

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

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Reacting to the Socio-political Issues Responsibly

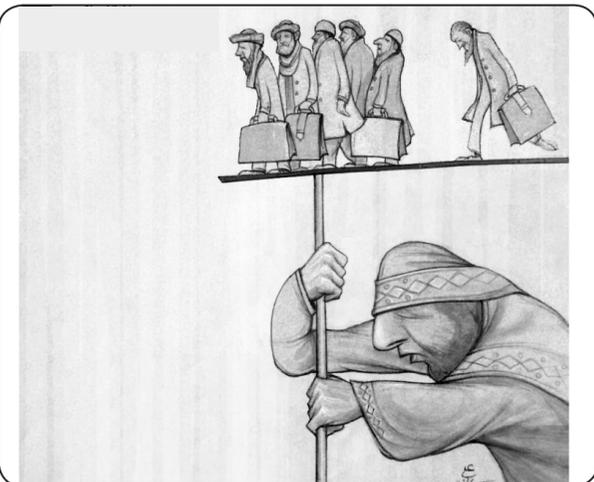
At this crucial juncture of history, it is imperative to study the nature of the disorder that has dominated our society and its reason. It is generally believed that politics and politicians are entirely responsible for the current disorder and chaos and such a belief is difficult to reject as politicians have not left any other choice. Their attitude and behaviour have made the people think so and at the same time it has defamed politics. However, this general belief tends to generalize the situation to a great extent and at the same time overshadows some of the important facts. Politics, as a matter of fact, is a social science and a sacred art. It is through politics that human beings can think of a society with a leadership, system and administration. Though defamed and corrupted to a certain extent, there is no other way out except than politics. The solution for the current chaos and disorder also lie within politics. At the same time, other people, other than the politicians also require feeling their responsibilities. If we analyze Afghan society, we can see that there are myriads of problems that we face. We are confronted with many economic, social and political issues and multiplied with that is the fact that we are not completely prepared to solve them. Years of wars and instability have further influenced our capacities to face the challenges. And then there is the menace of corruption, which like an anaconda has tightened itself around the society in such a way that it has no chance of escape. Extremism and terrorism have penetrated deep within the roots of our society and have been threatening our people to a great extent. Disorder, disturbance and chaos are building hurdles in front of the designs of our authorities to establish order, discipline and dignity. The current chaos is, to a certain extent, because of our ruling elite as everyone can observe that they because of their negligence and self-centred incentives have made politics a joke. They are, in the true sense of politics, answerable to both politics and the people. Politicians, in fact, are to serve the people, facilitate the people with their basic requirements, guide the nation, lead the nation towards a better system, solve the problems and issues and have the sense of responsibility. In our country, the politicians evade the people, fulfil their own requirements and demands, mislead the nation, never strive for political order and institutionalization, utilize the issues for their personal and group interests and do not have even slightest sense of responsibility.

On the other hand, because of the strategic importance of Afghanistan, it has been dominated by the international political games played by the world powers. In fact, imperialism blinded by extreme power has influenced the Afghan land to a large extent. "Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely," said by John Emerich, an English historian, politician and writer. And, this statement proves to be correct if we have a proper analysis of the contemporary international scenario. Few say that "Imperialism has died"; in fact, it has taken a new birth, it has been transformed in what is more scary. The capacity of imperialism to exercise power has been enhanced by the availability of advanced mechanisms. No land is far away from the imperialists and no one can avoid their influences. They are the decision-makers, they decide the destiny of the nations and they determine the course of world order. A little happens in the favour of what they dislike. They follow their interests in weaker countries in different ways. They can launch a direct war, influence the other countries through cultural dominance or affect their policies through aid and assistance.

However, blaming the other countries for all of the disorders and disturbances has been one of the policies of our political leaders to avoid responsibility. It also helps them create a sense of lethal enemy who is always ready to destroy us and who has nothing else to ponder upon except our extinction. And we fall prey to such ill intentions and get ready to believe such concepts as a result of our blind and fanatic patriotism. In fact, in such a way we become ripe to be utilized by them the way they want.

A little political understanding and prudence can make us understand the games that are basically played by international world and our own rulers. On some occasions, they make us be lost in the imaginations of an ideal society and on some others they slap us with the harsh realities to come back to the real world. What we understand is half-reality and half-lie, which is more dangerous than the whole-lie.

At the same time, it must not be forgotten that the understanding and attitude of the people have to be blamed to a certain extent as well for the chaos and disturbance in the society. If the rulers are not able to rule properly, they are also not able to understand their responsibilities and avoid performing them appropriately.



Afghanistan to Learn from Economic Development of China's Xinjiang

By: Hujjatullah Zia

No place tells the story of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) better in practice than China's Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region, bordering eight countries including Afghanistan, which has turned from a remote border region into a forefront for international logistics services. The operation of railroad logistics in Xinjiang started with only four international lines in May 2016. Now 19 lines are available, covering 24 cities of 17 Asia and European countries; 3,600 tons of cargo are handled per day. The transportation time of China-Europe freight trains has been cut from 22 days to 15 days with the improved schedule arrangement. The cost of rail freight is only 20 percent of the cost of moving cargo by air and it is three times quicker than shipping by sea. In short, the once windswept and mountainous route for horseback traders has now changed into a bustling hub of business and culture as 70 percent of westbound freight trains pass through it, with the roar of locomotives drowning out the howling wind.

Historically, Xinjiang was the bridge to link the transport of Eurasia Continent, the channel of exchanges of civilization, and the "Silk Road" that connected the civilizations of the ancient East and West. Moreover, Xinjiang was the gateway of Chinese civilization opening to the West.

Since Xinjiang is rich in wind power, the gradually accelerated wind power construction has greatly pushed forward the development of Xinjiang's wind power equipment manufacturing.

Similarly, Xinjiang has profound cultural accumulations which is reflected in rich ethnic customs and famous historic and cultural sites. Having a media tour in Xinjiang themed "The Core Zone (Xinjiang) of the 'Silk Road Economic Belt' Media Event", I have visited Museum of Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, which is a window to scratch the surface of Xinjiang's ancient monuments and cultural relics. Explaining China's history, an excerpt of a script attached on the Museum's wall read, "Tang Dynasty [founded in 618] also enhanced frequent exchanges with the Central Asian, West Asian and European countries, which formed the economic and cultural prosperity of China's feudal society, so the history of the Western Regions entered a new era".

It is self-evident that the ancient Silk Road has been one of the oldest and longest commercial routes for exchanging commercial goods, knowledge, and culture of humankind that linked some of the biggest civilizations of the world, namely,

China, India, Greece, Buddhism and Islamic Cultures to one another.

Islamic culture is seen widely in Xinjiang, which is Muslim dominated region. Briefing delegates from some 30 media in Islamic Institute of Xinjiang, built by Chinese government in 2017, Tumaniyaz, the President of the Institute, said that the Institute had teaching building, administration building, library, and indoor stadium and eight branches had been operating under the Institute with the capacity of receiving 3,000 students. He added that Chinese culture and history and religious knowledge, including Holy Quran and Hadiths, were taught in the institute. To my unmitigated surprise, students could recite Holy Quran and speak Arabic Language. Students were also paid about RMB 4,000 to 8,000 per year, the President said.

Similarly, the Buddhist culture is widely tangible across China, mainly in Gansu province, a sister city to Afghan province of Bamyan. I vividly remember when I visited Giant Buddha and Mount Emei Temple in Leshan City, Sichuan province of China, as well as Mogao Caves in Gansu province.

To put it in other words, the Silk Road has been a route for not only commercial exchanges but also cultural and people-to-people exchanges. Both tangible and intangible culture has been spread across China through ancient Silk Road, which is intended to be revitalized in the frame of the Silk Road Economic Belt and 21st Century Maritime Silk Road, known shortly as 'the Belt and Road Initiative'.

Xinjiang, which borders Afghanistan province of Badakhshan, has much in common with Afghanistan. For example, if you visit Aksu City, you will see very similar food to that of Afghanistan. It is also very rich in terms of agricultural product, mostly fruit, similar to many provinces of Afghanistan.

Since Afghanistan has joined the BRI, it has to extend its relation with China so as to pursue mutual benefit, not only in terms of trade, but also knowledge and culture. It is a highly appropriate saying which goes in Chinese that if you want to develop, you need to build road first, indicating that connectivity plays the best role in the development of a nation and country. Thus, as China is ready to share the fruit of its development with the world, including its neighboring country Afghanistan, we need to learn from China.

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BRI Will Clear Doubts as it Progresses

By: Pan Yixuan, Adapted from China Daily

Editor's Note: Doubts have again been raised over the Belt and Road Initiative's goals, with some calling it a "debt trap" for participating countries and China's "geopolitical expansion tool". Why are anti-China elements using such ploys to malign China? And will they see reason once the Belt and Road Initiative starts yielding fruitful results for the participating countries? Two experts share their views on the issue with China Daily's Pan Yixuan. Excerpts follow:

BRI's aim is peaceful development for all

Under the Belt and Road Initiative framework, China wants to share its development experiences with other countries and improve connectivity between Asia and Europe and Africa. China greatly benefited from infrastructure construction, and while sharing this experience with other countries, it aims to work with them to enhance the complementarity between the Belt and Road Initiative and their development plans to strengthen global cooperation.

Many countries that need to build or improve infrastructure networks may not get loans from international financial organizations because of various reasons, including uncertainty of repayment and supposedly poor environmental protection rules. So when China provided such countries with loans-including Pakistan which suffers from electricity shortage owing to the lack of power plants-to help them solve their infrastructure problems, some observers and advanced countries started seeing red.

China's cooperation with Central and South American countries, Panama for instance-which the United States considers China's strategy to enter its "backyard"-is a good example of a natural partnership with complementary resources. In such win-win cooperation, China makes the best use of its advantages in infrastructure construction to help its partner countries build the industries needed to better utilize their rich natural resources and, in the process, lays a solid foundation for further cooperation.

Some countries cannot accept the fact that China's State-owned enterprises account for the majority of Chinese large infrastructure projects overseas and therefore see the Belt

and Road Initiative as a challenge to their economic prospects. They keep on alleging that the BRI is a "debt trap" for participating countries so as to force China to lower the proportion of its SOEs' investment in overseas projects. But despite such claims and counterclaims, the Belt and Road Initiative will gather pace with the passage of time.

China, meanwhile, should increase communication with other countries, and keep explaining to them its goals so they can understand that the BRI's aim is peaceful development for all.

Initiative for the benefit of all participating parties

Based on the principle of achieving shared growth through discussions and collaboration, the Belt and Road Initiative is ideal for expanded global cooperation. No wonder the 71st United Nations General Assembly incorporated the Belt and Road Initiative into its resolution in 2016, and the UN Security Council called on all parties to participate in the initiative. The BRI explores multilateral cooperation, yet some countries doubt its aims and objectives. By boosting development in many places in the past years, the BRI projects have helped dispel fears that the initiative is a "debt trap" for participating countries.

That there is still a lot of room for the BRI to improve goes without saying. So the second Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation to be held in Beijing later this month should focus on improving BRI projects, including paying greater attention to sustainable development, environmental protection, and better evaluation of and arrangement for future projects.

With BRI projects producing more positive results for the participating countries, the world, including China's detractors, will better understand that its aim is to build a better platform for multilateral cooperation. True, China proposed the Belt and Road Initiative, but it is for the benefit of all the participating parties, as its objective is to promote co-development.

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