

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



October 17, 2015

Our Ethical Values

It can be observed in both the individual and social lives that the actions are mostly considered in terms of whether they are right or wrong. An individual, in most of the cases, while performing actions, tries to gauge it in perspective of his individual concept or the social concept of right or wrong. Same is the case with society; while analyzing the character and the actions of an individual the social beings try to tally them in accordance to the determined concepts of right and wrong. These concepts of rights and wrongs basically form an integral part of ethics.

Ethics, in wider perspective, is a complete branch of knowledge and can be easily placed in moral philosophy. It involves systematizing, defending and recommending concepts of right and wrong conduct. It is important to understand what the vague and qualitative terms like 'right' and 'wrong' really mean. In most of the cases these concepts are derived from the social norms and traditions. 'Right' is the action that is socially acceptable and in accordance to the social values, while 'wrong' is a conduct that is adverse to the socially accepted behavior.

The important point, however, is to determine whether the social norms and values are humane and they keep in consideration the basic human rights. As it can be observed that in a given society a particular conduct may be socially acceptable and may be considered right but in accordance to the basic human rights they may be very discriminating; as can be observed in some of the backward societies of the world. For example, discriminatory behavior in some of the societies may be considered right but it cannot be considered humane. The question, then, is whether such actions can be considered as ethical or not.

With the globalization, there has been development of universal ethics, which, though to a limited extent, tends to invigorate the conduct based on the universal concepts of human rights and betterment. The universal ethics consider the actions that harm other human beings as wrong and the ones that benefit others as right. However, it is very difficult to promulgate and implement universal ethics to all the societies of the world as the diversities are immense in different societies, mostly because of uneven development of social lives and different cultures and religious beliefs.

Religion and culture have been the most dominant sources of ethics. The followers of different religions derive most of their ethical values from the basic teaching of their religions which are present in their holy scriptures or from the lives and behaviors of their Prophets. In this regard, most of the religions of the world clearly define the behavior that is ethically acceptable to them. They have their own systems of reward and punishment, which is to ensure that the ethical behavior is in accordance to the teachings.

Laws, mostly in the modern societies, also try to ensure ethical behavior. Mostly, laws are made by the political and legal institutions, which happen to be the part of society wherein they exist; therefore, they strive to keep in consideration the society's ethical values. Though they have been very influential in the modern societies, laws are not able to implement the ethical values to a large extent and may also contradict them in certain cases. Moreover, there are limitations of the legal systems to implement the law in its true nature.

Though societies have large impact on the lives of the individuals, their behaviors and conducts are not mostly determined by the ethical values of the societies. The individuals, on certain occasions, perform their actions on the basis of their own beliefs and thoughts, which are not necessarily conforming to that of the society.

There has been concept of analyzing the ethical values on the basis of pleasure and bliss. The individuals, mostly after the advent of individualism and industrialization, have considered the actions that lead them to pleasure, happiness and comfort as ethical. Such concept can be based defined as Hedonism. Hedonism posits that the principal ethic is maximizing pleasure and minimizing pain.

The Afghan society, like all the other societies in the world, has certain ethical values, which are respected and pursued by most of the Afghans. Afghan society derives these values from its culture, tradition and religious beliefs. However, it should not be forgotten that Afghan society is very diverse and ethical values are not homogeneous. Nonetheless, that does not create any major issue as long as diversities are respected and tolerated. The major issue, however, is that some of the ethical values are derived from obsolete tribal values, which are based on discriminatory behavior. The Afghans need to realize that the ethical values that are obsolete and discriminatory must be discouraged so that they should be able to make developments towards a civilized society. On the other hand the individuals must keep in consideration the welfare and security of others while performing different social actions. The different strata in the society must be dealt with in accordance to their due rights. The weaker strata like the poor, women, and minorities must be treated appropriately. Moreover, the ethics is not just about doing good to one's own-self, rather it should be based on the principles of humanity and must avoid discriminatory behavior.



The Scenario of Russia's Involvement in Combating Terrorism in Afghanistan

By S. Mahdi Munadi

The recent changes in security situation and increasing ISIS threats from Afghanistan and the region have strengthened new scenarios such as entering Russia into combating terrorism. Russian air strikes and the formation of a coalition -which China is going to join- in Syria against terrorism, facilitate formation of another block in order to challenge American's order in the east. It seems that Fukuyama's end of history is going to end and a new history begins by the new block. However, America's order has been making things worth, not only terrorism is not defeated, but also getting stronger in the Middle East and South Asia. Generally, if we look at the whole situation and circumstances in Afghanistan, we can see that two major variable in the war of Afghanistan and the region have changed. The first, value targets, performance and scope of radicalism changed. In the past, most radicals were in the South and Eastpart of Afghanistan, but now they are in the north. In the past there was no image that these forces were going to shift to Central Asia, while now realistically or unrealistically it is believed that they are going to the North in Central Asia and North Eastern Xinxiang of China. The second variable is the perceptions about the role of America in combating the terrorism.

In the past, people and countries in the region trusted America's role in combatting terrorism, but now, not only Afghans have lost their confidence, but also countries in the region did so. In the past, countries in the region, especially Russia, in some cases like drug trafficking was working with America in Afghanistan. Even, when it came to the withdrawal of US troops from Afghanistan, Russia was concerned. Recently Putin made a speech in the United Nations and mentioned "America could found water on Mars, but could not find the roots of radical groups and emphasizes removing radicals in our region", which can be perceived that America is not willing to combat terrorism and might even support some groups such as the ISIS to destabilize Central Asian countries.

Changes in these variables could expand the scope of the threat of terrorism, not only in Afghanistan, but can skirt the northern states, Afghanistan is stuck! Meanwhile, northern countries, especially Russia will not just work on strengthening border and increasing border forces, but based on pre-emptive strike or preemptive literature that America has created, they will start air strikes in Afghanistan against

the radicals. On the other hand the evolution of China's policies and alignment with Russia on Syria indicates that China is not just an observer anymore. China will start working to secure the region and his economic programs.

The scenario of military action by Russia and Possibly China is looked nice among Afghans, but they are not thinking about possible competition among Russia and China with America and NATO. As Afghans had experienced in the cold war, this competition will change Afghanistan to second, Syria. Great Powers after World War II got to a rationalism to never fight directly with each other due to the nuclear weapons and deterrence, but solve their problem in poor, fragile and failed States. Thus, it can be imagined, the proxy wars in Afghanistan is the beginning of destruction of Afghanistan.

On the other hand, other scenarios also can be forecasted in the region, which is the cooperation based on common interests, combating terrorism, between Russia and China with NATO. However, this scenario due to the competition of these two blocks in Ukraine and Syria is less acceptable, but it is acceptable in International Relation, super powers are following two opposite policy at the same time. Through this literature, it is accepted that powers competing in one region, but cooperating in the other. Meanwhile, a possible cooperation through this scenario is also discussable.

Internally the multiplicity of perceptions about war or peace with the Taliban has addressed Afghans in different categories. There are groups who still believe in peace, while others are willing the complete war against the Taliban. It seems it is time for Afghans to unify their interpretation about enemy. According to one interpretation of the enemy, they can unify their security forces against Radicals. Additionally, it is assumed that Afghans are dependent variable to regional and beyond regional power, now it's time to get out of the dependent variable in policies and regional and extra-regional countries about the possible actions through a conscious decision. As far as Afghans are in conflict, they should manage the fight against terrorism and obtain assistances from other countries. Afghan government should not be assumed in other power managements.

So the only way to save Afghanistan not to change into another Syria is saving the country's ability to maintain an independent variable in nature and logically gain extra-regional actors to engage in the fight against terrorism.

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The Kunduz War: a Conundrum?

By Ali Zada

Soon after Taliban confirmed Mullah Omar's death, Afghanistan's National Unity Government (NUG) embarked on a publicity war against the group claiming that Omar's death can bitterly divide and therefore weaken the already debilitated terrorist group. It took the Taliban until late July to overcome the rancorous wrangling and power struggle in the vacuum of leadership and to name Mullah Akhtar Mohammad Mansur, Taliban regime's chief of aviation and the groups second-in-command since they were driven into exile in Pakistan in 2001, as Omar's successor.

To consolidate his position, and to fight back in the publicity front, Mansur began to orchestrate and carry out some small-scale skirmishes, which gradually grew to become a vital concern for the northerners (and for the ex-Northern Alliance). A little more than a month ago, First Vice-President, General Dostum, launched a clearing operation to fend the Taliban off the Northern Provinces, namely Jawzjan, Faryab and Sar-e-Pul. General returned back to Kabul with high confidence and hope rejoicing his victory. All that was mistakenly simplistic and surprisingly short-lived, however.

Nearly a month after Dostum's clearing operation, on September 28, the Taliban fighters raided Kunduz from three directions and captured a capital-province for the first time since 2001 without a considerable resistance. Afghan National Army's operation to recapture Kunduz failed to launch until Wednesday. Backed by Afghan Commandos & Special Forces and US troops air strike, the ANA seized parts of Kunduz city on Thursday but soon, the city again fell to the Taliban. Taliban's hit-and-run attacks and counterattacks continued for 13 days until the city was completely cleared on October 11.

Outraged by the attack and the Taliban's war crimes in Kunduz, Afghan citizens and media outlets published harsh polemics criticizing central government's inability and mismanagement in keeping security and in protecting its citizens. Some MPs and high government officials mouthed a "fifth column" responsible for the fall of Kunduz while some others went even further blaming Ghani and his cohorts for intentional remiss in this regard and accusing him and his cohorts for playing this game for hegemonic ends. The case was further compounded with

two Pakistani generals found dead in the counteroffensive. With that, the Kunduz war got a mysterious but unsurprising aspect.

Since in office, Ghani has had five trips to Pakistan to discuss security issues and to urge Islamabad for collaboration and cooperation in fighting the Taliban. Apparently, and to everyone's dismay, all the endeavors to gain Pakistan's cooperation in fighting the Taliban have simply and ridiculously ended up aborted.

On the other hand, Taliban's this time attack is distinctly different than their previous ones, regarding both the more calculated and relatively successful tactics they employed and the outrageously extensive brutalities and human rights abuses they committed. They had positioned themselves in civilian homes days before they launched the attack to hinder government's counteroffensive by utilizing civilians as a human shield. Besides, they committed shocking persecution, raped hundreds of women and girls, and killed dozens indiscriminately. Even, they allegedly had a slaughterhouse in the outskirts of Kunduz where they tortured to death many of the captives.

What the National Unity Government should take serious is the bitter fact that the Taliban are way stronger than to be ignored or denigrated. As announced recently by the U.N., "Taliban's reach is widest since 2001" and that is simply alarming. Since 2005-6, taking full advantage of the absence of a political will to fight them, Taliban have restructured and have increasingly gained power to an extent that can capture a key province with only a limited number of fighters and within less than a few days.

Taking this into account, the National Unity Government should rectify its simplistic and erroneous picture of the Taliban and should go beyond its deceitful publicity to ensure that the other provinces don't fall prey to, or fall to, the Taliban. Frankly, what Afghanistan lacks political will in fighting the Taliban.

In order to prevent more of its districts and provinces from falling to the Taliban, National Unity Government should reconsider all its strategy in this regard keeping in mind that the Taliban's white flag can be raised in the capital city of any of the 34 provinces should they continue lagging on the current path.

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