

In the Name of God, the Most Merciful, the Most Kind



April 18, 2015

## Security must be Prioritized

The incident of the last week which resulted in the death of 30 Afghan National Army (ANA) soldiers was really very tragic. Taliban insurgents ruthlessly targeted ANA soldiers in Badakhshan province and beheaded 8 of the soldiers and killed 22 others. The incident left everyone gloomy and soon there were concerns about the security in the area and at the same time the demands have arisen that ANA should launch a cleanup offensive before the situation gets out of hand.

Ministry of Interior (MoI) on Friday, April 17, mentioned that a cleanup offensive would be initiated in the restive Juram and Warduj districts of Badakhshan province to purge the area of anti-state elements. Earlier, the Interior Minister Noor-ul-Haq Ulomi had visited the province to assess the security situation after the tragic incident of the killing of ANA soldiers.

MoI spokesman Sadiq Sadiqi said that Noor-ul-Haq Ulomi had a detailed meeting with local people during his visit to the locality. He directed the security forces to flush out militants from the area. He also mentioned that the security forces were well-equipped in the districts however he mentioned that close coordination was required among various security organs to ward-off any threat efficiently.

It is important for the government now that it has to prove that it really has the capability to control the situation in the province. It has to have well-calculated assessment of the situation and then launch a comprehensive military operation in the areas where the insurgents are trying to strengthen their hold and becoming a danger for the Afghan security forces and the innocent civilians.

The civilians as the Interior Minister has mentioned must cooperate with Afghan security forces as it would be really difficult for the government to defeat the insurgents without their cooperation. If people as a whole, get committed that they would not provide safe haven to the insurgents and then the Afghan security forces launch its cleanup operation, there is no way insurgents can escape. Afghan security forces now have the required capabilities to fight insurgents and even defeat them.

Afghan security forces have gained much strength and capabilities in the last few years and now as the security responsibilities have completely been transferred to them, they face myriads of challenges. They would need the support of international community in this regard and there are possibilities that if they are backed and supported appropriately, they would be able to face these challenges with success.

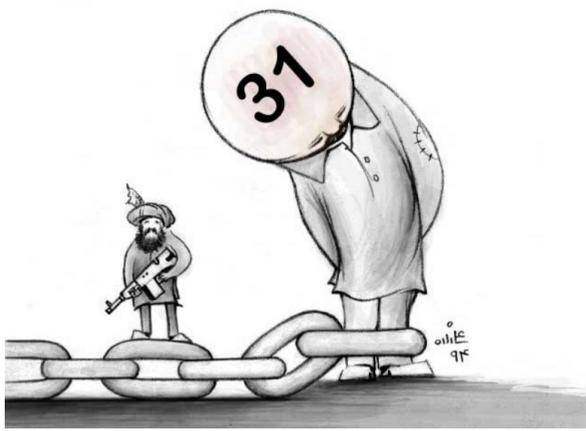
The Train Advise Assist Command (TAAC) North Commander, Brig. Gen. Andreas Hahnemann, talking on Thursday, April 16, with reporters in Mazar-i-Sharif that Afghan security forces are capable to defeat the enemies even though they were dangerous. He said that the militants would try to expand activities this summer but Afghan forces were well-trained to frustrate their designs. Commenting on Badakhshan and Balkh incidents, he said that though casualties were part of battle, the important fact was the manner the Afghan forces fought. He also mentioned that the international forces would not leave Afghanistan alone. Afghan forces, especially Afghan Air Force would require more assistance regarding training and equipment and international forces have been trying to provide them these requirements.

Definitely, in war against terrorism and terrorists, it is very important that the support of international troops must not diminish. Afghan Air Force can play a very important role in the fight against Taliban insurgents in the times to come. Strengthening and equipping it properly can guarantee the victory of Afghan forces. In addition, it is also important that Afghan forces must be trained enough to administer the equipment and technology that they will receive.

The victimization of the Afghan forces and common people because of insecurity in different parts of the country is really a serious matter and must be dealt as a top priority matter. Some of the recent incidents in the country clearly showed that the lives of important and innocent lives are in danger and the Taliban are mainly responsible for it. The incidents showed that Taliban have started their Spring Offensive and this year it may be very challenging to face them. Moreover, the butchery shown in the incidents are really heinous and there have to be serious steps to counter them otherwise they would threaten the lives of the people to a great extent.

Though the steps to maintain security at present is a top priority, long-term efforts to restore peace must never be forgotten. There are two important sectors that Afghanistan must concentrate on and must make improvements in so as to make their journey swift and easy in their long-term journey towards peace and tranquility. One of them is the peace process and the other is the political stability in the country. Unfortunately, various developments are required in both the sectors. The peace process, at the moment, is not on the track and currently there are no evident dialogues underway between Taliban and Afghan government regarding this process. Moreover, Taliban have continued the insurgency and have given no clear consent about peace talks they have, in fact, completely neglected the calls for peace.

The other sector that Afghanistan needs to work on to a great extent is its political stability. It needs to strengthen its political institutions and must carry on the democratic processes and culture with consistent efforts, otherwise achieving peace and tranquility will remain just a dream.



## Grand Corruptions Plagued Our Institutions!

By Asmatyari

Afghanistan suffers the most at the hands of prolonged war. The more than three decades of war have earned nothing except ruins, countless miseries and devastation for poor masses. The year's long war destroyed economic infrastructures completely and dragged Afghanistan towards annulment. No significant progress has been made albeit elongated international efforts to revive Afghanistan's economy improve the living standard of people and create greater job opportunities provided that the menace of corruption constantly depleted the rate of progress is minimized. Afghanistan stands among the poorest countries of world with more than 60 percent of its population living below or slightly above the line of poverty; still some officials don't sympathize with Afghans. The most prior reason behind the failure to strengthen the backbone of Afghan economy is the severe security problems and deep-rooted corruption.

Undeniably, Afghanistan's economy is the worst hit by consecutive quacks of corruption. The rumors of partial prosecution of multibillion dollar Kabul bank scandal diffused not, followed by Ministry of defense multimillion dollar scandal. According to credible media reports, the ministry of defense officials plotted and executed a misappropriation of over \$100 million. This undoubtedly is a great deal of manipulation of position or authority and misuse of public property. The government must enforce its authority, inflicting stricter terms of punishment to those involved behind the plot, once are charged.

The National Unity Government (NUG) took the issue into consideration whilst promising to closely investigate cases of corruption in government institutions and we know that at the moment corruption has expanded to government administrations including the Ministry of Defense and others as per statement of Freshta Amini, a member of the Economic Commission at the House of Representatives. Following the rumors of allegations the President Ghani assigned a commission to investigate the agreements has presented its report to the president, and the president will make a decision based on the suggestions by the committee.

The commission reviewing the fuel contracts in the Ministry of Defense has confirmed the corruption to the amount of \$100 million in Ministry of Defense contracts, but officials at the Fuel Importing Companies Organization said that based on the documents that they have received, the level of corruption is over \$200 million. Extensive corruption pertaining to the Ministry of Defense's fuel contracts has seen people, including Hazrat Omer Zakhailwal come under suspicion as well as senior Ministry of Defense and other government officials.

Previously, the oversight committee for Ministry of Defense fuel contracts disclosed that leading companies collaborated with each other and with the Directorate of Reconstruction and Development and the Special Procurement Committee to charge the government over \$100 million above the daily market rate.

Connecting the dots one assumes, without having sought the aids of concerned officials this plot would never have hatched.

Nonetheless, the latest reports affirms the presumptions an irrefutable reality, holding around sixty-three individuals, including President Ashraf Ghani's economic advisor, who have also been accused of involvement in the plot.

On the other hand people from all walks of life develop a mounting pressure on the government to bring the culprits into justice. The economic analysts, member of parliaments and the Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Industries (ACCI) members asked the government to bring all the corrupt officials to justice. Meanwhile, the National Economy Commission in the House of Representatives has also asked for a government probe. Conversely, the assigned committee has asked the president to seize properties owned by government officials who are accused of being involved if are convicted in the court of law. We have to learn it a vibrant progressive and developed Afghanistan is a corruption free Afghanistan.

MPs have said that all government officials and companies involved in this scandal must be legally prosecuted. In the wake of renowned bank scandals and financial embezzlements, the international institutions had lost their confidence, undertaking any consignment with Afghan banks and donor countries hesitant to grant financial supports to poverty stricken country. This tragic incident certainly will earn us infamy. President Ghani had earlier avowed to re-open the inquiry into the theft from the bank, fulfilling a campaign promise to make fighting corruption a priority. Following that he has issued a presidential decree to prosecute the case but the concerned officials had done nothing till date.

Putting an end to this very issue requires committed leadership, owing to take serious and long lasting decisions against the elimination of the prevalent corruption. Many problems in the third world countries are associated with flawed or delayed fixation of responsibilities; the culprit either escape owning the unlawful activity or keep on shifting the responsibilities from one to another stakeholder. Finally, no one is brought to book and hence justice delayed is justice denied. Particularly, when justice is to be exercised against a high profile person, then the anticipation of recovery and even-handedness die its natural death.

Seemingly, the unity government is all-encompassing government that contains every section of Afghan society; nonetheless it's frequently subjected to prolonged suspension over making critical decisions on significant issues, as witnessed at present relative to distribution of ministries. In spite of unexpected delays in cabinet formation, an end to prevalent corruption will render one of the foremost challenges for both president and chief executive. To accomplish that Mr. Ghani, who assumed the office in September, must first focus on getting a cabinet in place while opting officials of high credibility and integrity for public undertakings. However, accomplishment of significant tasks requires credible individuals hoisted for corresponding ministries, capable of ridding the departments out of calamities of corruption.

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## The Oozing Blood and Heartrending Sobs are none of My Business

By Hujjatullah Zia

I took no notice when I heard some horrible voices, when I saw the house beside me was burning, when I found the people struggling hard to stop the fire. I took no notice for the burning house wasn't mine, for my beloveds were safe, for I was so far from the fire. I took no notice as the fire started spreading around, as the smoke got thicker and thicker, as it got closer to my house and could burn it too, I still took no notice. Since I didn't think it could reach my house, since I thought it to be controlled, since I didn't think it could be so horrible, I again took no notice. Now my house is burnt, now I have lost all my loved ones, now I am all alone, now I notice, I notice. But it's too late."

The self-destructive megalomania and egotism will dehumanize man and empty him of virtue and moral values. Nurturing selfishness, one would be highly indifferent to the challenges, pain and suffering of his/her next door neighbors. One's apathy about the anguish of a mother saddened by the death of her child, about the wounded heart of a violence victim, about the starvation of the poor, etc. relegates him/her to a heartless being.

The bitter tears of an honor killing victim, the oozing blood of a wounded body, the heartrending sobs of an anguished individual, etc. can no more shake one's conscience or force tears into one's eyes. It is believed that altruism and humanity are in a moribund state and moral values are on the verge of erosion. Therefore, we take no notice of "horrible voices" and of the burning house sending up a huge cloud of smoke.

Charlie Chaplin writes to his daughter Zheraldin, an actress, "And look at people's lives, the lives of those street dancers in the final quarters to play hungry and shiver and beggary. I was like them .... It more than forty years I laugh people on earth. But I cried more than they are brave, Zheraldin.... In the world in which you live, there is only dance and music! At midnight, when leaving the great hall you forget richest fans, but do not forget to ask a taxi driver who takes home to his wife ... if no money to buy a coat child, you put money in his hand...."

We never take notice of the dancers, singers and thespians who perform on an empty stomach, not for pleasure, and of those comedians who "laugh people" with bleeding heart - as Charlie did. We do not notice the hungry women who succumb to the desires of salacious men to save the life of her children - this decadent lifestyle is almost rampant. Humanity and kind-

ness seem to turn meaningless with each passing day.

The violation of rights and dignity is rife across the society. One simply tramples upon the rights of his/her fellow citizens to gain self-interests. In other words, religious beliefs and ethical codes are surpassed flagrantly and human values are at its nadir. For instance, a child is molested or a modest girl is raped either to avenge her brother/father's acts or to satisfy the sinister desires of a salacious man, a woman's character is besmirched just to burn her up and one's blood is shed to henna the hands of rabid individuals.

We have no immediate experience of what other men feel. We can form no idea of the manner in which they are affected, but by conceiving what we ourselves should feel in the like situation. Though our brother is on the rack, as long as we ourselves are at our ease, our senses will never inform us of what he suffers. They never did, and never can, carry us beyond our own person, and it is by the imagination only that we can form any conception of what are his sensations. Neither can that faculty help us to this any other way, than by representing to us what would be our own, if we were in his case. It is the impressions of our own senses only, not those of his, which our imaginations copy. By the imagination, we place ourselves in his situation.

It should be considered that, "To pursue your own interests is prudence; to pursue the public interest as well is piety; but to pursue your own pleasure by depriving others of theirs is injustice. On the other hand, deliberately to decrease your own pleasure to augment that of others is a work of humanity and benevolence, which never fails to reward the doer over and above his sacrifice."

We have to revitalize humanity and the spirit of brotherhood through practicing moral standards. It is rightly said that: the love that is to be born out of hate will never be born. Hatred is sterile; it breeds nothing but the image of its own empty fury, its own nothingness. Love cannot come of emptiness. It is full of reality. Hatred destroys the real being of man in fighting the fiction which it calls 'the enemy', for man is concrete and alive, but 'the enemy' is a subjective abstraction. A society that kills real men in order to deliver itself from the phantasm of a paranoid delusion is already possessed by the demon of destructiveness because it has made itself incapable of love.

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