

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



September 14, 2015

The Points of Attention

The opinions of the people and intellectuals towards the socio-political scenario in Afghanistan appear to be divergent and there are not clear certainties in this regard. There are many doubts and the opinions regarding the situation are very shaky. It is not just about the situation in Afghanistan, but the situations in the neighboring countries are also unpredictable.

Especially, in the last some months the situation seems ambiguous as to where the country is leading and what would be the future of socio-political scenario in the region. Though, since the downfall of Taliban there have been major contributions on the part of international community to help our country out of instability and in that regard billion of dollars have moved in, especially from U.S., the major issues still remain with major concerns. There are many serious minds that doubt the future of the peace, stability and prosperity in the region.

Afghanistan has seen many decades of wars, including both international and civil wars. The people in the country have been seeking a period of stability wherein they get opportunities of development and progress. They have gone through the severest kind of agony and have experienced the worst kind of economic, social and political crisis. There have been hopes lately that country would move towards prosperity, but these hopes are being challenged now in the ongoing period of transition. After 14 years of war and movement against terrorism, though there have been improvements, the administrative, development and security sectors still remain immature. It is comprehensible that these sectors take long time for their improvement, but the level of the improvement so far made is not in accordance to the energy and resources being utilized.

One of the biggest hurdles in this regard has been the lack of transparency in the utilization of the resources, mostly provided as aid by the international community. The wave of corruption has uprooted the weak foundations of the development projects and possibilities of better outcomes have diminished to a great extent.

There are three basic sectors which require special attention. They include incapacity of the government to provide good governance. Good governance relates to the conduct of the public institutions regarding the public affairs in such a way so as to guarantee well being, prosperity and definitely human rights. But instead our public institutions have been dominated by incapacity and corruption. These institutions have been further adding to the troubles of the common people instead of solving their problems. They have been vehemently dominated by the individuals in authority. The institutionalization process has been very weak and institutions serve the authoritative people on the top of bureaucratic hierarchy.

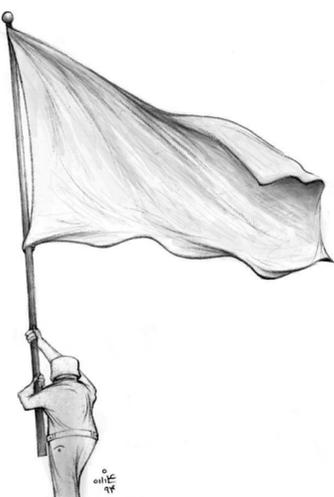
The real purpose of a democratic system is to reach to the common people of the society and provide them facilities on their door steps. Further, the so called democratic system in our country has not been able to represent the people of Afghanistan as a whole. The diverse Afghan society has not been able to be compensated in the system that has been trying to keep the central government stronger. The political system, wherein more authority should be given to the provinces, can provide better representation to all the ethnic groups in the country and can favor the general will but such a setup has not been appreciated the way it should have been. Even the key institutions like legislature, judiciary and executive have not risen to the task. They, instead of serving the country, seem to be fanning the flames of controversies. The government that should be the leading force towards a democratic setup, itself seems to be running after authority, not democratic principles. The parliament, which represents the elected members, is not given its due authority.

As far as the security of the country is concerned, there have been many improvements but a lot of work still needs to be done. The international security forces have withdrawn and the responsibilities of security are on the shoulders of Afghan security forces. As far as the capacity of Afghan forces to guarantee secure life for Afghan people, there are grey patches. Unless there are speedy development in the capacity building, training and professionalism of Afghan forces, the eyebrows will remain tense as far as security arrangements are concerned.

Further, the political reconciliation with Taliban that is expected to find out some political solution to the issues in the country in order to lead to peace is also suffering from lack of clarity and commitment, especially after the reports of death of Taliban leader Mullah Omar.

On the other hand new Taliban leadership has not shown readiness for the peace process. In addition, the factions existing within Taliban also differ in their views regarding any peace deal and this makes the process difficult by introducing the intricacy as to whether which faction should be considered as the true representative to Taliban, and what should be done with the other factions who opt to go against any sort of peace process.

The impact of international assistance will remain limited unless donors, particularly the largest, the U.S., stop subordinating programming to counter-insurgency objectives, devise better mechanisms to monitor implementation, adequately address corruption and wastage of aid funds. In order to address the socio-political and security concerns appropriately there has to be immense effort made on the part of government and other authoritative institutions in the country. Above all, this effort should be directed towards the wellbeing of all the people of Afghanistan



Debilitating Security Arrangements

By Dilawar Sherzai

The facts and figures reveal that the security situation in Afghanistan is not getting better. With each passing day, there are more security threats and the level of uncertainty about the future seems to be rising. Though war against terrorism was initiated in Afghanistan with the ambition to bring peace and prosperity, there are no clear indications of this ambition being transformed to reality.

A recent survey conducted by TOLO news clearly depicts that the security threats have increased by 13 percent in August as compared to July. 1,089 terror and anti-terror events were recorded during August with 13 percent of the events similar to the events that were recorded during July. ANSF extended their military campaigns during August and launched 666 military operations which show a 26 percent increase compared to the previous month.

Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) posed serious damage to the armed opponents during August, 3,482 rebels were killed including 48 local commanders and 1,940 others were wounded. However, ANSF also suffered losses in August. 396 security personnel were killed during this month and 137 soldiers wounded which shows a 29 percent increase compared to July.

In addition, there are also reports of different districts in different parts of the country falling to Taliban. The advances of Taliban in different parts of the country have reached to new levels during the year.

In short, the results of war against terrorism have shown that the peace and tranquility that had been promised in the beginning of the war are far from being achieved; neither the filthy terrorism has been eradicated. President Barack Obama while addressing a variety of national security topics during his live multimedia Worldwide Troop Talk at Fort Meade in the United States last week said that despite their continued war against terrorism significant threats from terrorist organizations persist in Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan and North Africa.

At the same time, Afghan officials and leaders also agree that the security situation has deteriorated and Afghan security authorities are not capable enough to shoulder their responsibilities properly. Wolesi Jirga members on Saturday, September 12, said that security authorities lacked the ability to improve the country's security situation and called for the officials concerned to be summoned to answer questions from lawmakers.

By looking at the security situation one has no other choice but to question the real outcomes of the war against terrorism that was started after the 9/11 incident. War against terrorism has completed

13 years and the international forces seem in a hurry to end up the war and most of them have already withdrawn their forces. The war is considered to have reached to a decisive position and the international community now thinks that Afghan forces and authorities are capable enough to take over the responsibility of the security of their country.

There are some who are very much optimistic about the result of this 'transition' but at the same time, there are some others who believe that many concerns are yet to be dealt with. Above all, they consider the war against terrorism not to have reached to a decisive position as the terrorism and terrorist networks are yet to be defeated and there are great chances that they may get stronger if the war is left at this particular position. Further, the ongoing situation of peace and tranquility also suggest that there are many things to be done before the victory is considered decisive.

Keeping in mind the concerns regarding the capabilities of Afghan security forces and the strengthening terrorist networks the feared situation is quite possible. The other major issues which remain ambiguous after 13 years of the efforts include the prevailing instability in the country regarding the political and economic systems. Both of them stand on shaky foundations and suffer from a trend of uncontrollable and ever increasing difficulties. It is really difficult to build reliable expectations except the support of international community.

Moreover, the regional dissatisfaction and ambiguities are also increasing about the war. Afghanistan's neighboring countries do not see eye to eye with the US authorities regarding the war and it prospects and their relations with Afghanistan face fluctuations time and again. Keeping in mind the present scenario in Afghanistan and the region, it can be safely said that if this war is not be termed as 'unnecessary' and 'evil', it can be termed as 'indecisive' for the time being. Definitely, there is more to be done to take this war towards conclusion. A proper conclusion of the war means defeating the enemy or reaching to some sort of agreement with the opposing forces, which at the present scenario are Taliban. Unfortunately, neither Taliban have been defeated completely, nor the reconciliation process with Taliban is on the track and heading towards a certain future. Taliban at the moment have opted for more aggression and they do not seem in a position to come to negotiation table.

There have been many sacrifices to achieve positive outcomes from the war against terrorism; these sacrifices should not go in vain and Afghanistan should be supported so that it can stand strong with dignity against disorder and terrorism. At the same time, the Afghan government and authorities must also strive to do their best in fulfilling their responsibilities and must endeavor to guide the nation towards lasting peace and tranquility.

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Article of Peace and Security Endure Negation

By Asmatyari

It was theatrical style killing – a group of armed men on a highway intercepted a local carriage, singled out 13 passengers, lined them up and shot them dead on vital organs – heart and head in front of their beloved ones. The female relatives of deceased souls could do nothing except crying their heart for the loss of their loved ones. The rest of passengers witnessed the brutal account of mass murder of their fellow citizens amidst the degree of haplessness the whole scenario showed off. Following the bloodshed the mass killers hastened not fleeing the scene, fearing apprehension or being chased after. Hours after the incident had taken place and terrorists had fled the security officials got the site when the relatives themselves had taken away the deceased soul for burial. Does not the government lose the legitimacy to rule when the civilians are left vulnerable to frequent attacks?

The people killed did not belong to armed combatant nor were public or security officials but unarmed bread earners who had to travel earning them livelihood. Numerous queries spin at the core of every sane mind what harms they had inflicted. What were the wrongs with those being ruthlessly killed? Whom to be questioned for this security lapse? When will the government ensure the security of unarmed civilians travelling across the country? When will the government clean up the highways of these evil minded insane murderers?

Despite a week is past the onset of brutal incidence no apprehension is materialized. The family members of the slain passengers are crying justice and call on Afghan legal, judicial institutions and the security official to arrest the assailants and bring them to justice. As usual the government resorted to condemnation and promises only. Customarily the governor of Balkh province linked the tragic incident to the onset of sectarian strife while meeting the families of deceased souls. It's great the public officials and elected representatives come to learn the core reason behind the tragic incident post occurrence. Unfortunately, the government tries not embracing the pragmatic approach that foils any such plot that could harm innocent masses.

Unconcerned to whether the ongoing bloodshed is going on for political dominance or religious gains or other clandestine reasons the planned systematic killing of an ethnic group can not be justified on any moral ground. Though the terror mongers seemingly have turned united, acquired the strength that has only let them, wreak havoc on ordinary masses. It is witnessed the terrorists by the end of pronounced summer offensive turn to every possible measure that could serve their interest. The growing attacks on civilians indicate the insurgents are underlining their pretentious presence amidst the negligence of government to protect and safeguard the masses.

Admittedly, at present terrorism has turned into a global subject – every ethnic and religious group renders prey to terrorists' attacks. Multilaterally, it seems as if the war waged against terrorist by inter-

national community is sparking terrorism instead diminishing. Afghans are facing war like situation against the terrorists – who preys to terrorists acts, is uncertain and capricious. Terrorist acts like suicide bombings have become a norm of the day. On account of these attacks Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq, Syria and Nigeria are suffering from inextinguishable loss ranging from civilian to economic. People have become numerical figures, blown up in numbers every now and then. Terrorists have not spared any place. Bazaars, mosques, educational institutes, offices, hotels, roadside no place are safe anymore. It is witnessed the terrorist even manage to reach unimaginable sites – is alarming for world community. Nonetheless the planned killing of an ethnic group based religious affiliation or otherwise is worrying denominator and altering dimension of war against and genuinely requires more attention.

Undoubtedly, Hazara Shiite are great often have rendered prey to sectarian violence at the hands of extremists in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Hazara were persecuted during the 1990s when the Taliban ruled most of Afghanistan, and so does it now. During the wars, thousands of Hazaras were killed in Bamyan, Mazar Sharif and Kabul by Taliban. Moreover, they were discriminated badly due to their ethnicity. In similar fashion, Daesh also considers Shias as infidels and the cruelties and killings they have carried out against Shias and certain other sects in Iraq and Syria are not hidden from anyone. One can not rule out the involvement of said groups behind the singling out and killing of Hazaras. Devoid of the terrorists having started to kill Hazara passengers they are also abducted on highways. Previously, masked gunmen seized 31 Hazaras from a bus in the southern Afghan province of Zabul. Nineteen of them were released later in exchange for scores of Uzbek militant fighters held in government prisons.

It falls under the jurisdiction of government and security officials to undo any such plot that may harm the national unity. The government must uncover the hands behind brutal killings of Hazara. Following regular critics, the intelligence institution, in a bid to excel its performance has doubled its surveillance system, to keep a close watch over important movements of insurgents.

History documents, the degree of repression accelerated where cowardice apathy prevailed indefinitely. Repression subsided not, continued instead wrenching the elements of peace, tranquility and concord, unless reciprocated iron handed. The reassurance of peaceful coexistence accredits the lengthened subsistence and stability of the state, the incumbent government of Afghanistan is not able to read, the ineffaceable lines of history. A state renders invincible, only when elements of peace and security draws substantial importance – maintenance of law and order secure top priority, in government's what to do list. Nevertheless, the government stuck to indifference on endless discriminate bloodletting intimate otherwise.

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