

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



November 06, 2016

## No End to Casualties

Terrorism is a midterm threat and we have commitments with the world to curb it because Afghan forces are fighting on the front-line of terrorism .... The Afghan forces have protected the dignity of their people with the price of their blood, it is a permanent agreement and the people of this country respect it, I defend and support you everywhere and every moment," these words were spoken by Afghan President Muhammad Ashraf Ghani.

This statement comes as the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) reported earlier that Afghan forces casualties increased by nine percent in the ongoing year compared to last year. SIGAR said a total of 5,523 Afghan service members were killed and an additional 9,665 wounded during the fighting season from January 1 to August 19. In addition, it is said that 30 terrorist networks are operating in Afghanistan. The Taliban outfits intensified their attacks within the two past years and inflicted heavy casualties upon Afghan soldiers and civilians, including women and children.

There were more than 11,000 conflict-related civilian casualties in 2015, marking the highest number of casualties since 2009 when UNAMA began documenting them. The conflict has since intensified, with Taliban insurgents expanding their activities to many more Afghan provinces this year. The Afghan war is estimated to have caused 70,000 civilian casualties, including over 25,000 deaths since the counting began seven years ago.

UN officials are also worried over the rising number of civilian displacements the conflict has caused this year. They have warned more than a million Afghans will be on the move by end of 2016, including tens of thousands of Afghan refugees returning mostly from neighboring Pakistan. According to UN estimates, the total number of the returnees has exceeded 400,000 since the start of the year.

A report by UNAMA blamed Taliban-led anti-government forces for causing 61 percent of all civilian casualties and accused pro-government Afghan forces of causing 23 percent of all civilian casualties, noting a 42 percent increase compared to last year, primarily due to the use of indirect and explosive weapons and aerial attacks.

With the establishment of democratic administration, peace has been the highest national priority and Afghan officials sought tirelessly to get warring factions to join peace process and stop violence and bloodshed. However, the Taliban persisted in their indiscriminate killings and spilling the blood of combatants and non-combatants alike. They turned the Afghan's peace offering down. Through continuing the tug of war, the Taliban left no room for negotiation and no trust to resume it.

It is an unmistakable fact that Mansour's death was a serious blow to the Taliban - who are still reeling from the death of its founder Mullah Muhammad Omar - and filled them with a strong sense of revenge. He had just consolidated his authority over the Taliban's faction since his appointment. Refusing to come to negotiating table, Mansour staged heavy attacks against the Afghan government which increased the graph of police and civilian mortality within last year.

The Taliban's current leader Mullah Haibatullah Akhundzada seems relentless and stubborn, the same as Omar, in staging attacks against the US and Afghan soldiers. Perhaps, as reported earlier, the secret and unofficial talks between the Taliban and Afghan government in Qatar was no more than a usual game the Taliban have ever played. They always show the white feather after giving the green light to resume peace. A serious determination for peace talks is never revealed by the Taliban elements and their leaders hesitate constantly.

"Disregard and contempt for human rights" - which is the main reason behind violence and bloodshed - have been widely practiced for decades. It is believed that warring factions are the major violators of human rights. Weary of war and insurgency, our nation prays for having a democratic society, void of war and violence, and demands from the government to protect the citizens' rights and liberty and address the political challenges.

Undeniably, Afghan soldiers will combat terrorism with strong valor and commitment and made great sacrifices in this regard. The problem, however, is that the soldiers lack equipments and their also seems negligence from high-ranking officials. For instance, soldiers are, frequently, killed by the Taliban after being surrounded for days and receive no help despite their persistent calls. In such a case, their blood will be wasted without a tangible outcome. The government is to invest their blood in the best possible way and value their lives since they protect the life of nation. The high graph of soldiers' casualties is really shocking and will demoralize them, if this trend continues.

Since the Taliban intensify their insurgency under spring offensive or Omari Operation, Afghan government also must launch military operations under certain title by the Special Forces and equipped troops, mainly with the support of the US forces. In this operation, the Taliban's suspect bases and their high-ranking leaders should be the main target so as to demoralize the Taliban and protect the citizens' life and liberty. In short, Afghan soldiers are not to always adopt a defensive position but also offensive one. Moreover, it will be hard to eradicate terrorism unless the supporting factors such as narcotic cultivation, drug trafficking and corruption in judicial system be rooted out.



## The World Needs Divine Savior

By Mohammad Zahir Akbari

Unfortunately, we live in a world of growing injustice, oppression, ruthlessness, humanitarian crisis and disorders! Power and dangerous weapons are in the hand of some greedy and wolves-likely human that the more they eat the greedier they become. Day to day, the poor people are getting poorer and the rich are getting richer. The wealth is gained at cost of shedding blood of innocent children, women and men. One day, if a crazy man access to nuclear weapons, he will destroy the whole world in a minute with a button and then no nation may survive. One day, if poor people wake up and knew how rich people are, there would be riots in the global streets. Likewise, if the climate change keeps changing, human should wait for a more unhealthy, unsafe, and unsustainable future.

Socially and economically, we have created great disparities of wealth. According to studies, a minority of the world's population (17%) consume most of the world's resources (80%), leaving almost 5 billion people to live on the remaining 20%. As a result, billions of people are living without the very basic necessities of life - food, water, housing and sanitation.

Specifically, 1.2 billion (20%) of the world population now lives on less than \$1/day, another 1.8 billion (30%) lives on less than \$2/day, 800 million go to bed hungry every day, and 30,000 - 60,000 die each day from hunger alone. The story is the same when it comes to other necessities like water, housing, education etc. On the flip side, according to Forbes Magazine, we have an increasing accumulation of wealth and power, where that the world hosted 1,810 billionaires, over double the 793 billionaires Forbes counted in 2009, at the depth of the Great Recession. These 1,810 billionaires together hold \$6.5 trillion in wealth. The combined income of 582 million people living in the 43 least developed countries is \$146 billion. Over all the developing countries, which constitute 70% of the world's population, account for only 30% of the world's income.

As a part of this unbalanced world, Afghanistan is among the most dangerous place to live! People are subjected to extreme poverty, violence, health and lack of education. Over a quarter of Afghan children die before their fifth birthday mostly from preventable diseases such as pneumonia and diarrhea. Afghanistan has some of the worst child malnourishment, stunting, underweight and vitamin deficiency figures in the world. According to the World Food Program, 39% of children under the age of five are underweight. 78% of Afghan children lack access to safe water and 1 in 8 Afghan women die in childbirth. People in Afghanistan are using opium to block pain; the pain of hunger, sickness, physical and mental trauma. Nearly three million addicts in this nation of about 30 million people, including 60,000 children under age 15, and about 13 percent are women and 7 percent are children. Most of the women are

opium addicts desperate to blunt the trauma of endless war. Many are illiterate mothers with unemployed husbands. Most have a little in the way of job skills, and some became addicts while picking opium poppies to earn a living and support their families...these have been happening for years while the world is watching and playing childish policies!

The very basic question is how is it wise to expect an even and balanced development of the international community under the existing international economic order? The gap between the industrialized and the developing countries continues to widen in a system which perpetuates inequality crisis. The present international economic order is in direct conflict with current developments in international political and economic relations. Since 1970, the world economy has experienced a series of grave crises, which have had severe repercussions, especially on the developing countries, because of their generally greater vulnerability to external economic impulses.

The decolonization process of the 1960s enabled developing countries (the South) to recognize a common interest contrasted with that of the industrialized countries (the North). In the 1990s this North-South gap has changed profoundly in nature. The relative homogeneity of the South has been transformed into five "South": the newly industrialized countries of South-east Asia; the oil rich South; the newly impoverished former socialist countries; the countries trying to adjust their economic and development policies in order to accelerate their integration into the North; and the very poor countries, notably in Africa. These changes have increased the social and economic inequalities in all countries and regions of the world. Significantly there has been the emergence of old and new forms of poverty within the North and the development of new wealth within impoverished countries of the South.

Finally, these terrible facts and figures show that the current social and economic system is unable to organize the world. The leaders of current system either are indifferent or enjoy when watching some people are dying due to war and starvation while others are dying because of eating more. In fact, the loss of consensus and the actual breakdown of some systems of global economic management have left the world economy in precarious circumstances. Nearly 80% world populations are suffering from intolerable poverty and economic instabilities. All these are not because the world is incapable of producing enough for its growing population or has run out of raw materials, but simply because countries have not been able to agree on a fair system of managing the world's economy. To end with, it seems that no one could break the current deadlock unless a divine savior.

Mohammad Zahir Akbari is the newly emerging writer of the Daily Outlook Afghanistan. He can be reached at mohammadzahirakbari@gmail.com

## Putting Democracy Above the Bottom Line

By Kelle Louaillier

This month, we will have a chance to chart a course toward a stronger, safer global society, where power belongs to the many, not to the few, and where those who have run roughshod over our environment, human rights, and public health will be held accountable. I am not talking about the United States' presidential election.

To be sure, the US election will be immensely consequential; but endless punditry and horserace politics have obscured two groundbreaking events that begin on November 7: meetings of the parties to the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

Superficially, international law lacks the drama of a presidential race, and can undoubtedly seem stuffy at best, and irrelevant at worst. But if one digs a little deeper, one finds an almost Shakespearean struggle between democracy and unbridled greed. At each conference this month, the international community will make decisions that will affect the outcome of this struggle, and which could begin to solve some of today's most vexing global issues.

Both the FCTC and the UNFCCC allow for governments to rein in global corporations' unchecked power, which is a root cause of many other problems, from economic inequality to social injustice and broken democratic systems. Global corporations are enormous, and their influence affects almost every aspect of our lives. To understand the reach of their power, one must look no further than the billions of dollars they spend on elections; their lobbying to gut worker and environmental protections in trade agreements such as the Trans-Pacific Partnership and the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership; and fossil-fuel corporations' relentless drive to derail climate-change policy.

Global corporations have disproportionate power because they can operate across national borders, which means that no single local or national government can effectively regulate them.

The crucial function of international frameworks such as the FCTC and UNFCCC is to provide concrete tools for governments to set national policies on issues ranging from public health to climate change and global inequality.

For example, Colombia was a stronghold for the tobacco corporation Philip Morris International two decades ago, and comprehensive tobacco-control legislation in that country was long unthinkable. But in 2009 - just six years after the World Health Organization adopted the FCTC and 15 months after Colombia ratified it - the Colombian government enacted one of the strongest tobacco-control laws in the

world.

Likewise, governments worldwide are adopting measures that are proven to reduce smoking rates and save lives, including graphic health warnings, marketing restrictions, and laws requiring tobacco products to be sold in unbranded packaging.

But the FCTC's work is not done, and governments are now pushing for legal liability to be a part of national-level corporate-accountability frameworks. If they are successful in negotiations at the FCTC conference this month, governments will have the tools they need to make Big Tobacco pay for the damage it has done. Such an outcome would mean that governments could recoup hundreds of billions of dollars in tobacco-related health-care costs and force the release of internal industry documents.

The FCTC is effective because it includes a hard-won provision that explicitly prohibits corporations from influencing policymaking. At the UNFCCC conference next week, some governments will hold up the FCTC as a strong precedent to argue that the fossil-fuel industry must be excluded from ongoing climate negotiations, owing to its conflicts of interest with sound climate policy.

Industries responsible for climate change must not be entrusted to solve it. Only by removing them from the equation can we implement truly groundbreaking measures - such as renewable-energy systems owned and operated by communities - that put people and our planet's survival above the industry's bottom line.

For as long as we've had public regulatory institutions, corporate interests have sought to co-opt them. Big Tobacco, Big Oil, Big Food, and Big Pharma have tried to bully, buy, and bribe their way into our public international spaces, all with the same goal in mind: to fend off regulation that would disrupt business as usual. Costs to human life or the planet rarely enter into their calculus.

Democracy advocates in civil society and government have managed to push back against global corporations, but much of their progress hangs in the balance this month. Will attendees at the FCTC and UNFCCC conferences defend democratic principles, or will they defer to big business?

The United Kingdom's "Brexit" referendum notwithstanding, there is no denying that we live in a truly global world. When the causes of our biggest problems are global, our solutions must be as well, which requires that we first address the fundamental issue of corporate interference.

The possibilities of what can be achieved by bringing international law to bear are too promising to ignore. (Courtesy Project Syndicate)

Kelle Louaillier is President of Corporate Accountability International.



Chairman / Editor-in-Chief: Dr. Hussain Yasa  
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.