

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


Daily Outlook
 AFGHANISTAN
 The Leading Independent Newspaper

October 14, 2019

Why Equality Before the Law Matters for Afghan Citizens

Equality before the law ensures for a transgression of the law, the son of a member of the parliament will be equally punished as the unfortunate homeless man. If the homeless man commits a crime and gets a sentence of life imprisonment, the son of a member of the parliament must also receive a sentence of life imprisonment for the same offense.

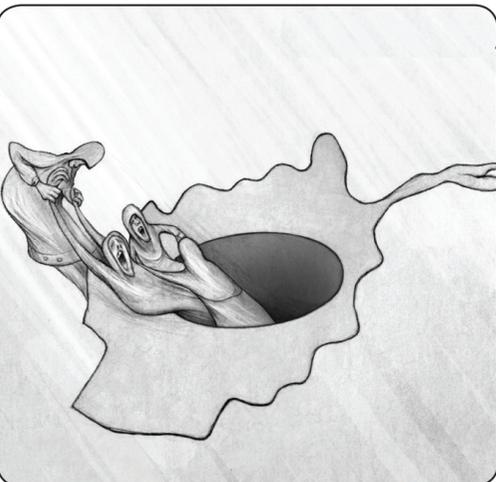
It also ensures and guarantees equal rights of the citizens in the society. Equal rights simply are what one citizen can do, another citizen can do. For example, if citizen A can open a university, then the law must guarantee that same right to citizen B to operate a university if they have equal rights.

In terms of access to opportunities, all people have the rights. Equality before the law ensures that those with qualifications, no matter where they got those qualifications can practice their profession and their customers will be satisfied or not. If qualifications are from another society, freedom will ensure that they can prove themselves quickly by writing exams similar to those written in the society. When engineers, work as drivers that society cannot claim to believe in equality, it would be telling lies, that society loathes equality before the law.

If equality before the law is not guaranteed by a respected constitution, then there will be conflict in the concerned society. Because in such a society, most of the citizens will conclude that the law only ensures the rights of a specific group. In such a society, there is no equality but discrimination that has been imposed by the law on the people. Overtime, the system becomes clogged and special interest groups become entrenched. A society that does not recognize the humanity of all beings, do not believes in freedom and equality before the law.

Thus, inequality before the law recognizes that all do not have something to contribute to society and they must be hindered. However, humans must choose how best to contribute to society. Such a law ensures humans use what they know to survive, the right to use their knowledge and their judgment. The knowledge base will grow at a faster rate as obstacles to the mind are removed in the society.

Equality before the law is very important for Afghan citizens. Most ethnic groups of Afghanistan have suffered discrimination due to lack of equality in the Afghan society in the past. In fact, inequality in Afghanistan has been one of the main causes of social conflicts in the country; Social scholars believe that inequality has been the main cause of the 1990s civil war in Afghanistan; they also hold that inequality is blamed for remaining Afghanistan as an underdeveloped country. Therefore, All Afghan citizens shall respect the law and shall be treated equally before the law. If they are treated unequally, we shall expect rule of law in the country. And if there is no rule of law we shall experience continued conflicts in the Afghan society.



China – From a Backward Country to World’s Second Largest Economy

By: Hujjatullah Zia

Within the past seven decades, China has made great strides, especially after adopting its reform and opening-up policy. In 1949, Mao Zedong stood in Tiananmen Square in Beijing urging a war-ravaged state into a new era with a founding speech and a somewhat plodding parade that could muster only 17 planes for the flyby.

This year, Chinese President Xi Jinping stood in the same spot in Tiananmen Square, where Chairman Mao announced the founding of the People’s Republic of China (PRC), and delivered his opening speech. Subsequently, a strong military parade featuring sophisticated weapons was held. It was followed by civilian parade narrating China’s economic and political success.

Xi said that the founding of the PRC had reversed the country’s plight of poverty and weakness, of being bullied and humiliated for over 100 years since the advent of modern times, and that the Chinese nation had since embarked on the path toward national rejuvenation.

Over the past 70 years, China has grown into the world’s second largest economy, the largest manufacturer, and the largest trader in goods, with its GDP exceeding 90 trillion yuan, about 13.4 trillion USD.

According to China’s Ministry of Commerce, China’s foreign trade in goods skyrocketed from USD1.1 billion to USD4.6 trillion, which makes it number one in the world. Moreover, its inbound and outbound investment, which was almost nonexistent 70 years ago, has increased to USD138.3 and USD143 billion respectively, both number two in the world.

The Ministry of Commerce added that China for many consecutive years had contributed more than 30 percent of global economic growth serving as source of power for world economic development. And China held the China International Import Expo to build a public platform for the international community to safeguard the multilateral trading system and support economic globalization.

The ministry vowed to adhere to the basic national policy of opening-up, mutual benefit, win for all, and common development, and ensure stable foreign trade and investment so as to realize the Chinese Dream of national rejuvenation.

Regarding ecological conservation and pollution control, Chinese officials of Ministry of Ecology and Environment said in a press conference last week that China adhered to the principle of “conservation first, natural restoration as the main approach” and had carried out a series of major

ecological conservation projects such as natural forest conservation and the Grain-for-Green Project. According to China’s Ministry of Ecology and Environment, NASA satellite data showed that in the last 20 years, China contributed around 25 percent to global lead area increase, more than any other country in the world. It added, “We have contributed over 50% of the phase-out of ozone-depleting substances by developing countries, making us the biggest contributor to ozone layer protection in the world.”

Enjoying the fruit of reform and opening-up within the last 40 years, Chinese officials have reiterated opening-up policy, promoting unimpeded trade, building an open platform for mutual benefit, and working with more countries to achieve great result. Chinese officials, including President Xi, reiterated the policy of opening wider to the outside world on multiple occasions so as to promote both commercial and cultural exchanges and people-to-people contacts.

Speaking in the media forum themed “China in My Eyes: 70 year of Impressions and Reflections”, Hua Chunying, China’s Director-General of Information Department of MFA, said that the national policy of reform and opening had been the code of China’s progress. Stressing “generosity and inclusiveness”, he added that true cooperation relied on inclusive development.

China is also the largest trading partner for Afghanistan. I pointed out in the forum that high-ranking official visits between China and Afghanistan, signing strategic cooperation declarations and agreement indicated the expansion of friendly relations between the two countries. I added that the two countries extended their relations in various areas, and then both Kabul and Beijing were determined to promote their bilateral relations based on mutual trust and respect. I stated that China was “a distinct neighbor and honest partner for Afghanistan”.

China has made remarkable achievements, especially in terms of trade and economy, within the last 70 years and can be a role model for developing countries. Afghanistan is one of the countries to learn from China, mainly its reform and opening-up policy.

Meanwhile, Chinese officials hold press conferences to describe their monthly and yearly achievements and answer to the public questions. Afghan officials have to learn to answer to the media and nation through holding regular press conferences so that people are not kept in the dark.

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Why Turkey Took the Fight to Syria

By: Mr. Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu

ANKARA, Turkey – It is dismaying that Turkey’s military operation in northeastern Syria is being spun in the American news media as an attack on Kurds, as weakening the fight against the remnants of Daesh (or the so-called Islamic State) and hurting America’s credibility with its allies. I am compelled to set the record straight because the 67-year-old NATO alliance that Turkey has with the United States is not temporary, tactical nor transactional.

Turkey started the operation to ensure its national security by removing the danger posed by terrorists along its border regions. This operation will liberate Syrians living there from the tyranny of terrorist organizations and eliminate the threat to Syria’s territorial integrity and political unity. These two developments would facilitate the safe and voluntary return of displaced Syrians.

Turkey has never accepted a corridor run by a terrorist group on its border. We have repeatedly proposed establishing a safe zone, including at the United Nations General Assembly. We have called on the United States to stop providing material support to terrorists.

But the American security bureaucracy couldn’t bring itself to disengage from the group, known for short as the P.Y.D./Y.P.G. This is even though American officials, including a secretary of defense, have admitted that the P.Y.D./Y.P.G., which forms the core of Syrian Democratic Forces, is inseparable from the Kurdistan Workers’ Party, or the P.K.K., in Turkey, which is recognized as a terrorist organization by the United States, the European Union and NATO.

Our American interlocutors seemed to agree that those forces needed to be removed from along our borders and we had even agreed on a timeline. Most recently, military-to-military talks in August ended with a mutual commitment to establish a safe zone from which the P.Y.D./Y.P.G. was supposed to be removed. But the United States did not see this through and gave us the strong impression that it was playing for time as the terrorist group entrenched itself even deeper in Syria.

The P.Y.D./Y.P.G. may present itself to the world as the group that fought Daesh, but it also smuggles explosives to the P.K.K. by digging tunnels into Turkish soil. We have found its members ushering Daesh prisoners toward Turkey. And in November 2017, the BBC reported on a secret deal under which the Syrian Democratic Forces arranged transport and allowed hundreds of Daesh terrorists to escape during the coalition operation to liberate the city of Raqqa.

We had to act. Several voices expressed concerns about the safety of the Kurdish population in Syria. I want to repeat and emphasize that Turkey’s fight is not against the Kurds. Our fight is against the terrorists. Any description of the situation as “Turks against Kurds” is malicious and false. Kurds are not our enemies.

Our target is the complex of terror run together by the Kurdistan Workers’ Party and the P.Y.D./Y.P.G., which have recruited child soldiers, intimidated dissidents, altered the demography and forced conscription in areas under their control.

The Kurds, Arabs, Christians and others who have been suffering under the P.Y.D./Y.P.G. yoke will be better off when freed. The World Council of Aramaean Christians have been asserting this point insistently.

Before proceeding with this operation, we have taken all steps to minimize

risk to civilians and prevent a humanitarian crisis. Over the past several years, Turkey has provided shelter to large numbers of refugees from northeastern Syria, including Arabs, Kurds and Turkmens.

Most of them, including over 300,000 Kurds, were driven from their homes by the terrorists. We have extended to them safety, shelter and livelihood in Turkey. We have shared our bread and the benefits of our public services. Turkey is the biggest humanitarian spender in the world and host to most refugees worldwide.

Turkey has established a reliable pattern in the last three years. Turkey’s operations in northwestern Syria – in 2016-7 in and around Jarabulus and 2018 in Afrin – cleared a vast area of the terrorist presence. In the aftermath of those operations the communities that suffered under the terrorists started living in peace and benefiting from orderly governance. Some 365,000 refugees returned to their home in northwestern Syria.

We have instituted public services, including schools for over 230,000 students. Six hospitals with 55 ambulances employ over 2,000 Syrian and Turkish personnel in liberated areas in northwestern Syria. Scores of recreational and sports facilities were built, including a soccer stadium. Businesses were rehabilitated and a border gate was opened to facilitate trade. Agriculture and animal husbandry started receiving material support.

Compare Turkey’s previous operations to the destruction of Raqqa by the coalition and you will see how carefully we manage counterterrorism operations. The lessons learned in those operations will help us make it even better this time around.

The P.K.K. and the P.Y.D./Y.P.G. have been blackmailing the global community by claiming that the fight against Daesh would falter without them. But the fight against those brutal terrorists will not falter, especially if our allies stay the course and cooperate with Turkey. We are the only nation that put boots on the ground against Daesh.

The fight against Daesh and other terrorist organizations will have to continue with everyone’s contributions and cooperation. Several European countries have been reluctant to allow the return of their citizens who joined the group. However, wishing away the problem cannot be the policy. They must shoulder their share of the burden.

We in Turkey are convinced that we are paving the way for the Syrian refugees to return home and ensuring that Daesh and other terrorist groups will not re-emerge.

I am aware that safe and voluntary return home of the Syrian refugees needs to be carefully planned and managed. This has to proceed in accordance with international law and in cooperation with the relevant United Nations agencies. Syria is home to several ethnicities and viable and representative local councils need to be established until a political solution is found to the Syrian conflict.

After our last counterterrorism operation, in areas where the Kurds were in majority, Turkey facilitated the creation of local governing councils with a Kurdish majority to reflect the population.

The Syrians want to go home now. They have suffered more than enough. We are taking the initiative to help create the peaceful conditions that are necessary for the homecoming of millions of refugees. Contrary to the prevailing misapprehensions, our operation will help address the humanitarian dimension of the problem, contribute to the preservation of the unity of the country and add to the political process.

Mevlut Cavusoglu is the foreign minister of Turkey.


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