



Twenty fifth Note

Haqiqat 26 contains news from Afghan print media with following details:

Negotiation and Reconciliation:

On the eve of ECHO summit, Turkey declared that it will mediate between Afghan government and the Taliban. Once again the Afghan government released 9 Taliban from Bagram prison as a sign of good-will. More than 50 Taliban fighters joined the peace process during the previous week. The High Peace Council started its activities in Kunduz province and Rabbani, head of this council says that foreign intervention has slowed down the process of work. The statement by the former Taliban foreign minister

about America's permission for Taliban to form their leadership circle in order to talk with Americans are the important news the Afghan print media focused on during past two weeks.

Election Transparency:

Special court is formed to assess the electoral frauds. Mishrano Jirga has asked for open trial of electoral institutions. FEFA also says that they are anxiously pursuing the creation of special court for electoral frauds. Also, police have banned former and angry MPs from entering the parliament. Other news in this section includes the rumors that IEC will reassess the frauds in the presidential elections and also Karzai wants to bring changes in the parliamentary elections results.

Corruption:

President Karzai says that widespread corruption exist in the foreign contracts and since 2002 hundred millions of dollars are wasted in this country. The head of Baghlan Appeal Court is arrested in this province and two more people are charged with corruption cases. Also, the weaknesses of legislative organs of the country have increased corruption and Taliban influence.

Transition Justice:

The Kabul print media did not have any article printed about transitional justice.

Articles and Interviews:

In this section we have an overview on the negotiation and reconciliation process with the Taliban and other insurgent forces inside Afghanistan during last year.

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An overview of the negotiation with the Taliban in 2010

▶ It seems that discussing the issue of reconciliation with the Taliban in the media and public have strengthened the spirit of the Taliban and they want to use this opportunity to exert more pressure on the government of Afghanistan to gain more privileges. **Page 13**



The Truth is a bi-weekly publication of the Afghanistan Watch supported by the International Centre for Transitional Justice (ICTJ). It is intended to provide a snapshot of how the Afghan media debate and approach these key issues facing the country: transitional justice, corruption, elections transparency and negotiations with the armed insurgents.

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Negotiation with Armed Anti-Government Groups

National Union of Afghan Journalists: Don't be deceived by wrong advice of malicious people

Mandegar Daily, No 470, Page 8, 15 Dec 2010

A group of international experts and analysts of Afghanistan's situation in an open letter to Mr. Obama have demanded for direct talks with the Taliban and say that a coalition government must be formed in Afghanistan with the presence of Taliban.

Ahmad Rashid, a member of the group and a Pakistani journalist who is one of writer of this letter, in one part writes that Taliban are a national movement who are powerful in north and west of the country.

In the other part of the letter it is written that whether we like or not; Taliban have big influence in the political prospect of Afghanistan and cannot be separated from the bulk of society. We need to sit down and talk with them as they have shown leaning towards negotiation.

These experts say that the formation of new government in Afghanistan without the participation of Taliban was a mistake.

The Afghanistan National Journalists Union deems the letter inappropriate, illogical and in the favor of terrorism.

Taliban are not a national movement. The Taliban include terrorists, Al-Qaida members, Pakistani and Afghan Taliban, Pakistani religious groups that are backed by the Pakistan's Intelligence agency, the narcotics mafia and criminals so it cannot be a national movement.

Pakistan's conditional support for peace process in Afghanistan

Mandegar Daily, No 470, Page eight, 15 December 2010

The Prime Minister of Pakistan in a meeting with the US deputy of Intelligence Agency said that Pakistan supports the process of peace in Afghanistan on a condition that it is parallel with the policies of this country.

Yousuf Raza Gillani, Pakistan's prime minister in a meeting with Michelle Morrell, deputy of U.S. intelligence Agency (CIA), emphasized that the fight against terrorism requires a common strategy by the regional powers of Pakistan, Afghanistan, NATO and U.S forces.

The prime minister of Pakistan declared his support for the joint strategy in fighting terrorism and demanded for furthering the regional cooperation with US in the areas of security and defense.

Head of High Council for Peace: Foreign intervention in Afghanistan has slowed down the peace process

Rah e Nejat daily, No 1591, Page One, 18 December 2010

The head of Supreme Council for Peace says that the foreign countries intervene in the affairs of Afghanistan which has slowed the process of peace talks with the Taliban.

Burhanuddin Rabbani, who was talking in Heart province with the reporters said that the foreign interference have created hurdles in bringing peace and stability in the country. He added that he will go to Pakistan for talks in this regard but did not mention the exact date.

He also said that one of the important factors in bringing peace in the region is talks with the regional countries that are involved in the affairs of Afghanistan.

Mr. Rabbani called peace as a culture and said: we can establish peace in Afghanistan when we reach out to people, learn their views and participate them in this process.

A Taliban commander joined the peace process with his men

Afghanistan Daily, No 1271, Page Eight, 18 December 2010

One of the local Taliban commanders in Baghlan province with his nine subordinates joined the process of peace in Afghanistan.

Abdul Rahman Rahimi, the security chief of Baghlan province said: "Commander Golzada joined peace process yesterday."

Gulzada was one of the local Taliban commander who fought the national and foreign forces in the Pokam village of Baghlan district.

He said his surrender is an important step in establishing peace in the district.

Gulzada said that I fought with government forces in Pokam village of Baghlan district with my 9 people and now I will join the national police force to serve the nation.

It is to say that it is one of the several anti-government forces that join the peace process in the country.

Former Taliban Foreign minister in talks with Al-Arabia: Mullah Omar insisted on hosting Osama bin Laden amid other Taliban leader's opposition

Rah e Nejat daily, No 1592, Page One, 19 December 2010

Mollah Wakil Ahmad Motawakil, former Taliban foreign

minister said that many Taliban leaders wanted to prevent any attack on US soil and did not favor hosting Bin Laden in Afghanistan, but Mollah Omar kept insisting in keeping him in the country.

Regarding peace talks with the Taliban, Wakil Ahmad said: The Americans are not seemed to seriously pursue this issue and they must let Taliban to form their leadership committee and sit down to talk.

Zazai declared as peace district

Rah e Nejat Daily, No 1592, Page Two, December 19, 2010

The residents of Zazai district handed over their weapons to the government and this district is officially called 'peace district'.

Earlier the Goriz district of Khost province was named as peace district.

Khost governor said that DIAG program is completely implemented in this province and the people ask the government to provide them with donations.

Reports show that insecurity persists in some parts of Khost province.

Taliban want fierce response

Bakhtar Daily, No 380, Page Three, 20 Dec 2010

Taliban continue to carry out attacks which shows that they will not stop armed fighting until the last stage. It can be perceived that Taliban have no interest in the peace talks initiated by the afghan government and they want to be victorious through armed confrontations. If it is true then the government of Afghanistan is required to change its behavior too in dealing with the Taliban. It can be possible when the government also focuses on armed confrontation as the first option and the peace talks as later options.

The growing momentum in the peace talks proposed by the government has created this mentality for the Taliban that the government is tired of armed confrontation with this group and tries to make them agree with ceasefire. Some international experts also believe that the declaration of exit schedule has created this hope for the Taliban leaders to become victorious in near future.

Crisis of Confidence and the Peace Strengthening Commission

8am daily, No 1041, Page Three, 21 December 2010

50 Taliban and Hezb e Islami members joined the peace process by handing over their weapons.

These people were involved in armed confrontations with the government and foreign forces in Ghazni, Logar, Maidan Wardak and Kapisa provinces and have promised to cooperate with the government afterwards.

Meanwhile, the supreme council for peace says that 10 thousand three hundred Taliban and other anti-government forces have so far joined the peace process. They were high ranking and lower commanders of these groups. The commission praises the role of local tribal elders in bringing these people to peace talks and have promised that if employment opportunities are created for these people then they can encourage more than 3 thousand people till the end of this year to join peace process.

Although the members of peace strengthening commission claim to have brought thousands of anti-government forces to the peace process but there are still violence and terrorist attacks in the country. The government formed the high peace council months before, which has not been able to mark any significant success either.

Meanwhile, some of the Taliban members in Kabul that have joined the commission for strengthening peace say that the government's efforts in bringing the Taliban and Hezb e Islami members to peace talks will not produce positive results because they don't trust this council.

Qari Ajmal, one of the Taliban members says that he knows some of his friends who joined peace process and after receiving some donation returned to the Taliban ranks. If there would be trust then many Taliban would join the peace process.

35 armed insurgents joined government

Afghanistan daily, No 1276, Page 7, 23 Dec 2010

The local authorities in the Badghis province have informed of 35 armed insurgents joining the government.

Haji Sharfuddin, spokesperson for Badghis governor said that these people have joined the peace process with the mediation of local elders. He added that they were involved in insurgent activities during past months in the Qadis district of Badghis province. According to him the Commission for Strengthening Peace provides identity cards for these people in order not to be tortured by NATO and Afghan security forces.

It is to say that these people have promised to cooperate in reconstruction and bringing peace in their district.

Turkey mediates in the peace talks

Mandegar Daily, NO 477, Page Eight, 26 December 2010

The Turkish authorities have welcomed the request made by Afghanistan and the Taliban to organize peace talks in turkey. Ahmad Dawood Oghlo, Turkish foreign minister said that they are ready to provide every cooperation means in establishing peace and stability in Afghanistan. Turkey and Afghanistan had agreed that Taliban open an office in this country to carry out peace talks.

Turkish national television reported that Abdullah Gul, the president of Trukey have welcomed this step and proposed that if Afghan government has no objection they will allow Taliban to open their office in Turkey.

Five insurgents joined the government

Daily 8 am, No 1045, Page One, December 26, 2010

The National Security Department says that five armed anti-government forces have joined the government.

In a communiqué released by the national security department says that this armed groups operated against the government in Andro and Badpish areas of Laghman province. Now they have given up armed activities.

According to the communiqué, the tribal elders and the residents of the province have welcomed this move by the insurgents.

Baghlan Governor: Tribal Elders have strong role in establishing peace

Afghanistan Daily, No 1276, Page Eight, 26 December 2010

The tribal elders with the cooperation of people can play a vital role in bringing insurgents to peace talks. Monshi Abdul Majid, Baghlan governor deems the role of tribal elders important in the areas where there is unrest and fighting. He says that tribal elders play a vital role in resolving the conflicts and establishing peace.

He said that the administration in this province have authorized people to cooperate in the peace process and bring insurgents to peace talks. Lately they have formed a council with 21 members to encourage insurgents for peace dialogues.

He stressed that more than 100 insurgents in central Baghlan have joined the peace process with the efforts of religious figures, tribal elders and local individuals.

High Council for Peace negotiating with the Pakistani authorities

Rah e Nejat daily, No 1599, Page One, 28 December 2010

Officials say that an unprecedented moment of dialogue with the Pakistani officials has been possible and the representatives of Supreme Council for Peace are visiting Pakistan to talk with the authorities there.

Wahid Omar, spokesman for President Karzai, on December 26 said that in order to bring the two countries of Afghanistan and Pakistan closer in the process of peace and negotiation with the Taliban, a number of Supreme Council for Peace representatives will visit Pakistan and talk with the officials there.

Omar added that Pakistan is the victim of terrorism like Afghanistan and it is the time for cooperation in order to make the situation better.

The release of 9 prisoners from Bagram meant to show good will towards the peace process

Rah e Nejat Daily, No 1599, 28 December 2010

9 people who were arrested during military operations in

Kandahar and Helmand province were released in Kandahar city with the presence of tribal elders and their family members.

Toryalai Visa, the Kandahar governor said that as a first step towards bringing peace, these criminals were released and their criminal cases exempted. Today they are with us. The tribal elders also demanded that more prisoners should be released who are imprisoned in Bagram and Pul e Charkhi prisons.

France supports the peace process in Afghanistan

Cheragh Daily, No 241, page One, 28 December 2010

The Presidential palace declared unconditional support of the French government for the peace process in Afghanistan. The press office of the President published this news adding that Allen Zhopeh, the French Defense Minister in a meeting with Hamid Karzai declared his support for the peace process with the insurgents.

The foreign countries, present in Afghanistan for 9 years, are now trying to resolve the crises through negotiation. The Afghan government also formed the Supreme Council of Peace led by Borhanuddin Rabbani to reach this goal.

A group of anti-government forces joined the peace process

Afghanistan daily, No 1281, Page Eight, 29 December 2010

A group of ten armed anti-government forces joined the peace process led by Mollah Abdul Ghani in Heart province. A source in the national security department on the condition of anonymity said that Mollah Abdul Ghani with his 9 friends joined the peace process.

According to the source, Mollah Abdul Ghani operated against the government in the Robath Sangi district under the command of Mollah Abdul Rahim (Lang) and with the mediation of tribal elders he joined the peace process.

He added that the government must provide them employment opportunities or join them in the ranks of Afghan security forces.

Peace Council started work in Kundoz

Afghanistan Daily, No 1281, Page Eight, 29 December 2010

The Supreme Peace Council officially began work in Kundoz and says that if foreign forces don't stop their arbitrary operations then the council will not be effective. The council declared its operation on December 28, 2010. Abdul Rauf Qazizada, one of the council authorities said that the council includes 25 members from religious scholars, tribal elders, government officials and members of provincial council.

This council is formed to follow the programs of supreme council for peace.

Qazi outlined clear objectives of the council as negotiation with the anti-government forces and their disarmament.

Pakistan will not negotiate with a weak government

Daily 8 am, No 1048, Page Four, 29 December 2010

The members of Supreme Council for peace went to Pakistan for their first official visit for the purpose of peace talks. There have been many trips in the president level between both the countries with no significant achievements in bringing peace or reducing the support of ISI for the Taliban.

But can the trip by President Rabbani as the head of Supreme Peace Council be the turning point in the politics of the country? The answer is clear; No. Mr. Rabbani is not the person having much influence on Pakistan military and politicians. Although he lived many years in Pakistan and had relations with ISI officials and other Pakistani statesmen during Afghan Jihad, but this relation is not so wide that he could bring a strategic turning point in the Pakistan-Afghanistan politics.

The Afghan government must seek the ways of dialogue with Pakistan, but if they do not seriously pursue the issue beyond usual diplomatic talks, they will not make any serious achievements. Such trips will not bring any strategic changes in the viewpoint of Pakistanis.

On the other hand the government of Afghanistan, itself, is a reason for the involvement of Pakistan in its internal affairs because of its weakness, disability, lack of legitimacy, effectiveness and corruption cases.

exempts them from any interrogation or investigation by the ISAF and Afghan security forces; however, there are reports that these people take the interest of this letter for insurgent activities.

But the officials in peace commission responsible reject this claim.

It is to say that the people who are part of the commission for strengthening peace enjoy many facilities.

Useless efforts interference in the duties of the institutions working for peace

Kabul Weekly, No 437, page two, 29 December 2010

Sayed Sharif Yousefi, spokesperson for the peace strengthening commission said: We believe that the formation of Supreme Council for peace beside the commission for strengthening peace has caused interferences in the duties of both the parties.

The political experts believe that formation of such commissions working on the same issue with same duties is meant to satisfy a number of figures.

Wahid Mozhdha, political expert says that when supreme council for peace was formed, Mojaddadi started shouting that he funds the commission by his personal money and Mr. Karzai, in order to satisfy Mojaddadi, said that the expenses of commission for strengthening peace will be given by the government.

On the other hand, the Taliban deems the commissions lack authorities and says that there are people in these commissions that were involved in civil war after the collapse of Najib government.

Anyone who joins the peace commission is given a letter which

Elections Transparency

Victorious candidates in presidential palace: Parliament should be opened on 19 December

Daily 8 am, No 1037, Page 2, 15 December 2010

One day after the statement released by the victorious candidates asking the inaugural of new parliament until 19 December, more than 200 candidates went to meet Hamid Karzai. In this meeting the victorious candidates asked the president to inaugurate the parliament on December 19. According to one of the victorious candidates Mr. Karzai will inaugurate the parliament in January 2011. The members of the Mishrano Jirga (Upper House) are on holidays and one third of the members of Mishrano Jirga are not appointed yet which has delayed the inaugural of parliament, the president said. Muhammad YouusQanooni proposed that the parliament should be inaugurated by the two-third members of the Mishrano Jirga which was rejected by the president.

Baktash Syawash, one of the victorious candidates addressing Mr. Karzai said: "We did not come to the presidential palace to beg, we don't feel pride either to come here but we are here to defend the right of our people." According to sources, the meeting was held in an unfriendly and conflictual atmosphere. Both sides were trying to directly and indirectly use abusive words. The sources say that Mr. Karzai stepped into Alemi Balkhi's talks and alluded the victorious candidates can continue their meetings under the supervision of Mr. Qanooni.

According to the law the parliament is inaugurated after the final elections result. But, President Karzai is delaying the opening of the National Parliament with a vague and unclear policy.

The Parliament Secretariat addressing former MPs: Your term is over, please do not disturb

Daily 8 am, No 1039, Page three, 19 December 2010

Dozens of angry candidates who were former members of parliaments are banned from entering the parliament as the parliament secretariat declared that their term is over according to the law.

These MPs call the final elections results by IEC illegitimate and say that they will continue their job until the final decision by the Supreme Court about elections result and the official inaugural of new parliament by the president.

National Union of Journalists: The Attorney general should not pave the way for dictatorship

Daily 8 am, No 1040, Page Three, 20 December 2010

The National Union of Journalists in a press release writes that



attorney general's office has asked the analysts and experts of the country not to discuss the affairs of recent parliamentary elections.

The National Union of Journalists in their communiqué released, says that this kind of statement is in complete opposition to the declaration of constitution and the Media Law. Such declaration will establish grounds for dictatorship in the country.

The National Union of Journalists emphasizes on the freedom of speech and the right to access information and they have asked the government and the ministry of culture to prevent any kind of activities that endangers the freedom of speech and access to information.

Meanwhile, Sadiqullah Tawhidi, head of media watchdog in NAI organization says that the attorney general's office lack knowledge about the law of media and thus they have taken this step.

Statement by Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission in relation to 1389 elections

Daily 8 am, No 1040, Page 6, 20 December 2010

The Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commissions emphasizes that any step taken in relation to the results of parliamentary elections must be with responsibility and the AIHRC express their concerns over the continuity of current crises and the illegal interference and pressure to ignore the votes of people.

According to the constitution and elections law, the IEC is required to maintain independence and neutrality and organize

fair and free elections. Moreover, it is their responsibility to assess the complaints, make decisions and declare the results of elections.

The second parliamentary election was held with relative success and the final results were declared officially by the Independent Elections Commission. Now it is the job of all legislative forces to safeguard the legitimate vote of people and support the obtained result.

This is achievable when all the institutions and individuals respect the independence of Electoral Commissions and recognize their legal authorities related to elections affairs.

According to elections law, the review of election frauds and decision-making about it, are the sole authority of Independent Elections Commission and they have the right to announce the final elections result. Therefore no other institution has the authority or right to abolish it.

The president is preparing the list of appointment members of Mishrano Jirga

Irada Daily, No 943, Page three, 21 December 2010

President Karzai's spokesman said that the Afghan President is busy preparing the list of Senate members to be appointed. Wahid Omar, in his weekly news conference rejected the rumors that president will appoint the failed parliamentary candidates as members of the Senate.

He said: it is possible that someone from failed candidates enters to Senate House but it does not mean there has been collusion.

FEFA: IEC poorly supervised candidate's financial report

Daily 8 am, No 1043, Page three, 23 December 2010

Free and Fair Elections Foundation of Afghanistan (FEFA) criticizes the role of IEC in supervising the candidate's financial reports during the parliamentary elections of September 18, 2010. They say that this weakness of Independent Electoral Commission caused many violators not to be identified. FEFA supervised the financial situation of 22 candidates in sixteen different districts of Kabul during the electoral campaigns and say that the election law lacks clear description on financial situation of candidates during their campaign and the IEC also did not pay significant attention about it.

Free and Fair Elections Foundation of Afghanistan in its report adds that among 22 candidates, who are assessed, 6 of them had parts in buying the votes and 13 of them have presented false report to IEC about their financial situation. Meanwhile, the Free and Fair Elections Foundation of Afghanistan regarding the ongoing jangles between the electoral institutions and the attorney general's office says that the Supreme Court should investigate about it.

Former MPs: The New parliament must not be inaugurated

Daily 8 am, No 1045, Page One, 26 December 2010

While the Supreme Court is busy collecting evidence and proof about the candidate's complaints regarding the final results of parliamentary elections, the former MPs have warned the president about the inaugural of new parliament.

These MPs, who are prevented by the police to enter the parliament, say that the president must wait until the decision of Supreme Court is announced.

While the president and their spokesperson have not expressed their official acceptance of the final elections results, the victorious candidates have said that the president will inaugurate the new parliament on Jan 21, 2011. But dozens of former MPs who had gathered behind the gates of parliament say that they have sent hundreds of documents showing frauds and violations and hope that the Supreme Court announces the elections result invalid.

Seventy percent of group B Electoral complaints is assessed

Afghanistan Daily, No 1278, Page Eight, 26 December 2010

The Electoral Complaints Commission says that 70 percent of group (B) complaints are assessed.

Ahmdzia Rafat, a member and spokesman for the Electoral Complaints Commission said that 70 percent of complaints in second category are assessed. According to the source around 1160 complaints of second category are registered about elections which have no effect on the result of elections.

Rafat added that the remaining 30 percent will be finalized soon.

The UN Security Council supported elections results

Afghanistan daily, No 1279, Page One, 27 Dec 2010

The UN Security Council declared its support for the final elections results, but UNAMA office spokesperson in Kabul is incognizant about this declaration. Nilab Mobarez, UNAMA spokesperson in Kabul said that she heard about this statement from the reporters and UNAMA has no particular viewpoint about it.

Mobarez said: it is possible that the declaration is published by the Security Council but we have no comment about it.

Mr. de Mistura, the UN Special Envoy to Afghanistan has given his report to UN Security Council about Afghanistan Elections.

The source adds that the UN Security Council supports and welcomes the parliamentary elections result of Afghanistan.

The UN Security Council adds in the declaration that they hope

all the institutions and the governmental bodies perform their respective authorities according to the constitution of the country.

5 angry candidates with 16 supporters: The elections results should be declared invalid

8 am daily, No 1046, Page One, 27 December 2010

Five angry candidates about the elections results of parliament with their 16 supporters asked for the invalidation of elections result. In a statement they demanded the legislative organs to declare the elections result invalid.

Abdulgomin Omarkheil, an angry candidate said that in no more than 20 votes are casted in Chahar Darra district and 13000 votes are counted in the process of vote counting.

He said that if the real votes were counted then every candidate could have made their way to parliament with 500 to 1000 votes.

Special Court formed to assess candidate's claims

Rah e Nejat Daily, No 1598, Page One, 27 Dec 2010

The special court with the endorsement of presidential palace is formed to assess the claims by the angry candidates.

Mr. Sadiqullah Haqiq, the head of Kabul's Appeal Court presides over this special court.

The suspected IEC members are not introduced

Irada daily, No 947m Page One, 27 Dec 2010

The Electoral Complaints Commission says that no suspicious IEC members are introduced to this commission.

Ahmad Zia Rafat, member and spokesperson for ECC on 26 December said that they have not received any particular list from the members of IEC who are accused of frauds and violations.

In the meantime, Noor Mohammad Noor the spokesperson for IEC says that they have sent the names of 1100 temporary IEC workers by email to ECC. These people are accused of frauds and violations in the elections process. Noor told that the list will be officially submitted to ECC very soon.

Noor Mohammad Noor, spokesperson for IEC said that this list is sent to ECC unofficially, but he did not give information about the time and date of official submission of the list.

Afghanistan Senate House demanded for open trial of electoral fraud's culprits

Daily 8am, No 1047, Page Three, 28 Dec 2010

The Afghanistan Senate House has asked for the open trial of IEC



commissions who are involved in the electoral frauds. Zalmai Zabuli, head of Senate House Complaints Commission told the media that they support the special court to pursue electoral frauds allegations.

This Senate House representative said that they support the decision by this special court about elections.

Zalmai said that in order to give satisfaction to people the process of the court must be open for public and media.

An IEC authority: We are gathering evidences and proofs of frauds in the presidential elections

Mandegar Daily, No 480, Page Four, 29 Dec 2011

An authority in the IEC in the condition of anonymity said to Mandegar daily that IEC is trying to obtain evidences and proofs that show widespread frauds in the presidential elections of last year.

This IEC authority said that the proofs and evidences of frauds in the last year's presidential elections will be referred to the special court. According to the source the IEC is determined to collect millions of fraud cases in the presidential elections of last year and submit them to the special court.

On the other hand some members of opposition party also expressed that they are not silent about it.

Ahmad Behzad, one of the members of the opposition said: "If the special court wants to pursue the electoral frauds with transparency and no political deals then it should start from the fraud cases of last year's presidential elections."

Serious conflicts between IEC and government Karzai tried to change the elections results

Mandegar Daily, No 480, Page 8, 29 Dec 2010

President Hamid Karzai has pressured the United Nations envoy to Afghanistan to bring changes in the elections results.

Some governmental and foreign sources have told a private media channel that Mr. de Mistura and Fazl Ahmad Ma'navi have mentioned many times about pressures from Hamid Karzai and they say that they will never surrender for the president.

A foreign official says that Karzai several times visited with foreigners and the IEC authorities to consent them with his demands. But, these people did not accept the demands of Karzai. This foreign authority says that he heard Mr. de Mistura many times that Karzai told him "it is in the favor of my country and the national interest that there should be modifications in the elections results."

Zia Rafath:

No court in Afghanistan can be formed in single step

Afghanistan Daily, No 1281, Page One, 29 Dec 2010

Electoral Complaints Commission says that according to the law and the framework of authorities of the officials, no court can be of single step in Afghanistan. Ahmadzia Rafat, member and spokesperson for IEC criticized the formation of this court and said that no court in Afghanistan can be of one single step. He added: This issue is detailed in the laws of Afghanistan.

In the mean-time, two days before the Afghanistan Supreme Court informed of a special court about the elections results of Sep 18 2010 with ultimate authority and the endorsement by the president.

Rafat emphasized that the elections results announced by IEC is not changeable.

The Angry candidates demonstrated again

8am daily, No 1048, Page Two, 29 Dec 2010

On December 28 a crowd of angry candidates, who could not make their way to parliament, came on the street and demonstrated against elections result. This demonstration takes place when the special court is formed to assess the elections cases.

The angry candidates and their supporters gathered in front of the Supreme Court building and demanded that the cases should be assessed properly without any pressure from any source.

The Supreme Court told earlier that the elections complaints will be assessed by the special court.

Formation of Special Court to assess the elections cases is a matter of concern for us

8am Daily, No 1049, Page Three, 30 Dec 2010

FEFA expressed its concern on the intervention of judicial and legal institutions in the elections affairs and called it against the constitution of the country. FEFA emphasizes that electoral institutions are the only authoritative organizations in assessing

the electoral frauds and complaints.

This organization also demands the Supreme Court of Afghanistan to practice the rules of elections law and only handle the cases related to crimes in order not to endanger the electoral institutions.

IEC:

We are not collecting evidences about the frauds in the presidential elections

Afghanistan daily, No 1282, Page One, 30 Dec 2010

Noor Mohammad Noor called baseless any rumor that IEC is collecting evidences about the frauds in the presidential elections.

He added that the presidential election is over and its case is closed.

Members of special electoral court to be appointed by the President

Afghanistan daily, No 1277, Page One, 25 Dec 2010

The Supreme Court says that the members of special court, prosecuting the frauds in September 18 elections will be appointed by the president. The Afghanistan Supreme Court has sent their proposition for president two days earlier. Abdul Wakil Omari, the publication head of Supreme Court said the number of judges will be endorsed and elected by the president. He added that the Supreme Court has sent the elections case they received from attorney general's office to the president to form a special court.

Corruption

Judicial weakness increases Taliban influence

Daily 8 am, No 1038, Page Two, 18 December 2010

The London based Research Institute- Chatom House criticized the Afghan judicial bodies and writes that widespread corruption, injustice and lack of response exists in the judicial departments of the country.

The report adds that no attention paid on the judicial system of Afghanistan since the collapse of the Taliban. The result of this negligence has caused widespread corruption and injustice in the justice system of the country and the people are dissatisfied with the judicial process.

The decisions taken by the government to exempt the war criminals as a result of political deals have brought gaps between people and the government.

The reports add Taliban are taking the interest of this condition to channel the situation in their favor.

President Karzai:

Widespread corruption in foreign contracts

Rah e Nejat Daily, No 1591, Page One, 18 Dec 2010

We can combat corruption when all authority is handed over to Afghans. President Karzai says that big part of corruption exists in the foreign contracts and the government is trying to oversight these contracts. On the occasion of International Day to combat corruption, president Karzai said that big contracts are not transparent and they are not signed in coordination with the government.

Karzai said: foreign contracts are a big problem and concern for us. We are not aware of these contracts whom with they are signed.

According to Mr. Karzai, the government of Afghanistan has not been informed of no single contract yet.

Karzai added: the government of Afghanistan has no authority and sovereignty to oversight these contracts. The foreigners sign contract with everyone they want. "Now we have started talks with them and they also know it. I hope they cooperate with us to solve this problem.

President Karzai named the security companies a big source of corruption and said that they have paved the way for corruption and insecurity in the country.

Food oversight department of public health ministry takes bribe from traders

Bakhtar Daily, No 379, Page One, 19 Dec 2010

Food oversight department of Public Health Ministry, in



particular the laboratory for food analysis did not propose any problem during past nine years as they took bribe and allowed all kinds of food materials to be imported to the country. The new laboratories installed in Nangarhar province have found that imported oils are of poor quality.

According to Afghan traders, the department is trying to ban the laboratory of food analysis in Ningarhar province in order to continue taking bribe from traders.

The traders say that Enayatullah Kohistani, an employee of Ministry of Public Health took bribe from the traders. With the installation of the laboratory the bribe money is cut off and this department is trying to create hurdles for the oil traders.

From 2002 to date, hundreds of millions of dollars are wasted in Afghanistan

Afghanistan Daily, No 1275, Page One, 22 Dec 2010

Aziz Shams, the spokesperson for the Afghanistan ministry of finance deems beneficial the statement of Arnold Fields, America's Special investigator on the reconstruction of Afghanistan who had told that millions of dollars aid for the reconstruction of Afghanistan was wasted in this country.

This assessment will make the people of Afghanistan understand that how much money is spent by the donor countries through their organizations to help reconstruct Afghanistan.

Mr. Fields says that there is lack of proper control on the money invested inside Afghanistan. But Afghanistan's Ministry of Finance says that a major part of international assistance is spent by these donor organizations. It is said that due to poor management and existence of corruption inside the Afghan government, many donor countries have spent money on the reconstruction projects through their organizations.



Two persons punished on corruption cases

Anis Daily, No. 219, Page One, December 28, 2010

The head of Zaid Rafi Trading Company and former head of oil and gas department are condemned for punishment by the primary court for criminal cases.

They are charged for manipulation of two thousands ton petrol. Based on the decision of the court the Zabihullah Shaikhani, head of Zaid Rafi Trading Company is sentenced to ten years imprisonment and fined an amount of one 111 million and 500 thousand Afs and 2 thousand liter petrol. Similarly, Azizullah Rasooli the former oil and gas department head is sentenced to five years and six months jail sentence.



The Chief Appeal Court of Baghlan was arrested on charges of embezzlement

Afghanistan Daily, No. 1281, Page One, 29 December 2010

Officials in attorney general's office say that they have arrested the chief of Baghlan Appeal Court for corruption and manipulation cases.

Hafiz Allah Hafiz, attorney general's chief audit office says that this person is charged for embezzlement of 25 thousand Afghanis.

According to him he had manipulated 25 thousand Afghanis from the purchase of fuel for winter season.

Articles & Interviews

An overview of the negotiation with the Taliban in 2010

By Jawad Naji

The year 2010 is perhaps, an important year in the new political system of Afghanistan. Besides the issues of security, corruption, elections and the exit plan of international forces, the most important discussion of 2010 proposed by the government of Afghanistan, was negotiation and reconciliation with the Taliban.

In the early days of Mr. Karzai' government there was an international and political intention against the Taliban to oust them from the region. It seemed that the trend would continue and the return of Taliban was improbable. Now, there is no talk of defeating and removing the insurgents but they are assumed as the second party to be negotiated with. There were talks of government's stance and direct and indirect contact through with the Taliban, particularly through the commission for strengthening peace, but after the London Conference the discussion of talks with the Taliban became official.

Important events:

London Conference:

The government of Hamid Karzai officially proposed the idea of reconciliation and peace with the Taliban at the London Conference in 2010. This was welcomed and supported by the international community.

Peace Jirga:

The peace Jirga was launched following the London Conference in Kabul. The government of Afghanistan invited about 1600 participants in this consultative peace meeting. Cabinet members, provincial governors, tribal elders, university professors, MPs and provincial council members were the participants of this meeting. The objective to launch this Jirga was to seek ways and propose solutions in order to reach peace in Afghanistan. However, it was later revealed that the government had already developed the plans and schemes of this Jirga. It was named as state Jirga than a public meeting. Many of government critics like Abdullah Abdullah and tribal leaders like Mohamad Mohaqiq and General Dostum were not present in this meeting. The declaration released by the participants of the Jirga demanded for the release of Taliban prisoners as a sign of goodwill and removal of some Taliban leaders from the UN's black list.

Maldives Meeting:

On the occasion of holding the Peace Jirga, the news spread

about the peace meeting in the Maldives' Islands with the presence of Hekmatyar's son-in-law, Taliban leaders and some MPs. This peace meeting was held and at the end a declaration was announced. Later, the President's spokesperson said that the meetings held in the foreign recreation places will have no achievements and the government did not participate in those meetings. Meanwhile the Hezb e Islami led by Gulbadin Hekmatyar also rejected the meetings of Maldives and called the meeting as personal and for recreation purposes.

Kabul Conference:

Perhaps, the important issue discussed in this conference were related to talks with the Taliban. Although the speakers did not mention about the details of it, it was observed that there had been talks on it behind the scene. Richard Holbrooke, former US special envoy to Afghanistan and Pakistan had said that in Kabul conference the major focus will be on the return of Taliban to their normal lives. In Kabul conference the government of Afghanistan financial aid to bring back the insurgents to

It seems that discussing the issue of reconciliation with the Taliban in the media and public have strengthened the spirit of the Taliban and they want to use this opportunity to exert more pressure on the government of Afghanistan to gain more privileges.

the normal lives through and secondly they demanded to remove the names of ten Taliban commanders from the UN black list.

Removal from Blacklist:

The names of some Taliban leaders were eliminated from the UN black list based on a request from the Afghan government. This issue was proposed by the Afghan government to UN officials. From 45 people whose names were removed from black-list, 10 were Taliban members. UN called it as an outcome of success in the peace process.

Formation of High Council for Peace:

The president himself initiated and formed the high council for peace. A number of jihadi leaders were also present in the meeting held in this regard in the presidential palace. This council has 68 members and many of them were the

mujahedeen commanders in the past. In relation to this council, there are local councils formed in some provinces. Mediation and contacts with the insurgents are supposed to be carried out by this council. It is worth noting that Wakil Ahmad Motawakil and Abdul Salam Zaef, two former Taliban leaders, have repeatedly rejected Karzai's invitation to participate in this council.

Release of prisoners: a considerable number of Taliban leaders are released from the prisoners as a sign of good will by the afghan government. At least, 172 Taliban leaders were released from prisoners under different pretext. It is said that their criminal cases are not processed but they are released.

Karzai's meeting with a fake Taliban leader:

The media in recent days reported that Karzai met a fake Taliban leader in the presidential palace. The government believed he was second man in Taliban leadership and held talks with him. It is said that the person took away millions of dollars with him. The media reported that he was a shopkeeper in Quetta Pakistan.

In 2010 the government focused more on the process of negotiation and talks with the Taliban. The statistic shows that 2010 has been the most deadly year for Afghan and foreign forces. Meanwhile, the Karzai administration had put all their efforts to bring the insurgents to peace process. Experts believe that all the efforts by the government is one sided and the response by the Taliban, not only show their lack of trust for reconciliation and talks but also providing such privileges for this group has encouraged them to fight more against the afghan government. It seems that discussing the issue of reconciliation with the Taliban in the media and public have strengthened the spirit of the Taliban and they want to use this opportunity to exert more pressure on the government of Afghanistan to gain more privileges.

The process of talks and reconciliation with the Taliban is not new. During past years the Commission for Strengthening Peace led by Sibghatullah Mojaddadi also spent a huge amount of money and this time, again, a lot of money is spent in this regard, but there are serious concerns about the lack of transparency in this process and its outcomes.

New publications

Theater and Transitional Justice in Afghanistan: Creating Spaces for Change

ICTJ / By Nadia Siddiqui / December 2010

A central tenet of transitional justice is the need to give voice to victims of trauma and human rights violations in order to build a more just and peaceful future. However, the arena and methods for this process are still sometimes contested, in particular between judicial responses and nonjudicial responses that may include artistic/social theatrical approaches.

While transitional justice mechanisms—from truth-seeking to trials—are by their very nature performative, offering a forum for victims' testimony, only a select number of victims are able to participate. This can make certain individuals and groups feel excluded and keep certain truths unexamined. Furthermore, in criminal justice settings participants are constrained in their responses, given the strictures of formal proceedings and may face adversarial questioning of their experiences. Rather than set the scene and express themselves freely, victims must confine their explanations to the questions asked. One witness before the Special Court for Sierra Leone noted that while in the courtroom each witness speaks for him- or herself, in the context of a play participants are able to present their stories simultaneously to show how different elements of their respective experiences are linked. Many critics argue, however, that deploying more expressive or theatrical devices in a trial setting in particular—creating a “morality play”—can impede due process and result in unfair trials, further setting back the establishment of rule of law.

http://www.ictj.org/static/Publications/ICTJ_AFG_theaterbriefing_pb2010.pdf

2010 Elections: A clear mess in the Land of the Light

Afghanistan Analysts Network (AAN) / By Fabrizio Foschini / December 15, 2010

Since Saturday it has become possible to do some real number crunching and to get a detailed analysis of the election results, after the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) finally uploaded the polling results per polling station. For weeks, the web page displayed an ‘Internal Server Error’ message, but a phone call to a senior IEC staff member seems to have done the trick. It is now easily possible to check which votes were excluded and from which polling centres, and which have been kept in. AAN's analyst Fabrizio Foschini has been going through the Nuristan results and the picture is revealing. Even the remaining results, that have gone through two rounds of scrutiny and disqualification show strong signs of fraud, suggesting that the election there was probably fraudulent in its totality.

<http://www.aan-afghanistan.com/index.asp?id=1385>

Get real: That's the road to Afghan peace

The Globe and Mail/ by LOUISE ARBOUR/ December 2010

Canada has already borne tremendous sacrifices. With 154 soldiers killed and another 1,500 injured since it entered the war in 2002, Canada has marked the third-largest number of NATO casualties after the United States and Britain. Hundreds of soldiers and civilians have worked heroically to stabilize the southern province of Kandahar, logging in countless frustrating days away from their families while battling both ruthless insurgents in the field and the politics of policy drift in the NATO alliance.

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/opinions/opinion/get-real-thats-the-road-to-afghan-peace/article1846170/>

What comes after remembering? Some thoughts after National Victims Day in Afghanistan

Afghanistan Analysts Network (AAN) / By Kate Clark / December 16, 2010

There are days when Afghanistan's sadness becomes overwhelming. For us, the Afghan National Victims' Day was such a day. AAN Senior Analyst Sari Kouvo and Political Researcher Obaid Ali participated in the Afghan National Victims' Day demonstration and commemoration.

<http://www.aan-afghanistan.com/index.asp?id=1388>

Taliban Insurgents Prepare to Attempt 'Spectacular' Attacks, UN Envoy Says

Bloomberg / By Bill Varner / Dec 23, 2010

Taliban insurgents will attempt “spectacular attacks” on U.S. and allied military forces in Afghanistan in the coming months, the top United Nations envoy to the war-torn central Asian nation said.

"We are detecting from the anti-government elements an attempt to show on their side some spectacular attacks," Staffan de Mistura, head of the UN mission to Afghanistan, told reporters yesterday after briefing the Security Council.

. There is likely to be "an intense security environment in the next few months. In other words, our assessment is that before it gets better, it may get worse."

U.S., Afghan and allied forces are trying to degrade the Taliban militia in its southern Afghanistan stronghold while building up the central government's ability to secure the country. The conflict began in 2001 when the U.S. toppled the Taliban regime that harbored the al-Qaeda terrorist group responsible for the Sept. 11 attacks in the U.S.

<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2010-12-23/taliban-will-attempt-spectacular-attacks-in-afghanistan-un-envoy-says.html>

Election Stalemate and the Revival of Old Fault Lines

Afghanistan Analysts Network (AAN) / By Martine van Bijlert / December 23, 2010

To all those who have lost track of what's going on with the Afghan Parliamentary elections: don't feel too bad. It has become very difficult to follow, even for those of us who really try – not just in terms of who is pushing for what and what that may result in, but also in terms of how deep the crisis is. The question underlying the bickering is whether this will ultimately fizzle out and blow over, or whether it will develop into a full-blown (although possibly very slow) collapse of the Afghanistan as we have come to know it.

<http://www.aan-afghanistan.com/index.asp?id=1406>

Taliban 'want base in neutral third country before peace talks begin'

The Telegraph / By Rob Crilly / December, 2010

In an interview with The Daily Telegraph, Mullah Abdul Salam Zaeef, the Taliban's former ambassador to Pakistan, said meaningful talks were not possible until insurgent leaders had a safe base from which to negotiate.

"Taliban are condemned by the world. They have no address," he said in the sitting room of the Kabul safe house where he now lives.

"If I was a Taliban I would choose a country close to Afghanistan but neutral, like the United Arab Emirates, somewhere which is not interested in interfering in Afghanistan, like Pakistan or China."

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/afghanistan/8219644/Taliban-want-base-in-neutral-third-country-before-peace-talks-begin.html>

Taliban makes demands in Afghan peace talks

The Telegraph/By Rob Crilly in Islamabad and Ben Farmer in Kandahar /December 22, 2010

US commanders have encouraged the Afghan government to establish talks with Taliban and other insurgents in an effort to resolve the nine-year conflict.

President Hamid Karzai established a High Council for Peace earlier this month to foster negotiations with insurgents. The US has used its helicopters to take Taliban commanders to meetings.

Afghan and Nato officials hope the talks can progress as they prepare for a withdrawal of American forces next year.

Ghairat Baheer, a leader of the Hizb-I-Islami insurgent group, headed by his father-in-law Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, has disclosed to The Daily Telegraph the Taliban's conditions for the talks.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/afghanistan/8097519/Taliban-makes-demands-in-Afghan-peace-talks.html>

Afghan War Just a Slice of U.S. Coverage

The New York Times/By BRIAN STELTER/ December 19, 2010

As the Obama administration conducted an Afghanistan-Pakistan strategy review this month, the news media did too, and the coverage came peppered with question marks.

The same week that ABC News scheduled a series of segments titled "Afghanistan: Can We Win?," Katie Couric of the "CBS Evening News" devoted six minutes to a special report, "Can This War Be Won?"

A recent headline atop New York magazine repeated a question asked by dozens of opinion writers this year — and last year, and the year before — "Why Are We in Afghanistan?" The questions reflect the complex nature of the Afghan war, and of the news coverage.

http://www.nytimes.com/2010/12/20/business/media/20coverage.html?_r=1&src=busIn

Afghan Taliban reject U.N. report on civilian deaths

The Reuters / By Sayed Salahuddin / December 22, 2010

The Taliban on Wednesday branded as "fabricated" the latest U.N. report on civilian casualties in Afghanistan that blamed insurgents for three-quarters of those killed and wounded in the first 10 months of 2010.

In a quarterly report on Afghanistan this month, the United Nations said civilian casualties had risen by 20 percent between January 1 and October 31 this year compared with same period in 2009.

It said there were 6,215 civilian casualties from conflict-related incidents, including 2,412 deaths and 3,803 injuries, over the period and that "anti-government elements" had been responsible for 76 percent.

<http://ca.reuters.com/article/topNews/idCATRE6BL1UC20101222?sp=true>

Taliban's Cash Flow Grows From Heroin Trade, Crime

The NPR / By Soraya Sarhaddi Nelson / December 20, 2010

The latest review of the U.S. strategy in Afghanistan notes that coalition troops are making gains against the Taliban on the battlefield. But that hasn't stemmed the flow of money into Taliban coffers.

U.S. diplomatic cables released by WikiLeaks reveal growing U.S. frustration with Arab allies and their failure to deal with charities and private donors who send money to the Taliban and other extremist groups.

But analysts and officials say that donations to the Taliban could become a moot point given the group's growing ability to generate cash on its own.

<http://www.npr.org/2010/12/20/132205104/talibans-cash-flow-grows-from-heroin-trade-crime>

Afghan war will fail unless Pakistan acts over militants

The Telegraph / By Toby Harnden / December, 15 2010

The assessment, the combined conclusion of the main United States intelligence agencies, came as a much more positive face was presented by the White House on the eve of a review of strategy to be released on Thursday.

Robert Gibbs, President Barack Obama's spokesman, said that the review, ordered to take place a year after Mr Obama committed a "surge" of an additional 30,000 American troops in a speech at West Point, will cite "important progress in halting the momentum of the Taliban".

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/afghanistan/8204332/Afghan-war-will-fail-unless-Pakistan-acts-over-militants.html>

Can economics help bring peace to Afghanistan?

The Foreign Policy / By Gerard Russell / December 16, 2010

A famous cartoon from Victorian Britain shows a nervous Afghan ruler standing between a lion and a bear, both of which are looking at him hungrily. The caption says, "Save me from my friends." The animals represent the British and Russian empires, both of which wanted to get their political paws on Kabul.

Afghanistan's neighbors are a different set today, but the cartoon still depicts one underlying truth. Impoverished, landlocked Afghanistan remains deeply vulnerable to regional tensions, including those between India and Pakistan. Yet, in the time of empires, it managed those tensions to its own advantage. It can do so again today, and in doing so help the United States' exit strategy. A political process is the key; but economics can make a contribution.

http://afpak.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2010/12/16/afghanistans_neighbors_help_or_hindrance

Scots troops seize Taliban commander on daring raid in Afghanistan

The daily record / by Craig Mcdonald / December 16, 2010

SCOTS soldiers staged a dramatic night-time raid to capture a Taliban commander.

The terror chief - nicknamed Spiderman for his climbing agility - fled during the Operation Brave Badger in a remote Afghan village.

But he was nabbed a mile away in a field by troops who fearlessly sprinted through the streets after him.

The Record accompanied the men from A Company, 5 Scots, on the operation - and we can reveal the full amazing details of the mission, which has been hailed as a "significant success".

<http://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/uk-world-news/2010/12/16/scots-troops-seize-taliban-commander-on-daring-raid-in-afghanistan-86908-22787503/>

Foreign Policy: The Zombie War In Afghanistan

The NPR / By Stephen M. Walt / December 20, 2010

Perhaps you noticed the following two headlines from last week's New York Times (print edition; the online headline is different):

"U.S. Will Widen War on Militants Inside Pakistan" and "Germany Will Begin Afghan Exit Next Year."

Those two stories tell you a lot about the situation in Central Asia, especially when read in the context of the latest strategy review. Surprise, surprise: that review reaffirmed virtually all of the Obama administration's justifications for continuing the war, and offered just enough upbeat assessments to support a continued effort. At the same time, it provides just enough prophylactic pessimism to appear "realistic."

<http://www.npr.org/2010/12/22/132199040/foreign-policy-the-zombie-war-in-afghanistan?ps=rs>

For Obama, Politics Of Afghan War Less Vexing Than Strategy

The NPR/ by Frank James/ December 17, 2010

. It's easy to be pessimistic about Afghanistan. That nation has a history of breaking hearts, those of foreigners who've invaded and occupied it over the centuries, and of its own people.

Many Americans know this. It helps to explain why about 6 out of 10 Americans don't believe the Afghanistan War has been worth fighting, according to an ABC News poll released this week. Other polls show similar unpopularity.

For many Americans, Afghanistan has become the bad war in which the objectives of vanquishing the Taliban and keeping that nation from once again becoming a staging area for terrorists seem to be receding beyond reach.

<http://www.npr.org/blogs/itsallpolitics/2010/12/17/132119560/for-obama-politics-of-afghan-war-less-vexing-than-strategy?ps=rs>

Afghanistan plans to open parliament on January 20

The Reuters/By Jonathon Burch/December 20, 2010

Afghanistan plans to inaugurate parliament on January 20, President Hamid Karzai's chief spokesman said on Monday, more than four months after a parliamentary election marked by widespread fraud.

Political turmoil has been simmering since the hotly disputed September 18 parliamentary ballot, with losing candidates holding street protests and tension rising over reports the attorney general's office had asked for the vote to be annulled.

<http://uk.reuters.com/article/idUKTRE6BJ1DS20101220>

'We Can only Lose the War in Afghanistan'

The special online/ By Jess Smee /December 12, 2010

During a surprise weekend visit to Afghanistan, German Chancellor Angela Merkel finally called the conflict a war she brought along the kind of blunt language that many have accused her of avoiding in the past. German troops, she said, were not just involved in "warlike conditions," a phrase that politicians in Berlin have become fond of using as a convenient way of avoiding calling the Afghanistan conflict a war. "You are involved in the kind of combat one sees in war," Merkel continued in her address to Bundeswehr soldiers in Kunduz, where most of the 4,700 German troops in the country are based.

<http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/0,1518,735638,00.html>

Caught in a Taliban trap: Afghan aid fuels war and inequality, coalition told

The age/ By Dan Oakes and Tarin Kowt/ December 20, 2010

MUCH of the billions of dollars in international aid to Afghanistan is ending up in the pockets of the Taliban and fuelling the insurgency, according to a Defence counter-insurgency expert.

Poverty reduction and the building of infrastructure is also counterproductive and is undermining efforts to bring peace to Afghanistan, David Matthews said.

Dr Matthews, head of the counter-insurgency studies team at the Defence Science and Technology Organisation, was presenting a briefing to coalition officials at Australia's main Afghan base at Tarin Kowt, including the overall coalition commander in Oruzgan province, US Colonel Jim Creighton, and Australian commander Lieutenant-Colonel Darren Huxley.

<http://www.theage.com.au/world/caught-in-a-taliban-trap-afghan-aid-fuels-war-and-inequality-coalition-told-20101219-191w2.html>

5 Things The Afghan War Review Didn't Say

The NPR / by Alan Greenblatt / December 16, 2010

As expected, the Obama administration's review of progress in the war in Afghanistan was mostly optimistic, outlining progress in key strategic areas such as beating back the Taliban and depleting the operational capacity of al-Qaida.

Still, the summary of the review that was released by the White House on Thursday leaves many questions unanswered. For the administration's strategy to succeed within the time frame it currently proposes — handing over primary security responsibility to the Afghans by 2014 — the following problem areas will have to be addressed:

The Afghan Government: State Department diplomats have complained that President Hamid Karzai has been an unreliable ally. Members of his government — notably his half-brother, Ahmed Wali Karzai, the chair of Kandahar's provincial council — have been accused of corruption

<http://www.npr.org/2010/12/16/132111316/5-things-the-afghan-war-review-didnt-say>

Obama: U.S. 'On Track' In Afghanistan

The NPR / by Alan Greenblatt / December 16, 2010

The U.S. and its allies are making progress toward its goals in Afghanistan, President Obama declared Thursday.

"I want to be clear: This continues to be a very difficult endeavor, but I can report that thanks to the extraordinary service of our troops and our civilians on the ground we are on track to achieve our goals," Obama said at a press conference following the release of his administration's review of its Afghan war strategy.

The president said the U.S. was seeing "significant progress" in its core goal of "disrupting, dismantling and ultimately defeating al-Qaida" in the region. But both he and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton stressed that the gains, while significant, were also fragile and reversible.

<http://www.npr.org/2010/12/16/132106367/obama-u-s-on-track-in-afghanistan?ps=rs>

Obama's War Review: Dual Messages On Afghanistan

The NPR / by Alan Greenblatt / December 15, 2010

You can't please everybody. Yet that is the difficult trick that President Obama is trying to pull off when it comes to Afghanistan.

The administration is releasing a major review of the war's progress Thursday. No one is expecting it to lead to any significant change in strategy.

Instead, Obama will use it as an opportunity to offer reassurance to a range of parties concerned with the question of how the war is going: NATO allies; congressional Republicans and his fellow Democrats; U.S. troops and neighboring countries such as Pakistan.

Making Obama's task more complicated is the fact that within each of these constituencies there is a variety of opinion about what sort of goals the U.S. should pursue at this point.

<http://www.npr.org/2010/12/15/132079987/obamas-war-review-dual-messages-on-afghanistan?ps=rs>

Afghan leader orders new court for poll complaint

The Reuters / By Sayed Salahuddin / December 27, 2010

(- A new court will be set up in Afghanistan to specifically hear fraud complaints from September's parliamentary election before the assembly can be formed, a senior official said on Monday.

The last of the results from the September 18 vote were released on December 1 and President Hamid Karzai's office had promised a new parliament would be formed on January 20 -- more than a month after disgruntled lawmakers demanded a new assembly be formed.

http://uk.reuters.com/article/idUKTRE6BQ14W20101227?loomia_ow=t0:s0:a54:g12:r2:c0.404245:b40429068:z3

Afghanistan Battles Insecurity, Joblessness

The VOA/Bethany Matta / 23 December 2010

Growing insecurity and unemployment in Afghanistan is forcing Afghans into the capital, across borders and into the insurgency looking for work.

Every day hundreds of men gather at Kote Sangi; one of the busiest intersections in Kabul. They fill the intersection waiting for work; they pass time talking and joking over cups of tea.

The workers say from morning until afternoon they wait and breathe in the pollution. They say in Dari there is a saying that "if you are bored and have nothing to do, go outside and measure the roads." The workers say that is what they are doing; they are measuring the roads.

<http://www.voanews.com/english/news/Battling-Insecurity-and-Joblessness-in-Afghanistan-112372424.html>

Afghan Taliban leadership splintered by intense US military campaign

The Guardian / By Jon Boone / December 22, 2010

The US military onslaught against the Taliban in Kandahar has dealt a major blow against insurgent commanders who have been forced to flee areas they used to control and reduced two of the most senior insurgent field commanders to squabbling over footsoldiers, residents in the critically important southern province say.

Tribal elders and ordinary villagers living at the centre of Barack Obama's military surge in and around Kandahar city say it has severely damaged the Taliban's capability, with senior commanders and foreign fighters quitting the key districts of Zhari, Panjwai and Arghandab altogether.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/dec/22/us-military-make-taliban-flee>

Analysis: In Afghan war, U.S. finds fighting may be easy part

The Reuters / By Missy Ryan / December 20, 2010

While the White House review of the Afghan war last week reported a surge in U.S. troops has pushed Taliban militants out of some key areas, it also underscored that fighting may be the easy part in Afghanistan.

The review, despite a cautiously optimistic tone, recognized that much remains to be done to improve Afghan governance and persuade Pakistan to end militant safe-havens as U.S. President Barack Obama aims to start bringing troops home next year.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSTRE6BFOWQ20101220>

U.S. Sharpens Criticism of Afghan Corruption

The Wall Street Journal / by MARIA ABI-HABIB / December 17, 2010

Any military gains made by U.S.-led coalition forces in Afghanistan are fragile and will be easily reversed unless the Afghan government improves governance and cracks down on corruption, top American officials said in Kabul Friday.

The comments, made by Admiral Mike Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and by the U.S. ambassador to Kabul, Karl Eikenberry, came a day after the White House released a review of the nine-year war in Afghanistan, highlighting steady progress in the military effort.

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748703395904576025372414556398.html>

U.N. Maps Out Afghan Security

The Wall Street Journal / By YAROSLAV TROFIMOV / December 26, 2010

Internal United Nations maps show a marked deterioration of the security situation in Afghanistan during this year's fighting season, countering the Obama administration's optimistic assessments of military progress since the surge of additional American forces began a year ago.

The Wall Street Journal was able to view two confidential "residual risk accessibility" maps, one compiled by the U.N. at the annual fighting season's start in March 2010 and another at its tail end in October. The maps, used by U.N. personnel to gauge the dangers of travel and running programs, divide the country's districts into four categories: very high risk, high risk, medium risk and low risk.

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970203568004576043842922347526.html>

Dari Publications

دادگاه ویژه و خودکشی سیاسی

روزنامه ماندگار/ حلیمه حسینی/ ۲۷ دسامبر ۲۰۱۰

قدرت همان عنصر افسانه‌یی است که تمام طول تاریخ بشری پر است از نزاع‌ها و کشمکش‌ها بر سر تقسیم و تصاحب آن. اما این‌که با وجود پیچیدگی‌های روابط امروز و تغییر ساختارها و کارکردها دخیل در به وجود آمدن و برجسته شدن قدرت، تشخیص این‌که قدرت را چگونه می‌توان تفسیر و تعریف کرد تا بعد بتوان دلایل و ریشه‌های بحران‌ساز بودن آن در مرحله‌ی تقسیم و توزیع را به درستی تحلیل کرد. به نظر میشل فوکو: هنگامی که از «قدرت» صحبت می‌شود، شنونده بی‌درنگ به ساختار سیاسی یا حکومت یا طبقه‌ی حاکم و یا سرور در مقابل برده و جز آن می‌اندیشد. اما این به هیچ‌وجه منظور من از رابطه‌ی قدرت نیست.

<http://mandegardaily.af/spip.php?article5322>

طرفداران طالبان کاهش یافته است

روزنامه راه نجات / ۲۷ دسامبر ۲۰۱۰

یک روزنامه انگلیسی با پرداختن به تحولات موجود در افغانستان مدعی کاهش شمار مبارزان طالبان در کشور شد. به گزارش جهان‌نیوز، روزنامه گاردین در گزارش خود می‌نویسد: حملات گسترده نیروهای امریکایی علیه طالبان در ولایات جنوبی افغانستان، از نفوذ نیروهای طالبان در این مناطق و در کل کشور کاسته است. این روزنامه مدعی شده که به دنبال گسترش هجوم نیروهای امریکایی و افزایش حملات شبانه آن‌ها به ولایات جنوبی از جمله قندهار، بسیاری از فرماندهان شبه‌نظامیان طالبان مجبور به ترک این مناطق شده‌اند و قطع ارتباط میان رهبران طالبان و جنگجویان به بروز اختلاف میان فرماندهان طالبان و به طور کلی متلاشی شدن بدنه رهبری طالبان در افغانستان انجامیده است. به گفته ساکنین این مناطق، هجوم نیروهای امریکایی که موجب خروج فرماندهان ارشد طالبان از این مناطق شده به توان نظامی شبه‌نظامیان محلی طالبان ضربه وارد کرده و از نفوذ آنان در این مناطق کاسته است.

http://www.news.rahenejatdaily.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=5562:1389-10-08-05-21-02&catid=67:maqalat-va-tahlilha

ما دل‌بستان روپا و خیالات به کجا می‌رویم؟

روزنامه ۸ صبح / شاکر مهریار / جدی ۱۳۸۹

سنجر سهیل، در روزنامه ۸ صبح نوشته است که «پاکستان با حکومت ضعیف مذاکره نمی‌کند». فکر کنم در سیاست، این از جمله‌ی بدیهیات است که نمی‌توان نقش قدرت را انکار کرد. حرف سهیل در واقع این است که امید به سفر برهان‌الدین ربانی به پاکستان جهت مذاکره با مقامات آن کشور، در حقیقت از جنس روپا و خیال است. بلی، این درست. میزان قدرت و دست بالا داشتن در امور، بدون شک سرنوشت میز مذاکرات را تعیین می‌کند. اما، فرض اساسی و کشف بدیع این نیست که کسی با حکومت ضعیف مذاکره نمی‌کند، بلکه پاکستان در برابر یک حکومت ضعیف می‌تواند حداقل از دو گزینه استفاده کند. اول این که اصلاً مذاکره نکرده جهت رسیدن به اهداف توسعه‌طلبانه، به تلاش خشونت‌آمیز خود ادامه دهد. بستگی به این دارد که در نظرگاه پاکستان، با وجود یک حکومت ضعیف در افغانستان، تا چه میزانی رسیدن به اهدافش ممکن است.

http://www.8am.af/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=16562:1389-10-09-07-35-06&catid=3:2008-10-31-09-37-07&Itemid=488

طالبان و تلاش جهت هویت‌یابی بین‌المللی

روزنامه ۸ صبح / احسان‌الله دولت‌مرادی / جدی ۱۳۸۹

در زمانی که رییس‌جمهور کرزئی در جریان سفر به ترکیه قرار داشت، رسانه‌های جمعی خبری را منتشر کردند که نشان می‌داد، رییس‌جمهور کرزئی در نشست سه‌جانبه در استانبول یا در نشست خبری بعد از نشست سه‌جانبه، از ترکیه خواسته است تا میزبان گفتگوهای صلح حکومت افغانستان با طالبان باشد. به نظر می‌رسد، این موضوع علی‌رغم تبعات گسترده‌ای که می‌تواند داشته باشد، آن‌گونه که بایسته بود، مورد توجه رسانه‌ها و تحلیل‌گران قرار نگرفت. آنچه اهمیت این موضوع را برجسته می‌کند این است که این درخواست از سوی رییس‌جمهور کرزئی، پس از آن مطرح شد که روزنامه دیلی تلگراف به نقل از ملا عبدالسلام ضعیف، سفیر حکومت دوران طالبان در اسلام‌آباد، گزارش داده بود که وی خواهان ایجاد یک دفتر سیاسی برای طالبان در ترکیه شده است. در یک گزارش دیگر نیز گفته شده بود که طالبان ابراز علاقه کرده‌اند که یک دفتر سیاسی در ترکیه، جاپان یا یکی از کشورهای عربی حوزه خلیج داشته باشند. به نظر می‌رسد تلاش برای ایجاد یک دفتر سیاسی برای طالبان در ترکیه یا هر کشور دیگر، به این دلیل صورت می‌گیرد که این گروه بتواند هویت سیاسی بین‌المللی کسب کند. اگر چنین کاری انجام شود، چالش جدی برای دولت رییس‌جمهور کرزئی ایجاد خواهد شد.

http://www.8am.af/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=16532:1389-10-08-04-43-51&catid=3:2008-10-31-09-37-07&Itemid=488

آیا استرهمحکمه می‌تواند استقلال خود را حفظ کند؟

روزنامه ۸ صبح / عبدالرحمان کبریت / ۸ جدی ۱۳۸۹

این که کرزئی تشکیل دادگاه ویژه برای بررسی انتخابات پارلمانی را پذیرفت، یک آینده نامعلوم دیگر را برای انتخابات مذکور رقم می‌زند. پیشنهاد دادگاه عالی افغانستان به معنای جانب‌داری از لوی‌سازنوالی است که باور دارد تقلبات و تخلفاتی گسترده صورت گرفته و کمیسیون‌های دوگانه‌ی انتخاباتی به آن رسیدگی ننموده‌اند. وقتی رییس‌جمهور تشکیل دادگاه خاص انتخاباتی را پذیرفت یک نهاد جدید در کشور را با فرمانی حکومتی به وجود آورد. رییس‌استیناف دادگاه عالی سرپرستی این محکمه را که وزنه‌ی سیاسی برای رییس‌جمهور به حساب می‌آید، به عهده دارد.

در این میان یک بحران را نمی‌توان از دید انداخت: بحران‌های رسمی. یعنی در حالی دادگاه عالی یا استرهمحکمه پای خود را برای حل اختلاف پیش گذاشته است که اعتماد کردن بالای آن دشوار است. ترس عمومی این است که استرهمحکمه جانب منافع حکومت و گروه‌های داخلی آن را بگیرد.

http://www.8am.af/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=16550:1389-10-08-04-54-07&catid=3:2008-10-31-09-37-07&Itemid=488

طالبان نرم مفهوم بدون مصداق

روزنامه ۸ صبح / عبدالرحمان کبریت / ۴ جدی ۱۳۸۹

آقای محمد محق طرح طالبان نرم و طالبان سخت را در «هشت صبح» مطرح ساخت که مقاله‌ی دیگری از شاکر مهریار در پی داشت. نقطه مشترک این دو مقاله در این است که گویا خلق اصطلاح «طالبان نرم» و «طالبان سخت»، اصطلاحات رسا برای بیان شاخه‌های مختلف طالبان است. در حالی که باور من این است که وضع این اصطلاحات، با وجود توضیح آقای محق، مفهوم و پدیده تازه‌ای را بیان نمی‌دارد، بلکه نوع جدیدی از زبان‌پردازی برای توضیح پدیده و گرایش مذهبی و سیاسی‌ای است که قبلاً در قالب گفتمان‌های دیگر تبیین شده است.

چرا طالبان نرم؟ شاید این سوال برای خواننده پیدا شود که چه نیازی به اصطلاح‌سازی به منظور فهم طالبان وجود دارد؟ آقای محق توضیح می‌دهد که «گروه‌هایی در جامعه افغانی وجود دارند که رسماً در شمار طالبان نیستند، یعنی نه خودشان خود را از طالب می‌دانند و نه دیگران، ولی عملاً با اعتقاد به بینش‌های طالبانی و ترویج افکار طالبانی، به همان جایی می‌رسند که طالبان می‌خواهند.

http://www.8am.af/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=16440:1389-10-04-04-46-50&catid=3:2008-10-31-09-37-07&Itemid=488

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The Afghanistan Watch is an independent, non-governmental and non-political organization registered with the Ministry of National Economy of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. It envisions a democratic, peaceful, tolerant and just society in which all citizens have equal opportunities to realize their human potentials.

Its mission is to undertake activities that will promote peace, justice, and a culture of mutual tolerance and respect for human rights in Afghanistan. As its core values the organization is strongly committed to democracy, justice, human rights, sustainable and balanced social and economic development of the country and impartiality, independence and professionalism as guiding principles of its activities.

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