

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



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Peaceful Life is Possible

The checkered past reveals the fact that Afghanistan has been the hotbed of different ideologies. Historical war and peace originate in political and social attitudes - the current instability proves the very issue. The mercenary militants fight to wreck havoc on the nation but our soldiers fight to protect the nation. The destructive and constructive roles of the warmongers and patriotic nation were in conflicts throughout the history and continue up to now. Our nation dream constantly to establish democracy and safeguard the national values and social norms but a mysterious group appeared to dismantle the aims and ambitions.

There were three main factors behind the historical wars imposed on our nation: First, we lacked political maturity and deception. Whoever smiled, behind a friendly façade, we shook hand from the bottom of our heart and deemed it a perfect companion. Our pure conscience and sincere policy were highly exploited. For instance, when the Taliban militants set foot in the country, the individuals welcomed them with open arm. A deep sense of hope permeated across the country. They were said to establish an impeccable law and order in the society and would change Afghanistan into utopia. But this hope soon disappeared and the public dream did not come true. To their unmitigated chagrin, the Taliban regime changed the country into dystopia via launching carnage and violence.

Honesty and faith in commitments, which were deeply embedded in our culture, played a counterproductive role in our history. Violating a commitment was considered immoral and we followed the famous rule of "honesty is the best policy". However, those who believed the opposite, they were the winner.

The second factor was disunity or the civil unrest. Our national glories, such as winning victory over the Soviet Union, were faded into oblivion and a tension broke out among the citizens. The ugly incident of civil war led to wide destruction and undermined our national honor. Moreover, the opportunists utilized the tension in their own political interests and muddied the water more than ever before. The existence of the Taliban militants is one of the results.

Thirdly, the radical ideologies penetrated into the minds of the youths who joined seminaries outside and this issue heralded violence across the country. They were trained military tactics and were armed to launch operation against modernization and western products. This group was the real ideologue, on the grounds of being brainwashed, rather than mercenary fighters. Weighing their values in the state, they found themselves playing an effective role and welcomed by the conservative individuals. They remain adamantly opposed to modernization and continue their militancy without flexibility.

The extremists seem to be the most productive creature, which can hardly be rooted out. Their dogmatic frames of mind are handed out to their progenies rather than being buried with their bodies. They are supported to fertilize their toxic beliefs in the minds of simple teens and preteens.

The past decade of counterterrorism failure bespeaks of the same fact. The pregnant silence after the 9/11 attacks was a break for the Taliban to reorganize their ragtag groups so as to continue insurgency in a more equipped manner. Moreover, the seminaries outside the country are yet the hotbed of radical ideologies, which are futuristic potential threat to the Afghanistan's security, and have to be considered by the officials. Hence, these were the critical factors behind the security situation in Afghanistan.

Currently, the challenges, especially the rise in militancy, have slowed down the process of democratization in the country. The Afghans' long-standing ambition for peace and stability is interrupted by terrorist acts. In other words, the ideologues and political mercenaries still attempt to prevent from democratization. Is there any peaceful way left to channelize for democratic system and stabilize the country?

Suggesting peace negotiation seems no more effective. Afghans must learn from the past and prevent from going an endless and labyrinthine path - which leads to nowhere. The former president Hamid Karzai left no stone unturned to bring the Taliban militants to the table of negotiation, but all the efforts were in vain. He knocked on every door, as a result he traveled to Pakistan for 21 times to have her played a conciliatory role, released the Taliban militants to ingratiate himself and called them "discontented brothers". In 2008 Karzai even offered to provide security for the Taliban supreme leader, Mullah Omar, if he agreed to peace talks - this was not incentive enough.

The High Peace Council, which was established in 2010, was tasked with contacting the Taliban and convincing them to join the peace process. The members of High Peace Council (HPC) were making efforts days and nights in pursuit of brining Taliban's leaders on the table of negotiation. However, all the efforts met failure repeatedly. In spite of the government's efforts focused on re-integrating Taliban fighters, they did not have a reconciliation strategy.

On the other hand, when any Taliban's senior leaders evinced interest in peace talks, they were attacked by unknown armed men. As a result, 5 Taliban commanders, including Mullah Abdul Raqib and Mullah Noorullah Hotak, were shot dead for the intention of holding peace talks with Afghan officials. Moreover, Mutasim Aqa Jan, who led Dubai peace negotiation session, was denied by the Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid to have any links with Taliban. To put it succinctly, Taliban are not led by a central power and therefore unable to sit on the table of negotiation.

It would be naïve of us to repeat the archaic procedures for counterterrorism. We must have reached the political maturity after passing political ups and downs. Our nation will be able to establish democracy if they learn from the checkered history.



Unchecked Corruption Earned Us Infamy

By Asmatyari

Undeniably, Afghanistan's economy is the worst hit by consecutive quacks of corruption. Subsequent to putting the cabinet in place, an end to prevalent corruption will render one of the foremost challenges for both president and chief executive and the cabinet. However, accomplishment of significant tasks requires credible individuals hoisted for corresponding ministries, capable of ridding the departments out of calamities of corruption.

The rumors of partial prosecution case of multibillion dollar Kabul bank scandal diffused not, followed by Ministry of defense multimillion dollar scandal. The media reports unearthed, the ministry of defense officials plotted and executed a misappropriation of over \$100 million. This undoubtedly is a great deal of manipulation of position or authority and misuse of public property. The government must enforce its authority, inflicting stricter terms of punishment to those involved behind the plot, once are charged.

The National Unity Government (NUG) took the issue into consideration apparently whilst promising to closely investigate cases of corruption in government institutions and we know that at the moment corruption has expanded to government administrations including the Ministry of Defense (MoD) and others as per statement of Freshta Amini, a member of the Economic Commission at the House of Representatives. Following the rumors of allegations the President Ghani assigned a commission to investigate the agreements has presented its report to the president, and the president will make a decision based on the suggestions by the committee. However, there seems not any sign of government's interest in the aforesaid issues as weeks past couldn't crystallize the formation of authorized commission.

The commission reviewing the fuel contracts in the Ministry of Defense has confirmed the corruption to the amount of \$100 million in MoD contracts, but officials at the Fuel Importing Companies Organization said that based on the documents that they have received, the level of corruption is over \$200 million USD. Extensive corruption pertaining to the MoD's fuel contracts has seen people, including Hazrat Omer Zakhailwal come under suspicion as well as the senior MoD and other government officials.

Connecting the dots one assumes, without having sought the aids of concerned officials this plot would never have hatched.

We have to admit the core reason behind the failure to strengthen the backbone of Afghan economy is the severe security problems and deep-rooted corruption. It is anticipated the new government will work out a plan to eradicate this great menace. As the problem of security and corruption persist, there seems to be a declining chance of betterment, and people will still have to wait for actual prosperity.

Unluckily, the system of general amnesty to potential power abuser are chained fast to the ground, given number of influential personalities involved in money embezzlement from public offices, heinous crime against citizens and power misuse were given amnesty without being subjected to strict measures entailing answerability. This attitude of government had discouraged new investments with remnants intend-

ed to downsizing and withdrawing a dire omen for progress of country needs immediate reversal by practical measures. This implies that the expanding role of government in development has placed the bureaucracy in a monopolistic position and has enhanced the opportunities for unlimited administrative misappropriation.

A similar reservation is highlighted formerly, by Integrity Watch Afghanistan, unearthing New Kabul Bank also suffering financial losses. The former Kabul Bank plunged into deep crisis after a run on deposits in 2010 when reports surfaced \$935 million had been stolen from the bank by its chief executives and stakeholders. According to investigation of head of Integrity Watch Afghanistan the government had so far recovered about a third (\$228 million) of the \$977 million stolen money has been recovered, over the past five years. The recovered money included \$179 million in cash and the rest in form of properties the government had seized from the accused. Following the case the government has sentenced to jail for five years the two former heads of the bank, founder Sher Khan Feroz and former Chief Executive Haji Khalil Ferozi, who were convicted in the initial inquiry of taking \$810 million of the stolen money. Regrettably the head of Integrity Watch also declared the New Kabul Bank faced losses amounting to \$50 million and the losses had been on the increase.

This is a grave state of worsening affair that presses hard the already wrecked economy of Afghanistan and utter negligence of government to tackle the peril of corruption. This is an undeniable fact either government is unwilling or hapless before powerful power abusers. President Ghani had earlier avowed to re-open the inquiry into the theft from the bank, fulfilling a campaign promise to make fighting corruption a priority. Following that he has issued a presidential decree to prosecute the case but the concerned officials had done nothing till date. It's therefore the New Kabul Bank has also plunged into the depth of corruption. An identical apprehension is raised by Integrity Watch too.

The year's long war destroyed economic infrastructures completely and dragged Afghanistan towards annulment. No significant progress has been made albeit elongated international efforts to revive Afghanistan's economy improve the living standard of people and create greater job opportunities provided that the menace of corruption constantly depleted the rate of progress is minimized. This only happens when every penny is deemed public divine asset and must be used for the welfare of ordinary masses.

The ten-year international effort has failed to create job opportunities and millions of Afghans, today, are suffering the negative impacts of unemployment. The consistency of unemployment in the country is doing much to widen the gap between people and the government. Afghans, risking their lives, travel to other countries of the world to seek better living condition. In this way the work force of Afghanistan is utilized by other countries whilst Afghanistan itself is in dire need of reconstruction and development works. The first thing it can do is to root out corruption that seems to be aiding all sorts of crimes including insurgency, unemployment and trust deficits.

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For Saving Asia and Africa!

By Muhammad Rasool Shah

History of Iraq is a perfect example in order to understand the root causes of instability, violence and the resultant economic and social backwardness in a number of countries of the region. With the exception of the few, almost all the Muslim countries are facing the same problem. Iraq was part of Ottoman Empire till the First World War. During the Ottoman Empire, it was a country similar to other countries of the region. Majority of people belonged to agriculture and illiteracy, poverty and other problems were common among these countries. Industrial Revolution had not reached there and there were hardly any factories, except for those that existed in old times as well and where production was still carried out on old systems. At the same time, the West and America had almost solved their economic problems and the attention had diverted towards reforms in education, scientific innovations, military advancement, elections, rights of women, freedom of press and other important elements of a democratic government. In the same way, democracy had almost reached to the maturity and all its organs were functioning properly and the educated public made sure that all these organs functioned perfectly.

After WW1, the Ottoman Empire was broken down into pieces and distributed among the victorious nations. Iraq came under the control of Britain and was to be administered by this powerful nation of that time till 1932, according to the mandate of League of Nations. In 1921, the British imposed the Hashemite monarchy on Iraq and when they left the country in 1932, Iraq became an independent monarchy. But in fact, the Hashemite monarchy was considered as the puppet of Britain and they worked to safeguard the interests of Britain in return for the continuation of their rule. The discovery of massive oil reserves in Tikrit and other cities of Iraq only added to the power and magnificence of the ruling elite but did not bring any change to the actual condition of public that was suffering of poverty and lack of basic civic facilities. This gave rise to a general hatred against the monarchy and the foreign powers that continued their policy of interfering in Iraq for safeguarding their interests. This led to a series of bloody coups and power changes but none of them was stable. In 1958, General Abdul Karim Qassem overthrew the monarchy by killing the King and a large number of his family members. However, a group of military officers and Baath party members assassinated General Qassem in 1963. But soon the Baath party got divided into factions and the internal fighting brought an end to their government and President Arif got the control of the country. In 1968, a bloodless coup against President Arif brought an end to his government and country once again came into the hands of Baath party.

In similar circumstances, Saddam Hussein comes to scenario. The instabilities and abnormalities in actions and decisions of Saddam Hussein date back to his childhood. He was born of a poor family when his father worked as a poor peasant while his mother contributed to the family income by fortune-telling. Saddam was born orphan as his father had already died when he came to the world. His mother got married to another person and from here start the problems that left their permanent imprints on his personality. Saddam's stepfather continuously humiliated him and did not let him attend the school. It is the reason why, he had not started learning to read and write until

he was 10. However, his stepfather used to send him on petty criminal errands and in such a small age, Saddam used to carry an iron bar with him. Continuous insult, beating and lack of attention molded his personality in a way that he resorted to use of force in every single matter. As he did not have enough attention from his parents, he remained thirsty for this throughout his life and gave way to those who flattered him.

But Saddam's rise to power was not a coincidence. His uncle Khairallah Tulhah discovered the hidden abilities of Saddam and soon moved him to Baghdad. Before coming to the capital city, he had completed his primary education in his native city. His uncle was a military officer and strongly supported the idea of Arab Nationalism. Just like majority of Iraqis, he hated the Hashemite monarchy and the interference and influence of Britain in the internal affairs of Iraq. From his uncle, he not only inherited the love of Arab Nationalism but also got the thirst of rising to power.

His political career was not bad right from the beginning. He was willing to go to any extent and he first assassinated a local government official in order to exhibit his loyalty to his uncle. This proved that he could be trusted. Here, his childhood habits were coming handy. He was part of the team that made a failed attempt to assassinate General Qassem in 1959 and Saddam was wounded and sent to exile. He went to Cairo where he completed his high school and started university but it was not completed when he was called to Iraq after the assassination of General Qassem in 1963. After the revolution of 1968, he had become the second most important person in the country after President Bakr. In 1979, he grew so strong that he forced the president to resign in his favor and the control of country came into his hands. His rule continued until the US invasion of Iraq and in 2006, he was executed.

Ruling for such a long period was not easy so large number of people were executed, tortured and thousands more disappeared during the regime of Saddam. His time did bring some changes to the conditions of Iraqi people but overall, it was never going to be a long-lasting government as it was based on dictatorship and monarchy-style distribution of power among his family members.

More or less is the case with a large number of countries in the region. In Saudi Arabia, there is a monarchy and the government mostly strives for the preservation of the status-quo. Libya's monarchy-style dictatorship also came to an end, leaving the country in tatters. Syria, Lebanon, Sudan, Somalia, and many other countries in Asia and Europe are passing through the worst turmoil, full of bloodshed and violence. The reasons are almost the same for all. The presence of a ruling elite, the deprivation of people from education, and basic rights, interference of international powers and military generals and lack of concern to the maturity of democracy. All these have resulted to poor economic conditions and people are paying through the nose. It is the time the thinkers and scholars of the region must sit and devise strategy to make corrections to address the actual problems of these countries. In the same way, world powers must work to strengthen democracy and promote education and strengthen economy if they really want to save the world of destruction and spread prosperity to every corner of the world.

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