power of the people'. Such an idea, in its literal sense, encompassing economic, political and social democracy does not exist anywhere in the world. This is primarily because the planet's resources, many of which human beings need in order to live, do not belong to the people as a whole. Instead, they are in the hands of a small, privileged, rich minority. Such extremely limited political 'democracy' as does exist in parts of the modern world, is scarcely even a shadow of what genuine democracy will be like when it is finally put into practice.

For real democracy, imagine a society where all the people would be of equal status, with equal, free access to resources owned by the community. Imagine a society where everyone can have an equal say in the issues that concern them. Above all, imagine a world in which all the people own and share the wealth that we need in order to live. One can hardly find a perfect and ideal democracy with all its components.

Democracy as a system of governance is supposed to allow extensive representation and inclusiveness of as many people and views as possible to feed into the functioning of a fair and just society.

Democratic principles run in line with the ideals of universal freedoms such as the right to free speech.

The ideals of democracy are so appealing to citizens around the world, that many have sacrificed their livelihoods, even their lives, to fight for it. Indeed, our era of "civilization" is characterized as much by war and conflict as it is by peace and democracy.

It is self-explanatory that great efforts and sacrifices were made in Afghanistan, since the downfall of the Taliban's regime, to promote the participation of civic groups, political parties, women and government bodies in the country's political and electoral processes. This process has taken place in the context of a difficult transition from Taliban rule to new democratic institutions. While political organizations and civil society groups have made some progress in advancing democratic political processes, much more needs to be done to protect gains Afghanistan has made in democratic governance and the protection of human rights, especially the rights of women. Security, political stability and democratic governance are closely linked, and the legitimacy of Afghanistan's government hinges on credible elections.

However, people rights are violated to a high extent in Afghanistan. As a result, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) has reported an increase in civilian casualties in 2016. Based on the report, in all 161 children that were killed from January to March and 449 were injured, marks a 29 percent rise over the first three months of 2015.

Terrorism is a highly perilous issue in the country which puts democracy under question. The citizens' ballots failed to overcome bullets that snatch their fundamental rights and curtail their freedom. The elections did not bear the desired result and left our people hopeless on the basis of escalated insurgency and emergence of new armed groups, mainly the self-styled Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). Likewise, the peace talks were proved abortive and the Taliban fighters have launched their "Omari Operation" that will lead to great loss of life in Afghanistan the same as last year or worse. Hence, can I really claim to exercise democracy in my country?

Constitutionally, the government is supposed to strengthen national unity, safeguard independence, national sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country. It is to establish an order based on the peoples' will and democracy. Moreover, the government is committed to "Form a civil society void of oppression, atrocity, discrimination as well as violence, based on rule of law, social justice, protecting integrity and human rights, and attaining peoples' freedoms and fundamental rights". If all these are fulfilled, I will claim to have democracy in my country.

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