

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



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Justice Promotes the Legitimacy of a Government

There is a direct link between justice and legitimacy. Even if a country does not have many resources, it can survive if there is justice prevailing in it. People can go through difficult times if they believe that their government is just and the system is able to strive justly for their wellbeing. However, if there is no justice within a society, excess of resources would end up creating an imbalanced society. In the presence of injustice the society would tend to become highly polarized.

Moreover, crimes, corruption and many other social evils are directly linked to the unavailability of justice and the societies that have strived to maintain true justice have, in fact, set themselves on the way to a prosperous future. While the countries, which have neglected it, have fallen to the depths of troubles and instability.

At the same time, the people of a country are attached to a country that prioritizes justice and accept the authority of the government that practices it. Finding law and order consistent for every one and treating every one as per merit, gives people confidence in the system and they start belonging to it and ultimately strive to play a positive role within the society. However, if they find that the justice system is biased and favor a certain group of people, they will definitely become neglected and alienated from the system and will, resultantly, follow a path that may be illegal or even unjust.

Afghanistan is also one of the countries that is lacking justice in its system. The people are not treated the way they deserve and the justice has, in fact, become the will of the rich. The ruling class, along with the elite and the authoritative individuals can easily take advantage of the law and order system or totally surpass it; while the poor people have to be treated in the most terrible way.

Therefore, the government seems to be losing its legitimacy. The government authorities and institutions are not believed and in most of the cases they are not even accepted as having the right to rule. There are certain parts of the country where the people still consider Taliban as the legitimate rulers.

These are the parts where the government has not been able to penetrate through the miseries of the people. The government services in these parts of the country are almost non-existent. Therefore, the people have lost any appreciation of the government's role.

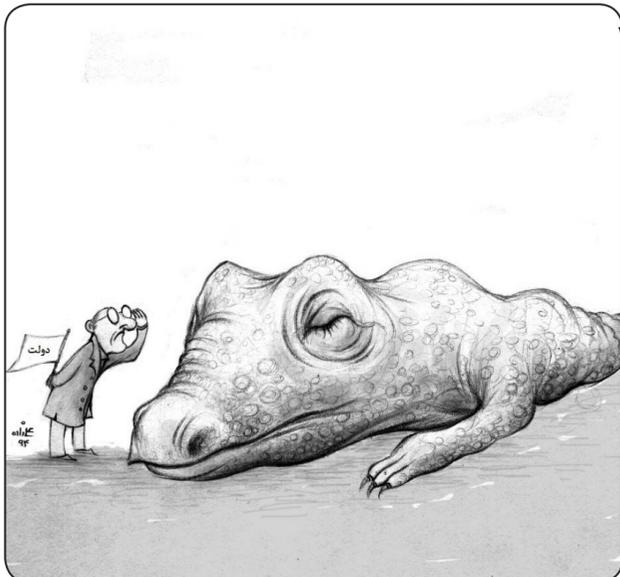
It remains a fact that the justice system in Afghanistan for some of the rural parts of the country are either non-functional or they are very slow. People mostly do not go to the law or the formal system for solving their matters as they have to wait for a long time before they can get their cases solved and their rights given. That is one of the reasons that the tribal setup has existed and has provided the background for Taliban to function. In such a setup Taliban with their speedy way of providing their own form of justice come to action and, at the same time, earn the support and the favor of the people. In certain ways, Taliban in those areas have more legitimacy and support than the government institutions.

Moreover, terrorism and terrorists have further debilitated the justice system. Insecurity and clashes have created a situation wherein the powerful can easily escape the law and order. There are many war crimes that go unnoticed or if they are noticed, they are not pursued properly. The national mechanism to control such crimes has not been strengthened, while the international pressure has not resulted in enough action. Therefore, the situation has remained grim.

Afghanistan is passing through a very crucial juncture in its history. It has to make sure that it survives through it. And, for that to happen, it must guard justice. Definitely, the support and assistance of the international organizations can be helpful and the country needs to cooperate with them in that regard.

However, the pursuit of justice by the government itself is also very much crucial. There should be efforts on the national level to strengthen the institutions that may guard justice, promote it and protect it. Without national efforts for strengthening Afghanistan itself to fight against injustice and establish strong and independent law and order system, it would be very difficult to imagine that the country would be able to fight the prevailing injustice successfully.

Afghan government needs to understand that no state in the world can maintain its integrity and order if it does not possess and guard justice. Justice is the requirement to maintain law and order and reduce crimes from a society. If a state fails to establish strong institutions that can practice and provide justice, it is bound to be filled with instability, corruption and illegitimacy.



Mounting Threats against the Globe

By Hujjatullah Zia

The magnitude of global crises and life-threatening issues increase in one way or another. Strong threats are posed to the life of mankind on day-to-day basis. The atrocities of terrorism, menace of ideological radicalism, and hazard of nuclear arms destabilize the world and threaten nations mentally and physically. We live in the world which is filled with peril. To protect their own lands, human societies violate the territorial integrity of others and support proxy wars; to exercise their own rights and freedoms, people curtail the rights and liberties of other individuals; and to live a quiet life, they target the peace and stability of their own fellows.

For instance, terrorism has remained a serious issue for the entire globe and scores of people lost their lives in terrorist attacks and suicide bombings from Kabul to Manchester and California and terrorist networks seek to continue their acts of horror and terror wherever possible. A large number of states, particularly NATO which is constituted of 29 countries, are embroiled in terrorist issue. This reflects the fact that terrorist networks have grown highly strong and will linger for many years. Thousands of people, including women and children, lose their lives in terrorist attacks around the globe.

On the other hand, the peril of nuclear arms looms large. According to reports, North Korea has detonated a hydrogen bomb capable of being carried by an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) on Sunday, which was the sixth nuclear test conducted by the North Korea so far.

In July, Pyongyang test-launched two ICBMs that are believed to be capable of reaching the mainland United States. Nonetheless, Sunday's test was the most powerful with a blast that experts said was far more destructive than the bombs that the United States dropped on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki during World War II. Subsequent to the two tests in a month, the US President Donald Trump condemned the launch, saying that North Korea's "second such test in less than a month" is the "latest reckless and dangerous action" by Kim Jong-un's regime.

Following the Sunday's test, the US ambassador to the United Nations Nikki R. Haley, who was speaking to the Security Council in an emergency session on Monday, said North Korea's leader Kim Jong-un "is begging for war." She added, "We have kicked the can down the road long enough. There is no more road left." To cut it short, fuel-

related sanctions are the focus of the Trump administration's latest efforts at the Security Council, according to the senior American officials.

On the contrary, Russian President Vladimir Putin held out against US calls for further sanctions on North Korea, warning of a global "catastrophe" despite the fact that he condemned North Korea's "provocative" actions while speaking after an international gathering in China. Similarly, China's ambassador Liu Jieyi warned, during the Security Council meeting, that the crisis was worsening and emphasized the need for dialogue and a diplomatic solution.

Regardless of the international reaction and condemnation, promoting nuclear arms will mount the global risk and put the life of mankind at stake more than ever before. Although the world is scrambling for enriching their arms, the main reason behind public anxiety is the threats posed against human life. Indeed, the indescribable casualties in the wake of historical wars, particularly during the First and Second World Wars, still haunt nations and fill them with great disgust. Therefore, the world has to minimize the threats.

Some political pundits ask what if one day terrorists get access to nuclear arms. Imagining this issue is extremely shocking. Needless to say, terrorists will show no iota of mercy to the world. They are killing people indiscriminately. Their radical ideologies leave no room for humanity or moral values. Hence, their barbarity is no more a mystery for the world. To put it succinctly, promoting (nuclear) arms will be self-destructive for the world.

Terrorism and nuclear arms are the two serious threats the world encounters. It should be noted that terrorism is a common enemy for all nations and must be rooted out or else it will lead to further human fatalities. To mitigate militancy, the root causes of terrorism must be targeted. Regarding nuclear arms, a peaceful solution will alleviate the tension. Indeed, military action or harsh deal will deteriorate the situation.

Protecting the rights of mankind and stopping violence must be the top priority for the world. We are not supposed to endanger one's life or curtail one's freedom to protect our own lives and liberties. Practicing upon the Golden Rule (Do unto others as you would have them do unto you) is believed to be the best possible panacea for our problems.

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Combating Hatred with History

By Guy Verhofstadt

After a white-supremacist rally in Charlottesville, Virginia, in which anti-fascist campaigner Heather Heyer was killed, and many others injured, US President Donald Trump notoriously blamed "both sides" for the violence. By equating neo-Nazis with those who stood against them, Trump (further) sullied his presidency. And by describing some of the participants in the Charlottesville rally as "very fine people," he gave a nod to far-right bigots worldwide.

A few weeks thereafter, just as Hurricane Harvey was bearing down on Texas, Trump pardoned Joe Arpaio, the former sheriff of Maricopa County in Arizona. Arpaio had been convicted of contempt of court in July for defying a federal judge's order to stop racially profiling Latinos. But the way Trump sees it, Arpaio was "convicted for doing his job."

Arpaio once boasted that the outdoor jail where he held undocumented immigrants was akin to a concentration camp. And he is now a leading exponent of the Tea Party and other xenophobic right-wing movements that rallied behind Trump in last year's election. By pardoning Arpaio, Trump was, once again, implicitly embracing white supremacists and nativists worldwide.

Sadly, many of Trump's allies in the Republican Party have barely raised an eyebrow in response to his latest words and actions. And according to a recent ABC News-Washington Post poll, 9% of respondents - "equivalent to about 22 million Americans" - find it "acceptable to hold neo-Nazi or white supremacist views."

This is a shocking finding. But it is not limited to the United States. Europe, too, is witnessing a worrying surge of racism, nationalism, anti-Semitism, and xenophobia. In a recent poll conducted for Chatham House, 55% of European respondents agreed that "all further migration from mainly Muslim countries" should be stopped. That is higher than the 48% of Americans who, in February, supported Trump's executive order barring travel from seven predominantly Muslim countries.

It is time for Europeans who would prefer to dismiss white supremacy as an American phenomenon to mind their own backyards. Since Trump's election in the US and the Brexit referendum in the United Kingdom, hate speech and crimes against ethnic minorities and foreign nationals have started to become normalized in many Western countries.

Most worryingly, intolerance may be on the rise among young people. The British magazine TES reports that "hate crimes and hate incidents in British schools" increased by 48% in the summer and fall terms of 2016, compared to the same period of the previous year. As the

report notes, this coincides precisely with the Brexit referendum and Trump's election.

In today's information landscape, social media have become the primary means for spreading hatred. The largest social-media platforms are now host to countless fake and anonymous accounts that spew xenophobic, nationalistic, and racist messages. These accounts are polluting a medium that many young people enjoy, and exposing impressionable minds to dangerous falsehoods and conspiracy theories. And more often than not, they are being operated with impunity by Russian-sponsored trolls in Macedonia or elsewhere in Eastern Europe.

But it is not just online trolls who are empowering people to be racist, anti-Semitic, and homophobic. Many world leaders and prominent opinion makers are doing it, too. Although mainstream European leaders offered a clear rebuke to the Charlottesville violence and Trump's reaction to it, they need to go further. Now more than ever, the European Union must demonstrate its commitment to upholding core values of equality and tolerance.

The fact that the current Hungarian and Polish governments are intentionally undermining democratic institutions in those countries should be evidence enough that we cannot take freedom, liberty, and the rule of law for granted. It took many years to build democratic institutions in Central and Eastern Europe, but it has taken just a few parliamentary elections to reverse that progress. For the sake of European democracy, the other members of the EU must take collective action now to sanction these increasingly authoritarian governments for their transgressions.

After an increase in anti-Semitic incidents in 2004, when I was the prime minister of Belgium, I launched an initiative to remind young people of the costs of World War II. During their history lessons, Belgian students would learn about the implications and negative consequences of certain ideologies.

With hatred on the march again today, we must remember that education is crucial in the fight against authoritarianism, which can thrive on generational complacency. To ensure that democratic values prevail, we must encourage all people to reflect on the lessons of the past, when grotesque abuses were perpetrated against millions.

We owe it to all of those who suffered under past authoritarian regimes to stand up now for democratic values. We can start by pushing back, as Heather Heyer did, against the right-wing populists who are openly fomenting hatred across the West. (Courtesy Project Syndicate)

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