



## Twenty Ninth Note

**Elections Transparency:** The Special Electoral Tribunal has summoned three MPs. Their names are not declared to the media. Besides, Sayed Ishaq Gilani who is a nominee for the presidency of the parliament is also summoned to the special tribunal. Mr. Gilani has said that he will take the suggestion of parliament to report to the special tribunal.

The Parliament issued a resolution to cancel the special tribunal and asked Mr. Karzai to support the resolution. The House of Representatives support the resolution as "The formation of this tribunal is against the constitution and the elections laws and any decision by this tribunal about the elections results is against the law and unacceptable."

**Negotiation and peace talks with the anti-government forces:** The media reported that a delegation of Hezb e

Islami is supposedly to enter Kabul for negotiations. The time of their arrival is not mentioned; however the reports add that the news is published after the visit of High Peace Council from Pakistan.

Four prisoners are released from Bagram-prison. These prisoners were released after the demand of Logar Peace Council.

Based on the reports, during past two weeks, more anti-government forces have joined the peace process.

**Corruption:** 12 money changers were prosecuted and imprisoned for five years. These individuals were accused of receiving bribe money during elections from some particular people. The anti-corruption office says that many years are passed from their work and yet, many MPs have not registered their properties with this office.

The Attorney General's Office says

that they have formed a special commission to assess the mismanagement in Kabul Bank.

Spokesperson for the Attorney General's Office says that Khudad Azimi, former Pashtany Bank President and two other people are found guilty for embezzlement of 300 thousand dollars and are sentenced to imprisonment and cash fines.

**Transitional Justice:** The Head of Afghanistan Human Rights Commission has expressed that the Afghan government lacks ability to prosecute war crimes and the government, instead, encourages the culture of impunity.

**Interviews and Articles:** An analytic article is included in this volume titled, "The Price of Justice under the pretext of Reconciliation" which has popped up questions and concerns about this issue.

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## The price of justice under the pretext of reconciliation?

▶ Lack of transparency in government and High Peace Council can also add to the concerns of the civil society organizations and the civil rights and women's rights defenders which can also trigger to the non-civic prejudices in different layers of Afghan society that can finally deprive the government from the national support of Afghan people. This issue can make the security situation of Afghanistan more fragile and can drive the country towards more severe and dangerous crises.

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# Transitional Justice

Sima Samar:

## The government encourages culture of impunity

Sam Daily, No 1078, Page Three, 2 Feb 2011

Dr. Sima Samar, head of Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission who was talking in the seminar of "Increased systematic violence against women" said: the efforts set forth by the government to negotiate with the Taliban and other insurgent groups strengthen the culture of impunity in the country."

Sima Samar said that bringing an end to the culture of impunity has been a serious demand by us. We have demanded for justice in dealing every case and will always be. Unfortunately the response has been either silence or negative. The silence by the government about these cases indicates that they unfortunately strengthen the culture of impunity and defend those who commit crimes against humanity.

Meanwhile, the civil society organizations, human rights and women rights activists released a declaration demanding the government, Parliament, Ullema Council and the Supreme Council for Peace to break their silence about the attacks of the insurgent groups.



## The government spreads the culture of impunity

Sam Daily, No 1078, Editorial, 2 Feb 2011

Sima Samar, head of Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC) who was talking in a gathering of human rights activists about the mounting violence against women said that the efforts by the government to negotiate with the Taliban and other insurgent groups strengthen the culture of impunity in country.

This point is indisputable that the passive approach by the government against ignorant and retrogressive criminals and their crimes have triggered their immoral activities. Unfortunately, in this first meetiiig of its kind and despite the hideous and ugly acts of terrorist groups the government calls them only anti-government insurgents and we have observed less reaction by the authorities so far.

Silence in the face of these kinds of acts actually means acceptance. In the country where the criminals write impunity letters we have forgotten the ugliness and folly of this silence.

## Where are the prosecutors of crimes against humanity and war crimes?

Daily 8 am, No. 1085, Editorial, 10 February 2011

The Independent Human Rights Commission officials have said

that the judicial bodies of the government lack the ability to address war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Apparently, the Afghan government has joined the International Criminal Court in 2003. But unfortunately the country's judicial institutions do not have the ability to handle these cases. In this case the people of Afghanistan have no choice but to consult their cases to the International Criminal Court.

Despite the fact that Afghan government has joined the International Criminal Court and is committed to investigate war crimes, but no one is yet charged with war crimes or trialed and there is no indication for the willingness of Afghan government to make any effort in this regard in near future. Because there is no determination and willingness to do it. The other assumption that the people of Afghanistan will be able to reach the international Criminal Court is also hyperbolic because many of Afghans do not know if such a court exists even and how to reach them.

Surely it is the responsibility of the government and perhaps the government could show its inability and helplessness in this regard. Again it's the government to open ways for the people so that they firmly believe in the values of human rights.

The people of Afghanistan will never forget that those who made their ways through the parliament with the votes of these people wrote their impunity letter and passed from the parliament. While it was expected that such persons were never allowed to enter the parliament and the parliament as the first institution could make arrangements to interrogate criminals and pave the way for the people to demand for their rights and trial the criminals.

**Sima Samar:  
Afghanistan lacks  
the ability to handle war crimes**

*Daily 8 am, No 1085, Page III, 10 February 2011*

Dr Sima Samar, head of Independent Human Rights Commission, on Feb 09 in the graduation ceremony of some law students from a USAID legal project said that the Afghan justice institutions lacks the ability to handle the war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Ms. Samar added: "In addition to the Afghan justice system that has the responsibility to implement justice, there exist international mechanisms also for the implementation of justice including the International Criminal Court for which Afghanistan is a member of. The International Criminal Court does not prosecute all ordinary crimes but crimes against humanity, war crimes and genocide are prosecuted by this court, the Afghan people can consult to the International Criminal Court for their cases."

Meanwhile, the head of Independent Human Rights Commission also adds that as long as there is no rule of law in the country and government departments and public authorities don't respect the values of human rights and do not fully believe in them, human rights will be violated. Ms. Samar also added that human rights values do not accept discrimination, but as she said, the issue of discrimination in Afghanistan, is the main problem of human rights values. Ms. Samar urged the people to fight for human rights values and the implementation of justice in country and respect these values.

# Negotiation with Armed Anti-Government Groups

## Farooq Wardak, the attorney of Taliban and Hezb e Islami

*8am Daily, No 1077, Page Four, 1 Feb 2011*

Farooq Wardak, minister of education and member of Supreme Council for Peace uses every opportunity to support his "Taliban and Hezb e Islami brothers". In a visit from Britain, he said that Taliban are not against women to get education and they have been able to reopen several girls' schools in the areas under the control of the Taliban.

During a news conference on Saturday in the head quarter of ministry of education, while signing the contract for building some schools, he said some words which were strange and shocking. Regarding the suicide attack in a super market in Wazir Akbar Khan of Kabul which left 8 people killed and 15 injured, Mr. Wardak expressed his suspicions and said that we should blame Taliban or Hezb e Islami for these attacks based on a telephone call by some unidentified men.

There is no doubt that Mr. Wardak has some limitations as part of Supreme Council for Peace and he should not say some sentences that would harm the peace process and the reintegration of armed anti-government fighters. He holds two positions; at first he is minister of education and must focus on improvement, expansion and growth of educational facilities and educational atmosphere for the children and youth of this country while on the other hand he is the member of Supreme Council for Peace which is political position and takes a lot of his time that should be spent on educational works.

## A delegation of Hezb e Islami is due to arrive Kabul soon

*Paiwand Milli Weekly, No 53, Page Three, 2 Feb 2011*

During past one year we have been hearing many rumors about the peace talks and reconciliation with the anti-government armed forces but there have been observed no practical steps towards this issue.

Based on this report, the exact date for the delegation to enter Kabul is not announced yet, however, the reports add that the Supreme Council Peace members met with a delegation of Hezb e Islami in Islamabad Pakistan and based on that the delegation of this group is due to arrive in Kabul to meet with government figures.

The International Forces and ISAF told the media that although the Gulbuddin network is dangerous, they welcome any group that intends to make with the afghan government.

## Taliban prisoners are released in Kandahar after paying money

*8am daily, No 1079, Page One, 3 Feb 2011*

The tribal elders in Kandahar province accuse the government and security agencies in this province that they receive money and release Taliban prisoners.

Pir Mohammad, a tribal elder in the Daman district of Kandahar says that he has strong evidence that the governor and head of national security directorate in this province receive 5 thousand afs and release the anti-government forces.

Turyalai Wisa, the Kandahar governor says that some of the prisoners were released with the decree presidential decree and the demand of Supreme Council for Peace. The Kandahar governor emphasizes that he has proposed the formation of a special tribunal for the release of these prisoners and the president has agreed with that.

## Ten Anti-government forces joined the peace process

*Afghanistan daily, No 1312, Page Eight, 3 Feb 2011*

A group of ten anti-government forces joined the peace process in Farah province.

Muhammad Younus Rasuli, the Farah governor said that this group operated against the government in the Bala Boluk district of Farah province under the command of Mollah Noor Ahmad.

He added that commander Noor Ahmad and his men joined the peace process in the Masaw area of this district and handed over their weapons.

## India is concerned about the peace process in Afghanistan

*Mandegar Daily, No 505, Page One, 5 Feb 2011*

Indian prime minister assured Mr. Karzai about India's commitment in the rebuilding process of Afghanistan and expressed his concerns over the peace process with the Taliban.

During the meeting, Man Mohan Sing expressed his concerns over the peace talks and the security of Indians working in Afghanistan to reconstruct this country. Hamid Karzai assured his Indian counterpart that his government will take measures about the security of Indians working inside Afghanistan.

Earlier the Indian foreign minister had also expressed his concern over the reconciliation process during his visit from Kabul.

## Four prisoners are released from Bagram prison

*Anis Daily, No 247, Page Eight, 6 Feb 2011*

In order to meet the demand of Supreme Council for Peace in Logar province, four prisoners are released from Bagram prison and handed over to their families.

These people were imprisoned for one year in Bagram and were citizens of Baraki Barak, Charkh, Mohammad Agha and Pul e Alam districts of Logar province. They were released after the demand of supreme council for peace, tribal elders and the guarantee of local council.

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## 219 Anti-government forces joined the peace process

*Saboot Weekly, No 9, Page Three, 6 Feb 2011*

The National Security Directorate declared that more than 219 anti-government forces that were fighting the government troops in the north of country have joined the government.

Lutfullah Mashal, spokesperson for NSD said to media, "Almost ten armed anti-government groups have joined the government with the mediation of Supreme Council for Peace and the efforts of National Security Directorate."

Mr. Mashal added that the groups surrendered include 189 armed men and 30 unarmed who were operating in Jawzjan, Sare Pul, Farah, Takhar and Kundoz.

He said that with these people joining the government, almost three hundred provinces have come under the sovereignty of the central government.

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## Hundreds of armed men in the North have joined the peace process

*Mandegar Daily, No 507, Page One, 7 Feb 2011*

Officials in ministry of interior say that hundreds of armed insurgents have joined the peace process in the northern areas of the country. "Minister of interior visited Kundoz, Takhar and Badakhshan provinces three days before. This visit was for the purpose of assessing the activities of Police and the ongoing operation in these provinces, and the viewpoint of people about the activities of Police in the area" said Ezmaray Bashari, Spokesperson for the ministry of interior in a news conference to the reporters.

Bashari added: "It is an important issue that hundreds of armed anti-government forces have joined the peace process in the north."

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## 40 armed insurgents joined the peace process in Ghor province

*Mandegar Daily, No 508, Page Eight, 8 Feb 2011*

Local officials in the center of Ghor province say that forty

armed people affiliated to the Taliban group have joined the peace process in the Pasawand district of this province. Based on the reports, these people have joined the peace process with the mediation of the tribal elites.

Abdul Baqi Nooristani, the police chief of Ghor province said that some Taliban leaders who were involved in insurgency activities in this province are also among these 40 people.

He added that if the government of Afghanistan acts in according to its commitments to provide employment opportunities then more people will join the peace process.

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## Hundreds of Armed anti-government forces ready to join the government

*8am Daily, No 1084, Page Two, 9 Feb 2011*

The NATO officials in the country say that almost 900 anti-government officials have agreed to lay down their weapons, but, this move should not be anticipated as an end to violence.

General Filipe Jones, NATO's Peace process coordinator told the media that the efforts to reintegrate armed anti-government forces have been accelerated for the past three months. Mr. Jones adds that it is the first step towards accelerating the peace process.

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## 260 Taliban fighters joined the peace process in last one month in Kunduz province

*Rah e Nejat daily, NO 1630, Page One, 9 Feb 2011*

Security Officials in Kunduz province have informed that during past one month 260 armed Taliban fighters have joined the peace process in different areas of the province.

Abdul Rahman Aqtash, security chief of Kunduz said in a news conference on Feb 8, 2011: "8 armed Taliban fighter led by Mollah Shamsulldin who were involved in insurgency activities in Imam Sahib District have joined the government."

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## The reintegration of local fighters is accelerated

*Rah e Nejat Daily, No 1630, Page Three, 9 Feb 2011*

A senior NATO official says that 900 anti-government fighters have agreed to lay down their weapons. However, he says that it is early to say how effective it would be towards ending the violence in the country.

Jones told the reporters in Kabul that the process of reintegrating these people has accelerated and this is the first step towards a long term peace process.

President Karzai says that reconciliation with the Taliban is the key towards ending war in Afghanistan. It has been one year that peace talks have begun in among high ranking officials but the outcome has not been satisfactory.

## **Karzai demanded for the transfer of Mullah Khairullah from Guantanamo to Kabul**

*8am Daily, No 1085, Page Two, 10 Feb 2011*

Hamid Karzai, the president says that he wants one of the high ranking Taliban officials to be transferred to Kabul from Guantanamo bay to join him to the process of national reconciliation.

The Supreme Council for peace had also demanded that Mullah Khairullah, former Taliban interior minister should be released. In response to a question Mr. Karzai said on 8 Feb 2011 that if Mullah Khairullah wants to negotiate then he welcomes it and will pave the way for his release.

The American officials are not happy with the release of Taliban figures after they released Mullah Abdul Qayom, a Taliban official and handed him over to Afghan officials, but, he rejoined Taliban.

The spokesperson for the American embassy in Kabul said that they support the efforts of supreme council for peace but did not say anything about the release of Mullah Khairullah.

Mollah Arsala Rahmani, the head of prisoners committee of supreme council for peace have also demanded for the release of Mullah Khairullah.



### **Kandahar;**

## **The failure of peace policy with the Taliban**

*Afghanistan Daily, No 1320, Page Two, 13 Feb 2011*

The government has been able to draw the support of international community towards peace process with the Taliban during past years. The London and Kabul conferences were planned by the government and partially supported by the international community. The major part of government's efforts in these two conferences was to draw support for the plan of negotiation with the Taliban which brought a successful result for the government.

The Consultative Peace Jirga, seminars, workshops and repeated demands of the government from Taliban to join the peace process were measures taken by the government to bring Taliban on the negotiation table.

Unlike all these government efforts, the Taliban have shown snobbism during last years. Taliban have caused major casualties for foreign forces. The number of foreign casualties in Afghanistan has reached high numbers.

This year was marked as the bloodiest year, in contrast to the anticipation of government calling it peace year. During last months of 2010, Taliban increased their suicide attacks targeting the major cities of Afghanistan. The attacks on Kabul and Kandahar and other cities of Afghanistan make the issue of reaching a peace agreement with this group more complex.

# Elections Transparency

## Three MPs are summoned by the Special Tribunal

Mandegar Daily, No 503, Page Eight, 1 February 2011

The Special Tribunal for the elections has sent warrant for three winner MPs.

Head of special tribunal, Sidiqullah Haqiq did not name these MPs but said that they are possibly from Takhar, Paktiya and Faryab provinces. He said that currently the cases of angry candidates are being assessed.

He added: "The electoral fraud cases of the provinces whose cases are being assessed are: Kabul, Nangarhar, Kunduz, Herat, Balkh, Baghlan, Faryab, Zabul, Helmand, Badakhshan and Samangan."

## The nominee for Lower House head summoned to Special Electoral Tribunal

Rah e Nejat Daily, No. 1625, 2 February 2011

Sayed Ishaq Gilani, nominee for head of parliament was summoned to the Special Tribunal.

Gilani confirmed that after he had declared his nomination for the post of head of parliament was told by the parliamentary affairs department this news. According to him, the two other summoned persons are Habibullah Qaisari and Shakir Kargar from Faryab province.

Another Member of Parliament on the condition of anonymity said that Habiba Danish is another MP from Takhar province who is summoned.

Gilani says that the main reason for summing him to the special tribunal was his nomination for the presidency of parliament and secondly that the special tribunal wants to measure their authorities if they can summon an MP.

This Lower House member added: "He will talk about this issue in the parliament on Wednesday and incase, the other members of the parliament agreed, he will go to the special tribunal."

## Sayaf and Qanooni are probably re-nominating for the head of parliament

Kabul Weekly, No 442, Page Two, 2 Feb 2011

As four days have passed since the beginning of the new parliament, the new MPs have not been able to elect the new head of the parliament. The MPs are supposed to elect one of the nominees out of ten as head of the parliament.

Meanwhile, some of the MPs believe that none of the nominees



will be able to receive majority of the votes.

There are unofficial reports that if the election of House of Representatives fails again it is possible that Sayyaf and Qanooni will nominate themselves again for this post.

## The angry candidates demanded for no intervention in the works of special tribunal

Afghanistan Daily, No 1314, Page Seven, 6 Feb 2011

On Saturday Feb 5, the angry candidates in Kabul said that they have an eye on the activities of Special Tribunal. Sardar Mohammad Rahman Oghlo, one of the angry candidates says that when the Wolesi Jirga has no legitimacy then it cannot represent the people of Afghanistan. Mr. Rahman Ohglo asked the special tribunal not to listen to anyone under any pressure and prosecute the complaints and claims of angry candidates according to the laws of the country.

He said: the Afghanistan special tribunal has religious bases and if this religious institution is not under pressure from any internal organs or foreign embassies then it can provide the people of Afghanistan with their due rights according to the laws of the country .

In the meanwhile, the authorities in the special tribunal for electoral complaints say that they will do their job according to the laws of Afghanistan and all the complaints will be assessed justly. This tribunal summoned three MPs last week who were allegedly being complaint against .

## Tuesday, again elections

*Rah e Nejat Daily, No 1628, Page One, 7 Feb 2011*

The MPs in the parliament decided to elect head of the parliament from the MPs who were nominees for this post. These people's representatives have been making decisions during past days to elect the head of the Wolesi Jirga .

Some of the MPs wanted to bring modifications in the internal procedure of the parliament and others wanted re-election. Finally the council decided to elect the head of parliament on Tuesday from amongst those who have nominated themselves for this post .

## The incompetent ministers are the reason behind parliament's crises

*8am Daily, No 1083, Page One, 8 Feb 2011*

Mohammad Sarwar Osmani, temporary head of parliament during a news conference in his home said that some incompetent ministers who were weak in their ministries provoke a number of MPs in the parliament to prevent the election of new head of the parliament .

Although it is expected that the third round of elections to elect the head of parliament will take place on 8 Feb but Mr. Osmani believes that the MPs will not be able to elect a new head of parliament this time too .

## The White votes, a barrier in the way of victory

*4am daily, No 1084, Page Three, 9 Feb 2011*

It was expected that the MPs would end up the crises and on Feb 9 elect the head of parliament, but there are faces playing this game carefully to reach this seat after a long game .

What is understood from the long discussions during the past weeks is that there are three groups in the parliament

The pro-government MPs tried to have their man in the seat of head of parliament

The opposition group tried to have this seat to have more power against the government and during past two weeks they showed that they do not have much capability to maneuver around this issue.

The third group is in the favor of this game to last longer so that they could earn big amount of money. This group lacks any political recognition yet and they are present in many occasions and sessions to earn better incentives and interests from any party. This group wants that this game last longer.

## Third round of elections also finished with no result

*Afghanistan Daily, No 1317, Page One, 9 Feb 2011*

The third round of elections to select the head of parliament

also finished without any result and none of the nominees could score 50+1 votes.

In the Feb 8 elections of the parliamentarians, six MPs were nominated and the elections went to second round when none of them could earn sufficient votes. In the runner up Abdul Qayum Sajjadi with 63 votes and Amanullah Paiman with 54 votes went to second round of elections. In the second round Mr. Sajjadi gained 87 votes and Paiman 69 votes where 40 votes were white and 39 invalid. Thus they could not gain 50+1 votes in second round too.

## Five new faces are nominated to become head of parliament

*Afghanistan Daily, No 1319, Page Eight, 12 February 2011*

The Temporary Administrative Staff of House of Representatives say that five new faces are nominated to become head of new parliament.

Nahid Farid, a temporary secretary of parliament said: Saleh Mohammad Seljuqi, Gulpadshah Majidi, Ahmad Farhad Azimi and Mohammad Arif Rahmani are the nominees that have submitted their letters. Shukria Barackzai is another nominee who did not officially submit her letter yet.

The temporary secretary of parliament informed of these new faces to be nominated for the head of parliament seat when the parliament failed to choose the head after five attempts.

## Muslimyar: Controversy over the election of Lower House head is a matter of concern

*Afghanistan Daily, No 1319, Page Eight, 12 February 2011*

A number of Mishrano Jirga members believe that if the crisis of parliament on being not able to elect its head continues then it will cause recession in the activities of this institution and if it further persists, then Mishrano Jirga or Upper House will retaliate next week.

Fazl Hadi Muslimyar, the head of MJ on 10 February said that the crisis of parliament is a matter of concern not only for them but also for all the people of Afghanistan.

Referring as an example to the budget of next year he said that if the problem of parliament persists then the budget will remain pending for the approval of the parliament which will cause delays.

## Structural deadlock

*Afghanistan Daily, No 1320, Editorial, 13 February 2011*

For the fourth time the Elections to select the head of parliament ended with no result. On Saturday, the same scenario was repeated and the two nominees who went for the second round couldn't gain 50+1 votes. Now everyone has understood that we do not confront a legal deadlock but a

political scenario and deadlock. There are political wills behind these events to channel everything for their favor to have their monopolistic control over certain issues. Aside from the ongoing political game of the parliament, now it is evident that the main objective of these people is to keep the political and civic institutions particularly the parliament as a weak institution.

Ten years experience of governance in Afghanistan showed that the main problem lies with the defective structure of political system. Every time when we have confronted any political problem which required to be solved through international standards, the international community has soon entered to the ground and has provided the people of Afghanistan a monopoly of power supplied through the package of democracy.

The root cause of all the crises lies in the centralization of power and the willingness to monopolize all the power. Only with the reforms in the political and power structures of Afghanistan one can make the situation better and hope for a better tomorrow for this country.

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## Parliament abolished the Special Court

*Mandegar Daily, No 511, Page One, 13 Feb 2011*

The House of Representatives on Feb 12 declared the activities of Special Tribunal for handling fraud cases of elections as illegal and officially demanded for its dismissal.

The House of Representatives made the decision after Mr. Sarwar Osmani, the temporary head of this house declared that the Special Tribunal will dismiss almost 83 MPs from the parliament on fraud cases during the elections.

The bill released by the House of Representatives writes that "creation of this tribunal is against the constitution and election law and that any decision about the election is illegal and unacceptable."

Also the bill asks Hamid Karzai, the president to support the decision of MPs and resolve the ongoing crises to mark an end to it by dissolving the special tribunal.

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## Legal disputes of government and the House of Representatives

*Mandegar Daily, No 512, Page Eight, 14 February 2011*

Since the establishment of the Special Tribunal for electoral issues, it was evident that it lacked legal legitimacy but formed for political purposes by which the president could diffuse his pro-MPs to the parliament and repress his opponent MPs.

Frauds and manipulations cases were registered by the domestic and international observers in presidential elections of 2009 and parliamentary elections of 2010.

The Supreme Court did not consider the equality of the law. If supposedly it was formed on the bases of law then to implement justice, bring the rule of law and institutionalization of people's governance all the violations and fraud cases of

presidential elections should have been prosecuted equally with the parliamentary elections, but it didn't occur.

The special tribunal was formed under the influence of the president that lacks any legal bases and most importantly, it was not anticipated for the elections. However the trial of the president, ministers, members and head of Supreme Court and the military cases are tried by the special tribunal not the elections.

In the article 122 and other parts of the constitution it is not mentioned and thus the formation of special tribunal has no legal bases and is against the effective laws of Afghanistan.

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## Angry Candidates: The president cannot cancel the special tribunal

*Afghan Jirga Daily, No 43, 14 February 2011*

A number of angry candidates for parliamentary elections in Afghanistan claim that the president does not have the power to cancel the special tribunal.

This protests comes after the bill recently proposed by the House of Representatives, which demanded the president to cancel the special tribunal for the elections. The angry candidates call the bill illegal when Mohammad Sarwar Osmani, temporary head of parliament says that he had no commitment with the president about the special tribunal.

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## Attorney general: The accused Election Commission's staffs are not introduced to us

*Afghanistan Daily, No 1321, Page II, 14 February 2011*

The Electoral Complaints Commission on Jan 31, when its mission was over, informed that tens of its staffs, who were involved in fraud cases of the elections, are introduced to the attorney general's office.

But Hafifullah Hafiz, head of complaints commission of attorney general's office said on February 13 that the attorney general's office has not yet received the list of these people. Hafiz added that as soon as we get the list, legal measures will be taken against these people.

# Corruption

## Corruption allegations of Kabul Bank to be investigated

*Rah e Nejat Daily, No 1626, Page Two, 5 Feb 2011*

A communiqué released by ministry of finance writes that Hazrat Omar Zakhilwal has asked the attorney general's office and the High Office of Oversight and Anti-corruption (HOOAC) to interrogate about the allegations on him to be involved in the corruption of Kabul Bank.

The press office of ministry of finance refers to an article of the Wall Street Journal that was published about Farnood, former head of Kabul Bank quoting an unidentified employee of an unknown bank.

According to this article a government authority deposits some money to Kabul Bank to gain 13 % interest. The bank's documents show that they have paid more than 16% interest to the same account while the bank authorities and shareholders have registered only 7% of the interest.

The article quoting Farnood writes that the interest is divided between Hazrat Omar Zakhilwal and the shareholders.

## Official Corruption a big obstacle to reach strategic objectives

*Rah e Nejat Daily, No 1627, Page Three, 6 Feb 2011*

Ten years have passed from the Bonn Conference and during this time, the corruption has been mounting. In the course of Afghan history the corruption phenomenon existed and stopped the people of Afghanistan to reach greater objectives like peace and security, just distribution of income and economic opportunities and establishment of social justice and a sound government system.

Unfortunately the mounting insecurity and our country's position as the third most corrupt countries of the world has stopped all development and employment opportunities and the number of unemployed people rise tremendously.

In such a situation corruption rises too. In such a situation the offices and different organizations combating corruption in Afghanistan have not been able to do their jobs accordingly.

The central office of control and audit, the oversight and anti-corruption office and High Commission which were formed by Mr. Karzai during past three years to stop corruption have not only been able to reduce corruption but there is seen noticeable increase in corruption in government institutions.

## The members of National Parliament have not registered their properties

*Mandegar Daily, No 508, Page One, 8 Feb 2011*

The High Office of Oversight and Anti-corruption has asked the

members of parliament and the government authorities to register their properties.

Nader Mohsini, head of registration and propagation of properties has said that although several years have passed from this process, still many MPs have not registered their properties. Mr. Mohsini told the media that many MPs, based on the reasons with them, have not registered their properties yet.

Based on the report by the High Office of Oversight and Anti-Corruption of Afghanistan, nearly 2000 high ranking officials have registered their properties with the government in which 8 are members of Upper House and some of them are MPs of the parliament.

## There is no political will to combat corruption

*Mandegar Daily, No 508, Page Eight, 8 Feb 2011*

Hamid Karzai, the president of Afghanistan during a news conference in Munich, Germany stressed on combating corruption but the political experts say that there is no political will to fight against corruption and Karzai's expressions have no result and are repeated.

Saifuddin Saihun, professor at Kabul University says: "Mr. Karzai in a coalition with his team has monopolized all the power in Afghanistan and any claim to combat corruption is nothing than bunch of lies."

Saihoon adds that when the legitimacy of a political system is based on lootings then it is natural that any claim to combat corruption is nothing but lies. It means that this group never has the intention of combating corruption or does not have the political will to combat corruption." Saihoon says that Mr. Karzai never paid any attention to the large body of government which is the source of corruption.

Mirza Rafat, a professor at Kateb University says that some of the high ranking government officials are accused of corruption and manipulations of government properties but they are not trialed yet which shows that the government has no willingness to combat corruption.

Rafat says: "What is so disappointing is that the accused and suspect of corruption cases have never been trialed or brought to court. This exemption from law has paved the ground for the corruption."

## Investigation for Kabul Bank corruption cases started and former communication officer of Pashtany Bank is sentenced to five years imprisonment

*Rah e Nejat Daily, No 1629, Page One, 8 February 2011*

Amanullah Iman, a spokesman for attorney general in a news

conference on Feb 7 said to media that the attorney general's office has formed a special commission to investigate about the corruption cases in Kabul Bank.

He added that our investigation about the money embezzlement in Kabul Bank is not finalized yet. He said that Khudaidad Azimi, former communication officer of Pashtany Bank and two others who were accused of embezzling 300 thousand dollars are arrested and imprisoned by the primary court of counter corruption.

He added that Khudaidad Azimi is sentenced to five years imprisonment and head of Maiwand Miraki Company is sentenced to 6 years imprisonment who was accused of U.S. \$ 300 thousand embezzlement. He also mentioned that a vice president of the same company is sentenced to one year imprisonment.

## The registration of properties; working out of unemployment

*Daily 8 am, No 1085, Page Four, 10 February 2011*

While the High Office of Oversight and Anti-Corruption repeated the drama of recording the assets of high-ranking government officials and the members of the parliament, the reports published in national and international media show that the government is not seriously pursuing the fight against corruption.

Recording the assets of high-ranking government officials is an effective policy to combat corruption. However, in Afghanistan this a failed policy and is only a showy drama which people also do not believe in. The strange point is that why the government has once thought of this plan when the expansion of corruption in the government institutions and the parliament have made both ineffective?

Instead of these dramatic shows, it is better that the government make public those cases of corruption which are pursued by the government of Afghanistan and the court has issued their verdicts about them.

Now every one knows that the financial misuse of big and small money in the Afghan government is an ordinary task and anyone who is not doing any of these is thought to be insane and simple in the view of his mates.

But the reality is that corruption is a matter of survival for the president and other high ranking officials in the government. Many of those involved in corruption are either part of president's team or members of opposition in the parliament.

## A traffic officer was arrested on corruption cases

*Afghanistan daily, No 1321, Page Two, 14 Feb 2011*

A traffic officer is accused of receiving bribe and was arrested by the anti-criminal police of Kabul security HQ.

Mohammad Zahir, the criminal department head of Kabul

security HQ says that this person was arrested on the crime spot in the presence of attorneys. According to him, the officer had received 5000 afis from a Kabul citizen to make a car permit license.

## Every Sarraf is sentenced for five years imprisonment in connection with election frauds

*Rah e Nejat daily, No 1627, Page Two, 6 Feb 2011*

12 Sarraf ((informal money changers) accused of manipulations in the elections were openly tried in the Kabul Appeal Court. These people are accused of receiving money from particular people who are supposedly successful MPs in the Sep 18 elections.

The attorney of the case declared the court's decision as: "We, the judicial commission of primary appeal court of Kabul Province in an open trial issue the verdict that Engineer Shahpoor, Abdul Aziz, Nuruddin, Amanullah, Syed Atiq are imprisoned for 5 years in the case of paying 220 thousand USD for the Regional General Director of Control of Independent Elections Commissions."

## Articles & Interviews

# The price of justice under the pretext of reconciliation?

By Muhammad Hussain Saramad, Writer and Researcher

The officials of High Peace Council have directly and indirectly said that we should accept some of the options of the Taliban and have demanded for the release of Taliban leaders.

However, talks with the Taliban have popped up major concerns and questions: On what issues the government will show resilience in talks with the Taliban? Will human rights, women rights, democracy, constitution and civic values be sacrificed for the purpose of talks with the Taliban? If it is so then will Afghanistan be caught again in the paws of the Taliban? If it is not so, then will Taliban accept these civic values? What are the preconditions of Taliban for peace talks as High Peace Council talks about? In all, where will Afghanistan head to after the reconciliation with the Taliban; violence and genocide of 90s or moving out of the current war?

The most critical part is that there are no obvious strategic plans proposed by the government about the reconciliation with the Taliban. On the other hand, the Taliban never showed any willingness towards peace talks and called the government of Afghanistan incompetent for peace process. The latest suicide attacks by the Taliban that targeted mostly business centers and common people are the answer by the Taliban that they don't agree with the peace process. In the meantime the government is running fast towards Taliban.

**Lack of transparency in government and High Peace Council can also add to the concerns of the civil society organizations and the civil rights and women's rights defenders which can also trigger to the non-civic prejudices in different layers of Afghan society that can finally deprive the government from the national support of Afghan people. This issue can make the security situation of Afghanistan more fragile and can drive the country towards more severe and dangerous crises.**

It shows that the government of Afghanistan lacks concrete plans and the initiative is with the Taliban. The government only accepts the preconditions of the Taliban. In other words the government is dancing to the drum beat of the Taliban.

What can justify these political contradictions in the behavior of Afghanistan government? Unfortunately, there have been no comments by the High Peace Council members and the government authorities. The officials in the government have only relied on some moral and religious advices and have sought no plans for the controversial

questions of the talks with the Taliban.

There is also a difference of age in proposing such questions from authorities; mostly the young people and the pro-civic rights are the people asking these questions. Mr. Rabbani, the head of High Peace Council in his latest demand from the Ulema and religious figures have asked, "Do not let the young internet and face-book users to take the leadership of the society." It mainly points towards the Middle East uprising which was controlled mostly by the young generation. Is Mr. Rabbani afraid of the elders' leadership positions in the society to be replaced by the new young people using face-book? The structure of the High Peace Council also reveals the fact that its members are the old leaders with fewer tendencies towards new values in the world. Maybe these old leaders see a common interest between themselves and the Taliban as they were also involved in the destructive fighting of the previous decades.

### Justice and Human Rights

As proposed earlier, justice, human rights and civic values are the most important questions in reconciliation process with the Taliban which are, indeed, the achievements of past ten years. Taliban showed their sample of governance during five years of their "Imarat Islami". Taliban were against the women's rights, civic and modern values, even they prohibited modern education beside all other atrocities they committed inside Afghanistan that drove Afghanistan towards dangerous cultural and political isolation amongst the international community. These were the characteristics of their government and they have still preserved that by burning down the schools, terrorist activities and suicide bombings.

Thus, the absence of justice and modernity has turned the history of this country into tyranny, prejudice, destruction and deprivation. Therefore, justice, human rights and modern values are the biggest demand of the people of Afghanistan and a long time lost item of this society. Now the proposition of peace talks with the Taliban have endangered these values as Taliban have vividly expressed that they are against all such things. Now we must ask the government of Afghanistan as the symbol of national governance and responsible for managing this country, what guarantees they can give to the people of Afghanistan not to drown the country into the crises of recent history and the Imarat Islami of the Taliban? Does it not seem illogical and funny after nine years of efforts and hopes by the people of Afghanistan and the international community?

## **Reconciliation and justice and the question of crimes against humanity**

In many occasions during the "Islamic Imarat of Taliban" occurred crimes against humanity. Taliban forced many people to migrate to different parts of the country and used their tribal - ethnic nepotism and religious justification for this policy. Several cases of genocide happened in many regions by the Taliban. They committed many war crimes. All these took place as an organized strategy to control Afghanistan and suppress the opponents. The Taliban leaders publicly ordered for such activities. For example, Mollah Abdul Manan Niazi, Taliban spokesperson and governor of Mazar e Sharif in his official speech after capturing this province declared: "The Uzbeks should go to Uzbekistan, Tajiks go to Tajikistan and Hazaras should become either again Muslims, pay ransom or go to graveyard."

Moreover, they can also be regarded as the violators of women rights. They prevented women from their due right to get education or work and deemed necessary every kind of violence against them.

According to the international criminal law these crimes should be tried and the criminals should be punished. One of the programs of new Afghan government with respect to the international criminal law and its commitment to international obligations was the implementation of transitional justice. This program was supposed to be implemented until 2008 and based on it, the criminal activities happened during past years should have been prosecuted. The program is not only forgotten now, but also the High Peace Council and the Afghan government has demanded for the release and impunity of many Taliban leaders who were involved in several crimes against humanity. Will the government of Afghanistan sacrifice the just demand of victims of Taliban's crimes for the sake of reconciliation?

Running away from transparency; political and ethnic deals with the policy of reconciliation with Taliban

The questions raised so far are commonly asked amongst the ordinary people, civil society activists and women rights defenders. Why the government and the High Peace Council pay no serious attention to them? The government avoids any clear instance about these issues. This lack of transparency has led to despair and uncertainty for the Afghan people about the government's intention to seek justice.

What acts as the dynamics of this despair and doubt in the minds of the Afghan people are the existence of ethnic, tribal, religious, linguistic and gender prejudice. This discrimination existed in the Afghan history as many Afghan kings also were involved in tribal and ethnical biases in particular the civil war was the acute point of all these. These prejudices can be vanished when a new political system based on rule of law, transparency and public interest. The current Afghan government has not only failed in shaping and promoting an atmosphere of integration and harmony but in most cases it has made this trend more precarious.

One of the main reasons behind claiming ethnic right in the political atmosphere of Afghanistan is the same thing; while in the civil society the citizens' right must be spoken of than ethnic rights. The citizen's right is the right of every individual without any affiliation to tribe, religion, position, language, gender and others. When these affiliations are the bases of claiming the right or giving the right then it is evident that ethnicity is proffered than individual or citizen.

If the government could break the threads of tribal and ethnic prejudices in Afghan society and dominate them then naturally and gradually the ethnical politics of Afghanistan would vanish and fewer would be the claim for ethnic rights. Meanwhile, the only thing that can remove this mentality and make the public opinion supportive of the reconciliation plan by the government with the Taliban is the transparency and truthfulness of the government in removing the concerns of the people and answer their questions.

Lack of transparency in government and High Peace Council can also add to the concerns of the civil society organizations and the civil rights and women's rights defenders which can also trigger to the non-civic prejudices in different layers of Afghan society that can finally deprive the government from the national support of Afghan people. This issue can make the security situation of Afghanistan more fragile and can drive the country towards more severe and dangerous crises.

### **The last word: The mirage of peace and reconciliation**

As noted the meaning of peace in terms of civil society owes to justice. Security does not only mean physical but it means psychological security and safety of every Afghan individual's conscience. It is evident that the psychological security and particularly the safety of conscience is particularly influenced by the citizenship status. Which means that when in the definition the status, dignity and citizens' rights discrimination is legitimized then the safety and security of conscience will be lost.

### **Can reconciliation with the Taliban bring real security?**

The justice and human rights and other civic values as defined earlier are threatened in the talks with the Taliban. Can reconciliation with the Taliban bring an end to the ongoing war in Afghanistan and establish security in the country, considering the issues raised and assuming that the government of Afghanistan is a democratic civil government and is committed to its international obligations? Are talks with the Taliban possible? Considering this fact the issue of talks with the Taliban remains as a mirage and impossible because Talibanism is a phenomenon of tribal beliefs against civil rights, human rights, justice and mixed with violence. Now that the government of Afghanistan has entered the Taliban's ground with the initiative in its hand and the High Peace Council in its side, another question can be posed, will the government of Afghanistan remain committed to human rights, democratic values, civic law or it will drive the country back towards isolation, barbarism and the Talibanism?

# New publications

## MPs unite and split, while Special Court raids the IEC

*Afghanistan Analysts Network (AAN) / February 15, 2011*

The Lower House of the Afghan parliament is still trying to overcome the difficult hurdle of electing its speaker. Different groups of MPs are arranging for alternative, if not conflicting, solutions. AAN's Fabrizio Foschini listened to different opinions on the best way to get out of the impasse, and discusses their pro and cons. What seems clear is that time-wasting may be becoming too expensive for the MPs, as the storm that was brewing over the parliament struck its first lightning on Monday, with a rather spectacular morning raid by the police and the judiciary at the IEC headquarters.

<http://aan-afghanistan.com/index.asp?id=1494>

## Untangling Afghanistan's 2010 Vote: Analysing the electoral data

*Afghanistan Analysts Network (AAN) / By Martine van Bijlert / February 19, 2011*

This new briefing paper by Martine van Bijlert provides a backdrop to the controversies surrounding the 2010 parliamentary vote. It presents an overview of the main publicly available electoral data and maps what information has been provided, what conclusions can be drawn and what information is still missing – either because it was not shared or because it is not known.

[http://aan-afghanistan.com/uploads/AAN-2011-Untangling\\_the\\_vote.pdf](http://aan-afghanistan.com/uploads/AAN-2011-Untangling_the_vote.pdf)

## Inciting the Believers to Fight: A closer look at the rhetoric of the Afghan jihad

*Afghanistan Analysts Network (AAN) / February 15, 2011*

While AAN in a series of recent papers has recently been looking at features of the Taliban movement in general, now it takes a look on one of its specifics: their propaganda. Our author Florian Broschk has dissected a rare Dari-language propaganda video and the language used in it, a Salafi-influenced narrative of 'oppression' and 'corruption' to 'incite the Believers to fight'.

[http://aan-afghanistan.com/uploads/20110214\\_FB\\_Inciting\\_the\\_believers\\_to\\_fight.pdf](http://aan-afghanistan.com/uploads/20110214_FB_Inciting_the_believers_to_fight.pdf)

## Making Peace in Afghanistan

*United States of Institute of Peace (USIP) / February 2011*

This report draws on a series of workshops entitled "Anticipating a Political Process in Afghanistan: How Should the International Community Respond?" These workshops brought together some thirty analysts, both Afghans and foreigners, who have spent many years in Kabul, Kandahar, and other parts of Afghanistan. Participants considered a range of possible scenarios for Afghanistan over the next five years and the drivers of events in Afghanistan, then developed scenarios based on a five-year perspective and constructed along two main axes: the degree of political inclusion and the degree of state capacity and control.

The workshops were held in Kabul, London, and Washington, D.C. in June 2010, supported by the Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the United States Institute of Peace (USIP) and facilitated by the European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR). This report also incorporates comments to an earlier version that was circulated as a nonpaper to senior policymakers ahead of the July Kabul conference. The report focuses on examining the role of the international community and the key challenges to a sustainable peace process, creating an inclusive peace process, gauging the interests of parties, identifying actual participants in peace talks, and structuring an agenda for sustainable stability

<http://www.usip.org/files/resources/SR267Jarvenpaa.pdf>

## Afghan Taliban members seek guarantees for peace talks

*BBC News/ By Dawood Azami / 1 February 2011*

Taliban commanders in Afghanistan have told the BBC that they are willing to explore peace talks. They say they will do so if they can have more solid guarantees about their own future and safety. The Afghan government and its foreign allies say they are making contact with members of the Taliban - but no formal talks are under way. In public, the Taliban have repeatedly rejected talks, saying there can be no progress until foreign troops leave. But in what appears to be a significant new development, more than a dozen senior and mid-level Taliban commanders have told the BBC that they are interested in a peaceful settlement.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-south-asia-12336294>

## Karzai Calls on the U.S. To Free a Taliban Official

*New York Times/ By ROD NORDLAND / February 8, 2011*

President Hamid Karzai said Tuesday that he wanted to bring a Taliban official being held at the Guantánamo Bay prison back to Afghanistan to join in reconciliation talks.

His remarks seconded a request by the government's High Peace Council calling for the release of the Taliban figure, Mullah Khairullah Khairkhwa, who has been held at the prison on the United States military base in Cuba since 2002. Mr. Khairkhwa, from Kandahar, reportedly had been the Taliban interior minister and also the governor of Herat Province during the Taliban government.

"If he wants to talk, we welcome him," Mr. Karzai said in response to a question at a news conference. "We would talk to him, we would arrange his release."

[http://www.nytimes.com/2011/02/09/world/asia/09afghan.html?\\_r=1](http://www.nytimes.com/2011/02/09/world/asia/09afghan.html?_r=1)

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## Aid increasingly wasted on security aims – Oxfam

*Alert Net, Megan Rowling/ 10 February 2011*

LONDON (AlertNet) - Billions of dollars in aid have been spent on projects that are expensive, unsustainable and sometimes even dangerous, because donor governments are increasingly using the money to support their short-term military and security goals, international aid agency Oxfam said on Thursday.

The neutrality and safety of aid workers is compromised if local people see humanitarian and development funding as a tool of the military, the charity says in a report. It notes that 225 aid workers were killed, kidnapped or injured in attacks during 2010, up from 85 in 2002, partly reflecting a rise in politically motivated violence.

Oxfam's report, called *Whose Aid is it Anyway?* says this problem isn't new, but the impact of conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, alongside aid policy shifts, are exacerbating the trend.

<http://www.trust.org/alertnet/news/aid-increasingly-wasted-on-security-aims-oxfam>

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## US designates al Qaeda, Haqqani Network leaders as terrorists

*By Bill Roggio / February 9, 2011*

The US Treasury Department has targeted two senior leaders of al Qaeda and the Haqqani Network, designating them as global terrorists. The al Qaeda commander ran a training camp in Pakistan; and the Haqqani Network commander, a brother of the network's leader, has helped raise funds for the terror group as well as supported al Qaeda.

Today under Executive Order 13224, the Treasury added Said Jan 'Abd al Salam, an al Qaeda leader, and Khalil al Rahman Haqqani to the list of specially designated global terrorists. The designation allows the US to freeze the assets of the two senior leaders, prevent them from using financial institutions, and prosecute them for terrorist activities.

[http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2011/02/us\\_designates\\_al\\_qae.php](http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2011/02/us_designates_al_qae.php)

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## Hundreds of Afghan fighters to lay down arms: NATO

*By Missy Ryan / February 7 2011*

(Reuters) - As many as 900 Afghan fighters have agreed to lay down their arms, a senior NATO official said on Monday, but it is too soon to say if a drive to bring in low-level fighters can be decisive in curbing bloodshed.

Major General Philip Jones, who leads NATO support of the Afghan government's efforts to broker peace with various militant factions, said reintegration of local fighters had begun in earnest three or four months ago.

"The pace of people coming into the program has picked up ... but the initial steps are the first in a very long process of trying to build peace," Jones told reporters in Kabul.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/02/07/us-afghanistan-reconciliation-idUSTRE71623620110207>

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## Afghan Taliban would be open to talks - report

*Reuters / By Myra MacDonald / February 7, 2011-04-02*

U.S. President Barack Obama's plan to begin reducing the number of U.S. troops in Afghanistan in July would jeopardize hard-won security gains there, a security thinktank said on Wednesday.

The International Council on Security and Development (ICOS), which regularly conducts research in Afghanistan, recommended current force levels be maintained until July 2012.

"The directive to begin drawing down U.S. forces in July 2011 ... is based on domestic politics and pressure for a withdrawal rather than a realistic assessment of on-the-ground dynamics in southern Afghanistan," said ICOS President Norine MacDonald.

<http://in.reuters.com/article/2011/02/10/idINIndia-54781620110210>

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## Commander Says Rule of Law Needed to Stop Taliban

*US Department of Defense / By Jim Garamone / February 10, 2011*

To stop the Taliban and terrorists, Afghans must have confidence in their government's ability to deliver justice and resolve civil disputes, the commander of a "rule of law" force in Afghanistan said today.

Speaking with Pentagon reporters via video teleconference, Army Brig. Gen. Mark Martins said the Afghan government must deliver on establishing the rule of law in Afghan provinces, districts and subdistricts.

Afghan officials need to craft "sound governance that will enable an enduring transition of security responsibility to Afghan forces and deny this rugged country as a sanctuary for global threats," the general said.

Failure, he said, could duplicate conditions found in Afghanistan after the fall of the communist government in 1991.

<http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=62776>

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## Afghan perspectives on "democracy"

*Foreign Policy / February 9, 2011*

The current session of Afghanistan's lower parliament [Wolesi Jirga] has not gotten off to the most auspicious of starts. After a fraud-ravaged election and last month's showdown with President Hamid Karzai, the country's newly-seated parliament has already ground to a halt in its wrangling over who to elect as speaker. As the system lurches from one crisis to another, many observers have raised concerns that Afghanistan's democratic system is hemorrhaging legitimacy at an unsustainable rate. But how do Afghans describe what a "legitimate democracy" looks like to them?

[http://afpak.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2011/02/09/afghan\\_perspectives\\_on\\_democracy](http://afpak.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2011/02/09/afghan_perspectives_on_democracy)

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## Foreign aid priorities corrupted by the global war on terror

*The Vancouver Sun / By Mark Fried / February 11, 2011*

There is a bright spot in Canada's eventual exit from the grinding stalemate of Afghanistan's war. With the drawdown of Canadian troops, our aid program should be freed from political directives to spend where Canadian forces operate and liberated from military demands to use aid for their own ends.

No longer would generals' orders to "win hearts and minds" drown out the considered advice of the government's own development professionals. No longer would our precious aid dollars be squandered on "quick-impact" projects that do nothing to alleviate poverty.

<http://www.vancouversun.com/news/Foreign+priorities+corrupted+global+terror/4264015/story.html>

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## Afghan peace council risks angering US by demanding release of Taliban leader Khairullah Khairkhwa from Guantanamo

*The Telegraph / By Ben Farmer / February 6, 2011*

A peace council appointed by Afghanistan's president has stepped into confrontation with America by demanding the release of a top Taliban leader from Guantanamo Bay to precipitate talks.

The demand that Khairullah Khairkhwa is released has emerged as the first formal recommendations from the High Peace Council.

Khairkhwa was an interior minister, then governor of one of Afghanistan's largest cities before the Taliban were toppled.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/afghanistan/8306978/Afghan-peace-council-risks-angering-US-by-demanding-release-of-Taliban-leader-Khairullah-Khairkhwa-from-Guantanamo.html>

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## Taliban were willing to talk

*Asia Times / By Gareth Porter / February 9, 2011*

The central justification of the United States-North Atlantic Treaty Organization war against the Afghan Taliban - that the Taliban would allow al-Qaeda to return to Afghanistan - has been challenged by new historical evidence of offers by the Taliban leadership to reconcile with the Hamid Karzai government after the fall of the Taliban government in late 2001.

The evidence of the Taliban peace initiatives comes from a new paper drawn from the first book-length study of Taliban- al-Qaeda relations thus far, as well as an account in another recent study on the Taliban in Kandahar province by journalist Anand Gopal.

[http://www.atimes.com/atimes/South\\_Asia/MB09Df01.html](http://www.atimes.com/atimes/South_Asia/MB09Df01.html)

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### Afghan peace council requests release of Gitmo detainee

*The Long War Journal / By Thomas Joscelyn / February 7, 2011*

Afghanistan's High Peace Council has requested the release of Khairullah Khairkhwa, a top Taliban leader, from Guantanamo. The council was set up by Afghan President Hamid Karzai in 2010 as part of his attempt to broker a peace deal between the Afghan government, the Taliban and other insurgents. Members of the council requested Khairkhwa's release so that he could supposedly take part in possible peace talks between the Taliban and US officials in the future.

In an interview with The Telegraph (UK), Mullah Arsala Rahmani said that the council sent a written request for Khairkhwa's release to American officials last month.

"Khairkhwa was an important man for the Taliban and his release would show the Americans are serious about negotiation. He is a good man and is well respected among the Taliban," Rahmani, a former Taliban official, told The Telegraph.

[http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2011/02/afghan\\_peace\\_council.php](http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2011/02/afghan_peace_council.php)

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### Afghan Taliban members seek guarantees for peace talks

*BBC News / By Dawood Azami / February 1, 2011*

Taliban commanders in Afghanistan have told the BBC that they are willing to explore peace talks.

They say they will do so if they can have more solid guarantees about their own future and safety.

The Afghan government and its foreign allies say they are making contact with members of the Taliban - but no formal talks are under way.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-south-asia-12336294>

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### Separating the Taliban from al-Qaeda: The Core of Success in Afghanistan

*Center on International Cooperation (New York University) / February 1, 2011*

Today the Afghan Taliban collaborate in some ways with al-Qaeda and other jihadist groups. Whether such relations result from the context – the need for assistance against a powerful enemy – or are based on principles or ideology affects how possible it is to change this collaboration. Such an assessment requires examining empirical evidence in context. This report represents a summary of the efforts of CIC/NYU to date. Key findings include the following:

- The Taliban and al-Qaeda remain distinct groups with different goals, ideologies, and sources of recruits; there was considerable friction between them before September 11, 2001, and today that friction persists.
- Elements of current U.S. policy in Afghanistan, especially night raids and attempts to fragment the Taliban, are changing the insurgency, inadvertently creating opportunities for al-Qaeda to achieve its objectives and preventing the achievement of core goals of the United States and the international community.
- There is room to engage the Taliban on the issues of renouncing al-Qaeda and providing guarantees against the use of Afghanistan by international terrorists in a way that will achieve core U.S. goals.

[http://www.humansecuritygateway.com/documents/CIC\\_SeparatingtheTalibanfromalQaeda\\_TheCoreofSuccessinAfghanistan.pdf](http://www.humansecuritygateway.com/documents/CIC_SeparatingtheTalibanfromalQaeda_TheCoreofSuccessinAfghanistan.pdf)

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### Taliban and al-Qaeda: Unfriended?

*Wired / By Spencer Ackerman / February 7, 2011*

Strip away all the gloss about stability in South Asia. There's one reason and one reason only for the U.S. war in Afghanistan: the Taliban's partnership with al-Qaeda. Only now a new report, connected to an adviser to the Obama administration, finds that the Afghan extremists aren't so fond of their old international terrorist allies anymore.

The good news, write Kandahar-based researchers Alex Strick van Linschoten and Felix Kuehn, is that it might be possible to reach a separate peace with the Taliban that keeps al-Qaeda out of Afghanistan, President Obama's stated goal for the war. The bad? Hammering the Taliban through "night raids, house searches and attempts to fragment" the group — in other words, much of the U.S. military strategy in Afghanistan — will inadvertently "create opportunities for al-Qaeda" to grow tighter with the buck-wild next generation of Taliban fighters.

<http://www.wired.com/dangerroom/2011/02/taliban-and-al-qaeda-unfriended/>

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## ABOUT AFGHANISTAN WATCH

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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