

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



November 21, 2016

## The Worth of Accountability

One of the key requirements of good governance is accountability. Not only governmental institutions but also the private sector and civil society organizations must be accountable to the public and to their institutional stakeholders. The institutions in Afghanistan, on the other hand, have lacked this basic factor which has resulted in uncontrolled corruption and mismanagement. Therefore, it can be easily observed that billions of dollars have been spent for the development of the country yet the country is not able to develop as much as it could. As a matter of fact accountability can be achieved when there is transparency and the rule of law.

In a democratic country the ultimate authority lies within the people. And ultimately, the government is answerable to the people. Moreover, to guarantee such accountability the modern states have established and strengthened their political systems in such a way that people have most of the power, though indirectly. However, in our country, Afghanistan, which claims to be democratic, the people are suffering because of the lack of any sort of accountability of the government and the deprivation of participation in the affairs of the state.

One of the basic ways the people can participate in the affairs of the state is through elections. Well-established and developed election systems can provide opportunities to all the members of the society to cast their votes and have their say in the making of the government. However, in Afghanistan this basic institution of democracy has not been able to function appropriately. The last presidential elections were vehemently dominated by fraud and corruption.

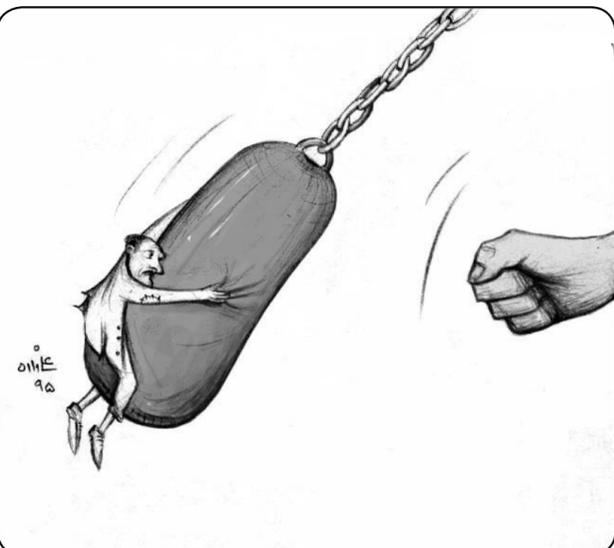
The proper and well-developed election process can play an important role in creating accountable government. A political party or a politician in order to be elected by the votes of the people tries to perform properly so that it gets chance of remaining in authority for a longer period of time. If the political parties and the contestants in the elections come to know that they can win the election even without the consent of the people, through illegal ways, they will never remain accountable to the people and would not care much about the public opinion. Afghan political scenario, at the moment, is facing almost a similar sort of situation.

Another issue of unaccountability arises when a system is made personality-oriented, wherein the individuals are prioritized on the basis of their actual or assumed personality traits. This property is mostly found in dictatorial and authoritarian forms of government. Such ideologies are basically the remnants of the monarchies that could be found long ago in human history.

The institutions, which can play a dominant role in establishing democratic culture and accountable system, are underestimated and even ignored in such systems. Our country Afghanistan happens to be a similar country. The democratic institutions are ignored to a great extent while the political system circulates around the personalities. Even the election system is designed in such a way that promotes personality-worship. The absence of political parties and their influence within election system have made many overlook the importance of political parties which happen to be very important institution for the growth and institutionalization of democracy. It is necessary for accountability that not only governmental institutions but also the private sector and civil society organizations must be accountable to the public and to their institutional stakeholders. Afghan government, on the other hand, has been formed in such a way that it is difficult to hold the government accountable for its policies and actions. As a matter of fact accountability can be achieved when there is transparency and the rule of law. However, both these characteristics seem to be non-existent in Afghan society. Transparency and rule of law can be maintained when there is proper separation of power and the different organs of state can function on their own - independently. In fact, judiciary and law enforcement agencies must be capable to hold the law as the top priority matter. In Afghan political system the separation of powers is not clear and the judiciary is composed of what the government decides. Moreover, the powerful and the rich are mostly considered above the law and the poor and weak have to go through the 'quagmire of law and order system'. The present rise in corruption, which is now turning out of control, is because of the same fact that the powerful are not made accountable to the rule of law.

A thorough analysis of Afghanistan's political scenario will depict that currently the political processes are also being kept aloof of accountability along with the institutions. The current efforts for the reconciliation and reintegration processes are very much non-participatory and non-transparent. As the major stakeholders are being kept away from the processes, a sort of ambiguity and distrust is being generated within different circles and the people of Afghanistan. Moreover, there is a disadvantage of such an approach as well - it is likely to result in improper and incomplete outcomes of the processes, which will further generate controversies.

Afghan authorities have in fact kept on striving to limit the power and authority to themselves and, on certain occasions, have used the same irresponsibly. The need of time is to make the political institutions and processes accountable to the people through proper democratization of the political structure.



## In Pursuit of Peace

By Hujjatullah Zia

Afghan nation bears the brunt of terrorism and civilian fatalities make the headlines in national and international media. The Taliban's radical leader Mullah Haibatullah Akhundzada remains adamantly opposed to peace talks and orchestrates deadly attacks against the National Unity Government (NUG) - which has asked the United Nations Security Council to include names of all terrorists, including Haibatullah, in its sanctions list. The graph of casualties has mounted dramatically within the two past years.

Despite the NUG's persistent urge for peace, "Afghanistan still remains a place for terrorism and extremism." Following the futility of "war on terror", the High Peace Council (HPC) was established to bring the Taliban to negotiating table; however the outcome was no more than signing a peace agreement with Hezb-e-Islami Afghanistan (HIA) led by a former Jihadi leader Gulbuddin Hekmatyar. The peace agreement with HIA has not mitigated the militancy in the country and the Taliban continue their insurgency without hesitation.

Deaths from terrorism in Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries increased by 650 per cent last year despite a marked fall globally as Islamic State (IS) and Boko Haram militants suffered military defeats at home but committed more attacks abroad - a report said last week. The Global Terrorism Index (GTI) said worldwide there had been 29,376 deaths caused by terrorism in 2015, a drop of 10 per cent and the first fall in four years, as action against militants IS in Iraq and Boko Haram in Nigeria cut the numbers killed there by a third. However, the report said the groups had spread their actions to neighboring states and regions, causing a huge increase in fatalities among OECD members, most of which are wealthy countries such as the United States and European nations.

It said 21 of the 34 OECD member countries had witnessed at least one attack with most deaths occurring in Turkey and France where coordinated attacks by IS gunmen and suicide bombers at the Bataclan music venue, a soccer stadium and several cafes in Paris last November killed 130 people.

Denmark, France, Germany, Sweden and Turkey all suffered their worst death tolls from terrorism in a single year since 2000, according to the index which is produced by the Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP) think-tank.

In total, 23 countries registered their highest ever number of terrorism deaths. "While on the one hand the reduction in deaths is positive, the continued intensification of terrorism in some countries and its spread to new ones is a cause for serious concern and underscores the fluid nature of modern terrorist activity," Steve Killelea, the IEP's executive chairman, is cited as saying.

Iraq, Afghanistan, Nigeria, Pakistan and Syria, which accounted for 72 per cent of all deaths, were the top five ranked coun-

tries in the GTI. The United States ranked 36th, with France 29th, Russia 30th and the United Kingdom 34th. The global economic impact of terrorism was assessed to be \$89.6 billion with Iraq suffering the greatest impact, at 17 per cent of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

IS was the deadliest group in 2015, the report said, overtaking Boko Haram with attacks in 252 cities that led to 6,141 deaths. However, Boko Haram's move into neighboring countries Niger, Cameroon and Chad saw the number of fatalities in these countries increase by 157 per cent.

The combatant and non-combatant casualties have increased to a great extent in Afghanistan and the fear and disappointed spread in the public air. In spite of the peace discourse, the Taliban pursue their sinister ideology through violence and bloodshed. To Afghans' unmitigated chagrin, the political instability deteriorates and takes its toll on civilians, including women and children.

Moreover, the protracted war has forced a large number of Afghan families out of their homes. About a million Afghans have been displaced internally in the past ten months due to the recent surge in violence. The majority of those displaced are from war-hit regions such as Kunduz, Uruzgan and Helmand provinces. In addition many are dealing with food shortages. Political pundits believe that Russia and China and other central Asian countries can play a constructive role in fighting terrorism in Afghanistan, adding if these countries take robust action in this sphere, Afghanistan can be removed out of the ongoing crisis. "Central Asian countries, China and Russia in the structure of Shanghai Cooperation Organization can help Afghanistan to eliminate groups such as Daesh and Taliban." Contrary to the Taliban's strong will for war and violence, a number of Afghan political leaders have, reportedly, moved to broker peace talks between government and the Taliban following secret talks between the two parties in Qatar recently. Officials confirmed that last month a meeting took place between the National Directorate of Security (NDS) Chief, Masoom Stanekzai, and Mullah Omer's brother Abdul Manan in Qatar - the claim was refused by the Taliban, though. Since the peace negotiation came to a stalemate repeatedly and the death of Omer's successor Mullah Akhtar Mansour deteriorated the security situation and led to mistrust among the Quadrilateral Coordination Group (QCG), the public believe that it will never come to fruition anymore. The Taliban masterminds also seek to play this game in their own favor through setting hard preconditions, but there is still no certainty if they practice upon their words and fulfill their promise after having their preconditions met. Now, it is the readers to judge if the unmitigated insurgency comes to an end through unstable talks.

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## Needs for Translation movement

By Mohammad Zahir Akbari

We live in a world where English, as a universal language, spoken everywhere is translation still important? The answer is absolutely yes, here are many reasons articulate why translation is important and will remain so, despite the growing ubiquity of English. English is the third most widely-spoken language in terms of native speakers, of which it has at least 330 million. But if we count the people who speak it as a second language, it's the most popular language in the world. English is the most commonly spoken language but that doesn't mean all who can speak some English can comprehend and well enough to cope in all situations. For example, a survey from the European Commission found that only a quarter of Europeans was able to understand sufficiently to follow an English-language news broadcast let alone to talk about the non-English-speaking citizens who live in a very remote part of the world.

Holding a basic conversation is one thing academic comprehension and production is something different. So the impact and importance of translation on history of civilization is undeniable; it can help economic and social organizations using unlimited talent and experiences exist across the globe. Translation movements have vastly benefited their countries paving the way for social and economic development while the seat of Afghanistan is vacant in such process.

Though, we are witnessing great explosion of English Language Center, fuelled by the growing dominance of American culture in this country. Even in remote towns you hear boys and girls speaking English. Bilingual store signs, street boards and restaurant menus widely seen in the urban also in some rural areas. Hundreds of English words have already become part of the daily conversation. But in academic ground we have the least products comparing to neighboring countries; even may of our universities and professors are beholden and dependent to Iranian translated products.

In fact, there is grave need for translation movement to pave the way for economical and social movements because no movement will happen without theoretical movements. We should understand that Language, as a core tool of communication, is the heart of social, cultural and economic human experience and achievements. The limits of translations are the limits of our world; translations open a new window to the soft expressions of a social and economical development. Good translators not only translate the thoughts of writers but they would translate the culture, customs, and social settings of the source and target language speakers. They are also familiar with different styles of speaking, and social norms of both languages. This awareness can improve the quality of the translations to a great extent and also familiarize the readers to depth of other cultures. Furthermore, Cultural variety opens our eyes to human rights, open mindedness and mutual re-

spects. It opens the door of dialogue amongst different cultures leading to cultural enrichment, cultural flexibilities and more peaceful world. When someone translates a book from different culture, he translates the expression of culture and individuality of its speakers; it can strongly influence the way he perceives the world. Therefore, translator should consider that to what extent the culture is in the text and to what extent the language is in culture.

The social context in translating a text is probably more important variable than its genre. The act of translating takes place in the socio-cultural context. So it is important to judge translating activity only within a social context. Every society has its own set of habits, value judgments and classification systems which sometimes are quite different and sometimes overlap. Modern literature on translation draws heavily on the important role of cultural gap between SL and TL communities. According to expert, cultural asymmetry between two linguistic communities is necessarily reflected in the discourses of their members, with the potential opacity and inaccessibility this may involve in the target culture system. They consider translation as a means which provides the TL society with a variety of strategies, ranging from conservation to naturalization, against the backdrop of the sense of otherness which conveys this difference with a set of cultural signs capable of questioning or even denying our own culture. Finally translation movements, especially English as central language, can play a very effective role in exchange of human experience and achievements. Many developing or developed countries such as Iran and china could accelerate their social and economic growth training professional translators in English languages. Today, English language is not only the language of science but also aviation, computing, diplomacy, and tourism. It is listed as the official or co-official language of over 42 countries and is spoken extensively in other countries where it has no official status.

English plays a great part in the cultural, political, or economic life of those countries. It is widely accepted that English has become the language of choice for many international scholarly journals and considered as an irreversible tool to academic and professional tool.

The trend is on a rise, and academia is left with almost no choice but to publish in English in order to obtain international recognition. Conversation without a common language between academicians from different nationalities, both in the virtual and real world, would prove impossible. Therefore, it is very important to train a professional team of researching translators especially English to National languages and vice versa to pave the way for social and economic growth in the country.

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