

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



November 15, 2015

Insecurity Persists

Among the pieces of news regarding the deterioration of security in the country, another news item shocked the people. According to a statement by Mirza Rahimi, the provincial governor of southern Helmand province, 65 Afghan security force members including three commanders surrendered to Taliban in Sangin district. He said in a press conference on Friday that in the past month more than 200 Taliban insurgents were killed and injured and around 85 Afghan security forces and three civilians were killed in the clashes. He, however, claimed that more troops had arrived and military operations were started in Marjah district and the forces had re-taken control of most of the areas which were under control of insurgents but clashes continued.

The Ministry of Defense (MoD), however, rejected the reports that 65 security force members had surrendered to the Taliban in Sangin district in southern Helmand province, arguing that a number of army troops might have been captured by insurgents.

MoD spokesman said in a statement, "Our troops will never surrender to the enemy... There might be some problems. This is war. Moving forward and backwards, defending and leaving strongholds (tactically) can happen in war and the troops are allowed to do this when required." Even if the reports regarding the surrender of the troops to Taliban are wrong; the reports of the rising insecurity in different parts of the country is not false. There are certain districts that have completely fallen to Taliban and Taliban in the recent months have shown that they have the capacity to threaten Afghan security arrangements to a large extent. In such a scenario it is really important to see how the concerned authorities in the country perform.

It depends largely on how Afghan authorities will deal with the circumstances ahead. At this crucial juncture when the Western allies do not have many options but to leave the country and the regional countries are very much interested in pursuing their own interests, the Afghan government does not have any other option but to be more responsible and deal with the situation on its own.

Afghan government can adopt a clear policy regarding the reconciliation process in the country. By continuing to invite Taliban for peace talks would not solve the issue easily. Taliban, even after very welcoming remarks have denied to take initiative regarding talks with the government. In fact, they, as a response, have continued violence and terrorism, while Afghan government apart from welcoming them has not been able to offer anything else. It is not necessary that Afghan government must pursue the issue militarily but they have to come up with a practical policy regarding the issue.

At the same time, Afghan government can revise its relations with the neighboring countries so that they should be improved. It is correct that neighboring countries have not fulfilled much as far as their responsibilities are concerned, yet Afghan government has to bring about innovations and flexibility and diplomatic prudence in its approach towards them.

Afghan government has to keep in consideration as well that as a result of decades of instability and socio-economic and political problems, the Afghan people have been suffering from myriads of problems. Though there have been certain important improvements made in the last decade or so, some very concerning issues still exist that threaten the lives of the common people of Afghanistan. There are claims that changes have been brought within Afghan society; however, it should be noted that if the effectiveness of the changes have to be felt or observed, they should be observed by the changes in the lives of the common people. If there is any change in the condition of living of the common people as the outcome of the change; the change should be guarded for and even backed and supported vehemently. If not, either the claim must be discarded as wrong or the efforts should be improved to make the changes effective. And that is what Afghanistan needs to do - it has to improve its efforts to bring about necessary changes in the lives of the common people that have been jeopardized both by insecurity and lack of rudimentary requirements of life.

Coupled with insecurity, there are many other problems as well that haunt Afghan people's lives. Some of the problems are directly linked to insecurity; like, people are not able to have access to health and other facilities of life. Moreover, development works to improve the standard of living of the common people are not carried out because of the security threats, thus the desired objectives are not attained in this regard. People, in some parts of the country, are not able to have access to education as well. Schools are shut by force and the school going children are irritated.

While living in a state, the people expect and expect rightly that they should be provided their basic requirements of life by the state and the government. In the modern concept of state, protecting the basic rights of the people and providing them the requirements to live a better life are considered as the basic functions of a state. The government of Afghanistan, therefore, needs to make sure that the common people of Afghanistan are provided a secure life along with basic requirements like food, cloth, shelter, education, health facilities and job opportunities.

Paris Rocked with Horrific Attack

By Asmatyari

It was the unfortunate Friday night when large number of people bustling the street of central Paris, with locals and visitors alike attending concert, having meals in restaurant, spectators enjoying the sight of football match and pedestrians walking their set destinations, that bangs of gun shots and explosion ripped through different locations, killing over 128 people, injuring multiplied numbers. It was only then the stirrer of chats began roaming in international and social media, where everyone found extending sympathies with the families of victims of Paris attack and wide denunciation.

The terrorist set loose ruthlessly murdered century of hapless people in coordinated series of precedential attack. Reportedly, the first blast was heard at 9.17 p.m. local time outside the Stade de France national sports stadium, where France and Germany were playing a friendly soccer international in the presence of President Francois Hollande killing at least five people. Reportedly few black-masked gunmen stormed into the concert hall and opened an indiscriminate fire killing at least 100. The Rue de Charonne and terrace of the Casa Nostra pizzeria was some other site that got targeted. Regrettably, the streets of Paris that bore the brunt of attack were blood bathed with innocent ordinary citizens who had nothing to do with political gimmicks shaping behind the closed doors.

So far, no claim of responsibility has been made, but witnesses at the Bataclan music venue heard the killers shout religious slogans whilst condemning France's partaking in the U.S.-led coalition fighting self-styled Islamic State (IS) in Syria. The terrorists of IS, seems more likely to being behind the attack bidding to warn West of plans of attacks in Syria or elsewhere. France has been a potential state supporting US in the mission to fight against terrorist hideouts in Syria and in Iraq.

It could garner a potential reason leaving France susceptible to attacks. If the attack is linked to France's role in Syria, why was it yet again targeted above other members of the U.S.-led coalition? France has been the only state in Europe -too vocal to talk on various sentimental subjects including the former sacrilegious publication that aired mass protests across Muslim world.

In the former Paris attack, on January 7, three masked gunmen attacked and killed the editorial staff of a weekly satirical journal Charlie Hebdo which ridiculed Judaism, Catholicism and Islam. The publication of highly provocative cartoons published in the previous days past, which had deeply offended Muslims, served to be behind the daylight massacre. Whatever, the reason be, the carnage never justifies nor can be deemed a legal course to avenge the sacrilegious cartoon or political support on war against terror.

The deed exercised by extremists finds no validation; in fact contradicts Islamic interpretation. In defense of religion devastating religious values, a self-cheating prophecy, can't earn

acceptance in the civilized world.

The countless innocent killed did not quench the blood thirst of these self claimed religious champions and sane; Al-Qaida, ISIS and Taliban whose bloody tale of mass massacre, outpainted the humanists across globe.

The Muslim world should come to a conclusion to disown and alienate these evil practitioners, manipulating the sacred religion for personal gains, adding into the already the miseries of Muslim. The Muslim population of European countries will directly be left to the mercy of hatemonger, with multiplied complications. The six million Muslims living in France and elsewhere in Europe understandably dread a backlash and fear that the sense of Islamophobia already very visible in their country would further deepen.

The tragic incident will deepen the polarization of the said society and imperil the Muslims residents. Indeed, those who would suffer the most from this event would be the majority of the West's Muslim population, most of which is made up of law-abiding, ordinary people who believe in the policy of live and let live and who do not subscribe to the distorted version of their faith that is being propagated by a handful of misguided extremists. That is a nasty business involving large numbers of deportations, cancellation of French citizenship, and other threats that inevitably would affect many individuals with no direct connection to terrorism.

The effort would be costly, but ultimately it would succeed: most French Muslims simply want to stay in France and earn a living. To revive its credibility, the Muslims abroad should condemn terrorism and extremism on every forum and shouldn't leave a vacuum to be infiltrated by hate monger and religious-political opportunists.

It depicts that France, or any other state, could defeat the terrorists is obvious, to stand united against terrorists irrespective of cast, creed and religion.

The wretched incidents received wide condemnation from across the world. The US President Barack Obama led a chorus of global condemnation, saying it was "an attack on all of humanity". German Chancellor Angela Merkel and European Commission chief Jean-Claude Juncker said they were "deeply shocked" by the attacks.

"I am shocked by events in Paris tonight," the Prime Minister wrote on Twitter. "Our thoughts and prayers are with the French people. We will do whatever we can to help. United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon condemned the attacks and called for any hostages to be immediately released. President Ghani and CEO Abdullah didn't stay behind condemning the Paris attack. The premiers have previously pledged to the protesting masses with seven beheaded souls, they would try to reverse the security situation. Undeniably, formation of uniform policy that likely serves the interest of greater population can rid the world out of the menace of growing terrorism.

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IS Stokes Racial Tensions

By Hujjatullah Zia

Human rights violations have outraged men's conscience around the globe. The history witnessed bloody wars and violent practices which led to the death and injuries of thousands. A great number of human beings suffered on the grounds of their race, sex or beliefs. In other words, many historical wars originated from ideological beliefs, ethnocentrism or racial discriminations. The hitherto ideological wars result in human casualties and men have yet to take lessons from the history.

The transgression of men's inalienable rights and contempt for their dignity is practiced on a large scale. One's freedom is curtailed and his/her blood is shed either for following a certain school of thoughts or belonging to a particular ethnic group. Freedoms of thoughts, beliefs and expressions are beyond the tolerance of religious fundamentalists.

As a result, the self-styled Islamic State (IS) group imposes their warped beliefs on the barrel of gun and inflicts indescribable pain and anguish upon the ethnic minorities in Iraq and Syria. Their inhumane treatments root in radical interpretations of religious texts and stereotypical ideologies. The IS insurgents perpetrate the most horrible crimes under the aegis of false narration of Sacred Book and Sunnah and claim to establish Islamic Caliphate not only in Iraq and Syria but on the surface of Middle East.

The IS's practices are totally void of humanity and moral standards. They infringe the humanitarian law and treat the non-combatants, including women and children, without an iota of mercy. Their fatwa, under Abu-Bakr al-Baghdadi, justifies moral corruptions such as rape - under the name of Jihad-e Nikah or Jihad against nonbelievers - and violent acts of bloodshed. Further more, the IS militants claim to be religious stakeholders and their de facto leader, al-Baghdadi, is a highly qualified Caliph to be pledged allegiance and obeyed with eyes closed.

The IS seeks to trigger sectarianism across the Islamic countries through subjugating and violating the rights and dignity of ethnic minority groups. There are reports that IS has gone about systematizing rape, sexual assault and slavery by embedding the buying, selling and gifting of slaves into a system of rewards for its fighters. Of the estimated 3,500 Yazidi women held by IS few months ago, survivors report being interrogated and in some cases stripped for sorting and categorizing. They have been rated according to desirability, labeled and transported across IS-held territory. They have been traded between fighters, and awarded by leadership as prizes.

Not surprisingly, it was previously reported that the US hostage Kayla Mueller was repeatedly raped by IS leader Abu-Bakr al-Baghdadi.

Currently, the IS group has gained foothold in Afghanistan and compete against the Taliban militants for superiority.

Sporadic skirmishes have been reported between the Taliban and IS insurgents in different parts of the country. The IS's acts of cruelty such as blowing people up via explosive devices were denounced by the Taliban militants. To put it succinctly, the IS has surpassed the Taliban in barbaric acts and inhumane practices.

The IS outfits also stoke sectarianism in Afghanistan and intend to spark racial tensions among the nation through decapitating ethnic minority groups. Their recent act of violence namely beheading two women, four men and a child from Hazara ethnicity last Sunday offended the public and prompted them to stage huge demonstrations in various parts of the country including the Kabul City. The demonstrators did not only call for action by government to ensure the safety of civilians but also demanded equal rights for all. Issuing a declaration, demonstrators called on government as well as the United Nations to ensure justice is served against those behind the Zabul incident and that they ensure the safety of every Afghan citizen. Shortly after reading out their demands, a group of representatives from the organizers of the protest entered the Presidential Palace where they reportedly met with government officials over their demands.

Meanwhile, Afghan parliament or Wolesi Jirga condemned murder of seven hostages by IS group in Zabul province and accused the National Unity Government (NUG) of incompetence in releasing hostages. "This is a dangerous message to the nation, government and political allies at the international level. We should consider just for a moment that how it feels that a nine years old girl beheads in front of her family," Abdul Rauf Ibrahim the WJ chairman is quoted as saying. Similarly, Afghan President Muhammad Ashraf Ghani also condemned the issue. However, the question is that will condemnation or condolence alleviate the anguish of victims' families or tackle the crisis?

A member of the Wolesi Jirga Abdul Rahman Rahmani spoke angrily about the NUG's insufficient achievements. He is cited as, "National Unity Government benefited nation's trust with the hollow slogans and took control of the country. They should satisfactory reasons over their failure in releasing the abducted passengers." The government has to pay serious heed to the citizens' rights and do its best to secure the people. Moreover, the officials must leave no room for sectarianism and foil the militants' plan of sparking racial tensions. Afghan soldiers should be reinforced to counter terrorism with high morale and root out the insurgents' haven. Similarly, Afghan President will have to answer positively to the protestors' legal demands and provide equal security to the entire Afghan nation. It is hoped that the heads of NUG will fulfill their promises made during their presidential elections and protect the rights and dignity of the nation.

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