**Time for peace, not war**

[Abdul Sattar](https://www.thenews.com.pk/writer/abdul-sattar)

Wednesday, Aug 25, 2021

The United States and its Western allies could not achieve anything after spending over two trillion dollars on the invasion and destruction of Afghanistan, one of the poorest countries of the globe with millions of homeless and malnourished people. The catastrophic effects of this invasion will haunt millions of Afghans for years as the aggression of the Western countries did not end the conflict but in fact sowed the seeds of a new unrest that is going to be between the Afghans themselves if sanity is not allowed to prevail.

The Western intervention in Afghanistan after the 9/11 attacks should have prompted the West to indulge in some soul-searching. It should have triggered a debate about the utility of squandering billions of dollars as well as other resources on senseless conflicts. It should have made the intellectuals of the advanced capitalist world come up with an anti-war narrative that underscored the need of pumping money into human development instead of investing it into death and destruction.

But unfortunately, instead of any reckoning on the part of Western intelligentsia, war-mongers sitting in prestigious places of learning and power corridors of London, Paris and Washington are equating the withdrawal of Western troops from Afghanistan with a humiliating defeat of the Western civilization and a severe blow to their invincible power. They seem to be more concerned over the imperial ego that has been badly hurt with the pullout of troops than the plight of Afghans who witnessed death and destruction during the Western intervention.

The slaves of the military industrial complex and the permanent war machinery have unleashed a torrent of criticism against the Biden Administration and all those who are reluctant to engage in forever wars and crises. These stooges of the corporate world, the agents of the arms manufacturing mafia and advocates of Western military interventions in the name of human rights and democracy want turmoil and unrest across the globe to justify their jingoistic mentality. This not only benefits a tiny minority of arms makers, who have a huge appetite for multiplying this profit, but also helps the so-called intellectuals achieve lucrative positions on think tanks whose sole job is to create war hysteria and encourage violence across the world.

Some of these Western academics seem to believe in the evil nature of humanity, asserting that there can only be peace by maintaining a balance of power which requires deadly weapons. They seem to be subscribing to the ideology of Thomas Hobbes who was sceptical towards the claim that humans are kind by nature, asserting that the life of the jungle was ‘solitary, nasty and brutish’. The use of brute force, in his view, was one of the ways to maintain peace and order. Although the political ideas of Thomas Hobbes are the reflection of the anarchic situation that Europe faced during the 15th and 16th centuries, some Western intellectuals interpreted his theory in a way that could provide justification for permanent wars and conflicts.

War that used to be an anomaly in human society has been normalised by these clever Western intellectuals, who assert that a society free from strife and turmoil can never be established. For them, wars and conflicts are inevitable and to prevent them requires more power, strength and aggression. Such intellectuals abhor the very idea of pacifism, claiming that peaceful means of settling disputes is nothing but a utopian endeavour in a practical world riddled with machinations and conspiracies. For them states are entities that are always busy plotting against one another. They consider statesmen to be Machiavellian – people who should employ lies, fraud and deception for the sake of power and national interests.

Interestingly, their definition of national interests is very narrow and elitist in essence. In the name of protecting such interests, they guard the interests of a particular class. For instance, the majority of the people in the advanced capitalist countries did not want their ruling elites to pump over five trillion dollars into the 'war on terror'. Instead they wanted it to be spent on health, education and housing. They did not want countries to be annihilated in their name or export of democracy to developing states with the help of B52. They have no interest in upgrading nuclear weapons but would like to see a society that is free from lethal weapons, which are not only detrimental to human beings but to all species as well besides causing immense damage to the environment.

The vast majority of these countries do not wish to see the militarization of space. They dream of a world free from invasions and aggression, taking to the streets in their millions whenever their masters plan an act of employing brutal force against any country. Millions of anti-war protesters who rocked London, Paris, Washington and several Western capitals made it abundantly clear that they despise the penchant of their rulers for military interventions. But it seems the struggles of these people against armed interventions, hunger, starvation, environmental degradation and declining living standards remain unnoticed. It seems academics of prestigious institutions and intellectuals of top think tanks do not consider them part of a nation or nations because this vast majority does not have the material wealth to influence the thinking of learned people.

The world has already suffered a lot because of wars and conflicts. Only in the recent decades, millions of people have perished – with Iraq witnessing the death of over 2.5 million, Syria over 555000 and Afghanistan over one million. This is in addition to over 80 million people that were engulfed by the two terrible wars and over 20 million in various conflicts since 1945. Despite all this destruction, there are still many in the political circles of Western capitals, the academic world of Europe and sections of the media who wish to see more tensions and sabre-rattling.

Instead of advising restraint and patience, they are urging their ruling elites to pick fights with China and Russia. Their constant provocations in the strait of Taiwan could trigger a new destructive conflict. Their baseless claims of Russian adventures could push not only Europe but the entire world towards a conflagration that could wipe away almost all of humanity. Such an irrational attitude in the midst of a devastating contagion that claimed over a million lives besides causing trillions of dollars in losses is really very unfortunate. The world is a miser when it comes to this existential threat that might require a few hundred billion dollars but the global elite is ready to pump trillions of dollars into the purchase of arms and ammunition and it does not shy away from taking this race of hegemony to space as well.

With the Western withdrawal from Afghanistan, the world should invest energies into stabilizing the war-torn country. We do not need more unrest and crises, but more Belt and Road Initiatives and Marshall Plans. The global economy needs trillions of dollars only for infrastructure. It is advisable to direct trillions to much needed roads, housing and civic infrastructure. The unfolding humanitarian catastrophes in the conflict zones of Yemen, Somalia, Libya, Iraq, Afghanistan and several parts of Africa, Asia and Latin America should prompt us to make a pledge that we will work for peace and prosperity. Let us inform our ruling elites that this is time for peace – not for preparing for more wars.

The writer is a freelance journalist.

Email: egalitarianism444@gmail.com