

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



May 13, 2017

Are we Free to Have Freedom?

Though today human beings are born within societies that have their rules and regulations and bound them in so many ways; yet there is always an urge among human beings to be free and to be out of the control of the restrictions that are imposed upon them. The best society is born when both these forces balance each other.

There is no possibility that a person should be totally free, while so many restrictions also create a suffocating environment. Therefore, a balanced society, wherein a person at least has certain freedom to make choices for himself, is the need of the time.

It is also imperative for the society as a whole to provide opportunities to the people to practice certain liberties; otherwise, the people would not respect the existence of the society.

Human beings have not created political and social order to lose their freedom; rather their freedoms depend on the proper functioning of the society.

How could a person value a society where none of his wishes is valued? Where he has to spend his life by following the orders of others? No one would like to follow those rules and regulations willingly, which are formed without his involvement and are forcefully implemented on him.

He would definitely question the authority of those who impose their decisions on others. He would ask who has given them the right to do so. No one among us has been sent from the sky and all of us have the same relation with the time and space.

It is not right if some of the people start considering themselves superior to others as all belong to the same earth and live through the same time.

Moreover, the individuals within a society would not be demanding any sort of freedom if all the inhabitants of the society had the same level of liberty. If the all could choose only what the society offered them. But that is not the case.

There are few who have many choices available for them and they can easily use the best for themselves. They possess most of the wealth, luxuries and comforts while others can only dream about them. In such a world, it is the right of every individuals to question the system that provides them nothing except misery and demand freedom of choice for themselves.

If a person is not able to choose an option from amongst different choices, he, in fact, does not exist. And, if he is free but he has sold his right of decision to someone else, it means he has lost himself willingly. While, he has lost himself, he does not have the right to live life with all its beauties. He, actually, resembles a nonliving being, that is lying uselessly on the face of earth without contributing anything positive to it.

Both for the personal growth and the betterment of the society, it is vital that the individuals should have a certain level of freedom of choice. If people are given such a right, they would definitely choose the best for themselves and attain bliss and contentment which would ultimately result in the development of the whole society. However, today's societies have failed to do so.

Though today most of the societies chant the slogans of democracy, they have failed to implement it in true sense.

Democracy, at least ideally, stands for the freedom of thought, expression and decision, but today's men living in democratic societies are deprived of their choices. They are enslaved in the invisible chains of deterministic systems.

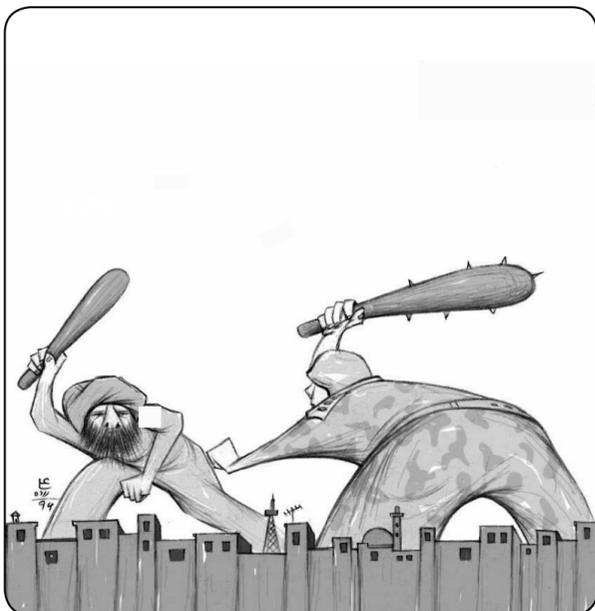
In backward democracies, like the one in our country, the decision are made only by few authoritative people who seem to have great freedom and the choice that is given to the people through the right to vote is also a fake one. There are many who cannot cast their votes and many others who do not know even the concept of casting votes. Moreover, it is not always the votes of the people that decide who should be the rulers.

As a matter of fact most of the people are only free to choose between the bad and worse. They either have to suffer extreme poverty or opt for a criminal life.

They, on one hand, have the option to live a pathetic life or welcome the untimely death.

Is it really democratic? Is it really a choice, wherein you are given a limited set of options to choose from when none of the choices is better than the other? On the other hand people are not encouraged to choose; they are taught to compromise with what they have. Through different social institutions they are conditioned to live a life they are dictated to live.

Parents, teachers and guides all have failed to teach the children and the students the capability to choose and to choose rightly.



BRF Promotes Win-win Cooperation for China and Afghanistan

By Yaojing

Exclusive for the Daily Outlook

China will host the Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation (BRF) in Beijing from 14 to 15 May 2017, with the aim of discussing ways to address problems of global and regional economy and pushing the Belt and Road Initiative (Initiative) to better benefit the people in all countries.

The important Initiative, put forward by Chinese President Xi Jinping in 2013, aims to realize complementarity of advantages, synergy of development strategies and common progress for participating countries by closer international cooperation. Over the past three years and more, the Initiative, focused on economic cooperation especially infrastructure construction, is commonly welcomed and actively joined by all parties including Afghanistan, for it goes in tandem with the development prospects of the countries and the region alongside the Silk Road Route, boosts regional investment and domestic demand, increases job opportunities and reduces poverty, promotes development level of the whole region. At present, more than 100 countries and international organizations have joined the Initiative, among which more than 40 have signed cooperation agreements with China.

As a hub connecting central, south and west Asia, Afghanistan enjoys an important geological advantage and owns huge development potentials. Afghanistan is not only a traditional neighbor of China but also an important partner along with the Initiative. Up to now, China and Afghanistan have achieved positive results under the Initiative.

1- Policy Coordination.

China is willing to coordinate strategies and policies on economic development with Afghanistan, support Afghanistan's national development strategy and its participating in regional cooperation. The two countries have signed the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Jointly Building the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road between China and Afghanistan. From last year, there has been more than 20 minister-level delegations which visited each other and held policy-level discussions.

2- Facilities Connectivity.

The two sides have signed MoU on Cooperation in Information Technology & Telecommunication, which prioritizes the China-Afghanistan cross-border fiber optic project. China is willing to help Afghanistan with formulating infrastructure development plan, enhancing connectivity with regional countries around, and also would like to strengthen cooperation with Afghanistan on the construction of China-Kyrgyzstan-Tajikistan-Afghanistan-Iran railway and etc. China supports Afghanistan to expand its infrastructural connectivity with its neighbors in south, central and west Asia.

3- Unimpeded Trade

A direct flight from Kabul to Urumqi has been resumed, and the first ever freight train between China and Afghanistan has started. Necessary procedures have been completed for China to import saffron from Afghanistan. Negotiations for importing pomegranate, dry fruits and marble from Afghanistan are underway.

Last year, Sino-Afghan bilateral trade volume reached close to US\$1.1 billion. China remains the third largest trading partner and the largest source country of investment to Afghanistan. In recent years, Chinese companies with good reputation and capacity, have expanded investment in Afghanistan and contributed to the development of local economy and society.

4- Financial Integration

The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank approved the membership for Afghanistan in March 2017. China would like to take up this opportunity to strengthen bilateral and multilateral financial cooperation with Afghanistan. The Silk Road Fund and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization Development Bank under construction can also provide financial support for Afghanistan's economic and social development in the future.

5- People-to-People Bonds

China and Afghanistan consistently promote bilateral exchange in the fields of congress, culture, education, think-tank, media and etc. The traditional friendship between the two nations has further deepened in recent years. Since 2016, the Chinese Government has successfully invited more than 50 Afghan delegations to visit China. At present, China trains about 1,000 professionals and provides 150 scholarships for Afghanistan annually, which have strengthened our mutual understanding and trust.

The BRF will be the highest-level forum under the Initiative since its launching over three years ago, and will focus on reviewing progresses and planning ahead, showcasing important early harvest outcomes, further building consensus for cooperation, discussing major cooperation measures in the future and working to advance a cooperation for win-win outcomes.

A high level official delegation from Afghanistan will also participate in the Forum and discuss how to jointly build the Initiative with representatives from other countries.

The Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation (BRF) has great significance for China and Afghanistan in jointly building the Initiative.

We hope Afghanistan can play an important role and be transformed into an important hub of connectivity and center of cooperation in the region, and believe that our bilateral relationship will be well nurtured during the process of jointly building of the Initiative.

Yaojing is the current Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to Afghanistan.

The Right to Agricultural Technology

By Henry I. Miller

In the 1960s, when biologist Paul Ehrlich was predicting mass starvation due to rapid population growth, plant breeder Norman Borlaug was developing the new crops and approaches to agriculture that would become mainstays of the Green Revolution. Those advances, along with other innovations in agricultural technology, are credited with preventing more than a billion deaths from starvation and improving the nutrition of the billions more people alive today. Yet some seem eager to roll back these gains.

Beyond saving lives, the Green Revolution saved the environment from massive despoliation. According to a Stanford University study, since 1961, modern agricultural technology has reduced greenhouse-gas emissions significantly, even as it has led to increases in net crop yields.

It has also spared the equivalent of three Amazon rainforests - or double the area of the 48 contiguous US states - from having to be cleared of trees and plowed up for farmland. Genetically engineered crops, for their part, have reduced the use of environmentally damaging pesticides by 581 million kilograms (1.28 billion pounds), or 18.5%, cumulatively since 1996.

Surprisingly, many environmentalists are more likely to condemn these developments than they are to embrace them, promoting instead a return to inefficient, low-yield approaches. Included in the so-called agroecology that they advocate is primitive "peasant agriculture," which, by lowering the yields and resilience of crops, undermines food security and leads to higher rates of starvation and malnutrition.

Promoting that lunacy, the United Nations Human Rights Council recently published a report by Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food Hilal Elver that called for a global agroecology regime, including a new global treaty to regulate and reduce the use of pesticides and genetic engineering, which it labeled human-rights violations.

The UNHRC - a body that includes such stalwart defenders of human rights as China, Cuba, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and Venezuela - usually satisfies itself by bashing Israel. But in 2000, at the Cuban government's urging, it created the post of special rapporteur on the right to food. Befitting the UNHRC's absurd composition, the first person to fill the position, the Swiss sociologist Jean Ziegler, was the co-founder and a recipient of the Muammar al-Qaddafi International Human Rights Prize.

For her part, Elver has, according to UN Watch, cited works that claim the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks were orchestrated by the United States government to justify its war on Muslims. Elver's position on food reflects the same para-

noid mindset. She opposes "industrial food production" and trade liberalization, and frequently collaborates with Greenpeace and other radical environmentalists.

Much of Elver's new UNHRC report parrots the delusional musings of organic-industry-funded nongovernmental organizations. It blames agricultural innovations like pesticides for "destabilizing the ecosystem" and claims that they are unnecessary to increase crop yields.

This all might be dismissed as simply more misguided UN activism. But it is just one element of a broader and more consequential effort by global NGOs, together with allies in the European Union, to advance an agroecology model, in which critical farm inputs, including pesticides and genetically engineered crop plants, are prohibited. That agenda is now being promoted through a vast network of UN agencies and programs, as well as international treaties and agreements, such as the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Codex Alimentarius Commission, and the International Agency on Research on Cancer.

The potential damage of this effort is difficult to overstate. The UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (which hasn't yet completely succumbed to radical activists) estimates that, without pesticides, farmers would lose up to 80% of their harvests to insects, disease, and weeds. (Consider, for example, the impact of the fall armyworm, which, in the last 18 months alone, has devastated maize crops across much of Sub-Saharan Africa.) Developing countries are particularly vulnerable to radical regulatory regimes, because foreign aid is often contingent on compliance with them, though they can also reshape agriculture in the developed world, not least in the EU.

Millions of smallholder farmers in the developing world need crop protection. When they lack access to herbicides, for example, they must weed their plots by hand. This is literally backbreaking labor: to weed a one-hectare plot, farmers - usually women and children - have to walk ten kilometers (6.2 miles) in a stooped position.

Over time, this produces painful and permanent spinal injuries. Indeed, that is why the state of California outlawed hand-weeding by agricultural workers in 2004, though an exception was made for organic farms, precisely because they refuse to use herbicides. Depriving developing countries of more efficient and sustainable approaches to agriculture relegates them to poverty and denies them food security. That is the real human-rights violation. (Courtesy Project Syndicate)

Henry I. Miller is Wesson Fellow in Scientific Philosophy and Public Policy at Stanford University's Hoover Institution. He was the founding director of the Office of Biotechnology at the US Food and Drug Administration.



Chairman / Editor-in-Chief: Moh. Reza Huwaida

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.