

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



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The Political Games

In Afghanistan, politics has turned into a notorious profession. People do not consider it honorable and do not have a positive opinion about the politicians and their activities. Though politicians have one of the most important responsibilities of taking care of the affairs of the state and, therefore, should have an honorable position in the society; they are thought to be treacherous and difficult to believe. Recently, the activities of the present government in particular and politicians in general have made the people lose their confidence on politics.

They have started believing that the current political system would not heal their wounds and address their issues. This has also resulted in depreciation of legitimacy of the government and the political leaders, which is something very alarming and may result in chaos and anarchy in the times to come. And, Afghanistan that needs to solve most of its issues through political means, cannot afford to face such a scenario.

One of the basic reasons that politics has been ridiculed is the performance and the attitude of the politicians. Like all the other fields of life, it is also important in politics that the politicians must have the basic understanding of politics or even should have the formal education in this regard as it is the age of specialization.

Unfortunately, that is not the case - today those people become politicians who have financial support, enjoy good reputation in the society, belong to the elite or the authoritative strata of the society or are the landlords or belong to different sorts of mafia.

They join politics only to maintain their status in the society or to gain power so as to achieve their personal goals. They, in fact, have no consideration for human welfare and betterment.

Though they are dependent on people for favor, they do not know how to respond to the people. They do not understand their basic problems and do not have any sort of familiarity with the dynamics of politics and political changes. With such a scenario at hand, it is very much possible that politics is further humiliated and degraded in our society.

It can be said without a tinge of doubt that politicians have not been very much skilled in their jobs and they have made politics a filthy business. Though we have myriads of problems, the politicians instead of solving those problems tend to pursue their own gains. The socio-political circumstances in Afghanistan are clear to all.

There are various troubles we are experiencing. We are facing different social, economic and political challenges and the fact is that we are not prepared at all to overcome them.

Years of wars and instability have further decreased our abilities to overcome these challenges. Along with these problems, there is corruption, which has completely dominated our administrative system. Extremism and terrorism have become an integral part of our society and our people are being threatened to a large extent. Instability and chaos are creating hurdles in the way to establish order, stability and sustainability.

The current chaos is, no doubt, because of our politicians as everyone can experience that they have made politics a mockery. They, in the true sense of politics, are answerable to both the system and the people, but that is not the case in our society.

Politicians are to serve the people, facilitate the people with their rudimentary requirements, lead the nation towards stability and welfare, solve the issues and fulfill their responsibilities as much as possible. Unluckily in our case, the politicians elude the people, pursue their own benefits, mislead the nation, never work for political order, use the issues for their political interests and do not have sense of responsibility.

At the same time, blaming the other countries for the disorders and disturbances has been one of the tactics of our political leaders to dodge the attention of the people from their own weaknesses. Unfortunately, we become the victims to such intentions and get prepared to believe such ideas as a result of our blind patriotism. As a matter of fact, in such a way we are ripe to be used by them the way they would like.

It is important to note that a little political cognizance can make us comprehend the games that are being played by our politicians. On certain instances they make us imagine of an ideal society and on other they smack us with the unkind reality to return to the practical world. In such a scenario we neither understand the reality nor the falsehood. It must be kept in consideration that the reaction and attitude of the people have to be considered liable as well for the prevailing chaos and commotion in the society.

If the politicians are not able to govern appropriately, they are also not able to fulfill their responsibilities and understand the trickery of the politicians. It is really essential for them to remain vigilant and raise voice against such attitude of the politicians.



Wars in North should be Taken Serious

By Mohammad Sarwar Jawadi

Seeking news, reports, officials' statements, newspapers and social media, I have found out no more than the pain and shouts of some individuals on Facebook and reports in foreign media about the current war in Afghanistan's northeast. It reflects two facts: either one does not bother himself to write a piece for underestimating this war or the military significance of this area has not been realized. The catastrophic wars, which have destroyed homes, in several parts of the country come as political leaders are haggling and wrangling over gaining power in central government and speak surprising words. Similarly, the northern political leader are highly depressed. Meanwhile, one of the top controversial state's opponents have been escorted with military convoys, including air and ground armored vehicles, while entering Kabul and welcomed by the National Unity Government (NUG) and called a step towards peace process.

The war was started in Salang and spread to Baghlan, Kunduz, Khaja-Bahauddin, Darqad, Ashkashm and Zeibak close to Wakhan. The enemy ridicules the officials and those claiming resistance against the Taliban.

In recent years, the war has been transferred to the north which will be a new game for those who trigger and engineer the war. Afghan government should adopt a wise and careful stance regarding this politics and does not allow them to spread the war in every nook and cranny of the country. War will burn the nation, if it breaks out in any parts of the country. War has painted the eastern and southern parts of the country with the blood of our youths. If a Pashtun's arm was amputated in Helmand, a Hazara's leg was cut in Kandahar, too, and so on.

The Taliban, along with other terrorist groups, are believed to change the geography of the war through destabilizing north so as to provide a relative peace for the areas close to Pakistan. Political pundits believe that insurgents seek to continue war with the support of regional intelligence. They, however, dream on since the main players widen the realm of insecurity and the ground for their game. In short, the players' aim is to burn the center amidst war and violence. The voice of people about nightly suspicious flights and helicopters and emergence of unknown armed individuals in mountains and deserts in north fell on deaf ears. The high-ranking northern officials, who were rewarded for fighting against the Taliban, neglected this event for urging for gaining power or land in return for their brave fighting. Perhaps, they were seeking power in Kabul or were engaged in discord and joined different groups for competing against one another. The aforementioned factors paved the ground for the Taliban to compound their militancy through assassinating jihadi leaders and stoking sectarian, factional and linguistic tensions. Moreover, they fished in the troubled waters through revealing moral and administrative corruptions, the usurpation of lands, and violation of people's dignity with impunity mostly carried out by local officials. Enemy's strategic points for destabilizing the country are below:

Political Maneuvering Zone

Strengthening the foundations of governance; mobilizing the state's human resources in all areas including economy, natural resources, business, borders, underground developments which have connected Afghanistan with regional and global trading route and put the country under the focus of foreign investors. Afghanistan will be undermined in these areas with escalated insurgency and widen the enemy's political maneuvering zone.

Northern mines: the government still does not have full control over some mines in the north mainly in Badakhshan. Those mines are exploited and used by local officials supported by high-ranking officials of the central government. War and violence will smooth the path for such uses.

Control of Some Ports

Some ports located in Badakhshan, Takhar and Kunduz are one of the resources of outcome for anti-government groups. The terrorist groups try continuously to gain the financial resources. Hence, they have been drawn to north to provide their financial needs.

Escalating Ethnic Conflicts

The Taliban's activity in north will escalate ethnic conflicts. The Taliban's ethnic identity will outweigh their terrorist, ideological and mercenary nature with the extension of battle field. The northern war will, on the one hand, highlight the ethnic alignment and, on the other hand, will give the Taliban the opportunity to recruit from east and south more than ever.

Recruitment from Neighboring Countries

a large number of our neighboring countries' citizens live in the north. Their presence in the north and having battlefields in the border of our northern neighbors will give the opportunity to recruit from Middle East and enable them to orchestrate for destabilizing those countries located there. The presence and empowerment of terrorists in north will involve other countries in civil unrests. Earlier NATO and US had military presence there. However, the Syrian incident indicates this fact that the terrorists' presence in north will pave the ground for Russia and China's interference. Currently, Ashkashm, Zibak, Darqad and Kunduz have been changed into battlefields. If such places fall to the Taliban's control, Chetral, which was the terrorists' former safe haven, will also join. Chetral is somehow far from Tajikistan's control with mountainous borders and will be counted a threat to China's border considering the rebellious inclination in Kashghar and its surroundings.

The extension of instability in northeast: considering the record of extreme insecurity in the northwest (Faryab and Badghis), the extension of conflicts in northeast will make the crises of war uncontrollable.

Hence, a vast and an immediate mechanism should be adopted in eliminating war in the north. In addition, this opportunity should not be provided that a number of individuals arm people and organize battlefields under the pretext of combating terrorism. Such possibilities are not improbable and the formation of irresponsible armed groups will be no less dangerous than terrorism.

Peace Remains Elusive

By Hujjatullah Zia

Despite peace agreement signed between Afghan government and Hezb-e-Islami Afghanistan (HIA) - mostly known as Hezb-e-Islami Gulbuddin - in September 2016, the insurgency did not decline. After the winter lull, Afghan soldiers sustained great casualties. Violence and militancy have lingered for more than a decade inflicting heavy casualties upon Afghan civilians and soldiers. The Taliban fighters continue their acts of terror regardless of national and international condemnations. The clerics called this war inhuman and against Islam. Calling the Taliban to join peace process, HIA's leader Gulbuddin Hekmatyar also said in his recent statement that the Taliban's war had no legitimacy.

Afghan jihadi leaders are backing the post-Taliban government which was established on the basis of democracy. Following the 9/11 attack that led to the fall of the Taliban's regime, Afghan Loya Jirga (Grand National Assembly) approved a constitution based on Islamic tenets, cultural and democratic values. In this constitution, human rights and dignity are considered inviolable and inalienable and there is no discriminations against Afghans regardless of their race, color and creed. In Loya Jirga, people's representatives, jihadi leaders, notable clerics and high-ranking officials had active part so as to approve it in accordance with religious tenets, sharia, and Afghanistan's cultural standard.

It is said in article 3, "No law shall contravene the tenets and provisions of the holy religion of Islam in Afghanistan." Thus, the constitution respect religious sharia and fundamental rights of mankind. The current government has been elected by people's direct votes although lacked transparency. The Taliban's inhuman practices such as killing non-combatants, including women and children, and attacking Muslims in mosques (Muslims' sacred place) while offering prayer, destroying schools and infrastructures, etc. are supported neither by Islam nor by a sound mind.

In other words, the Taliban's ideology, which allows the cruel practices, is believed to originate from lack of knowledge and men's megalomania. Nothing is sacred for the Taliban, including the rights, dignity or blood of mankind or holy places or books. Therefore, a high-ranking jihadi leader and cleric Abdul Rab Rasul Syyaf has constantly condemned the Taliban's war and actions challenging them to hold a discussion in this regard with the presence of media. Nonetheless, the Taliban made abortive attempt to kill him.

In addition, the former jihadi leader Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, who entered Kabul on Thursday, May 4, called the Taliban's war illegitimate. Hekmatyar, who returned to Afghanistan

after 20 years living in exile, urged the Taliban elements to stop violence and bloodshed. Hekmatyar's men were also involved in militancy against the government and nation. Now he has made peace with the government and seeks to have a share in the government's body.

Although the peace accord with HIA has not mitigated the militancy, it has been deemed a great outcome for Afghan government after the establishment of High Peace Council (HPC). The Taliban condemned Hekmatyar's agreement through social media and continue their insurgency.

On the other hand, a number of Afghan people staged a demonstration against Hekmatyar on Friday when he had a speech in a sport stadium in Kabul. The demonstrators were shouting for justice and for Hekmatyar's trial.

Perhaps the presence of Hekmatyar in the government's body will led to some political tensions. His political opponents held key positions in the government within the 20 years of Hekmatyar's absence. Now there are some officials in the state's apparatus who oppose him indirectly. Similarly, HIA's leader talk implicitly against his opponents. To think deeply, this agreement is not really an achievement for the HPC, since it cannot reduce the challenges.

It is believed that the Taliban is neither a political party nor a religious group but rebellious fighters who have shed streams of blood and continue to do so. Signing peace with the Taliban will be in conflict with the international law because they were involved in massacres. Nevertheless, there will be no other shorter way to put an end to the protracted war. Following the abortive "war on terror" and withdrawal of foreign forces, the counterinsurgency might not have been as strong as before, for there was lack of military equipment. In brief, the imposed war on Afghanistan was hoped to be ended with imposed peace agreement.

Afghan nation is exhausted from war and violence. It is self-explanatory that war has no legitimacy in Afghanistan whoever is involved in. Warring parties are fighting against an Islamic and democratic country and killing innocent people. Although the legitimacy of peace agreement is also under question, it should be signed for being the only viable way for peace. Human rights are highly significant to be protected in one way or another.

Peace agreement with warring parties is hoped to bring in security and protect people's basic rights. Government overlooks the dark past of armed groups calling them to hold negotiation for providing a bright future for the nation, but peace still remains elusive.

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