

Thirty third Note

Important news and the contents of this Issue:

Reconciliation and peace talks with the Taliban: The investigation into the killing of UNAMA staff in Mazar-e Sharif shows that the main perpetrators were those Taliban who had earlier joined the peace process. Reports show that the High Peace Council released 138 Taliban members locked up in the National Security Directorate of Ghazni province. The US government has paid 50 million dollars to High Peace Council and the council has declared that those Taliban fighters who lay down their weapons and join the process will be paid money in return. The so called Taliban governor of Kunduz province with his 50 men joined the peace process and likewise

60 other insurgent in Sar-e Pul province have also joined the peace process.

Electoral Transparency: Media reports suggest that officials of the Attorney-General's Office are seeking to arrest officials of electoral commissions. Meanwhile, the Afghan parliament, summoned the attorney general to answer their questions about the Special Tribunal for elections. But the attorney general has said that parliament has no right to summon him. The Attorney general has not been present to parliament yet and says he will never go to parliament.

Corruption: Head of the High Office of Oversight is summoned to parliament to answer the questions of MPs; however, the Attorney General's office says that there exist problems and

challenges with THE work regarding corruption.

Enayatullah Qasimi, former minister of Transport is released after being questioned for allegations of corruptions and Dr. Abdullah Abdullah the opposition leader has warned that the continuity of corruption in the country will result into public protests.

Transitional justice: During past two weeks, one article is printed on the subject of transitional justice in the Afghan Press.

Interviews and articles: In this issue we have an interview with Fawzia Kofi, an MP from Badakhshan province and Head of Women's Affairs Committee of the Lower House of the National Assembly about the negotiations and reconciliation with the Taliban.

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Talks With Taliban Won't Result Into Peace

Interview with Ms. Fawzia Kofi, Head of Women Affairs Committee at Afghanistan Parliament

▶ If Afghan government persists to follow its reconciliatory efforts while ignoring the parliament, political parties, Afghanistan citizenry, and civil society organizations as the main party to the conflict these efforts will result into violating citizenship rights and can do nothing for peace. **Page 18**



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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Transitional Justice

Justice based on the criteria of race and language

Daily 8 am, No 1121, Page Eight, 2 April 2011

Author: Khaled Khosrow

The Conference titled "Creating Coordination among the survivors of war victims" was held in a gap of only some years from the anniversary of Afshar massacre and south, east and west of Kabul massacres. The messages were clear: sustainable peace will not be established without justice. Dr. Sima Samar, head of Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission said that no one has the right to forgive the war crimes. However, this right was given to the politicians and the warriors' soon after the Bonn Conference in 2001 and they sat around a single table with the support of the west to form the new government.

If we are to introduce the meaning of justice and prosecution of war crimes and crimes against humanity then can we have a single view of all Afghans? In an optimistic way one can say that justice and the prosecution of war crimes are the legal terms that every individual without and territorial prejudice favors it. But it is apparently true. When Ms. Samar as head of AIHRC talks about the implementation of justice in Afghanistan, she probably have this idea in mind that the project of implementing justice is backed nationally and all Afghans have experienced its lack of implementation. Since these terms are so mixed with politics and history, understanding them leads into political and ethnical debates.

Why such an agreement does not exist? Because it is linked with the ethnicity. Afghans identify themselves as an "Afghan" in their passports and ID cards but in reality they are identified by the fragmented number of ethnicities who confronted in different historical and political framework as hostile ethnic groups to each other.

Negotiation with Armed Anti-Government Groups

Karzai:

We will not sacrifice women for peace

Mandegar Daily, No 540, Page One, 2 April 2011

President's office says that Karzai's government is committed to women's right and will not sacrifice women in the process of talks with the Taliban for the purpose of bringing an end to the war in Afghanistan.

During his video conference with foreign students, Mr. Karzai regarded the participation of women in political, economic and social sectors of Afghanistan as a big achievement of his ten years government.

In some parts of his speech, the President referred to the High Peace Council as the government body that deals with the process of peace and said there are women members in this council who are trying towards bringing peace in the country.

Hamid Elmi, spokesman for Mr. Karzai has said that the president stressed in his speech that he will not accept any peace process with insurgents in which the role of women is not considered.

This spokesperson added: "The president has said that any program launched about peace will consider the role of women and the achievements of past ten years."



of their ideology and they showed that during their Imarat Islami government in Afghanistan. If they withdraw from this stance then their total ideology on which they are based will be questioned.

Peace, with no doubt is the main demand of every Afghan, however, have we ever dared to ask ourselves that what should we lose in return to reach peace?

Does a possible reconciliation not undermine the women rights' achievements?

Daily 8 am, No 1121, Editorial, 2 April 2011

The Afghan president in a speech during a conference held in Texas State of USA on "Building Afghanistan and the development of Women Freedom" said to the participants that the upcoming negotiation and reconciliation with the Taliban is not acceptable if the rights of women are ignored.

On what bases and evidences the head of government makes these claims and to what extend the promises of president is guaranteed to be practical in something which remains as a probability and can be related to his extreme zealotness towards talks with the Taliban. However, any probability should be based on the evidences and documents available.

Nonetheless, on the Taliban side there has been seen no sign of positive answer towards the repeated demands of the government for peace. They shelled and bombed the first Peace Jirga which was a strong answer meant "No" to this process.

Anyone that has least familiarity with the terrorist group of Taliban understands that their policies against women are part

If the Taliban are honest!

Iqtidar Milli Weekly, No 405, Editorial, 2 April 2011

The Taliban leader Mullah Mohammad Omar has commanded his men to stop attacking schools and educational centers. He called it prohibited to attack such places, destroy educational facilities and deprive the children of the homeland from getting education. This step taken by the Taliban leader which will lead towards removing the obstacles on the education of thousands of children and youth is widely welcomed by the people, civil society, government and international community.

If this is a green signal by the Taliban for the international community to participate in the upcoming peace negotiation then we cannot much optimistic about it, because it is possible that during the political dealings the Taliban would not achieve anything and change their position again. The first group that is sacrificed then is the innocent children that have no role to play in this game.

Therefore, this new verdict of Mullah Omar basically does not express the change in the views of the Taliban rather it is for the purpose of getting a more prominent role in the process of negotiation and reconciliation.

The Mazar incident and its consequence for immunity for the Taliban

Mandegar Daily, No 540, Page Four, 3 April 2011

Author: Halima Hussein

The disastrous incident of Mazar-e Sharif and Kandahar is not only a shocking news for the domestic theorists that follow the discourse of talks with the Taliban but also the international counterparts which opened a new phase of probabilities and the start of new crises.

The High Peace Council, with the impunity measures it has taken so far has amalgamated the Taliban into society from their marginalized positions and this group is using this opportunity towards achieving their objectives. Can the High Peace Council answer this question that in the horrible event of Mazar the local people became Taliban or it is the Taliban whose impunity bills are declared everyday by this council?

We do not want peace with the Taliban

8am Daily, No 1122, Page 6, 3 April 2011

While the president says that he never accepts any kind of peace process in which the women rights is neglected, some women rights activists express their concern about the behind closed door dealings of the governmental authorities with regard to talks with the Taliban.

Reconciliation with the Taliban, a group known for anti-women policies and violent repression of women has brought serious concerns about the possible gradual loss of rights and freedoms brought about during last years.

However, Human Rights Watch has said that the Afghan government did take measures in the past that has increased concerns over the violations of human rights and women's rights in this country. According to the organization, the approval of the law about the "Impunity of war criminals from the prosecution" is the measures taken by this government to save from legal prosecutions. This organization stresses that the only way to guarantee the rights of women in the peace talks is their participation in all decision making processes.

However, the women and girls of Afghanistan are against the process of peace talks with the Taliban.

Immunity of representatives, Taliban's condition for peace talks

Mandegar Daily, No. 541, Page Eight, 4 April 2011

The High Peace Council in its new statement has announced that the Taliban and Hekmatyar's Islamic Party demands for guarantees from the West, particularly America for the purpose of peace talks. Atallah Lodin, the deputy of High Peace Council told the media that Taliban want guarantees from the United Nations and America so that they directly negotiate with the Americans.

He added: "High Peace Council is trying to pave the way for the direct talks between the armed opposition groups and

Americans and NATO officials."

Lodin added that USA seems reluctant to provide any guarantees to the Taliban but he expressed his hopes that with the pressures from the Afghan people and the public opinion, the U.S. officials will be ready for talks with the Taliban.

In the current situation it seems unlikely for the U.S.A to give any kind of positive guarantees for the Taliban and the Hezb e Islami representatives to attend the peace talks.

Is USA ready for talks with the Taliban?

Afghanistan Daily, No 1362, Page One, 5 April 2011

Now that ten years have passed from the Afghanistan war, even proposing the idea of peace talks with the Taliban creates anger, concerns and fear for Americans and those who propose this idea are accused of treason.

Some human rights organizations like Amnesty International propose the idea that any talks with the Taliban should consider women's rights. However, the idea of talks with the Taliban has no direct relation with the bitter situation of Afghan women and there is no reason that supposedly their rights will be violated during as a result of talks with the Taliban.

It is possible that the women's rights are proposed in the framework of the agenda of talks with the Taliban. But these arrangements require that USA and Taliban confirm their priorities and make decisions on the women rights that how important it is for them.

Peace initiatives are inconclusive

Afghanistan Daily, No 1362, Page Two, 5 April 2011

Authors: Mohammad Reza Hovaida

The peace plan with wide spread propagandas and an extensive expenditures during past several months did not mark any significant result or achievements. The Taliban attacks are continuing fiercely and in new and old techniques and violence is growing.

The fight against terrorism and the Taliban after several years with tens of thousands of foreign forces alongside the Afghan National Army and Police forces did not bring any result and after confronting failures have proposed the peace plan which did not have significant achievement either after many years and it very unlikely that there will be any success in near future.

These plans and other big plans that accompanied with widespread domestic and international propagandas were allocated a big part of foreign donors' aid to Afghanistan. Each of this plan consumed billions of dollars but did not mark any significant achievements in proportion to the amount of money spent.

Which side the Taliban negotiates with?

Afghanistan Daily, No 1362, Page Two, 5 April 2011

Writer: Abdullah Herawi

The issue of talks with the Taliban has been proposed for the

past quite some times in the political arena of the country. One of the serious followers of this talk is the government. The president has rarely condemned Taliban attacks and if sometimes he has done so it has been like an advice. Likewise in many areas the issue of talks with the Taliban was not particularly focused. Only a particular group has tried to favor this topic and the president has tried to prevent taking serious sides with the Taliban directly. The issue of talks with the Taliban is not supported in the society and the political groups because most of the people and the political forces never forget the bitter experience of Taliban government.

The recent bloody events happened in the country removed all those hopes that people had about the flexibility in the views of the Taliban and it made the position of Taliban obvious that they still emphasize on their stance.

An important point that can be perceived from these showy acts of stances is that Taliban always tries to be the upper hand. They never showed any willingness towards the demands of the government and they understand that the Afghan government is feeble enough to meet their demands or give them the privileges they ask.

Building trust, reform in policies and ill-mannered governance are the tools that can remove the concerns over peace talks and can prove for the Taliban that this is only one party in Afghanistan which has the authority to carry out the peace talks with this group and that is the central Afghan government. Therefore, any peace talks and reconciliation can be carried out based on this axis.

Peace claims and direct talks between America and armed resistance

Erada Daily, No 1014, Page Two, 6 April 2011

Earlier a number of foreign experts proposed the peace talks between USA and armed resistance as the only option to bring peace in Afghanistan considering the ground realities of the country, which was not apparently included in the strategy of Obama's new government. It is said that the time has come for America to put an end to the Afghan war. The end of war requires direct talks with the armed resistance groups.

The existence of armed fighters and the governing mafia in the government are accounted as the major obstacle in establishing peace. High Peace Council had no achievements during its works for the past months. It was anticipated earlier too. This council is linked with the obvious and unseen groups of domestic and foreign that promotes war. Another internal challenge is the encouragement of ethnic rivalries in the country with particular supports from specific foreign channels.

11 Taliban fighters joined Kundoz police

8am Daily, No 1125, Page Two, 6 April 2011

Mollah Salahuddin, based on his personal claims that he fought in Taliban ranks out of compulsion against the government forces in Imam Saheb district of Kundoz province joined the police.

Mollah Salahuddin said, "Taliban were not bound to any principals and I was compelled to defend my honor and dignity during past two years."

General Samiullah Qatra the Kundoz Security Chief says that the government will provide job opportunities to those brothers who have been against the government for some specific reasons.

Taliban favors talks with USA

Cheragh Daily, No 1779, Page Two, 6 April 2011

When government's decision to start peace talks with the Taliban was welcomed by international community but opposed and criticized by several domestic forces there were no big changes or developments observed in this regard and the big and small cities came under heavy fire and attacks by the insurgents that caused fighting between coalition forces and this group. But in recent days we hear two fresh news about this process which mostly in the favor of the Taliban but can bring an end to this impasse situation.

In one hand, Iran has declared its readiness in the final days of 1389 (Persian Calendar) to host the process of peace talks between armed government opposition and the High Peace Council and there is another rumor that Taliban has recently declared that they have preconditions for the talks with the government and require guarantees for them.

Hamid Karzai and Dr. Njibullah share the same fate!

Daily 8am, No 1126, Page Four, 7 April 2011

Mr. Stephen Demestora called the current year as the year of hard efforts and political struggles to bring an end to the problem of Afghanistan. UNAMA is one of the parties that has entered into talks with different Taliban commanders. What is obvious from the talks of UNAMA head is that everybody is involved in the process of talks with the Taliban but these talks have not been able to reduce the intensity of fights but has increased the political confidence of the Taliban.

Mr. Staffan de Mistura emphasizes that the international community should leave Afghanistan aside as they did at the times of Dr. Najibullah. However a comparative look over the optimism of current UN representative and Mr. Boutros Ghali, the UN envoy in 1991 shows that both are the same. At that time UN intervened in peace talks and when crises occurred then as a weak institution it pulled out of the scene.

The UN was part of the pressure on Dr. Najib to leave power. The peace agreements between Karzai and Taliban are a pretend for the west to pull out of Afghanistan. Karzai repeats the same mistake as did Najibullah.

In his government, there is no other ways against the Taliban. The Taliban have enough motivation, power and agenda to seize power in Afghanistan in a brutal and bloody way. In such a situation Karzai has begun talks with the Taliban when the

country is threatened with another civil war and a complete domination of the Taliban. Therefore we expect that the UN must not commit the blunder of 90s. Besides, the peace talks do not reduce the high ambitious Taliban to have monopoly of power in all Afghanistan.

US provides High Peace Council 50 million dollars

Afghanistan Daily, No 1364, Page One, 7 April 2011

The US embassy in Kabul has declared that in order to encourage the Taliban to leave war and reconstruct the war affected areas almost 50 million dollars aid money is provided to Supreme Council for Peace. This money is supposed to be given by the Afghan government to the council to be used for development programs in the areas where Taliban and insurgents leave fighting and join the government. The supreme Council for peace has the obligation of carrying out peace talks with the Taliban and pave the way for this process. The local authorities say that since the council began its works almost 200 million dollar is given to the council by different donor countries. The supreme council for peace says that this aid money shows the tendency of international community towards bringing an end to insurgency and violence in Afghanistan through peace talks and reconciliation.

International aid should be spent properly

Afghanistan Daily, No 1364, Page Four, 7 April 2011

Although much time has not passed since the formation of High Peace Council; however there has been much criticism on the structure and the works of this Council by the experts and the media.

Many people basically question the formation of this council and believe that as long as political and military options are not considered in the talks with the Taliban the council will be confronted with challenges and problems. Therefore, the High Peace Council is nothing but an institution that has massive spending and expands distrust in the society with no other achievements. Criticizing the efforts of High Peace Council does not mean that the reality of peace talks is to be rejected, but it means that there is no ground is not paved for these talks and secondly the people are worried about the outcome of these talks in current situation.

The High Peace Council is not only supported by the Afghan government but has also been supported by many other and yet almost two hundred and fifty million dollars of international assistance is allocated to the council in order to encourage and promote the peace talks. Considering the ambiguities and questions marks on the prospect of this council, it seems unlikely that with this aid peace will not be established to this country.

The result of appeasement towards the Taliban

Afghanistan Daily, No 1364, Page Four, 7 April 2011

The attack on UN compound in Mazar e Sharif raised important

and serious questions about the ongoing issues in the country.

The investigation results show that the Taliban fighters who joined the government and were kept in the safe homes provided for them by the government were the main attackers on UN compound. These were the armed men who encouraged the angry mob towards UN compound to attack it. Perhaps the other incidents happened were also linked with them. From the beginning of peace process we cannot see any significant achievement that could be mentioned here. What is observed mainly is the privileges given to Taliban to encourage them to join the peace process.

The only major task carried out by the authorities and the government officials about the peace process is the number of Taliban fighters joining the government. There have been many doubts about the identity of these people joining the government and they are given many privileges like employment opportunities, safe homes and impunity from the crimes they have committed so far.

The attackers on UNAMA Compound in Mazar e Sharif were those Taliban that had joined the government

8am Daily, No 1127, Page One, 9 April 2011

The fact-finding group of government that traveled to this city to investigate the details of attack in Mazar e Sharif says that a number of Taliban men were the main culprits behind this demonstration.

Mohammad Akbari, an MP who was leading the group said that these people were previously cooperating with the Taliban and lately had joined the peace program of the government.

Mr. Akbari stressed that the number of these people were not higher than ten people. Mr. Akbari added that a number of them cooperated previously with the Taliban and later had surrendered. The people who were the main creators of the tragedy were those people who had joined the peace process.

He said that these people are arrested by the security forces and have confirmed that they had links and cooperation with the Taliban previously.

Reconciliation with terrorists or a big joke?

Daily 8am, No 1127, Editorial, 9 April 2011

The issue of the Taliban joining the government and their return to the ranks of the Taliban is nothing new but a repeated phenomenon but what is questionable and suspicious is the intractable insistence of those who ignore the fact and still try to bring back Taliban to peace and reconciliation process.

However, the scores of people joining the peace process cannot make hopeful many people that they are not like those who temporarily join the government and when they find an opportunity strike back like those who did in Mazar e Sharif and

Kandahar. The High Peace Council shares the crimes and atrocities committed by these criminals.

High Peace Council releases 138 armed opposition from NDS prison in Ghazni

Afghanistan Daily, No 1366, Page Eight, 10 April 2011

The Head of national security chief of Ghazni province informed of 138 people detained in charges of collaborating with the Taliban when two men were released from Bagram prison with the mediation of High Peace Council who were from Qarabagh district and were accused of cooperating with the Taliban. Qari Habibullah Fowzi, a member of High Peace Council promised that all those people who are imprisoned for the charges of collaboration with the Taliban will be released.

High Peace Council requires new strategies and programs

Erada Daily, No 1016, Editorial, 10 April 2011

For the last since six months the government established a new Council to bring peace in the country and entered into a new phase in this regard; this council was created to encourage Taliban fighters to join peace process however we didn't see any significant achievement from the activities of this council for the past months.

The US embassy in Kabul declared that the White House will pay 50 million dollars to High Peace Council to encourage Taliban to join the government and reconstruct those areas which are affected by war. In the meantime the local people say that more than 2 hundred million dollars is provided as aid money to this council since it began operation.

The international aid for the council is an important factor in encouraging the Taliban fighters to join the peace process and leave war. The experts believe that the High Peace Council must take two political approaches in bringing peace and stability in the country. In order to bring back the Taliban commander to peace process their safety and security must be ensured and they must be provided with employment opportunities.

It seems that the process of amalgamating the Taliban must be followed with transparent programs so that they are encouraged to join the government and start a normal life.

It must be noted that in the absence of some specific program, transparent and efficient solutions the activities of this council will remain as an ambiguity like the Council for Strengthening Peace.

The process of peace and multi-dimensional failure

Cheragh Daily, No 1781, Page Two, 11 April 2011

The Mazar incident shows that the Kabul government and their foreign supporters who have provided them with millions of dollars to carry on the so called process of negotiation with

terrorists must bring changes in their views about this process. Meanwhile the members of High Peace Council have talked of developments in their program of talks with the Taliban. The American government spends 64 thousand dollars every minute for the war on terror but it has allocated only 50 million dollars for the process of talks with the insurgents. This visible difference shows that USA has opposite approach towards peace and war in the region. On the other hand the members of peace councils think that with the surrender of terrorist the necessary guarantees for peace can be achieved, but what happened in Mazar e Sharif explicitly ignores the fact that this view has been a mistake from the foundation and to guarantee peace other options must be thought of. Besides, the payment of the recent money to the peace council by USA does not mean it supports the peace process but USA believes that Kabul's activities will never end up into sustainable peace building. In fact, much of this money is aimed to encourage these officials and deviate the public opinion about the adverse consequences of the deals with the Taliban.

Signs of Al-Qaida's reemergence

Afghanistan Daily, No 1367, Page Four, 11 April 2011

Writer: Mohammad Reza Howaida

The two issues of foreign forces exit from Afghanistan and the proposition of peace talks with the Taliban has encouraged the group to regroup. Taliban as the frontline fighters against the foreign forces in Afghanistan have been optimistic that with the exit of this troop they can find it easy to fight with the government forces of Afghanistan. Therefore, they never paid any serious attention to the demands of the afghan government. The Al Qaida network is also optimistic about the power vacuum created after the withdrawal of foreign forces in Afghanistan to reemerge in the power arena of this country.

Taliban and Al-Qaida have both infused in some areas of the country. Based on the reports by the local and international military officials the Taliban and Al-Qaida are strengthening their military bases in some areas of the country including the Kunar and Nuristan provinces. On the other hand the proposition of peace talks with the Taliban has reduced the total pressure on this group as the government is the main supporter of this process. The privileges like releasing Taliban leaders from prisons, removing their names from Security Council's black list, providing shelter and other privileges for those Taliban that join the government are somewhat programs to give impunity to the Taliban and bringing them back to the political arena of Afghanistan. Taliban's insistence on the fight against government and international forces has made them a superior power than the government which has acquired a rather passive behavior towards this group.

Where 10 million dollars of aid will be spent?

Mandegar Daily, No 546, Page One, 11 April 2011

Lately the United States of America has provided the High Peace

Council 50 million dollars for the purpose of bringing Taliban to peace process. The political experts believe that the millions of dollars aid money provided by the international community and USA to High Peace Council will bring no practical result in the process of peace talks with the insurgents. According to them, Taliban cannot be amalgamated to the Afghan government through money.

Syed Ali Kazemi, an MP in the parliament says that the millions of dollars aid money provided by USA to High Peace Council will ultimately reach in the hands of those people within the council and afghan government who are collecting money. This MP criticizes the aid money and says that it is unclear why USA provides the peace council with this bulk of money when the result is already known that it will have no positive impact.

Kazemi believes that this aid money is not only ineffective for peace process but he fears that the money will reach the hands of insurgents. He adds that the High Peace Council has turned into a giant institution parallel to a ministry and major part of this money will be spent in the internal administrative affairs of the peace council and will have no effect on establishing peace and stability in the country.

Peace process

must be transparent and trustworthy

Musharikat Milli, No 397, Page Two, 11 April 2011

The afghan government has accelerated its peace efforts and has put as its top agenda and policies when the armed anti-government forces show no single interest in this regard.

Today the people supports the demand of the government about peace and negotiation and the people believe that only military option is not effective in bringing ultimate peace and other options are needed to be considered beside it. However, they do have widespread criticisms about the policies of the government which should not be interpreted as if they are against the government or the peace process. Currently the peace process has shadowed over all other national programs.

The major achievements of the peace process so far have been the release of Taliban prisoners from Pul e Charkhi, Bagram and other provincial prisons, removal of top Taliban leaders' names from the black list of UN-Security Council and allocating money and other privileges and lands to those Taliban fighters that join the government.

Safe Houses

Afghanistan Daily, No 1368, Page Seven, 12 April 2011

According to a source the president is busy these days visiting the tribal elders and the people who have somehow links and contacts with the Taliban and he is making behind scene dealings with them. He added that the formation of safe houses was proposed by the High Peace Council and the works of this council are performed in these houses.

Moulavi Arsala Rahmani, a member of High Peace Council only

confirmed one guest house in Kart e Char of Kabul city where the members of High Peace Council come and go.

Fazil Sancharaki, the spokesperson for the Change and Hope coalition says, "the safe houses are not formed now but they existed three to four years before. He added that there are currently tens and hundreds of such houses in Kabul in which groups of people are placed and even they are provided with military equipment.

What is the definition of opponents and supportive parties from the peace process?

Nukhost Weekly, No 56, Editorial, 13 April 2011

The main question about the peace talks of Mr. Karzai is that what this issue is proposed from which dimensions? The early proposition of this issue was unanticipated and many rejected it in the early stage. However, the continuity of this process created its supportive parties and the oppositions. The team that supports this program is the Afghan government, Pashtun ethnic group in the government, some Jihadi figures, journalists and intellectuals (The last group provided conditional support and demanded for transparency in this process). On the opposition side were the United Nations, European Union and other involved countries in the affairs of Afghanistan who primarily rejected it with one voice. However, these groups have now turned to be the extremist supportive of Karzai's this plan. The political parties' opposition to the government has rejected the plan. The formation of High Peace Council as the main body to carry the talks with insurgents ignited a number of reactions. These reactions included the formation of different layers in the political arena like mobilizing people against the process and warning people that it will pave the way for the return of the Taliban and the ongoing debates in the afghan media. Now the perspectives on this process have proved. The party supporting the peace process is hardly trying to make the people believe that the High Peace Council backed by international community will be ultimately successful in bringing peace. The opponent group however believes that this process will bring no result and it will undermine the achievements and the values of the constitutions.

The insurgents that give up fighting will be paid cash

Paiwand Milli Weekly, No 62, Editorial, 13 April 2011

The United Nations is ready to pay cash to those Taliban fighters who lay down their weapons. This process is launched in Kunduz province and those people who are fighting against the government will be paid money if they stop war.

Abdul Rauf Qazi Zadeh, one of the officials cooperating with the United Nations Development Programme says in this regard that this program is launched for those people who stop fighting against government and will paid money to solve their problems and find an employment opportunity for themselves. Mr.

Qazizada said that they have so far registered 300 men in different areas and these all people will be paid money.

Turkey an open route of Afghanistan peace talks

Erada Daily, No 1019, Page One, 13 April 2011

Turkey declared that this country welcomes the opening of Taliban representative office in this country. The objective behind this move is said to accelerate the negotiation between the two parties.

Based on unofficial report by the foreign ministry of Turkey, the Taliban has not yet filed any demand in this regard to the authorities of this country and as soon as they do so the Turkish government is ready to assess it.

Arsalan Rahmani a member of High Peace Council says that Turkey is making preparations in this regard to open Taliban's representative office in this country.

It was an important part of talks between Burhanuddin Rabbani and Turkish authorities during his visit from this country last month.

Turkey is trying to play the role of mediator in finding a way to bring an end to Afghanistan crises.

Payment of money and the risky consequences

Daily 8 am, No 1131, Editorial, 13 April 2011

Author: Ehsan Ullah Dawlat Moradi

The media have reported that the UN will pay money to those Taliban fighters who stop war. The purpose behind this pay is to help these people find a job after they leave fighting.

Some of the political experts in Afghanistan believe that a number of Taliban fighters have joined this group due to poverty and unemployment. There is no doubt that poverty is considered one of the important factor behind the enlisting of the youth in the Taliban ranks, however, it must be investigated that how many of these youth do really have economic problems.

Meanwhile, the report by the international organizations shows that more than 70 percent of the civilian killings is carried out by the Taliban. Considering this fact can undermine the optimism that the Taliban will stop killing people after they received money. If the experts and international advisor have concluded that they can bring down Taliban from the mountains by giving them money then they should take a big guarantee that this money will not be used later on for insurgency activities. ON the other hand the process of giving to Taliban may encourage other people also to join this group and then receive money.

Loya Jirga is part of Talibanisation of Afghanistan

Mandegar Daily, NO 548, Page Three, 13 April 2011

According to the legal experts, the Afghanistan constitution says

that the members of National Parliament, heads of provincial and district councils are members of the Loya Jirga and can make decisions on the big affairs of the country. According to these experts, the Loya Jirga which Mr. Karzai wants to convene is not constitutional and he wants to violate the constitution as he did in many other occasions and implements his personal wills on the people.

Masood Tarashtwall, politics lecturer at University says that the president has obvious demands to make in this Loya Jirga and the important ones include getting participants confidence on signing Afghan-USA strategic treaty and other games between him and the USA, modifications of constitution, identifying Taliban and introducing himself as a national figure.

Trashtwall emphasized that convening such Jirgas is not in the favor of the people of Afghanistan and the president is playing with the feelings of the people. He added: "currently the process of talibanisation of the country is moving very fast and convening Loya Jirga is part of that process."

Peace Strengthening Committee: We wish that High Peace Council was joined with us!

Mandegar Daily, No 548, Page One, 13 April 2011

The authorities in the peace strengthening commission say that they welcome the activities of High Peace Council but they believe that if both commissions are joined then their activities will bring better results.

Syed Sharif Yousufi, the deputy of Peace Strengthening Commission on April 12 in a ceremony held for the 30 insurgents that had joined the peace process said that this commission holds years of experience in the peace process and has done so far much cooperation in this regard. According to him this institution has taken big measures in rejoining the insurgents with fewer budgets. However he said that if the High Peace Council joins this commission then the peace efforts in the country will bring better results. Yousufi stressed that we hold a positive towards High Peace Council and wish that they were together with Peace Strengthening Commission.

The Taliban governor of Kundoz province joined government with his 50 men

Mandegar Daily, No 548, Page One, 13 April 2011

The Kandahar Security Officials say that one of the so called Taliban governor has joined the peace process with his 50 men. Moulavi Noorulaziz, is a high ranking Taliban official who was recently appointed by the Taliban as the governor of Kundoz province in the north.

The security officials in the Kandahar say that he had been operating previously in the south of Afghanistan and with the mediation of local elders on 10th of April stopped war. This former Taliban leader was leading small groups of the Taliban fighters in different provinces of the country.

Abdullah:

The main problem in Afghanistan is the President himself

Afghanistan Daily, No 1370, Page One, 14 April 2011

Dr. Abdullah, the leader of “Thaghyeer and Omid” coalition was talking in Washington in the Asia Research Center and said that he agrees with the logical proposition of talks with the Taliban because in every war the negotiation door must always remain open, however if the ground realities are not considered then the current achievements of last year’s will be sacrificed.

Regarding Taliban he said that Afghanistan has about 30 million population and only 20 to 30 thousand of them are fighting in the ranks of the Taliban. He added that with no doubt the only threat to the people of Afghanistan and the international community is the government of Afghanistan.

He said that Hamid Karzai wants to retain his position till the end of 2014 when the foreign forces will leave the country.



Sixty Taliban fighters have joined the government in Sar-e Pul province

Sam Daily, No 1132, Page Two, 14 April 2011

A Taliban commander in the Sar e Pul province joined the government with his 60 men.

Asadullah Sherzad the Security Chief of Sar e Pul province told the media that Azim, a Taliban commander with his 60 armed men joined the government from Sheramha area of central Sar e Pul province.

The Security Chief of Sar e Pul says that after these the Sheramha area which includes 50 villages will be safe and Azim was operating in these villages for the past one year against the government.

Elections Transparency

Continuing tension between legislative and judiciary and the backdoor dealings

Erada Daily, No 1010, Page One, 2 April 2011

The House of Representatives was expected to determine the fate of Head and members of Supreme Court about the alleged allegations by the 103 MPs with regards to the Special Tribunal; however the government used its influence and the administrative commission of parliament prevented the grand meeting of parliament which delayed the trial of these officials.

The communiqué released by the special tribunal says that there is no specific claim about the MPs in this tribunal. Unlike its earlier claims that special tribunal is of one step now it says that the special tribunal will assess the complaints gradually in different phases.

The members of parliament were due to decide on the dismissal and trial of members of Supreme Court and its head, but after behind closed door meetings of parliament's administrative commission, the grand meeting was suspended.

The MPs that signed the dismissal application of the head and members of Supreme Court believe that the formation of special tribunal for electoral frauds is illegal.



Attorney General's Office seeking to arrest electoral officials

Mandegar Daily, No 540, Page One, 3 April 2011

Author: Jamshid Yama

The officials in the Electoral Commissions say that they are seriously threatened by the Attorney General's office and the security agencies to be detained illegally.

Ahmad Zia Rafat, a member and spokesman for the Electoral Complaints Commission told Mandegar Daily that the security agencies under the pressure of Attorney General's office try to detain some of the members of electoral commissions. However, the spokesperson for attorney general's office did not give any details about the arrest of the IEC members and said that they are waiting for the decision of special tribunal for elections.

Also, Amanullah Eman, spokesman for Attorney General said in this regard that providing more details on this case will damage the decisions of attorney general. He added that anyone who has committed any crime will be prosecuted by the attorney general's office.

However, Mr. Rafat says that during past days the security forces tried to detain the head of Electoral Secretariat in mid-way but were not successful.

The Electoral Complaints Commission spokesman added, the Attorney General had failed in their claims to prove criminal cases and violation of elections law by the electoral commission members and now they are thinking of other ways and have asked some vague questions from the IEC members.

The protesting candidates are firing in the air

Arman Milli, No 2011, Page Two, 2 April 2011

Everybody knows that the September 18, 2010 parliamentary elections were full of frauds and manipulations.

After discovering the score of frauds and manipulation documents, the Attorney General's office of Afghanistan asked the Supreme Court to take action against the accused ones. In reality, president Karzai felt that he has less number of friendly MPs in the parliament and he also supported the claim of legal institutions to form a Special Tribunal to assess criminal cases during elections. The state television currently broadcasted vague news that the Special Court will carry out its works in three phases.

First, it is not known that to whom the special tribunal will send its final decision. Because issuing credential letters for MPs is the authority of Independent Elections Commission.

Secondly, the president wanted to silence those voices in the parliament that wanted to trial the members of Supreme Court for calling illegal the formation of Special Tribunal.

Third, prolonging the job of Special Tribunal means to use it as a tool on those MPs who are critic of the government and do not let them make any moves against the government.

This Electoral Complaints Commission member complains about the possible arrest of IEC members by the attorney general's office when most of the MPs have asked the Supreme Court to answer their questions about its illegal activities and measures.

The Wolesi Jirga summoned the Attorney General this time

Erada Dily, No 2086, Page One, 3 April 2011

The tension between the legislature and the judiciary has reached its peak. From canceling the Special Tribunal to the summoning of the Supreme Court members to Wolesi Jirga are the issues remained unsolved. On the other hand the president has kept the Special Tribunal to put the winner MPs of the parliament in complete chaos and anxiety and this issue has caused the winner MPs to have discussions everyday on this issue rather than talking about the main issues in parliament. Considering this issue the Wolesi Jirga decided to summon Mohammad Ishaq Alko to the parliament. The winner MPs are emphasizing on cancelling the Special Tribunal for electoral frauds in the parliamentary elections while the protesting candidates are optimistic that the Special Tribunal will modify elections results after their investigation is finished.

Attorney general: Parliament has no right to summon me

Arman Milli, No 2014, Page One, 5 April 2011

Following the tensions between the House of Representatives and the attorney general's office on the second round of parliamentary elections, the MPs asked the Mr. Ishaq Alko to come to the parliament and answer the questions of MPs about the elections cases.

However, the attorney general did not go to the parliament and in a letter stated that Attorney General Office is an independent institution and the Parliament has no right to summon him.

The members of parliament, after receiving the letter of attorney general, decided to impeach Mohammad Ishaq Alko on April 9.

Ahmad Behzad, the deputy of parliament's head argued that based on the consultative theory of legal advisory committee of monitoring commission on the implementation of the constitution that was sent to the Wolesi Jirga last year, the parliament has the right to summon and impeach those independent organs and institutions that work under the executive branch and takes vote of confidence from the parliament. He said that we can impeach the attorney general and article 89 of the constitution also says that House of Representatives can form a special commission to have an eye on the activities of the government and since the attorney general's office is part of the government so impeachment attorney general is not illegal.

Continued confrontation between government and the parliament

Afghanistan Daily, No 1363, 6 April 2011

The confrontation between the government and the Lower House is growing every day. The government came into confrontation with the winner candidates after the elections results went into controversies and the government favored the demonstrating candidates. The confrontation of government and the parliament is getting closer to a point which seems to be not returnable.

The attorney general's office says that the parliament has no right to summon the attorney general while the parliament says that when they can give vote of confidence then they have the right to impeach and summon the attorney general too.

Like all other problems in the Afghan politics which has become an issue, the authorities in attorney general's office refer to the constitution and bring documents to support their claim.

Another important point is that the interpretation of the constitution in Afghanistan has been based on different perceptions and it has not been able to keep people united.

The conflict between the government and the Parliament has affected all aspects of political, social and economic atmosphere of the country and resulted into an ambiguous and tense situation. If this process continues then it will cause more destabilizations in the country and the only ones that take interest of this situation is the anti-government armed forces that are fighting with the people and the government. In such a condition we do not observe the people using their mentality or brain but feelings and animosity have covered their eyes to use their minds.

People are tired of pointless conflicts

Arman Milli, No 2016, Editorial, 9 April 2011

The crisis and distrust among government agencies and officials is growing every day. After the formation of special tribunal for elections which was apparently proposed by the Supreme Court and the president also endorsed it, the political prospect of the country worsened and the controversies between the winner candidates, the protesting candidates and the government increased.

Therefore the MPs summoned the attorney general to the Parliament, but in advance, the deputy attorney general office told the media that the summoning the attorney general to parliament has no legal bases thus he will not go to parliament.

In contrast, the parliament warned the attorney general that if he is not present in the parliament until April 9, 2011 then they will impeach him.

It is obvious that the impeachment of attorney general by the members of the parliament will not be accepted by the president because he himself has started this dangerous game that has created crises in the country. And, if his wills are not changed the MPs will not leave confronting him.

If the confrontation between the government and the parliament is not solved then it is probable that many of the government's ministers will be rejected by the parliament and this issue will be so complex that it will much harder later on to be solved.

Corruption

Corruption; How long?!

Mandegar Daily, No 540, Page Eight, 2 April 2011

Three days before, the second vice president pointed out the existence of some mafia groups active in the Afghan government

Referring to the existence of corruption in government institutions, the second vice president admitted that there is some mafia groups in the afghan government involved in corruption.

Moreover, the spokesman for the Supreme Court and the attorneys has also admitted this issue. Many government officials including the president have also talked about corruption while the interesting point is the blame of Westerns and Pakistanis on Afghan government officials for corruption when they are the godfathers of corruption. They important the culture of economic corruption to this country and the major benefit from this business goes to their pockets.

The government of Afghanistan has been vocal on corruption but has not been able to take any practical measure in tackling corruption. It has created several institutions that have not been proved to be fruitful in achieving something.

Enayatullah Qasimi is released on bail

Arman e Milli, No 2011, Page One, 2 April 2011

Afghanistan Attorney General's office says that Enayatullah Qasimi, former transportation and aviation minister is released after spending three days in custody.

Amanullah Eman, spokesperson for this office told the media that Mr. Qasimi was released after being guaranteed but his case is not solved.

He added that his case is awaiting the decision of the court.

Enayatullah Qasimi was arrested on corruption cases and was allegedly involved in the manipulations of 9 million dollars.

The government structure has confronted a situation with the challenging factor of corruption. The news published in the media show that corruption exist in all parts of the governmental institutions and no part is safe. Meanwhile, some high ranking officials are also involved in corruption whom no law can fight against.

High ranking governmental authorities, ministries and deputies are in the top list of corrupt officials with the support of their foreign counterparts they continue with their activities in a systematic way.

There are foreign hands also involved with corruption. the allegations referred by Eiken Berry, the US ambassador in

Afghanistan is not baseless and supported by the evidences.

Mohammad Ishaq Alko, earlier complained about the official intervention by the US embassy in Kabul and said: "The US ambassador in Afghanistan told me to resign for not prosecuting Haji Rafiullah Azimi, the deputy of a bank."

The attorney general called a political plot and said that there was no criminal case against Haji Rafiullah.

Rahmatullah Nazari, the deputy of Attorney General on oversight also says that almost 20 cases are of corruption registered with these institutions which show the involvement of minsters, deputies, ambassadors, governors and other high ranking government officials in corruption." The list includes the names of following people: Siddique Chakkari, former head of Hajj and Awqaf ministry, Hamidullah Qadiri and Enayatullah Qasimi, former ministers of transportation and civil aviation, Mohammad Amin Farhang former commerce and industries minister, Nadir Atash former head of Aryana, Abdul Ahad Sahibi former Kabul Mayor, Ashraq Hussaini former deputy of ministry of education, Ataurahman Salim former deputy of Hajj and Awqaf ministry, Akbar Barackzai former head of water and energy ministry, Mohammad Wali Rasuli former minister of public works and Ahmad Zia Salehi former financial officer of National Security Directorate.

One of the important barriers in implementing the law on these accused people is the same issue and their cases are pending. The issue of corruption is not limited only to domestic affairs but often there has been debates between afghan government and international donors about this issue.

Releasing big perpetrators means that there is something wrong

Sam Daily, No 123, Page Four, 4 April 2011

Writer: Ahmad Saeedi

Once in three months a news is published in the media from judicial and legal sources of the country that the cases of high ranking officials involved in corruption are being processed and after there is no word for another three months.

The attorney general says that Enayatullah Qasimi is still banned to travel out of country. In a country where the security of presidential palace is not ensured how can one stop Enayatullah Qasimi to infiltrate from another hole out of country?

The attorney general declared that Mohammad Sidique Chakari and former head of national radio and television are also banned from travelling out of country. In order to deceive public opinion; later on declared that Sidique Chakkari is arrested by the Interpol Police. But Sidique Chakari told to BBC

in an interview: "I am free but you are caught by the mafia."

The arrest of high ranking governmental officials is a drama and resembles those movies whose end is known without being finished. It is true that in many developing countries corruption is the product of political, economic and cultural situation of them, however the ongoing corruption in Afghanistan can be regarded as political or in other words; official corruption.

Another factor is the absence of a transparent and observant system that has allowed corruption. Another obstacle is the tribal and ethnical privileges that have allowed corruption.

Also, the lack of punishment for government officials and their ignorance from Afghanistan law is another challenge.

Bribery in Afghanistan has foreign sources and there are obvious evidences. The foreigners are involved in the ongoing corruption cases in Afghanistan.

Go and hang yourselves!

Arman Milli Daily, No 2014, Page Eight, 5 April 2011

Author: Daniel Idris

On 4th of April we witnessed the media showing images of deputy Attorney General's office that how feeble they are in dragging the corrupt governmental officials to prison. We have been listening from domestic and international media that fight against corruption is difficult in Afghanistan because many of these corrupt officials are warlords and have links with particular political and armed factions, while the reality of the ground shows another picture; upon scrutinizing the government structure we observe that except some limited number of authorities the other warlords are driven away from governmental posts. Then what is the real motive behind the culture of impunity which still covers many corrupt government officials? Is the economic that powerful that none of them are to be prosecuted?

The government is unable to imprison only a single person who is supposedly a deputy or a ministry for the crime he has committed. This authority might have only twenty bodyguards or soldiers.

Attorney General:

there are errors and problems with us in issues related to corruption

Mandegar Daily, No. 541, Page Eight, 4 April 2011

Deputy Attorney General Office, Rahmatullah Nazari on April 3 said to Members of Parliament that during past years there has been efforts and their results are obvious too, however, there are some problems that prevent them to do their jobs.

Nazari added, "We have problems and there are mistakes and shortcomings. For example, one of deputies of the ministries is sentenced for five years and one month imprisonment by the court and if we try to imprison him then we have to imprison his team of policemen. We accept this problem and this problem have caused us that we could not imprison this person."

The deputy of Attorney General's office also said that the cases of 20 government officials are under investigation and will be finalized soon.

Corruption a lasting unknown myth

Mandegar Daily, No 543, Editorial, 5 April 2011

The story of fight against corruption in our country remains in a way that a police officer who takes 3 thousand Afs. As bribery is accused of several years' imprisonment while the main culprits and corrupt officials are neither caught nor mentioned anywhere.

Recently the Attorney General Office charged one of the former ministers for embezzlement of thousands of dollars and arrested him. However, he was released after the president issued his release order. It is interesting when the Attorney General claims that they cannot arrest a deputy or head of a government institution accused for corruption cases because there is no necessary cooperation between these institutions. The fight against corruption in Afghanistan remains as an unknown myth because those who are involved in corruption are actually powerful figures of the system and if any of the cases are revealed then their political images will be harmed.

Therefore, we must accept that the debate of fight against corruption in Afghanistan is ridicule. The government has proved that it never took the smallest step in the fight against corruption but has deceived people by some false slogans.

Head of Anti-Corruption Office is summoned to the parliament

Arman Milli, No 2013, Page One, 4 April 2011

The reports show that the House of Representatives summoned the deputy of attorney general's office and the Head of High Office of Oversight to provide explanations on the cases which are not yet completed.

Dr. Azizullah Lodin, Head of High Office of Oversight showed one case and said: this is one of the cases that cost one hundred million dollars and it includes powerful people like ministers and others.

Mr. Lodin highlighted about the existence of corruption in the traffic department and the central statistics office of Afghanistan and other departments.

The Members of Parliament stated that the corruption cases are not assessed in the attorney general's office.

Dr. Abdullah's warning of protest of people about growing corruption

Daily 8 am, No 1127, Page One, 9 April 2011

Dr. Abdullah Abdullah, the leader of coalition "Change and Hope" warned about the public protest on the expansion of corruption and the weak government performance. Mr. Abdullah was talking to the gathering of students in Kabul and

said that the people of Afghanistan must learn from the latest demonstrations in Egypt and Tunis.

He said that the Afghan government has not been able to fulfill the demands of people which have caused a big gap between people and the government.

Mr. Abdullah is a strong critic of Mr. Karzai's programs and criticized the government's lack of responsiveness about the expansion of corruption. Referring to the pressures imposed by the demonstrations in the Tunisia and Egypt on the governmental bodies he said: "If the current government leadership is sunk into mistakes then they will share the same fate as did the leaders of Middle East and North African countries."

Thousands acre of governmental lands are taken back from the confiscators

Sam Daily, No 1129, Page One, 11 April 2011

Almost four million acre land is confiscated throughout the country and during past six months the government has been able to take back 16 thousand acres from the confiscators.

Ahmad Shahir Shahryar, head of land administration in Afghanistan said that this institution is formed under the framework of Ministry of Agriculture to avoid land confiscation and take back those lands grabbed by powerful and give that back to farmers and private sectors. He said that this institution has been able to take back thousands acres of lands in different provinces of Afghanistan in coordination with other governmental bodies that include; 3000 acre land in Kohsan and Angil of Heart province, 600 acre in Shakardarra and Paghman districts of Kabul, 9600 acres in Behsud, Surkhrud, Rodat, Bati Kott, Shinwar and Kama districts of Nengarhar province and 3000 acres in the center of Ghazni province.

He said that the powerful and local people have confiscated more than four million acre lands in different parts of the country during past three decades. He did not mention the names of the confiscators, but said that in proportion to common people the powerful men have confiscated more lands that are now having high positions in the current government.

Articles & Interviews

Talks With Taliban Won't Result Into Peace



Interview with Ms. Fawzia Kofi, Head of Women Affairs Committee at Afghanistan Parliament
Interview by: Jawad Naaji

Question: what is your stand in relation to peace- talks and reconciliation with Taliban?

Reply: I think there are two points that must be differentiated: first peace, second reconciliation process. I believe that no human- particularly no woman can oppose peace; we (women) have paid the highest price for war in the country. Wars not only devastated the country to a great deal but it also cost lives of the nation's children. Thus, peace is a social need and the ultimate desire of Afghan citizens.

Peace- talk with Taliban is different from "peace" itself. Reconciliation with Taliban doesn't necessarily result into peace. There can be many reasons for this: first, Taliban is not a political party; it rather is an ideological group created and controlled by intelligence of neighboring and regional countries. Secondly, Taliban is a militant group that is fighting the government. That is why; offering privileges to an ideological and militant group won't result into peace-building. This fact rather undermines the country's nascent democracy and state-building processes. If we consider Taliban as a political party, then this political party should enter the power-sharing process through political mechanism such as elections. But this is clear that Taliban is an insurgent group that takes hundreds of lives on daily basis under the name of Islam and conducts suicide attacks that kills tens of innocent men, women and children. Therefore, one can say that since Taliban is insurgent and terroristic group reconciliation with such groups won't bring peace and security.

Question: Taliban despite being an ideological group struggles to share political power in the country and Afghan official have frequently announced that Taliban can share power with government. This shows that Taliban is assumed as a political party?

Reply: well; one objective for Taliban is to strengthen the group's role within Afghanistan political structure. I doubt Taliban is seeking a power- sharing deal. Taliban wants the whole regime. They want to found their own type of political structure which is indeed a despotic governing mechanism; they fight to rule the country alone. This in fact, is against democratic values in Afghanistan.

Over the last ten years there have been several ideological and militant groups in Afghanistan that have joined the peace process and rule of law through different mechanisms. For example, former Mojahideen and non- Mojahideen groups who were reintegrated into the society through processes such as

DDR and DIAG.

If Taliban lay down their guns and undergo the DDR process, respect Afghanistan Constitution, adhere to women political and social participation, and admit freedom of speech as some undeniable facts, in this case, I don't think anyone would oppose the political process of reconciliation with Taliban. However, I think for the time being Afghans have reached a certain level of political maturity that can understand who the Taliban are.

Question: do you think the insurgent groups or Taliban will accept what you have just called as democratic values?

Reply: It isn't likely; usually in any country, when peace talk begins both parties show some sort of flexibility in their stands. Since 3 years Afghan government is seeking to talk with Taliban. In this period, Taliban has shown no flexibility. Taliban's preconditions to peace-talk reject the country's current

values. For example, amendment to the Constitution, foundation of Islamic Emirate, denial of freedom of speech, freedom of media, unconditional withdrawal of international troops from Afghanistan, denying women's right of political participation and other facts that were experimented under Taliban regime. These preconditions aren't applicable in current Afghanistan. In such circumstances, it seems unlikely that Taliban comes down and take and reconciliatory and participatory stand.

Question: How do you assess the role and impact of women on the peace process?

Reply: As a critic to the process, I want to make it clear that no country can achieve economic, civil and social prosperity unless women's role is respected in their relevant reconciliation processes. Kingdom of Norway is a good example of economic development with highest rate of per capita income where women participation in political process is 55 percent. Therefore, I think Afghans should also seriously consider

If Afghan government persists to follow its reconciliatory efforts while ignoring the parliament, political parties, Afghanistan citizenry, and civil society organizations as the main party to the conflict these efforts will result into violating citizenship rights and can do nothing for peace.

women's 50 percent political participation. Women should have their role in various social, educational and other processes and enjoy their rights. Otherwise, Afghanistan will head back and its achievements will deteriorate.

Question: currently 8 members of the High Council of Peace are women. Considering the country's female population this number is very less. It was expected that women might criticize the process more seriously while it didn't happen. Do you know why?

Reply: I think presence and participation of those women who disfavor the reconciliation process is very important to success of the process. Their participation and feedback will avoid violation of human rights and women rights. With due respect that I have to the 9 female members of the Peace High Council; I see that their role isn't very important to the Council. The government intentionally, selects those women who favor the process and for those women with different views, there would be no chance to participate in such processes.

Generally speaking, I don't think that Afghanistan reconciliation process and the High Peace Council launched unilaterally by the government can do anything to secure peace in the country. In the worst scenario and circumstance two things might happen that I will explain later. The best scenario would be this that Afghanistan fulfills its primary responsibilities, expand good governance and address the basic needs of ordinary Afghans. Agendas beyond the control of government such as fighting Taliban or terrorist groups which are regional and international phenomena are out of our abilities and we can't bring peace in our country through current reconciliation process. I again emphasize that these phenomena have got their own regional nature. As I said in the worst scenario two things can happen: first, submit the country to the Taliban for the second time; two, ignite another civil conflict in Afghanistan. There are individuals and groups who don't want Taliban to rule the country and start fighting which would be another civil war in Afghanistan. However, in both cases this is ordinary Afghans who will pay the price.

Question: do you think that Afghanistan once again will turn into an Islamic Emirate?

Reply: the current process, the recent tendency of Afghan government to bring peace at any cost, and the stand taken by regional countries such as Pakistan seems to direct Afghanistan towards Talibanisation. Now we have to look at the role of international community.

For the time being, the US Secretary of State has announced that US troops withdrawal from Afghanistan isn't hundred percent sure and will take place in view of the country's situation. The Secretary has also announced that they will support the reconciliation process as long as it doesn't contradict the democratic and civilized values of Afghanistan. However, one has to see that how the situation develops over the next few months. I think that the current government of Afghanistan isn't a reliable partner for the international community to fight terrorism. In the current situation, if Afghan government persists to follow its reconciliatory efforts while

ignoring the parliament, political parties, Afghanistan citizenry, and civil society organizations as the main party to the conflict these efforts will result into violating citizenship rights and can do nothing for peace. Naturally, those opposing the process will get frustrated and start a new internal conflict. Keeping in mind that Afghanistan hasn't disarmed all illegal groups and individuals, if these groups see that their interest aren't served through democratic processes, the easiest way for them would be to start violence as Taliban is doing it.

The above scenarios are really the worst possible options that one can assume and I hope that such scenarios won't be given any space to realize; but the current process is tending towards such scenarios.

Question: taking into consideration the Taliban ideology, do you think that the mechanism of peace- talks with Taliban is right? And do you think peace is achievable?

Reply: I reiterate that there are two different themes and we need to be careful not to confuse the two facts. Peace- talks with Taliban and the "peace" itself. Peace- talks with Taliban won't necessarily result into peace. If you go back to 1990s, a similar "national reconciliation process" had been initiated by government of Dr. Najeeb and everyone was of the opinion that the process would result into ultimate peace for Afghanistan. When Najeebullah's regime collapsed and Mojahideen came to power, we saw that things turned to the contrary. Now if we compare the two situations, we see that in 1990s ordinary Afghans wanted peace and they considered Mojahideen as part of the nation who were fighting to liberate the country, but now, Afghans don't consider Taliban as a national resistance force. So, keeping in mind that fact that the nation doesn't want Taliban, the peace- talk process with them will result into nothing.

Today no one can guarantee that the process would be successful; no one can assure that the reconciliation process with Taliban is indeed a peace process. As I said, there can be two scenarios: a new phase of internal conflicts and a Talibanized peace process that will lead the country backward and turns it into a place where people live like spiritless creatures that can't dare to react against the regime. Afghanistan under Taliban can't be a peaceful country; it rather would a country of spiritless creatures.

Question: Do you think peace-talks with Taliban enjoy grassroots legitimacy or it is just a political and government owned process?

Reply: this is more a government process rather than a public one. Public support is realized only when a process is initiated based on some sort of social contract. Social contract based on state- building principles is created when you specify the party(s) to a conflict, create some guaranteeing mechanisms for materializing your objectives, and then achieve the desired results. For the time being, many things are unclear with the process and these vague parts in the assumed social contract between Afghanistan citizenry and Afghan government has confused results of the process.

Question: what would be the political and social consequences of the peace- talk and reconciliation process with Taliban?

Reply: If the government neglects its fundamental duties to address the primary needs of its citizens and instead involve itself in issues beyond its authority and continue to ignore role of other state institutions such as parliament, this will either take the country back to 1990s or if the government while neglecting all other state institutions and Afghan nation and the MPs persists on its reconciliation efforts this will result into Talibanization of Afghanistan.

Question: What has been the reaction of Afghanistan Parliament in relation to the reconciliation process?

Reply: So far, the important issues such as reconciliation and other state fundamental policies in this regard haven't been referred to Afghanistan parliament. While article 64 of the Constitution says that part of the responsibilities of the President is to determine and approve the fundamental policies of the government in coordination with the country's parliament.

The parliament is a policy making state institution and represents the nation. So far, as public representative, we haven't been consulted regarding the peace process. If the parliament that represents all Afghans is neglected, then how the reconciliation process reflects the national interest? With this situation I think that further isolating of the parliament will cause confrontation of power and will undermine the government from inside.

New publications

Afghan Taliban intelligence network embraces the new

Los Angeles times / April 13, 2011

The Taliban has deepened its infiltration of Afghan institutions and sharpened its surveillance of Afghan and foreign troops as it seeks to exploit an edge in the information war that will help decide the fate of the insurgency.

Much of the Taliban's structure was destroyed or dispersed by the 2001 U.S.-led invasion, which forced the militant group from power. Midlevel commanders have been hit hard in recent months by Western forces, and NATO officials say the Pakistani-based leadership is plagued by infighting.

<http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-taliban-intelligence-20110414,0,6672065.story>

Al-Qaeda sees opportunity in peace

Asia Times / April 13, 2011

With the great 2011 Arab revolt still simmering, Western leaders are scrambling to bring to an end the 10-year war in Afghanistan, where the Taliban-led insurgency remains unbeaten. A step in the direction of an endgame through a political reconciliation process is likely to be taken at a preparatory conclave on the security and reconstruction of Afghanistan to be held in Turkey's capital Ankara next month.

http://www.atimes.com/atimes/South_Asia/MD13Df03.html

Kabul Bank to Be Dissolved

Wall Street Journal / April 11, 2011

Afghan President Hamid Karzai said Monday that Kabul Bank, the largest private lender in the country, will be dissolved and that he has ordered the Afghan attorney general's office to investigate corruption allegations at the lender and to begin prosecutions.

The announcement appears to end six months of tensions between the Afghan government and the international community, which pushed Mr. Karzai to dissolve Kabul Bank and to pursue an investigation that could lead to prosecution of the bank's key shareholders and managers.

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748703841904576256780797518272.html?mod=googlenews_wsj

Top Afghan Official Confirms Talks With the Taliban

New York times / April 6, 2011

A top Afghan official confirmed on Wednesday that the country's government had been in peace talks with the Taliban.

The official, Mohammad Massoom Stanekzai, secretary of the High Peace Council and an adviser to the Afghan president, Hamid Karzai, said reconciliation talks had been under way with insurgents for some time.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/04/07/world/asia/07afghanistan.html?ref=asia>

Raids on ex-Taliban threaten Afghan peace process, diplomats warn

Guardian / April 6, 2011

International and Afghan security forces are setting back the embryonic peace process by raiding the homes of former Taliban officials instrumental in promoting talks with insurgents, according to diplomats and leaders of the former hardline regime.

At a time when the US has called for a "diplomatic surge" to solve the conflict, the most recent target of the greatly expanded night raids programme, which employs electronic eavesdropping and special forces units on a major scale, was Mullah Zaeef, former Taliban ambassador to Islamabad and a proponent of peace talks. He is regarded as sufficiently important by the international community that last year an international travel ban on him was lifted, enabling him to travel to London.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/apr/06/raids-taliban-afghan-peace-process>

Facts and Fiction on the Frontier: The Haqqanis and the Kurram peace deal

Afghanistan Analysts Network (AAN) / by: Fabrizio Foschini / April 14, 2011

For a few weeks, it looked like the sectarian conflict in Kurram Tribal Agency had been brought to a solution. The years-long siege on Shia residents had been lifted thanks to a much talked about peace agreement, allegedly brokered with the help of Jalaluddin Haqqani. This, however, now looks increasingly doubtful and seems to be more the part of a narrative that wants to paint a

favourable picture of the old mujahedin commander's network. Meanwhile, a series of brutal attacks have plunged one of the most strategic areas of FATA once more into instability, while the links between this conflict and the one in Afghanistan grow even stronger. AAN's analyst Fabrizio Foschini pieces the story together.

<http://aan-afghanistan.com/index.asp?id=1627>

Victims Organisations Sound a Wake-up Call

Afghanistan Analysts Network (AAN) / by: Sari Kouvo / April 13, 2011

AAN continues its analysis of civil society's role in and ability to influence the processes unfolding in Afghanistan. AAN's Sari Kouvo and Obaid Ali participated in the National Victims Conference held in Kabul 30-31 March.

<http://aan-afghanistan.com/index.asp?id=1624>

Towards a More United Voice of Civil Society

Afghanistan Analysts Network (AAN) / by: Fabrizio Foschini / April 5, 2011

During the last months, AAN's Fabrizio Foschini has had the chance to follow closely the process leading to the formation of a network of Afghan civil society organisations, its path to a two-day conference in Kabul, and its plans for future initiatives.

<http://aan-afghanistan.com/index.asp?id=1601>

U.S. pledges more money for peace program in Afghanistan

Washington Post / By Joshua Partlow / April 7, 2011

The United States pledged \$50 million Wednesday to jump-start a slow-moving program to encourage Taliban members in Afghanistan to stop fighting and support the government.

Facing rising levels of violence in recent years, Afghan and U.S. officials have struggled to craft incentives for insurgents to give up their cause. But government-funded programs have been plagued by misspent funds, and fledgling talks with Taliban leaders have made little headway.

http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/us-pledges-more-money-for-peace-program-in-afghanistan/2011/04/06/AFn87hqC_story.html

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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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