

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



October 16, 2016

World Food Day

October 16th is celebrated around the world as the World Food Day. The day is to honor the date of the founding of Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations in 1945. It is celebrated by many organizations concerned with food security, like, World Food Program (WFP) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development. The basic objective of the day is to highlight the importance of the food security as there are millions of people around the world who do not get enough food to live alive or healthy. This year the theme of the day is "Climate is changing. Food and Agriculture must too." The theme basically emphasizes that one of the main issues pertaining to climate change is food security. The poorest people in the world, who mostly include farmers, fishers and pastoralists, are being hit the hardest by rise in temperatures and frequency in weather-related disasters. Meanwhile, there is a continuous increase in world population, which is expected to reach 9.6 billion by 2050. So as to meet the demand of such a large number of people agriculture and food systems will have to adapt in accordance to the changes in climate and be more productive, resilient and sustainable. Without looking at the future, even the present scenario shows a very dismal picture in some parts of the world. In the backward countries like Afghanistan, food security is a serious issue and many people, particularly during the winters and in case of any natural calamity, suffer from lack of enough food. The agricultural sector in Afghanistan has not been able to fulfill the requirements of the people as it has not been given proper attention by the concerned authorities. Mostly, this sector is highly dependent on the individual farmers and landowners. Most of them grow as much as they require themselves. Further, the growth of narcotics in the country leaves little room for the lands to be used for the cultivation of other necessary items that can fulfill the food requirement of the people. The government does not have any comprehensive strategy regarding the development of the agricultural sector on the basis of modern techniques. Therefore a large number of people, each year, have to look at the other countries for help in order to have food to eat. The international organizations in this regard have been fulfilling the food requirements of the country to a large extent, thus making the burden of the government much lighter. But this sort of help can never be permanent and it has already been facing difficulties as the donor countries that have been sponsoring such programs have decreased their contributions to a certain extent. Estimates show that there would be almost two million people throughout Afghanistan who would be in need of extra food support starting from now. The shortage of food is no doubt the result of poor production on the part of the agricultural sector and the dearth of rainfall that has been persistently hitting the country and the trouble is doubled as there has not been an active irrigation system to bring the country's water supply in use by the agricultural sector. Wheat, which is the main crop that can provide ready food to the people, has been affected badly and what remains of it is a poor and insufficient production. Some studies show that there are about seven million people in Afghanistan who suffer from the food insecurity. Food insecurity means that there is no surety that this number of people is really going to have food requirements. And unfortunately, the alternatives are not ready as well. The security concerns and the hardships during the cold weather make the supply of the food from other parts of the country to the regions of the starvation a Herculean task. The food shortage itself is a sure problem, but there are many other problems that are directly linked with the hunger that results from such shortages. Many social evils will find their way in the society and will further deteriorate the country's socio-political scenario. More people would be involved in crimes in order to feed themselves and their families. Two major problems in the country have been greatly strengthened by the continuous hunger and poverty. The first one that has been threatening the whole world is the growing terrorism in the region. The people suffering from hunger and poverty are very much likely to become part of terrorist groups that are ready to provide them their living. The second problem that has made the country much notorious like terrorism is the production and trafficking of narcotics. Afghanistan is considered one of the leading countries in this regard. And now the phenomenon has become a part of organized crime in the country, with the involvement of national and international mafia. The poor and hungry people of the country are ready to become a part of this menace instead of suffering because of intense deprivation. They either become a part of its production or trafficking as they are paid handsomely in this regard. Further, the demand of the narcotics also makes many people think of using their lands for poppy cultivation rather than deciding to grow the crops that can yield food for the people.



When Law is not Respected

By Hujjatullah Zia

Parliament is considered the beating heart of democracy and established to protect the rights and dignity of a nation and decentralize the power of state. Members of Parliament (MPs), who represent the nation, will have to approve laws based on society's religious tenets, moral norms and social values. Legal defects and lack of respect to citizens' rights and liberty will result in political and social challenges in a community. The authority of people's representatives does not necessarily belong to legislation but also monitoring the government. The Constitution of Afghanistan states in article 89, "The House of People shall have the authority to establish a special commission, on the proposal of one third of its members, to review as well as investigate the actions of the Government." Moreover, MPs are able to decide about the elucidation session of ministers and even the president is "responsible to the nation as well as the House of People". The theory of "segregation of powers" suggests that centralization of power will lead to corruption and absolute monarchy. When all power is in the realm of a single entity in a government, corruption and dictatorship will emerge. Based on this theory, it was the unlimited and absolute power of the kings, in the past, that conducted to violence and bloodshed and the rights and liberty of the people were violated on a large scale. With the centralized power, the legislative, executive and judiciary powers are in the hands of a single entity and the ruler will not deem himself/herself responsible to the nation. Since the violent practices of kings and rulers outraged human conscience, the theory of segregation of powers was introduced to tackle the issue. In democratic system, the segregation of powers is a key element and parliament, which reflects the national will, is the heart of democracy. The legislative, executive and judiciary powers, which form a government, will have to move parallel to one another and share an organic relation so as to ensure peace and stability and protect the fundamental rights of citizens. In other words, since these three powers pursue the same objectives, they should not move to different directions. The legislative power will supervise the activities of ministers (legislative power) so as to make sure that the government fulfills its commitments. Although the segregation of powers prevents from the centralization of power, it does not necessarily mean that the state will not show inclination to corruption or injustice. After the downfall of the Taliban's regime, Afghanistan moved towards democratization and the first round of parliament was inaugurated in the solar year of 1384 after

an election, in which a large number of men and women participated. Moreover, the second round was also inaugurated by former President Hamid Karzai in 1389. Despite the third round of presidential election, however, the third parliamentary election is yet to be held. The Constitution states in article 83, "The work period of the House of People shall terminate, after the disclosure of the results of the elections, on the 1st of Saratan of the 5th year and the new Parliament shall commence work. The elections for members of the House of People shall be held 30 to 60 days prior to the expiration of the term of the House of People." Hence, the second round of parliament was terminated more than a year ago and currently it has no legal basis to continue. After all, one of the President's duties mentioned in article 64 is supervising the implementation of the Constitution. In spite of the establishment of democratic administration, undemocratic practices and lack of law enforcement prevail in the country. To one's unmitigated chagrin, the government, which is supposed to supervise the law, violates the Constitution - this is a slap in the face of democracy. In addition, the National House, where nation's representatives are to raise their voice against injustice and ensure law enforcement, has no legal basis. Is parliament really the "beating heart of democracy"? If it is so, democracy - in Afghanistan - needs heart surgery. In such a case, it is no surprise to see Afghanistan on the list of world's most corrupt countries. When law is not implemented by executive power and government machinery suffers from political syndrome, democracy is deemed moribund. It is believed that lack of law enforcement is one of the highly serious issues in the country which hampers the process of democratization and leads to greater challenges. Since the National House lacks legal basis, there remain civil society and media to monitor the government and put pressure on it so as to act upon law. In case of violating law by authorities, the civil society is to organize peaceful demonstrations and media should reflect the voice of people. To strengthen the nascent democracy and protect the rights and freedoms of the nation, the state will have to not only implement the law but also abide by law. In short, the bulk of the challenges lie in the machinery of government. All the three aforementioned powers have the responsibility of establishing suitable law, putting it to force and prosecuting the violators to form a democratic society void of violence and bloodshed. Since law is the backbone of a society, lack of respect to it will pave the way for political, social and economic challenges - as Afghanistan is wrestling with them. *Hujjatullah Zia is the permanent writer of the Daily Outlook Afghanistan. He can be reached at zia_hujjat@yahoo.com*

Reconsidering Polices!

By Mohammad Zahir Akbari

Alexander Mantytskiy, the Russian envoy to Kabul, last Wednesday said the United States and NATO have failed in their mission to ensure security and rid the country of terrorists. He also said that reports about a confrontation between Washington and Moscow over Afghanistan and other issues are not true. He stated that Russia is concerned about insecurity in the north of Afghanistan and that the increase in military relations between Islamabad and Moscow is not linked to any other country. "They are trying to get rid of all guilt including worsening of the political and military situation in Afghanistan and their failure to win this war despite 15 years of NATO and U.S presence in the country," he said. In response to a question about Russia's relations with Pakistan, he said: "It is a bilateral cooperation and I don't understand why it is a concern for you as a reporter or for your countrymen... We don't speak about your cooperation for example with American side. We just support it. But we want your American friends to do more here to defeat terrorism and narcotics." Russia is trying to grab the attention of Taliban in order to address Central Asia's issues. It is trying to avoid Taliban from getting close to the Central Asia, because if the Taliban went there then Russia will be affected by the situation," said a military affairs analyst. These are expressed after launch of a new wave of bloody murders across the country, such as Kunduz, Helmand, Bulkh, Uruzgan, Kabul, Farah and in particular the north parts of the country. In fact, the unprecedented grow of insecurity challenges not raised concerns of some neighboring but also Afghan people. From Daily incidence such as kidnapping, armed robberies, attacks on worshipers, universities, passengers, men, women and children, to occupying districts, provinces and killing hundreds at once became common and rampant. Gunmen kill people and burgle homes in broad daylight, but no serious strategy taken to help improve the situation. On Wednesday, again, dozens of defenceless worshipers, women and children lost their lives in Kabul and Balkh province as there is no security police; these show that Afghanistan is suffering unforgettable challenges in its recent history. The failure of government to prevent such incidents is not the only challenge; their irresponsible behaviour, their shameless repeated condolences, their justifications, their repeated negligence in the aftermath of explosions is also of frustrating to citizens. So many times government has established special committee promising to report their performance but non-has been fulfilled yet. People in Afghanistan are using opium to block their pain; the pain of bloodshed, hunger, sickness, losing their sons, daughters and men. Most of the addict women are desperate to blunt the trauma of endless war, mental trauma and unknown fu-

ture. To look back at the past, it was a decade and half ago that US-led International forces intervened in Afghanistan after Al-Qaeda suicide bomber targeted the World Trade Centre in New York. On Contrary to their nature, the people of Afghanistan who are viewed as the destroyers of empires welcomed Americans for deposing the Taliban and their slogans. Afghans accepted the UN Security Council Resolution on Afghanistan, and joined the democratic process with the hope of a bright future. Afghans, which were tired of war and oppression, expected that the US involvement in Afghanistan would liberate them from the evil of terrorists, while also helping them have a prosperous life. Afghan side also had vested interests in the goals America was pretending for its presence in Afghanistan. The fight against terrorism and narcotics, and the rehabilitation of infrastructure destroyed by war were the goals in Afghanistan. These were the very issues that Afghans also wished, and thought to be in their interests. Afghans, and even according to former diplomats, the Taliban did not want their country to be used against other countries. Furthermore, Afghans traditionally do not like the illegal drugs, and view opium as haram (forbidden in Islam) so that is why the US motto of poppy eradication was welcome. The renovation of infrastructure ruined in wars, and becoming an economically self-sufficient nation were the wishes of the war-stricken Afghans, which encouraged them to accept the foreign forces presence in Afghanistan. Consequently, the presence of international community lasted for 15 years under these three slogans and commitments: counter terrorism, narcotics and reconstruction of war-torn infrastructure while there is no tangible and fundamental improvement at all. Afghanistan is more insecure than it was during the initial years, and there are more terrorist groups active than ever. The cultivation of narcotics has increased by many folds, and Afghanistan is considered as the world's biggest producer of drugs. Although there is a little progress made in economic infrastructure and welfare, it is not fundamental because 39 percent of Afghans still live below the poverty line. On the whole, growing Insecurity, poverty, refugee problems, administrative corruption and etc are considered as an achievement of past 15 years. Afghan people welcomed and will welcome if international partners to pursue its interests in Afghanistan through peaceful means other than its current policies and the prolongation of conflict. Otherwise, not only Russian representative but all Afghan people and the regional countries will remember the failure, the wrong policies and will lose the confidence for ever. *Mohammad Zahir Akbari is the newly emerging writer of the Daily Outlook Afghanistan. He can be reached at mohammadzahirakbari@gmail.com*



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