

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



August 03, 2015

Taliban Leaders At Sixes and Seven Appointing New Chief

Taliban has been the epitome of violence, atrocity, human and women right violation, oppression, mass killing. In the quest to establish Islamic Emirate in the war wrecked Afghanistan they turned upside down and devastated every infrastructure, institutions, historic monuments, holy shrines that did not fit their interpretation – they deemed would curb their version of Islam. The decade long insurgency was led by Mullah Omar whose demise has left the movement in sixes and seven.

Earlier the day along the rumors of suspected death of a renowned decade long leader of Afghan insurgency turned a myth that ended with confirmation from senior Taliban leaders and Afghan government alike. Out of all, death of the Taliban's ghost leader may defect the peace process – given the demise of Taliban's central leadership may result into unending quest of accession to power between leaders with variant degree of popularity among on ground Taliban. The fact being is –his presence unifies and makes all the splintered factions oblige by the commandments of a sole leadership. His death may turn an indigestible chunk, marks the beginning of endless internal strife.

Subsequent to the news of demise of supreme leader of Taliban, Mullah Akhtar Mansour was notified as successor to the late Mullah Omar by Taliban Council. Mullah Mansour, who is in his mid-50s, served as head of the aviation department during the Taliban government and after their ouster from power remained the shadow governor of Kandahar and deputy to Mullah Omar. He also headed the political and military division of Taliban, have had direct contact with the field commanders. Subsequent to this development Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid confirmed in a statement the appointment of Mansour as the new Taliban chief.

Following his appointment Mullah Akhtar Mansour released a 33-minute audio message –he called for unity in the movement. The central issue he tried to elucidate in his message was talks of unity amongst ranks of Taliban. Undoubtedly, the selection of the new leader without consulting some war leaders have resulted in creation of rift between them that likely discredited the appointment of Mullah Mansour.

The message that surfaced earlier contained talks on the same subject where the new Taliban chief was found saying, “the insurgency will continue and advises his followers not to pay attention to rumors spread about the Taliban campaign.” Another important thing he stressed was the unabated continuation of jihad until the goal was met that is said to be the implementation of Shariah and Islamic system. The audio message from Mansour also mentioned peace talks with the Afghan government, though it was not clear whether he supported them.

Nonetheless, the said apprehension turned truth; following a rare heard Taliban spokesman Mullah Abdul Manan Niazi termed Mullah Mansour's appointment against the standard operating procedure of Taliban's where the chief's assortment is referred to a credible council and whose decision is deemed ultimate. Meanwhile, the Taliban's Quetta Shooraa also termed this appointment an ISI's plot bothered not to consult them. According to the reports, Abdul Qayoum Zakir, Taliban's military head; Mullah Habibullah, a member of Taliban Quetta Shura; and Sayed Tayib Agha, head of Taliban's political office in Qatar are among the senior Taliban members that are opposed to the appointment of Mansour. According to credible media reports the neighboring country has played a significant role in orchestrating the overall developments and is deemed to have been undeniably behind the plot. Afghanistan since long has been demanding Pakistan to exercise its influence and make Taliban come on table of negotiation. Pakistan seems to have responded to this call by staging the former round of talks that took place in Murree. In the Murree talks last month between Afghan government and Taliban in an attempt to work towards a peace process for the war-ravaged nation, though the second round of talks that had been expected in Pakistan on Friday was postponed following the announcement of the death of Mullah Omar. The second round of talk is likely to take place imminently but let the dust of confusion relative to appointment of new emir get settled. At the last couple of moments, the news emerged pertaining reappointment of new Taliban chief after finding Mullah Mansour controversial. According to latest reports the council has given Akhtar Mansour some time to “give up” the top position. This decision is taken in the greater interest of the movement to avoid any confrontation amongst it ranks and keep Taliban united at the peak hours when Taliban is to present its demand to Kabul government and give up a decade long insurgency. In the meanwhile Mullah Omar's family has too announced not to support any group if the leaders failed to agree on the chief unanimously. The family members also declined to back Akhtar Mansour who was one of the trusted leaders of Mullah Omar subsequent to emergence of conflict. It is said any appointment made based on broader consensus between Taliban leaders will earn support from all factions of Taliban including family member of slain de facto Taliban former leader. “We will serve the new leader if he is elected with consensus but will not support anyone including Mullah Akhtar Mansour if the leaders failed to demonstrate unity,” Omar's family said.

The world waits to see whether Taliban incumbent leaders can succeed to install unity in their ranks and agree to elect a leader base on mutual consensus without a bit of emergence of disparity and clash of interest. If they succeed installing conformity amongst their ranks there will be greater likelihood of winning the forthcoming peace talks head to congenial solution else the bloody conflict ensue endlessly.

Mullah Omar's Death: What Lies ahead for Taliban?

By Abdul Ahad Bahrami

The Taliban insurgency in Afghanistan entered a new phase of its history as the group has picked Mullah Akhtar Mohammad Mansoor as replacement for its deceased charismatic leader Mullah Mohammad Omar. After many speculations over death of Mullah Omar, Taliban finally confirmed his death and picked Mullah Mansoor as his successor after intensive talks among senior members of the Taliban Supreme Council, or the Quetta Shura. Media reports suggest Taliban senior leaders pledged allegiance to Mansoor as the group's Supreme Leader despite differences between Taliban senior members over who should succeed the deceased Mullah Omar. Mullah Akhtar Mohammad Mansoor, who was civil aviation minister during Taliban regime, is believed to be one of the moderate leaders of the Taliban playing a key role in taking the initial steps for starting peace talks with the government of Afghanistan.

The transition in leadership for a group led by an unelected supreme council, which is comprised of powerful but competing members, would not be an easy task. Announcement of Mullah Omar's death itself suggested the group's vulnerabilities for the Taliban. Taliban say their leader has directly been in charge of group, and that he has died inside Afghanistan. This is while shortly before Taliban's announcement on Mullah Omar's death, Afghan intelligence officials said that Taliban supreme leader Mullah Muhammad Omar had died in 2013 in a Karachi hospital. There are claims from intelligence sources and Taliban splinter groups that Mullah Omar has died in unknown and mysterious circumstances.

In last two years, the Taliban continued to issue messages purported to be from Mullah Omar while it is believed that Mullah Mansoor was the de facto leader in charge of all activity of the group's senior leadership. There are claims that the Taliban leader had been kept away from the group's day-to-day activities while then his deputy Mullah Mansoor carried out his duties. According to reports, Taliban senior members and field commanders had been unable to contact Mullah Omar, leading to increasing distrusts between the mid-level operatives and senior leadership of the Taliban. All these indicate that the Taliban leadership has gone through a difficult time with potential impacts on the future of the group.

With the announcement of Mullah Omar's death and election of Mullah Mansoor as next Taliban leader, the militant group is stepping in a pathless and uncharted future while the challenges for the group are enormous. The very first challenge for the Taliban and the group's new leader would be preserving unity of the group which remained largely intact under its former charismatic leader. Taliban's quick move to choose Mullah Omar's successor is a sign indicating the group's attempt to avoid erosion of the group's core leadership by lapse of time and overcome any diverging differences over the future leadership of the group.

The transition in leadership of the Taliban raises serious questions on destiny of the biggest insurgent group in Afghanistan waging a deadly war against the Afghan government. There is no clear prospect for the Taliban insurgency after Mullah Omar, who was a charismatic leader leading the group into victory in 1990s and keeping the group unified

after it was toppled from power in 2001 US invasion. With no doubt, the Taliban has no chance of remaining intact in absence of its charismatic leader Mullah Muhammad Omar. The question is that what will be impacts of death of Mullah Omar on the future of the Taliban. Will the group collapse in the face of an Afghan government anti-insurgency crackdown? Or will it divide into two or three rival groups choosing different paths on war and peace issues and even fighting each other?

The first issue for the Taliban's survival is Mullah Mansoor's capability in unifying the group and preventing potential erosion of the Taliban senior and middle level leadership to Islamic State or splinter groups from inside. Mullah Akhtar Mohammad Mansoor, who has been the de facto leader of the Taliban since 2013, is a controversial figure and his election has also been opposed by some high profile figures of the Taliban. Taliban are believed to be run by the powerful Quetta Shura as well as a Peshawar Shura, while now the Qatar office of the group also plays a key role in establishing contact with the outside world. It is believed that the decision makings by the Quetta Shura was dominated by Mullah Akhtar Muhammad Mansoor, while other key figures such Omar's son and Mullah Qayum Zakir, a key commander of the Taliban, were supporting Mullah Yaqub, the eldest son of Mullah Omar, for promoting him to leadership of the Taliban.

Mullah Yaqub, who was tapped as successor to his father, is now defeated in the race for assuming the leadership of the Taliban. He could be a potential opposition figure to Mullah Mansoor's leadership. There are also other key members such as Mullah Qayum Zakir, Taliban top military commander, Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, former deputy to Mullah Omar and Sayed Taib Agha, who have opposed Mansoor's selection and some of whom are aligned with Mullah Yaqub. Almost all of the Taliban senior leaders who are unhappy with selection of Mullah Mansoor as next Taliban leader have loyalty of some factions or parts of the Taliban. Mullah Qayum Zakir will continue to have considerable influence over the Taliban fighters and field commanders and Mullah Yaqub will inherit supports of some parts of the Taliban who were loyal to his father.

Mullah Mansoor's best chance for preserving unity of the Taliban is possible unification and unanimous support of members of the Taliban supreme council. However, given the diverging differences among Taliban senior members, the emerging challenges for Taliban and the fact that Mullah Mansoor is not a charismatic leader like his predecessor, it would be quite difficult for him to preserve Taliban ranks united. Therefore, there is chance of emergence and expansion of internal divisions among the Taliban and a split of the group into two or more splinter groups.

However, an unforgettable fact about the Taliban is that the group has been highly resilient against many external challenges. It is also possible for the group to overcome the internal differences and remain united. However, given the open differences over Mansoor's selection as Taliban leader and unpopularity of the new leader, defection of Taliban members to other rival groups is inevitable. In this case, it is highly likely that rival groups opposing the Taliban such as the Islamic State or other groups recruit Taliban members and further defy the Taliban.

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Parenthood and Social Evils

By Dilawar Sherzai

It can be easily observed in our society that whenever a person does something wrong, his parents are blamed for it, his family background is held responsible and the nourishment and teachings of the parents are questioned. All these lead to the misconception that parents are responsible for all the evils that erupt in the society. One of the main causes of such a conception is the tribal thinking. In a tribal setup, family plays an important role and is considered as the center of all the activities. All the attributes that are developed within a personality are thought to have roots in the family. People are recognized as per the name and status of their families. Therefore, their actions are judged in the similar fashion. The evil-doers are thought to have learnt the evils from their families and their parents. This sort of thinking is really narrow-minded and fails to understand the whole truth. It only sees one of the aspects of the fact while getting blind towards most of the others. It's like diagnosing a heart problem by looking at someone's finger, which is weird and unacceptable!

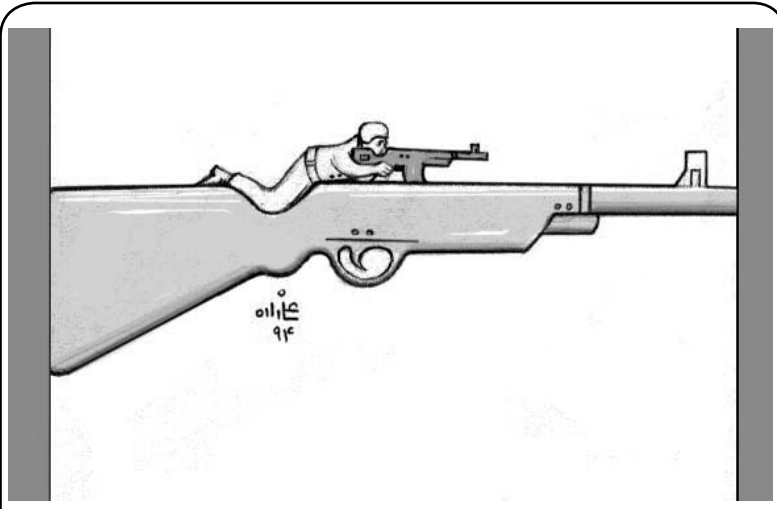
Let's have a scientific and a rational understanding of the issue, though it would be a bit difficult for those who have been greatly influenced by tribal thinking and have the habit of jumping to the conclusion without going through the details. The formation of a personality is highly dependent on various institutions; from family to political system, there is a long list. Yes, the family is the basic one but the institutions like schools, social, cultural and religious institutions and ceremonies, offices, sports and others have their undying influences. All these institutions have different practices and there are different personalities in them that imprint their marks on a person psychology. It is difficult to say that a particular behavior within a person is the outcome of the family or the parents alone as there are different factors involved at the same time. It would be like writing a word and reading one of the alphabets from it, which would never generate sense and meaning. To generate sense and meaning the word should be read as a complete word – a free advice!

Parents' nourishment – their care and their neglect have influence on the children, this cannot be rejected. It is believed and believed rightly that a mother's lap is the first academy for a child. But there is a long journey between how a person is treated by his parents and his choice to commit an evil. Moreover, the imprints of parent's behavior on the minds of the children are not like reflection in a mirror – it does not come back in the same form; or it is not like the input and output in the computer, where the output is as per the demands of the users. If it was so, parenting would not be difficult at all, but it

is not so and the parents living in our society are the witness to it. The love from the parents will not necessarily result in a good conduct of the children – observations show that children with great love and attention from their parents have committed crimes and evils that have made history; similarly, their neglect does not necessarily result in the children becoming evil-doers. There are many children in our society, who are the victims of their parents' negligence, yet they show great values and behavior and even hate evils. Simply, human behavior and psychology is not like mathematics where two plus two is equal to four. To understand it, more efforts are required than just to cram the tables; unfortunately, cramming is alone what many so-called analysts know; therefore, they are not able to understand the complex nature of human existence.

The evils that we see in our society are, in fact, the responsibility of the society as a whole. As Henry Thomas Buckle had said, “The society prepares a crime, the criminal commits it”. This suggests that there are many socio-economic conditions that are involved in the preparation of the crimes which are the biggest evil in our society. The social injustice, the economic disadvantage, the political corruption, the religious intolerance, all these factors and many others play their roles in motivating the criminals and the evil-doers to commit them. Suppose a person steals money and becomes a thief. There are certain possibilities, all of which towards the role of the society in it – the person stole money because he was compelled by his economic conditions. He might have had financial problems and have been incapable of providing basic requirements of life to his family members. He might have a patient at home, waiting to be cured, which is only possible in today's society through money as health services have become a great business. Thus, there are so many social factors that have nothing to do with the parents alone and which even compel the parents to nourish and guide their children in a certain way. In fact, if we see from a wider perspective we will soon realize that parents themselves are among the effected, how can they be the cause? The vicious circles of the unjust economic and political systems have bound the people in such a way that they have no way out and no clear idea what to do except blaming each other. That's why we find parents blaming the children and children blaming the parents, and many others blaming both of them, when in fact both are innocent. However, as mentioned earlier, to understand this concept a wider approach is required while many people are just peeping through the lock hole to see the whole room, which does not assist them in any way to see the whole truth. Now, if the door is opened for them, they would be able to see the whole truth and realize how big this world is! Much bigger than their tribal perspective!

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