

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

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Corruption Downing Economic Backbone

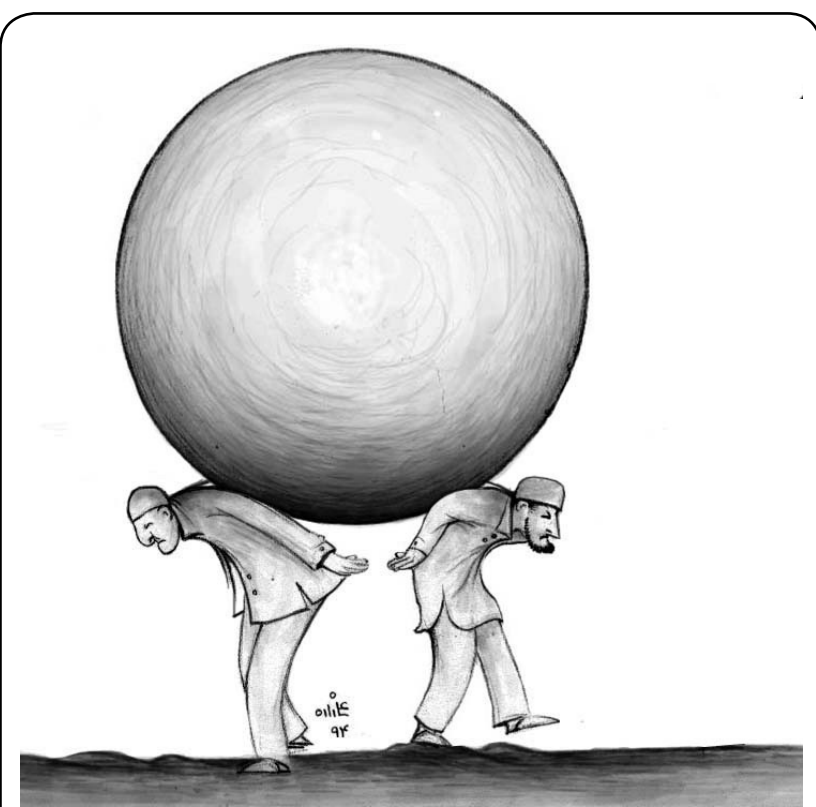
Afghanistan suffers the most at the endless bloody conflict. Almost four decades of war have earned nothing except ruins, countless miseries and devastation for poor masses. The year's long war destroyed economic infrastructures completely and dragged Afghanistan towards annulment. No significant progress has been made albeit elongated international efforts to revive Afghanistan's economy improve the living standard of people and create greater job opportunities provided that the menace of corruption constantly depleted the rate of progress is minimized. The most prior reason behind the failure to strengthen the backbone of Afghan economy is the severe security problems and deep-rooted corruption.

Reportedly, After Taliban regime the United States dispensed \$1 trillion, including some \$110 billion in aid aimed at rebuilding one of the poorest countries on earth. Undeniably, Afghanistan's economy is the worst hit by consecutive quacks of corruption. Unfortunately, Afghanistan corrupt element are not left alone -there are major US organizations who are alleged embezzling fund outlaid to the war torn country. It is confirmed by head of Special Inspector General of Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) John Sopko, saying U.S. government is partly to blame for the misused funds. His findings holds, corruption in Afghanistan is the major challenge facing the United States in its reconstruction endeavors. With Washington set to send billions of dollars in fresh aid to Afghanistan despite the military drawdown, the U.S. official in charge of auditing assistance programs said that "it's not too late" to address the fraud and mismanagement that has bedeviled the 14-year effort to rebuild the country. In the report SIGAR has underlined some US's fraudulent projects including a compressed natural gas filling station in Afghanistan's far north costing \$43 million to build without assessing the need. Identically a warehouse worth of \$36 million was built in the main Marine Corps base in Afghanistan of no use at all. Other programs have suffered from outright fraud. Earlier, SIGAR reported that one current and three former U.S. soldiers had been sentenced to four to eight years in prison by a North Carolina court for their involvement in a bribery scheme in southern Kandahar province that resulted in the theft of more than \$10 million worth of fuel. Having had suffered manipulation of authority and resources unquestioned, emboldens the corrupt elements in both US and Afghanistan carry out their evil practices undeterred.

The soaring corruption and lack of accountability in Afghanistan has melted the trust of international community away to openheartedly extending their financial support. The intensifying war with the Taliban and the withdrawal of aid groups and investors has devastated Afghanistan's economy and sent unemployment soaring to 24 percent. The increasing unemployment has pushed youth to join the insurgency out of economic desperation, that help Taliban expand its footprint deep in the country. Eventually, as long as the problem of security and corruption persist, there seems to be a declining chance of betterment, development and prosperity. This is a grave state of worsening affair -there is greater likelihood of declining economy, elongating the financial needs of Afghanistan. Seeing at the negligence of government to tackle the peril of corruption hard the already wrecked economy of Afghanistan, the thought of betterment fades away. This is an undeniable fact either government is unwilling or hapless before powerful power abusers -despite the fact, president is apparently showing interest in lodging cases against power abusers.

Formerly, a fraudulence report surfaced when a member of Baghlan provincial council accused the provincial high peace council to have spent more than \$13 million as part of government's peace initiatives since the peace council officially started its activities in the province, which were confirmed to be unsuccessful and much of the money is said to be embezzled but evade accountability. Similarly, the governments formerly launched the 'Smart City Township' Project was struck by. Surprisingly, the projects are handed over to those individuals whose fame in manipulating public offices could not be earthed. Reportedly, Khalilullah Ferozi, one of the biggest convicts in Kabul Bank scandal, shares a big part in the project. In the wake of renowned bank scandals and financial embezzlements, the international institutions had lost their confidence, undertaking any consignment with Afghan banks and donor countries hesitant to grant financial supports to poverty stricken country. Seemingly, the government was trying to trial those accountable persons who have manipulated their position of trusted.

Despite these measures the corrupt officials enjoys misappropriating their positions, provided the system of general amnesty to potential power abuser are chained fast to the ground, given number of influential personalities involved in money embezzlement from public offices, heinous crime against citizens and power misuse were given amnesty without being subjected to strict measures entailing answerability. This attitude of government had discouraged new investments with remnants intended to downsizing and withdrawing a dire omen for progress of country needs immediate reversal with practical measures. This implies that the expanding role of government in development has placed some officials in a monopolistic position and has enhanced the opportunities for unlimited administrative misappropriation.



Insurgents Must be Prosecuted

By Hujjatullah Zia

The globally systemic crimes have prompted the world to tackle the issue in one way or another. As a result, the 1909 Shanghai Opium Commission was a multinational drug-control initiative. The participants passed resolutions urging national governments to enact measures to curb opium smoking in their countries and ban the export of opium to countries that prohibited importation. Moreover, the United Nations Convention was held against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances in Vienna on December 20, 1988. These commissions were intergovernmental reaction against crimes.

Besides many international challenges, terrorism is a great crisis which blackmails the world. The ideological stereotypes and scholastic fundamentalism enhance the number of insurgent groups. For instance, the self-style Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) is the product of extreme beliefs. Similarly, the Taliban's regime from 1996 - 2001 ruled Afghanistan under the aegis of holy banner. The ideologue insurgents, which have been and are vehicles for political masterminds, were incubated in madrasahs to be used as means of pressurizing states.

Currently, the ISIL's vague policy has generated a great turmoil around the globe. Alleging to establish "Islamic Caliphate" on the surface of earth via "Jihad", the ISIL has violated the territorial integrity of many countries and global security is left at the mercy of terrorism and militancy. In other words, the recent terrorist attacks in Paris, as ISIL claimed the responsibility, and Mali - which led to the death and injuries of more than 300 people - reflect that civilians are highly vulnerable to terrorism without being involved in politics. The indiscriminate killing of non-combatants carried out by militant outfits is a matter of great concern for the world and has to be tackled promptly.

The International Criminal Court (ICC), which began functioning on July 01, 2002, is the court of last resort for prosecution of genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity. Crimes against humanity are defined as acts "committed as part of a widespread or systematic attack directed against any civilian population, with knowledge of the attack".

Moreover, war crimes include willful killings, torture, inhumane treatment, willfully causing great suffering, denying a fair trial, unlawful deportation and transfer, unlawful confinement, taking hostages

Since terrorists commit all the mentioned felonies, they are widely involved in war crimes and have to be prosecuted by ICC. The international community should have pursued and prosecuted the insurgents and terrorist networks, mainly the founders, supporters and leaders, long ago. Undeniably, the countries plagued by insurgency and rebel such as Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan are un-

able to bring the militants to justice and the ICC must take step in this regard. Al-Qaeda, Taliban and like minded groups perpetrated outrageous crimes in Afghanistan. Despite being involved in genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity, Osama, the founder and head of the Islamist militant group al-Qaeda, was killed without trial in Abbottabad of Pakistan on May 02, 2011 by United States Navy SEALs of the U.S. Naval Special Warfare Development Group. Although, legal and ethical aspects of the killing, such as his not being taken alive despite being unarmed, were questioned by Amnesty International, nonetheless, it remained unanswered. Similarly, Mullah Omar passed away in Pakistan two years ago without being brought to justice.

Afghanistan was the victim of tremendous war crimes and crimes against humanity throughout the history. The rights and dignity of large number of people, including women and children, were violated not only during the Taliban's regime but also when the former Soviet Union occupied Afghanistan and infringed the territorial integrity. Within these historical wars, a great number of people, including women and children, were massacred and buried in mass graves and many more were amputated by land mines even in post-war period. Were the perpetrators brought to justice? The Taliban's ragtag militants, who were reorganized across the border after the collapse of their regime, are still involved in acts of terror in Afghanistan. They target the combatants and non-combatants alike without paying heed to national and international law. They pressurize the democratic state through terrorizing and shedding the blood of citizens. The civilian death toll has increased on a large scale in recent months and people flock to foreign countries to breathe a sigh of relief in a secure atmosphere. In a nutshell, the criminals are at loose without being pursued by regional or international criminal courts.

The world's criminal justice system should "reduce crime by bringing more offences to justice, and to raise public confidence that the system is fair and will deliver for the law-abiding citizen". After all, the ISIL, operating under Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, has gained a firm foothold in the country and worsened the security situation. The militants stoke sectarianism through hostage-taking and murdering ethnic groups and rebel against the state in one way or another. However, the international community, mainly ICC, give no signal to these worldwide criminals.

Criminal justice plays a huge role throughout society as a whole in any place. Afghan government should adopt strict criminal justice regarding the militants. Those who are involved in terrorism, drug trafficking, etc. must be brought to justice by the state courts. In case of not being tried in the country, the international courts should prosecute them for committing intergovernmental crimes.

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Superstitions - The Illogical Beliefs

By Dilawar Sherzai

The world is replete with different sorts of thoughts, ideas, feelings and beliefs. These thoughts, ideas and beliefs are basically the endeavors to understand the world or the different phenomena in the world. Since the very beginning of their life on earth human beings have wondered about different things existing in the world and the different incidents and phenomena occurring around. This has led to the formation of different sets of thoughts, ideas and beliefs. The same thoughts, ideas and beliefs have afterwards formed the ideologies, isms and religions. In this particular journey of understanding the world and life human beings have not always been logical and reasonable. Therefore, there have been sets of beliefs and thoughts that are much distant from the logical interpretations and yet they exist in human societies as a major portion of their cultural, traditional and religious beliefs. Superstitions are also the types of beliefs that are not based on logical interpretations. They are based on beliefs which are supernatural and are not necessarily governed by physical laws. They basically try to prognosticate the happenings in daily life on the basis of certain incidents that have already occurred. In this way the result of a particular happening or incident is necessitated by an earlier happening not based on the theory of cause and effect and they, in scientific interpretations, are much apart from each other. The clear example of a superstition is an omen. For example, if a black cat crosses your way it is considered a bad omen and is believed to bring bad luck, though in logical sense both the mentioned incident and its result are not related to each other clearly.

Superstitions exist in most of the cultures of the world. They are able to make their way through the generations as a part of inherited beliefs. Superstitions are also linked with the religions, but they are not the production of religions. However, there are superstitions existing in most of the religions of the world. Further, the religious people are more likely to accept the superstitions than the non-religious people. One of the basic reasons of the transmission of superstitions and their survival is through the sanctity that is preserved for traditional values and the interests that are maintained for the folk stories and legends. In addition, there is a tendency in most of the people not to question the superstitions that are transferred to them. At the same time it must also be kept in mind that most of the superstitions are taught to the people as a part of their nourishment, while they are too small to differentiate between what is logical and what is not. So, they are already inculcated in them by the time they become young. It can also be observed that superstitions are more common in backward societies that are marked with religious fundamentalism and hard-line traditional values. There is no need to utilize energy in proving that superstitions have link with reality. They are totally based on supernatural beliefs and are never linked with reasonable course of happening. On certain occasions superstitions are proved correct accidentally or by chance but such occasions do not stand correct on all

occasions and do not qualify to be considered as facts. Superstitions may affect people in different ways. First of all the most dominating impact of superstitions is that it keeps the people away from finding out the real cause of a particular happening. Relying on the given interpretations of the happenings they do not strive for the truth and remain unbothered.

This does not guarantee any struggle on their part for the improvement of their ideas and the eradication of false ideas from society. Moreover, the minds that believe in superstitions can be easily utilized by those who have their business based on such superstitious beliefs. Afghan society is a kind of society that is marked with extremist religious beliefs and traditional values. There is great shortage of analytical way of thinking in ordinary life. Most of the Afghan people do not bother to challenge the superstitious ideas that are transferred to them from their ancestors. They believe on them blindly and even suggest others and their next generations to keep them intact.

Afghan women in particular are overwhelmingly influenced by the superstitions. Because of their limited exposure to the external world and modern thinking their sets of beliefs are dominantly marked with the superstitions. The dominating role of superstitions in Afghan society provides a golden chance to those who know how to utilize them to earn money. Traditional Mullahs in this regard play a dominant role. They hijack the superstitious thinking and keep on filling their pockets. We can find a lot of people in our society seeking for the services of Mullahs for making their present problems disappear or guaranteeing a prosperous future.

Mullahs in this regard give them talisman which they have to tie around their necks or keep them in their pockets or even put them in their pillows and they are thought to bring good luck to them. If by chance the wearer of the talisman is gifted in some way or the other, the Mullahs become famous and have lucrative business. No one even dare to question their qualification or understanding regarding religious teachings. Moreover, there are not many people who dare to question whether such acts are religious or not.

Superstitions are undoubtedly illogical and take us away from reality, making us create a world of imaginations where things happen on the basis of false interpretations. Superstitions should be completely neglected and must be questioned seriously, especially in the societies like Afghanistan. Our people need to have proper understanding of the matters concerning their life and society and have to carry out necessary measures to curb them. They have to develop a scientific approach, wherein they have to challenge the superstitious beliefs that are transmitted to them from different sources, most of which are untrustworthy. They also have to keep in mind that superstitions are not appreciated by religion Islam.

Islam has clearly asked human beings to think appropriately before forming a belief. There are three stages in Islam that a Muslim has to go through before establishing firm beliefs. They are Ilim-ul-Yaqin, Air-ul-Yaqin and Haq-ul-Yaqin. Without going through these three stages Dilawar Sherzai is the permanent writer of the Daily Outlook Afghanistan. He can be reached at email.urya@gmail.com

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