

‘The Fate of Afghanistan and the Fate of Humanity Are Much More Closely Connected Than Most People Can Imagine’

by Katherine Notley

What they have done by having this sort of an embargo, they’re denying the poor people of Afghanistan, the children of Afghanistan, the women of Afghanistan, and those men, who are really starving. So they warned 60%. It will get even worse, and the time will come when you will find that 90% of Afghans are without any food, and without any shelter. So I just cannot understand that America, which has at times been extremely a great benefactor and giving assistance to the most deserving places, now imposes the restriction and tried to punish the poor people of Afghanistan, because the government is that of Taliban, while they’re even negotiating with the Taliban....

—Pakistan Lt. Gen. Talat Masood (ret.)
on PTV World

The humanitarian issue is the primary issue at the moment.... Will OIC Foreign Ministers’ meeting come up with a solution? It is difficult to predict.... So it is Pakistan’s earnest hope that as part of the *Ummah*, we can come up with a solution, which is to save the lives in Afghanistan....

—Former Pakistani
Ambassador Naela Chohan
on PTV World

Dec. 19—During Christmastime, Christians give thought to the migrant family, a man and his young, pregnant wife on the verge of her first birth, traveling in the dead of winter, the darkest part of the year, with no chance of finding shelter at their journey’s end. She gave birth in a stable, and cradled her firstborn in a hay-filled manger, where otherwise the animals would fill their stomachs. The migrant family, the poorest of the poor, is the family of the child Jesus, whom Christians

recognize as the Son of God, and in Whose name, Christians view all children as children of the Creator.

But here, in the United States, how many know that some one million Afghan children under five are facing death by starvation *this winter*; that another 3 million Afghan children have no idea when or from where their next meal will come? How many of these children haven’t even the shelter of a stable? We don’t know: The media—CNN, *New York Times*, BBC, *Paris-Match*, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, Vatican News—don’t tell us.

Nor do the media cover, that since the U.S. and NATO withdrawal from

Afghanistan, the Federal Reserve and U.S. Treasury have now frozen some \$9.5 billion in assets rightfully belonging to Afghanistan’s central bank: Hence, without access to those funds, Afghanistan has no financial system, no banking system! Whatever food, fuel or shelter may be available against the ravages of winter in that mountainous country cannot be accessed, because no money is available. Withdraw funds from your bank account? The bank has no funds to give you!

The Pakistani guests on Pakistan TV’s program about the all-consuming concern of the overwhelming tragedy in neighboring Afghanistan, which has also affected Pakistanis for 20 years and more now, were shocked, almost to unbelief, when Schiller Institute guests from Germany, Sweden, France, and the U.S. told them that news of Afghanistan had dropped from media coverage since at least September. Neither Americans nor Europeans know anything about the volume of starvation, internal displacement, exposure to cold, or migration flight. They know nothing of the embargo to release funds belonging to Afghanistan’s central bank by U.S. Treasury, European banks, and others, under the excuse that the Taliban—with whom they have all negotiated in past years and months—took responsibility to attempt to govern the country,

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when Kabul's U.S.-backed President Ashraf Ghani fled on Aug. 15 carrying a valise reportedly stuffed with millions.

What Did Pakistan Do?

Pakistan had hoped that they, along with Afghanistan's other neighbors—Iran to the west, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan to the north, and a small border area of China to the east—could manage a humanitarian relief, and perhaps even embark on regional development, beginning with connecting the Afghan capital Kabul to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, providing land-locked Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan with access to ports on the Arabian Sea—Pakistan's Gwadar or Iran's Chabahar.

But the U.S.-European attack against the Afghan financial and banking system has killed any hope that its people might live from one day to the next, never mind to integrate their nation into a regional development program. Kabul's neighbors, now faced with the reality of an exponentially greater tragedy on their doorsteps, drawing down their own economies even further, could not turn away.

Pakistan appealed to what Islam calls "the Ummah," the community of co-religionists, in the form of the 57 member nations in the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, hosting an Extraordinary Meeting of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers Dec. 19, to fight what UN World Food Program Executive Director David Beasley is calling the "worst humanitarian disaster," in which some 22.8 million human beings, more than half of Afghanistan's population, face acute food insecurity, as temperatures plummet below zero; 8.7 million face emergency levels of food insecurity. Millions of children younger than five face immediate death from malnutrition and exposure *this* winter.

Pakistan's appeal to the Ummah in the OIC countries, and to the United Nations, the UN Security Council's permanent five nations (China, France, Russia, United Kingdom, United States), and others was largely twofold: to address the immediate humanitarian threat this winter, and to get the U.S. and Europe to release the Afghan people's \$9.5 billion in central bank assets,

in order for it to build an economy, open its schools, hospitals, and join its neighbors in economic trade and development.

'All Men Will Be Brothers'

Inasmuch as Americans, regardless of religious confession, "hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal," we are bound to acknowledge that the act of our government freezing the central bank assets of the people of Afghanistan constitutes a crime against humanity, and must be reversed without delay.

In that same Pakistan TV broadcast, Helga Zepp-LaRouche, Schiller Institute President, described her proposal for Operation Ibn Sina: To make of Afghanistan an example, in which the world's people pledge to create a model of modern healthcare delivery, including a general hospital system, an attending educational system for medical care, and, while caring for the sick, also providing whatever a people need to be well, healthy, and happy: nutritious food, fuel, shelter, electricity, sanitation, and above all, clean drinking water

Inasmuch as the world community, our "planetary Ummah," can do this in Afghanistan, it can be done in all countries, and consign words like "poverty" and "pandemic" to textbooks that the Afghan children who will survive this winter will only learn from reading about.

Or, as Zepp-LaRouche concluded her remarks to Pakistan TV's coverage of the OIC extraordinary meeting on Afghanistan:

To get all the forces internationally together to help Afghanistan is, in my view, one of the absolutely important historical missions.... I hope that all the participating and affected countries will double and multiply their efforts to make saving Afghanistan an issue of the whole world.... There must be a drumbeat, a drumbeat of awakening the conscience of the world:... Are we morally fit to survive or not?

The fate of Afghanistan and the fate of humanity are much more closely connected than most people can imagine.