

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



September 05, 2017

New Strategy to Counter Corruption

Corruption has been one of the main issues that have influenced Afghanistan to a great extent - it has not only created many other social issues but has also hindered the way to development and progress. Without uprooting corruption from the country, it is really difficult for Afghanistan to pave the way for peace, tranquility and progress. Though the leaders of the nation have promised on many occasions that they would fight corruption with will and determination, the practical steps have been negligible. The current government from its inception promised that it would launch a comprehensive strategy against consistent corruption; however, its promises have not materialized into tangible action. On Monday, September 04, 2017, President Ashraf Ghani presided over a special meeting to discuss the national counter-corruption strategy, which in his view will help strengthen the rule of law in the country. Meanwhile, the second Vice President Sarwar Danish, talking on the occasion, said that the strategy is an effective tool to counter corruption in the country, and it is more inclusive and multi-dimensional. It is important to how the major factors and factors are discussed in the strategy and how the strategy plans to introduce practicable measures to counter the persistent corruption in the country. It is imperative to realize that the persistence of the issue of corruption or graft in Afghanistan is not a good sign. It is not only responsible for bringing bad name to the country but has also made the international community skeptical of supporting the country. Besides that, almost all walks of life have been influenced by the negative impacts of uncontrolled corruption as Afghanistan is listed among the top 10 most corrupt countries of the world. This has hampered the development initiatives in different parts of country to a large extent. International community, on many occasions, has emphasized that there should be a comprehensive strategy and effective institutions that should be responsible for controlling graft in Afghanistan. It has even conditioned its support on a strong stance of the Afghan authorities against the corrupt individuals and institutions. Nevertheless, a great deal of work needs to be done to make any contribution against corruption a success. Particularly, a determined and honest stand has to be taken against the strong and influential personalities who have been involved in different sorts of corruption.

Establishment of Anti-Corruption Criminal Justice Center (ACJC) was an important step against the reign of corruption in Afghanistan. Both the Afghan government and International community is hopeful that something worthwhile can be achieved through ACJC if it is provided with enough authority and it keeps on pursuing the corruption cases with determination and consistency. At the same time, it must not be forgotten that one of the major reasons that there has not been any considerable achievement regarding fight against corruption is the fact that the authoritative institutions and individuals have lacked true commitment; which ultimately provided them the room and the opportunity to benefit from the situation and make their own bank balance. So much has been said and so many instances, examples and data have proved that corruption has devoured much of the assistance funds that were for the purpose of improving the life standards of the poor and deserving people, yet there has not been any tangible measure taken to stop the situation.

No strategy for fighting corruption in Afghanistan can be successful unless it starts making the strong individuals and institutions accountable for any sort of corruption that they commit. The norm has been that the rich, powerful and influential people easily dodge the justice system, while the poor have to receive the negative consequences. In fact, the poor are influenced in two different ways by corruption. First, if they are alleged in any case of corruption, they have to go through inefficient and most unjust process of the justice system. Second, they are the ones who have to pay bribes and search for recommendations in order to get their works done in the departments and organizations that are corrupt in their dealings. While the rich, through their influence, get away with their corrupt activities and at the same time get their works done from different organizations without any difficulty. Therefore, it stands paramount that the rich and influential people, both in public and private sectors, who are involved in practicing corruption and promulgating it through their actions should be brought to justice. It is important in so many ways; first it will support in identifying the huge cases of corruption that involve large sums of money; second, it will set example for others - finding the influential people brought to justice and held accountable for their corrupt deeds would send a message to the people and to other officials that they cannot run away from justice if they practice corruption.

Such initiative definitely requires support and determination to fight against the whole system; particularly, fighting influential and powerful individuals; nevertheless, there is no other option available. Therefore, it is important that the government and the international community must address this particular issue if something worthwhile is required to be achieved.



The Worldwide Vacuum of Humanity

By Hujjatullah Zia

The chronic pain continues unabated without a panacea despite controversial discussions. The bleeding wound of nations, flagrant violation of human rights, and heart-wrenching stories of human catastrophes make headlines around the globe. A number of individuals suffer indescribably for being born Muslim, Christian, Jew, etc. or belonging to a certain ethnic or racial group. The megalomania and selfishness of mankind never come to an end. Political tensions and armed conflicts are hot topics in national and international media. Harsh rhetoric, pugnacious huffing and puffing and nuclear threat loom large. Proxy war lingers and terrorist networks shed the blood of innocent men, women and children in horrific manner. The tearful eyes of women, who bear the brunt of cruelty and fall the victim of rape, fill you with an outpouring of grief. The sliced throats of innocent children posted either in social media or published in international newspapers numb your feelings and triggers a strong sense of hatred; i.e., hatred of mankind. It is too hard to articulate the carnage and massacres carried out in bloody wars and militancy. A large number of individuals are burning amidst war and violence around the world.

The repeated words about human tragedies no more carry weight and one's heart is no more melted with human catastrophes which have been changed into daily practices. The human rights discourse is likely to change into bombastic discussion. In other words, the rights of mankind, particularly women's rights, freedoms and spirit of brotherhood are reiterated both in international instruments and political speeches; however, not practiced in real life. The vacuum of philanthropy that used to be a serious issue and the void of true soul of democracy are greatly felt in human societies. The soulful stories of war victims fall on deaf ears. It is believed that humanity and moral values have declined to a great extent in the wake of harsh and anti-moral practices. Viewing gory pictures and the riddled bodies of war victims will certainly desensitize the issues. Similarly, frequent violation of women's dignity and hearing about rape victims will not only weaken one's conscience but also embolden them to be engaged in such moral turpitude.

No one will feel the pain and anguish of a rape victim, whose dignity is her only world, the agony of a mother whose child has been slaughtered before her eyes, or unbearable sorrow of a child whose mother has been raped before him/her!

Despite the escalated militancy and serious threats posed by terrorist networks, human societies are involved in threatening one another in the strongest possible term. The jeopardy of nuclear arms gets more serious.

Human catastrophes are widespread and highly outrageous, especially when a number of people suffer on the basis of their race, color and creed.

Viewing the picture of a Rohingya woman sitting amidst war and shedding bitter tears, I was swollen with pain. The quotation which said, "People have been sharing videos of the killings on WhatsApp. Videos of women and children being killed. Innocent men being shot dead. You can't begin to imagine how scared we are," would add insult to your injury.

Reports said about Rohingya that minority are widely reviled as illegal migrants from Bangladesh, despite having lived in the area for generations.

The tragedy was stated that Rohinyas have been rendered stateless by the government and the UN believes the army's crackdown may amount to ethnic cleansing - a charge the government of Aung San Suu Kyi vehemently denies. It added the security forces' offensive has been beset by allegations of arson, killings and rape; and forced more than 87,000 Rohingya to flee to Bangladesh. "Treating Rohingya as all combatants," the report added that the Myanmar army are accused of shooting indiscriminately at unarmed Rohingya men, women and children and carrying out arson attacks.

Rakhine state is home to most of Myanmar's 1.1 million Rohingya, who live largely in abject poverty and face widespread discrimination by the Buddhist majority.

A most recent report says that about 90,000 Rohingya Muslims have fled to Bangladesh in the last 10 days, uprooted by reported rapes, murders and acts of arson by the Myanmar army.

To sum up, the vacuum of humanity is strongly felt around the human societies and people's rights and dignity are violated in the worst possible way. It should be noted that if the world does not promote the spirit of brotherhood, religious tolerance or racial acceptance, the bleeding will continue unabated and fill people with sense of revenge. The ongoing catastrophes around the globe which compound human fatalities is the tragedy of our century. The world needs to fill this vacuum with the spirit of brotherhood and respect the rights and dignity of mankind.

Hujjatullah Zia is the permanent writer of the Daily Outlook Afghanistan. He can be reached at zia_hujjat@yahoo.com

Political Leaders Should Reply to the Public

By Syed Asif Hussaini

Afghan political elites are supposed to fulfill their responsibilities regarding nation. Within the past three decades, Afghans made great sacrifices for the sake of political leaders. Regardless of historical ambition, ethnic and tribal tendencies played a key role in the sacrifices made for them.

Therefore, Afghan leaders will have to reciprocate the nation's devotion. The younger generation, who still suffer from the past sacrifices, will realize this fact.

The current situation has imposed a shared suffering upon the nation. According to public belief, alleviating the common problem will not be possible individually. However, the national determination depends on the collective determination of political leaders, who are able to play an instrumental role in mobilizing the public. Thus, political figures should procrastinate their factional demands and political shares. Now it is time to remedy the nation's problem.

It goes without saying that the challenges do not necessarily root in foreign factors.

Pointing the finger at others is tantamount to evading the responsibilities. We are all responsibility in terms of the status quo. If we do not deem ourselves responsible, the history will condemn us in the future.

Afghanistan's political tension roots in political demands of political and tribal leaders. The country's contemporary history proves that political tensions have never been due to structures and principles. Although Dawood Khan - one of Afghanistan's kings - changed the system of sultanate into republic, yet he was the same king ruling in republic clothing. The tensions among political elites within the communist regime also stemmed from conflicting interests and political complexes. The spirit of discrimination and lust for totalitarianism of political figures hindered the firm establishment of a political structure. Struggles for extending power even involved religious elements in the issue.

The tough conflict between Afghan political elites was ended with Bonn Agreement.

The pressure exerted by international community in 2001 urged political elites that their opponents will not abandon the ground in the wake of tension. For the first time, political elites gathered in Bonn following 1352 Afghan calendar and articulated their intentions.

Within three decades of conflicts, Afghan political elites could not establish a modern and comprehensive administration in the country. Hence, the cornerstone of nation-building was laid by the US determination in Bonn Conference. The US believed that nation-building, in countries involved in ethnic conflicts, will be possible after a strong state-building. Therefore, powerful states would influence

all the inhabitants of a land and reconcile people - no matter which mentality they cherish.

Following the Bonn Conference, state-building continued in Afghanistan hierarchically and after the transitional period, the system of republic emerged in the best possible way.

Afghanistan's political elites yielded to the ruling situation and preferred political reconciliation despite their differences. Afghan nation and the international community deemed the agreement of political elites the mainstay of consolidation and felt a strong sense of hope. However, this hope did not last long since political tension resurfaced among political figures with presidential election, mainly in 2009 and 2010.

It is believed that history will repeat itself again unless political elites reach a strong agreement. That is to say, the current issues suggest that history will repeat in Afghanistan since political elites have not realized the history which was made by themselves.

Foundations of political development, such as the constitution, government agencies, the army and police, private media, civil society, development of education, etc. will be highly susceptible and bear the brunt of damage if tension continues between political elites - who are mostly tribal leaders, too. In another item, the words and practices of tribal leaders carry much weight for the individuals belonging to the same tribes. The aforementioned institutions are formed of the same individuals. This hypothesis is reinforced by the fact that, in Afghanistan, the individuals belonging to each ethnic group are dependent on the speeches and actions of their ethnic leaders before they are subject to law and government.

Hence, it is an undeniable fact that the conflicts between Afghan political elites will be extremely threatening and a great obstacle before transition to political maturity in the country. Political tension has constantly infiltrated the public and political elites are able to play a crucial role in mobilizing people on the basis of factional and tribal tendencies. Currently, political elites are supposed to implant in nation fresh spirit and fill them with hope since their different perspectives kept people disappointed for long time. The continuation of political disagreement will put an adverse effect on the view of international community regarding Afghanistan.

In short, political elites must realize this fact that returning to past will ruin everyone. So, it will be wise to prevent the issue before happening as it is said that prevention is better than cure.

Syed Asif Hussaini is the permanent writer of the Daily Outlook Afghanistan. He can be reached at the outlookafghanistan@gmail.com

Chairman / Editor-in-Chief: Moh. Reza Huwaida

Vice-Chairman: Kazim Ali Gulzari

Email: outlookafghanistan@gmail.com

Phone: 0093 (799) 005019/777-005019

www.outlookafghanistan.net



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