

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



December 29, 2015

Peace – A Crucial Requirement

One of the most crucial requirements for a society to develop is peace and tranquility. Without sustainable peace, thinking of prosperity is nothing more than a figment of one's imagination. With peace, a society would be on the track of a healthy evolution and it would be able to concentrate on many other issues that are hurdle in the way to bliss and contentment.

In the journey from the first human societies to today's modern world, wherein human beings call themselves civilized and the best of all the creatures, there have always been fluctuations between peace and war. Unfortunately, no peace has been for ever and fortunately, no war has lasted long. Wars have always devastated human civilizations, killed millions of human beings, brought miseries and pains and yet they have not been rejected as unnecessary and this fact is really very painful.

It is difficult to believe that knowing the horrors of wars, human beings have always considered them necessary and almost all the nations in the world are really ready for wars. There are many important requirements that are neglected in the society and most of the energy and efforts are utilized to make a nation ready for launching war and strong militarily. It is weird to note that there are many countries on the face of earth that would not utilize the resources of the nation for improving the standard of the living of the people but would spend them magnanimously on acquiring modern weaponry. In fact, human beings are preparing for their own destruction and extinction consciously.

Unfortunately, some of the human beings are of the view that peace can only be achieved through wars and therefore, wars are necessary in human societies. This is the biggest misconception human beings have ever had. War does not and cannot bring peace; it in its nature is destructive. Even if war brings peace that is only after the entire human civilization is erased.

At the same time, some nations are today proud of their military achievements and their history of wars. And today, wars have become an educational subject that is taught within colleges, universities and military institutions. People get degrees and certificates in the science and art of killing one another. This is the most organized way of arranging for one's own destruction. Human beings really need to reconsider so many aspects of their lives, start knowing their worth and start living their lives. They are really on a path of no return. They need to change their attitude before they are not able to do so.

Most of the wars have been possible because the nations have been very much interested in dominating each other and gaining power as power has enabled them to play major role in international politics and power game. In the meanwhile, they have forgotten the basic philosophy of the development of politics and states. Politics is really a game of power but the same power can be used to bring peace and tranquility within the world. Moreover, if all the political achievements of human beings are not able to bring them peace, what is the purpose of all those achievements? If they are not able to use their tendency to love each other what is the use of their sensitive feelings?

One of the basic reasons of wars has been the tendency to subjugate others and try to revenge them for any perceived misdeed. And the series of retaliations have mostly formed an unbreakable chain of recurring circle and the wars have devoured several generations. This fact is true both in collective and in individual lives. Nations and individuals who have kept on retaliating have only been able to achieve great loss, nothing else. That is how human beings in today's society behave. They behave as if they are blind towards all the ugly manifestations of bloody wars and to all the miseries; therefore, they are making themselves ready for more and more wars, more seriously than ever before.

To maintain peace and tranquility in the world, it is necessary that there should be efforts both on collective and individual levels. The international organizations can play a very dominant role in bringing peace in the world. They can bring the world leaders together and try to establish strong relations among the nations of the world based on the theory of cooperation and collective existence. They can also strive to introduce ban on the proliferation of the destructive weaponry and careless utilization of atomic energy.

On the individual level, human beings can use their characteristics of compassion and love to reduce the possibilities of war and establish peace. There is no doubt in the fact that human beings are loving beings. They have a heart, which knows to beat and to feel affection towards other human beings. They can be all ears to the beating of their hearts and can observe how peacefully and in a perfect order they follow one another, neither to dominate nor to beat but to support one another and in the process support the entire heart which then ensures life.

ISIL Gains Firm Foothold in Afghanistan

By Hujjatullah Zia

Reports about the presence of the self-styled Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) in Afghanistan trigger a sense of fear and anxiety in the air. The ISIL insurgent group – which was recently involved in stoking sectarian tension in the country – surpasses the Taliban outfits in extremism and radicalization. Their ideology is far more aggressive than that of the Taliban. The ISIL's relentless insurgents spill the civilians' blood in more ruthless way to project an image of horror – they maneuver violence and bloodshed the same as the bloodthirsty kings did in the past and declared themselves the divine wrath who have come so that the public atone their sins under their despotism. Likewise, the ISIL's head Abu-Bakr al-Baghdadi claims legitimacy under religious aegis. He may have anything but religion – his practices demonstrate the same fact. The Taliban's leader Mullah Muhammad Omar also called himself as "the commander of the faithful" – a fanciful title that ISIL's leader proclaims. The title "gave him badly needed legitimacy and a new mystique," wrote Ahmed Rashid in his book Taliban. During the war against the Soviets, he fought alongside other young men of lesser tribes from the south of Afghanistan – as he received an injury in his right eye. Unlike al-Baghdadi, Omar's war against the former Soviet changed him into a charismatic leader among his people.

Similarly, the founder of Al-Qaeda, Osama Bin Laden, lured the naïve individuals by his charisma as he became involved in the jihad in Afghanistan when he opened a half way house in Saudi Arabia for recruits travelling to Afghanistan to fight in the jihad. He is said to have provided very basic military training to high school and college students, as well as fundraised for the jihad. Lawrence Wright explains, "The people who rallied to the Afghan jihad felt that Islam itself was threatened by the advance of communism. Afghanistan meant little to most of them, but the faith of the Afghan people meant a great deal". In short, he also got magnetism under the mask of spirituality.

Now, al-Baghdadi has resorted to the sacred title of "Amir-ul-Mumineen" (the commander of the faithful) to rule under a religious mask as long as his ploy works. It is believed that he bears no charisma, however, garners the support of the individuals who failed to unfold the lump in their throats, find a mental solace in their lives, deprived of a female bosom buddy or the girls who found no suitors after an endless wait. In other words, the ISIL's fighters are mostly those who seek to satiate their carnal desires rather than spiritual thirst. They violate women's dignity and kill ethnic minorities in cold blood on the grounds of their cast, creed, beliefs, etc. Men's natural and inalienable rights and

freedom are trampled upon without an iota of humanity. Their practices are utterly devoid of ethical code and religious values. Therefore, the armed groups, mainly ISIL, who claim to act upon a certain ideology or religious code, practice whatever suit their tastes rather than being ideologue, excluding very few.

The ISIL spews forth venom to the entire world and Afghanistan is no exception. Off late, it was reported that ISIL has launched a radio station in Afghanistan to recruit fighters and stir up anti-government sentiment. The one-hour-long Voice of Caliphate broadcast in Pashto language was started in eastern Nangarhar province by supporters who pledged allegiance to ISIL. "The ISIL militants in Afghanistan are growing stronger and this radio channel is helping them recruit fighters which will make them even stronger.

Their aim is to brainwash people through this radio channel. However, we are trying to track it and shut it down," Achin district governor Haji Ghalib is quoted as saying.

There are also reports that members of ISIL group has entered Nangarhar province by helicopter. The political figures previously predicted the ISIL's firm foothold in the country and its struggle to establish a link to the Iraq and Syria's leadership. The recent news about the ISIL's activities is a matter of great concern for the public.

In another item, the emergence of ISIL group on one hand and the heavy offensives of the Taliban militants on the other hand have filled the air with fear and disappointment.

However, the deputy chief of Army staff Murad Ali Murad said, "There is no report on transferring of Daesh militants to Nangarhar. But we do not reject that Taliban and Haqqani Network supports to Daesh."

Fighting to reconstitute the historical Khorasan into the so-called "caliphate" of Abu-Bakr al-Baghdadi, the ISIL also poses threat to the Taliban through battling and creating gap between the Taliban's warring elements. However, a number of the Taliban militants have pledged allegiance to the ISIL and turned their arms against their former loyalists and religious brethren – this is a serious blow to the Taliban.

Regarding the Taliban militants – who have wrecked great havoc on country's political and economic issues – Afghan officials seek to resume peace talk and resolve the issue through diplomatic way, the fruition of this strategy is yet under doubt. However, the role of ISIL is taken less serious and no effective mechanism has been adopted to prevent from its active presence. It would be more reasonable to deal with the armed groups, mainly ISIL, militarily. Afghan soldiers must be reinforced to curb the security crisis.

Hujjatullah Zia is the permanent writer of the Daily Outlook Afghanistan. He can be reached at zia_hujjat@yahoo.com

The Renewed Efforts for Peace

By Abdul Ahad Bahrami

During a visit of Pakistan's army chief General Raheel Sharif to Kabul, Afghan officials and the top Pakistani General reached an agreement for starting fresh efforts for resumption of peace talks in Afghanistan. According to media reports, the two countries will plan to meet US and Chinese officials next month to consider resumption of peace negotiations with the Taliban. The Pakistani General arrived in Kabul on Sunday December 27, 2015, and had meetings with Afghan President Ashraf Ghani and Chief Executive Officer Abdullah Abdullah. A presidential statement released after the meetings between Mr. Sharif and the Afghan leaders said that the two sides agreed to hold the first meeting of officials of Afghanistan, Pakistan, the US and China in next January to develop a comprehensive roadmap for achieving Peace in Afghanistan. According to the presidential office, responsibilities of each party in the efforts for achieving peace in the country will be specified in the roadmap.

The agreement between the two countries comes after a recent visit of President Ashraf Ghani to Islamabad where the two sides agreed on principle to restart the efforts for resumption of peace talks with the insurgent groups. After the meeting, President Ashraf Ghani expressed optimism of Pakistan's renewed commitment to assisting the Afghan government resume negotiations with the Taliban. More importantly, Ghani said the Pakistani leaders had promised him of taking action against those militant groups who do not come to table of peace negotiations and shun violence. President Ghani's visit to Islamabad was agreed between Ghani and Pakistani PM in the sidelines of the climate summit in Paris. Ashraf Ghani's Islamabad visit was viewed as a considerable breakthrough in the tense relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan after the two countries failed to kick-start a formal and sustainable round of peace negotiations with the Taliban. The efforts to bring Taliban leaders to table of negotiations failed after the first formal meeting between the government of Afghanistan and Taliban representatives was held in Muree, a resort city near Islamabad.

The failure to develop the Muree meeting into a sustainable talks between the Taliban and the Afghan government – which was resulted from the abrupt announcement of the death of Taliban former leader Mullah Omar – was further compounded by the hard-headed insurgency and the Taliban offensives across Afghanistan. With the tense relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan and the surge of violence in the country, President Ashraf Ghani's initiative for improvement of relations with Pakistan aimed at resumption of peace talks with the Taliban was going to be a failed endeavor. However, there have been concrete progresses in recent weeks as both the Pakistani and

Afghan government strive to prepare the ground for resumption of negotiations between the Afghan government and the insurgent groups.

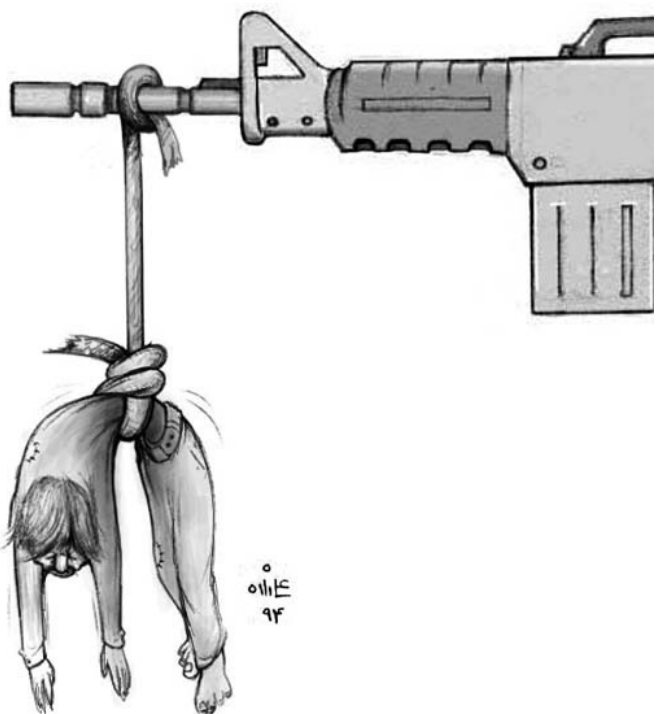
The recent flurry of diplomatic efforts in recent days has given a fresh breath to the hopes for resumption of peace talks among the Afghan government and the Taliban.

On the other hand, Indian Prime Minister's visit to Afghanistan was also viewed as success for the government of Afghanistan who managed to receive crucial military assistance from the New Delhi to boost the campaign against the insurgency. More importantly, the landmark visit of Mr. Modi to Afghanistan was followed by his visit to Islamabad where the two leaders must have debated, among other things, the Afghan conflict as well.

The visit of the top Pakistani general and his agreements with the Afghan officials suggest a concrete progress in the difficult negotiations between Kabul and Islamabad over many sticky issues related to the peace talks as well as the insurgency going on in the country. According to the Afghan government, the two sides have also agreed that the negotiations should resume only with those groups who are ready to negotiate, and the two countries would work on a framework on how to deal with groups not denouncing violence. Afghan forces are currently battling to push out Taliban insurgents who seized large swathes of the key opium-rich district of Sangin in southern Helmand province. If the two countries manage to reach to a common ground over how to deal with the groups continuing violence across the country, it would be a game changer in the efforts for reaching peace in Afghanistan.

The surge of violence, however, the intensifying insurgency highlights a push by the militants to seize more territory in a bid to wrangle greater concessions during talks. The two countries managed to largely overcome the distrusts of the recent months. Pakistani Prime Minister paid the most glorious welcome to Afghan president Ashraf Ghani when he visited Pakistan. The two countries reached agreements with representatives of world powers and regional players over starting the peace process in Afghanistan. Kabul and Islamabad should also be able to go ahead with the peace efforts in a sustainable manner. For this to happen, Pakistan should remain committed to its promise of taking action against the militants if they refuse to join the peace talks. In the past, the increase of the militant attacks has been a major factor behind the failure of the efforts to resume the peace talks. Both Kabul and Islamabad need to realize that the Taliban needs to be pressurized militarily to be convinced for a peace deal with the Afghan government. It is highly likely that the peace process may once again fail if the Taliban attempts to gain political advantages by waging another wave of war and violence across Afghanistan.

Abdul Ahad Bahrami is the permanent writer of the Daily Outlook Afghanistan. He can be reached at ahad.bahrami@gmail.com



Daily Outlook
AFGHANISTAN
The Leading Independent Newspaper

Chairman / Editor-in-Chief: Dr. Hussain Yasa
Vice-Chairman: Kazim Ali Gulzari
Email: outlookafghanistan@gmail.com
Phone: 0093 (799) 005019/777-005019
www.outlookafghanistan.net

افغانستان
The Daily Afghanistan

The views and opinions expressed in the articles are those of the authors and do not reflect the views or opinions of the Daily Outlook Afghanistan.