

افغانستان آزاد – آزاد افغانستان

AA-AA

چو کشور نپاشد تن من مباد بدین بوم ویر زنده یک تن مباد
همه سر به سر تن به کشتن دهیم از آن به که کشور به دشمن دهیم

www.afgazad.com

afgazad@gmail.com

European Languages

زبان های اروپایی

http://www.outlookafghanistan.net/editorialdetail.php?post_id=13888

Governance Crisis

December 14, 2015

Afghanistan's long march towards gradually restoring stability, peace, prosperity and all-round development seems to have halted in tracks. There appears to be continuous degeneration and a steep decline in almost all the aspects and areas in which Afghanistan saw drastic improvement in the early years immediately after the fall of the Taliban. The heady days of early years when a sense of rejuvenation, excitement and overflowing hope for a better tomorrow dominated minds as well as the headlines seem to be over. Uncertainty and a state of dark pessimism have cast a long shadow over the perceptions among both common people and the Afghan intelligentsia alike. Parallel to a rising graph of war, violence and bombings, no one would fail to see the kind of hopelessness and despair that is slowly seeping in. According to the analysts, perhaps, what Afghanistan desperately needs the most and foremost now is getting back that lost sense of optimism, hopefulness and nation-wide momentum for a fresh start that we had in the earlier years but lost along the way as problems mounted.

Many within the international community, including some voices in such Western governments have come to publicly voice deep concern over what they see as a futile military strategy in Afghanistan while civilian efforts aimed at building a viable government have delivered only limited dividends. The NATO mission to Afghanistan moved to defend the organization's and the broader achievements in Afghanistan citing a number of progress areas such as education, healthcare provision, GDP growth, thousands of kilometers of roads and greater women participation in Afghanistan society. While these are indeed solid areas of progress in Afghanistan over the past decade, no one can close eyes to many glaring shortcomings that have

come to have deeply negative impacts on Afghanistan of today. In essence, the extent of success or failure of the international community and its Afghan partners should be assessed based on the main indicator of whether or not the government of Afghanistan - as the main vehicle of delivering the international community's will and wishes - has been able to deliver on a minimum of responsibilities that it is supposed to deliver as a government. The yardstick for measurement of Afghanistan's progress should not be eye-catching advertisements of Afghan women and children giggling in newly-built classrooms, but the ability of Afghanistan of today to successfully and progressively manage its own affairs while upholding the values that the international community has fought for in Afghanistan since 2001. The real yardstick for measuring the progress made by Afghanistan should be the question whether the government in Afghanistan has been able to deliver on the most basic and fundamental of all its duties: its responsibility to provide some extent of security and good governance. The real yardstick for measuring the progress made by Afghanistan should be the question whether or not the government has been able to gain and preserve the kind of trust and faith that any successfully functioning government is able to garner from its people. Even on these sets of minimum requirements expected of a functioning government, the performance of the government of Afghanistan is abysmally poor. It is difficult not to miss the sorry state of affairs in the country has steadily been losing its momentum to initiate positive change and as a result, the breakdown in security and governance across Afghanistan is reaching catastrophic levels.

Afghanistan and its government in particular, both ideally and as an inescapable necessity especially after 2015, should be gradually moving towards greater self-reliance and self-sufficiency in terms of how it governs the country especially in the areas of delivering development plans and programs and bringing about inclusive governance. "Inclusive governance", being currently the mantra across the developing world as both a national goal and an increasingly popular public policy imperative, should be the hallmark of governance in Afghanistan of today. Unfortunately, it is not and the government has failed in moving towards this critical policy imperative. Inclusive governance means making not only varied ethnic groups but also communities, and major social groupings direct stakeholders in the process of running their own affairs. The stark reality in Afghanistan of today is a government that is inching farther away from these imperatives and is bent on further concentrating national-level power in hands of yet fewer persons with the decision and policy making being increasingly left to the whims and tastes of a handful of persons.

Saving Afghanistan, restoring normalcy and order, and reversing the tide of failures would be, clearly, a multi-stage long journey. At present, Afghanistan has a government that is heavily concentrated in the center - Kabul - and most of the provincial capitals around the country. Outside these provincial centers and out in districts and villages, there is not much of a functioning government and governance even in those areas which have always been calm and secure from Taliban infiltration. Government offices in these outlying areas might be staffed and salaries disbursed for them on a regular basis but when it comes to actual work, nothing is being done.

Now and on one hand, blowing a new life into the dying veins of this pathetic, non-existent governance is one thing and on the other hand, making the national politics at the center - Kabul - more democratic, efficient, accountable and less authoritarian quite another issue. Afghan

leaders, from all ethnicities, just focus all their attention on making the central government in Kabul more inclusive and accountable without paying due attention to the goal of building a nation-wide functioning governmental system. Striving towards making the National Unity Government at the center in Kabul more accountable, efficient and democratic should not come at the cost of losing sight of the over-arching goal of making better the apparatus and system of governance in every province and part of the country.