

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



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Extremism Will Lead to Terrorism

It is really difficult to ignore the severity of the disaster introduced by extremism and terrorism in today's world. In fact, extremism and terrorism are reciprocal and have badly influenced all the norms and values of human society and have marked a dreadful stigma on the prominence and significance of human beings. A glance at human history portrays that so far millions of the people have been exterminated. Most of these exterminations has been carried out by the terrorist and extremist groups, which have strong relations with different human groups.

Modern societies believe that they sacrifice a lot to bring transparent changes in the third world countries. They claim that they support the underprivileged people to modernize and bring peacefulness and success among them, but there are many people who do not favor this because their minds are restricted to the imprisonment of radicalism and religious torture cells where our thousands of young people have been disgustingly pushed in the deep valley of illiteracy, obliviousness and savagery. They are bound to be confined to their wells as they do not have the capacity to see and think out of it. Their limited attitude, which is basically nourished through their habituation, finds nothing more than a single straight line that they have to follow. They are, as a matter of fact, the blinds with the eyesight and the brainless with the brains. It is no more a secret that the coldhearted and inhumane extremists subdue the people with the extremist ideas supported by tribal customs and religious traditions; they mistreat the devotion and belief of the people.

So far, plenty of guiltless and impartial masses have been killed; the decency of the sacred places has been ruined with suicide attacks; unimaginable cruelty on women and children have been made, and regrettably even holy Quran has been used and that in our own country to plant a bomb. Hence, isn't it the real face of extremism, savagery and of course terrorism? The terrorists and extremist don't have any true and loving faith and religion but they have their specific goals and desires and even do not vacillate to utilize the sacred religion for their inhuman and wicked desires.

It can be observed that nowadays the extremists by the dint of their violent attitude have attracted the attention of everybody towards them; most of them are purely liable for every kind of exploitation and destruction. Particularly the Islamic countries have been rebuked for such violence and carnages. Mostly, the Islamic militants have been called terrorists. What is the real reason? The main reason obvious and that is the fact that the extremists are involved in the massacre of innumerable people in Syria, Libya, Egypt, Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan. It is pretty sure that extremism is the founding stone of terrorism and in all the countries mentioned above the people have been displaying their extremism in a violent manner. They have been tricked in the name of religion and they fail to use their minds to recognize what they are trained. They only follow blindly the teachings and take the worst possible actions.

There are some so-called clergies who want to mask the fact by claiming that extremism may lead the humanity towards the divine exaltation, nevertheless they deliberately disregard the spirits of humanity. We must know their primitive practices and frustrated religious and tribal system with their outdated and ill-intended teachings that are nothing except mistreating the human beings.

Nowadays we can effortlessly find out the melancholies and insecure-circumstances which are unquestionably the eventual aftermaths of extremism. Currently the reputation and integrity of our religion and civilization are in immense danger just because of extremism. And the approach that is established in the minds of most of the people is really a matter of worry; therefore, it is necessary to protest against this ignorance, which has caused us inflexible and distressing attitude. We are caught in the worst kind of quagmire of extremism and seemingly we do not have any way of getting out of it. The more we try to get out of it, the more we sink into it. We actually need to know that the way we are making efforts is erroneous and we require doing something else in order to get out of it. We need to comprehend this crystal clear fact that extremism has rewarded us the demeaning gift of terrorism, which is, without a tinge of doubt, intolerable for every sensible, literate and human-loving person. Because those who love peace and tranquility, they always support moderation and tolerance. Extremism in any way or form can never lead to a balanced and peace-loving society. We have experienced this fact and by now we should have learnt valuable lessons in this regard. However, it is never too late; therefore, we still have time to mend ourselves.



Will New Moves End the Complexities Between Afghanistan and Pakistan?

By Mohammad Zahir Akbari

Though Afghanistan and Pakistan has been struggling to end the ongoing conflicts between the two countries but never resulted to a practical outcome. Pakistani officials including the top authorities welcomed Ghani's vision for peace and reconciliation in Afghanistan and his offer of peace talks to the Taliban militants. Both parts described terrorism as "a common enemy" and "agreed not to allow their soils to be used for anti-state activities against each other. While in practice, insecurity has been increasing and bombing also continued in Afghan provinces bordered with Pakistan. In response to this, Pakistan's Foreign Ministry always rejected the allegation as baseless and was justified that operations had been conducted against originally Afghanistan-based militant groups on the Pakistani side of the border, not the Afghan side. As a result, the blame game caused a lot of hatreds and complexity between the two countries, even effected the daily exports and imports of small or large businesses between people of two countries.

It was articulated by the President of Afghanistan that Pakistan is in an unannounced war with Afghanistan which means that peace with the Taliban is not possible without peace with Pakistan; initially, we need to resolve our fundamental issues with Pakistan, then with the Taliban and other insurgent groups. Because these groups are blamed for receiving orders from the intelligence circles of that country and that's why they cannot join the peace process until they are allowed. Thus, Pakistan was accused by other national and international stakeholders for not being honest in fighting against terrorist and also in relationship with Afghanistan; they divide terrorism into good and bad, targeting only those groups that are hostile to the Pakistani government but those groups that targets Afghanistan are supported.

Therefore, Pakistan has been increasingly pressured by diplomacy and the volume of US aid has fallen to a great extent, and it will be too costly for Pakistan. After formulating a new strategy by the United States and the European Union, the authorities of these countries clearly criticize Pakistan's actions on terrorism. America, but has taken a more explicit and sharp reaction to Pakistan and has warned the authorities that the United States can no longer tolerate Pakistan's dual battles. However, Pakistan has been trying to shape a new coalition with Russia and Iran in the region for a year and to establish a wider economic relationship with its strategic partner, China.

Following the past ups and downs, on Monday, Afghanistan and Pakistan finalized the Afghanistan Pakistan Action Plan for Peace and Solidarity (APAPPS) envisaging six working groups. The finalization came in the 4th meeting held at the Foreign Office between the Afghan delegation, led by Afghan Deputy Foreign Minister Hekmat Khalil Karzai and Pakistan's Foreign Secretary Tehmina Janjua. It is hoped that framework may strengthen mutual trust and deepen interaction in all spheres of bilateral engagements. It is also a mechanism for finding solutions to bilateral areas of concern, but there were no details either about the

meeting itself or the way forward.

Likewise, last Friday, a group of Pakistani religious scholars together with Afghani and Indonesian religious Ulema announced through a joint conference that the Ongoing Afghanistan war is illegitimate and not acceptable from Islamic view point. They confirmed that violence against civilians and suicide attacks are against Islam, stressing that no religion, nationality, civilization or ethnic group should be associated to justify violent extremism.

Pakistan and Afghanistan also agreed to avoid territorial and air violations of each other's territory. The leadership of both countries also agreed to avoid a public blame game and use the plan's cooperation mechanisms to respond to any mutual issues and concerns. Based on media reports, working groups will be established to implement the agreed principles and both sides will also nominate "liaison officers" for further coordination and supervision. Both sides agreed that effective and full implementation of APAPPS would contribute towards the common objectives of eliminating terrorism and achieving peace, stability, prosperity and development of the people of the two countries.

As media quoted, the previous joint working group and meetings had focused on ensuring comprehensive engagement for countering terrorism, refugee repatriation, intelligence sharing, economic development through trade and transit interaction, reduction of violence through a comprehensive re-conciliatory approach. But the next joint working groups will be formed to implement the seven principles as set on April 6 when Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi and President Ashraf Ghani met in Kabul, and both sides had agreed on seven key principles to operationalize working groups under a bilateral peace plan. The joint working groups will be formed of the military, intelligence, diplomats, trade officials and officials of the ministries dealing with the refugees' issue.

Overall it is hoped that this may be the end the complexities between two countries as both sides are involved in discussions on the deployment of liaison officers (LOs) in both countries for joint supervision, coordination and confirmation mechanism about the suspects. The LOs deployment for realization of the agreed actions will be in accordance with the seven key principles of the APAPPS. The deployment of LOs, who will be military officials at the brigadier or colonel level, could be deployed initially at the embassies in Islamabad and Kabul for joint supervision, coordination and confirmation mechanism. If the LOs system makes progress, LOs could later be deployed at GHQ in Pakistan and Defense Ministry in Kabul. However, the Afghan officials have not commented in this regard so far but the Afghan foreign ministry officials had earlier said that no major breakthrough has been made during the previous talks in the format of the APAPPS meeting, mainly due to the circumstances surrounding the fight against the terrorism.

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America's Collision Course With China

By Kishore Mahbubani

The world's most important bilateral relationship - between the United States and China - is also one of its most inscrutable. Bedeviled by paradoxes, misperceptions, and mistrust, it is a relationship that has become a source of considerable uncertainty and, potentially, severe instability. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the brewing bilateral trade war.

The key assertion driving the current dispute, initiated by US President Donald Trump's administration, is that America's trade deficit is too big - and it's all China's fault. US Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin has gone so far as to demand that China unilaterally cut its trade surplus vis-à-vis the US by \$200 billion by 2020. But most sensible economists agree that America's trade deficits are the result of domestic structural economic factors, especially low household savings, persistent government deficits, and the US dollar's role as the world's main reserve currency. According to Joseph Gagnon, a senior fellow at the Peterson Institute for International Economics, if the US wants to reduce its trade deficit, it should start by reducing its massive fiscal deficit.

Yet it is not even clear that America's trade deficit urgently needs to be cut. While the external deficit is certainly large, the US can live beyond its means in a way other economies cannot. Thanks to the dollar's reserve-currency status, the US can absorb most of the rest of the world's savings, which finance its saving shortfall. Moreover, as Trump's own Council of Economic Advisers noted in February, the US enjoys a services surplus with the world, including with China.

But it is not just the Trump administration that shuns rational economic argument. Trump's approach to trade with China enjoys more mainstream support in the US than most of his policies, because most Americans - including many who otherwise oppose Trump - are convinced that China is not playing fair. The political commentator Fareed Zakaria, for example, has stated that "on one big, fundamental point" Trump is right: "China is a trade cheat."

What all this China-bashing leaves out is that cheap Chinese imports have drastically improved the quality of life of American workers, whose median income has stagnated for 40 years. According to the consultancy Oxford Economics, buying Chinese imports saves American families around \$850 annually. Given that 63% of American households do not have even \$500 saved for emergencies, this is not an insignificant amount.

Of course, open trade with the US and the rest of the world has enabled China to achieve the fastest poverty reduction in human history. But that does not mean that China is reaping most of the economic benefits. For example, the Chinese manufacturer Foxconn earns just \$7.40 for every \$800 iPhone that is sold; most of the value goes to Americans.

Chinese policymakers now put their faith in what was arguably the West's most important export: modern economic theory. Yet they remain subject to damaging decisions made by a US plagued by misperception. The question is whether China will bow to US pressure.

China's leadership is, ultimately, pragmatic. If a few symbolic concessions (like the voluntary export restraints to which Japan agreed in the 1980s) could prevent a collision, China may make them. But, when it comes to bigger - and economically unjustified - demands, China is likely to hold the line.

Here, the most obvious example is Mnuchin's demand that China abandon its "Made in China 2025" plan. China has already been subjected to American export controls on high-tech equipment (including the recently imposed seven-year ban on the sale of software or components by US companies to ZTE Corporation). It is not about to give up its quest for high-tech development, a critical element of a clear long-term strategy for moving its economy up the global value chain.

In short, however rational China tries to be, a trade war remains a real possibility - one that will hurt both Americans and Chinese. And this outcome is made all the more likely by a deepening disquiet in the bilateral relationship.

A three-month sabbatical at two leading US universities has underscored for me the extent to which attitudes toward China have soured in recent years. If Chinese policymakers were aware of the intensity of this shift - and I have informed a senior figure among them - they would realize that their calm and rational policies toward the US during the past 20 years may well not work in the next 20.

It would take an entire book to explain why America's opinion of China has turned so negative. But some reasons are obvious. Within the next decade, China will overtake the US economically, despite not being a democracy. Several thoughtful Americans have told me that they could live with a larger China, if it was democratic.

Here, again, there is some irrationality at play: a democratic China would be far more susceptible to populist and nationalist pressures, and thus would probably be a pricklier partner for the US. Yet the US remains blinded by ideology, and thus is unable to see the benefits of a China guided by economic rationality.

In the future, historians will lament that America's long-term policy toward China was not similarly a result of calm calculation. Instead, they are likely to focus on how America's political polarization and simplistic ideology - shared by many who should know better - drove it into a highly damaging and utterly pointless conflict.

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