

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

# Daily Outlook

## AFGHANISTAN

The Leading Independent Newspaper

February 08, 2016

## Ways to Fight Boring Routine

Human beings for many centuries have strived for organized life and different systems in their societies and they have been able to have some gains in this regard as well. They, now live in states, which have their political, economic and social systems that are based on certain rules and law. However, the different systems, structures and patterns that human beings have developed have caught them in a repetitive circle of activities that have made their lives very much boring. Thus, they have been caught in the quagmire of routine.

Different structures and patterns have developed human lives in such a way that they do not have any other choice but to follow routines in order to achieve their objectives. Though the routines can be of some assistance in mastering a profession or earning a livelihood, it proves to be very much boring and colorless and most of the times make the people psychologically weaker and tired.

There is a famous proverb that says that variety is the spice of life. Changes in life make life better and colorful. However, routine keeps on repeating similar activities every day, which ultimately results in boredom. Human psychology is attracted more towards the activities that are new and different. Repetition would make the adventure and suspense vanish and make the activity dull and lifeless. Routines can sometimes become the reason of intense frustration and serious psychological problems; therefore, it is necessary to handle it carefully.

The frustration that comes out of routine displays itself through various means; the example can be easily observed in daily life. People working in offices often have skirmishes with each other on petty matters. Teachers, because of very small mistakes, punish the students and even beat them. Traffic police, who has been working for years on the same square, have zero tolerance for any disobedience. There are many such instances which clearly depict that frustration from routine results in skirmishes and even serious fights.

It is necessary to manage routine in an appropriate manner. Ways should be identified and pursued that may result in lightening the load of the daily tasks. If it is not possible to change the routine, there are certain other techniques that can assist in making routine acceptable to a certain extent. Daily exercise can be very much helpful in this regard. Exercise before the work, mostly early in the morning, can help in keeping good health and at the same time good mind. Apart from that weekly or monthly outings and picnics or even celebrations of different kinds can support people in refreshing their minds. These will also help in maintaining a balance between work and fun, which is very much necessary for all human beings. Exposure visits or trips to other cities and countries annually and biannually can also be very much supportive in this regard.

The techniques to fight routines are not only helpful for the individuals but they can be very much supportive for the management of different organizations as well. Today's modern techniques of management would require taking care of the human factors in work environment as well. They want to make sure that their workers are provided some sorts of activities that can help them in escaping the ghost of routine and monotony as it would ultimately result in less production and output. Therefore, they have different sorts of field trips and training facilities to keep on increasing their capacities and changing their perceptions and understandings. Management of the organizations can also bring about changes in the daily work environment, like changing the seating arrangement and decorations, in different ways so as to avoid boredom.

Although the routines can be very tiresome, they can be very much helpful in achieving an intended objective. Sometimes the goals are really very difficult to achieve; therefore, persistent efforts would be required to achieve them. A good example can be considered in this regard; water is considered to be very soft as compared to rock and it is very difficult to think that water would ever break the stone or make a hole in it. Nonetheless, it can be observed that with consistency, water can break the stone or make a hole in it. Same is the case with human cause or purpose; if there is a great cause and that is very much fruitful for the society as a whole, it is worth a routine. We all have possess routines, but they should pursue some purpose and provide a result that we can see and take some comfort from, or else they are of no use.

In short, we are human beings and not machines. Today's mechanical life has restricted us to tough routines but we need to know that we need entertainment and refreshment as well, as we possess a sensitive heart and a busy mind.

# Is Peace Possible with a More Powerful Taliban?

By Abdul Ahad Bahrami

Since Taliban split after the announcement of death of Taliban founder Mullah Muhammad Omar last year, the main faction led by Mullah Mansoor has been struggling to boost influence and powers of the new leadership of the group. Since then, the faction led by Mullah Mansoor has been waging a bitter war against rival groups along with reaching out to senior militants and other influential members of the group to garner support for the new leader. Since the formation of the rival group led Mullah Rasool, the movement is no longer considered as unified insurgency. It was expected that the split would lead to inevitable gradual attritions from the Taliban that eventually would debilitate the insurgent group into some sort of disintegration.

The split of the Taliban marked a new chapter in Taliban's history. The once unified Taliban movement has since undergone profound changes since it was appeared that the former leader and founder of the group had actually died some years ago. Surprisingly, the Taliban have not only been weakened but grown stronger and fiercer in their insurgency against the government. It is rather ironic that the movement that is considered as disunited after the recent split within the group has grown more powerful in waging the insurgency against the Afghan government. Despite the turmoil in Taliban leadership, the group has managed to expand the insurgency into more areas across the country. Given the current state of the Taliban leadership and war capabilities, a Western diplomat in Kabul has truly stated that "the Taliban leadership is fragile, but the movement is not".

However, the 'fragile' leadership has also performing well in surviving the split within the group which was expected to result to disintegration of the movement. Mullah Mansoor faction has been battling on many fronts with rival groups such as another Taliban faction led by Mullah Rasool and the Islamic State group. Since the start of the infighting, the main Taliban group - as it leads vast majority of the Taliban - have had uncompleted victories in the turf war with rival groups in some eastern and southern provinces. The main group has crushed militants loyal to Mullah Rasool faction in many provinces including Zabul, Ghazni, Nimroz and some other southern provinces. While other groups such as Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan have also been allied with Mullah Rasool faction, the faction under Mansoor has had the upper hand in the infighting. In the very initial days of announcement of Mansoor as successor to the Taliban founder, most of the Taliban leaders pledged allegiance to the new leader. Still, some high-profile figures of the Taliban leadership refused to accept his leadership, accusing him of betraying the movement by hiding the death of Mullah Omar. There have been immense efforts going within the Taliban and by some pro-Taliban independent clerics and tribal leaders to reconcile senior members of the Taliban with the main faction. The efforts have been paying off in many cases with senior militants rejoining the main group. According to media reports, the Taliban have been recently trying

to bring about disgruntled members around Mansoor and establish a broader unity among the movement. And the efforts have been successful to large extent with increasing number of senior militants including Abdul Qayoum Zakir, a top military commander of the group, Mullah Hassan Rahmani, a member of Quetta Shura and many others joining Mullah Mansoor faction. This could be meant growing influence of the main Taliban faction and a reunification of the movement.

So the question hovering in mind is that what this would mean for the peace process. What will be the impacts of gradual reunification of the Taliban movement on the peace efforts? The Afghan government has always been cautious about the impacts of the Taliban split and the current infighting among the militants over the peace process. Many expect that a prolonged bitter infighting among the Taliban would provide the opportunity for the government to crush the militant groups militarily. This is while others were anxious about the Taliban split, worrying that it could further complicate the efforts to reach a peace settlement with various Taliban groups and end the long-lasting conflict in the country.

The four-nation initiative - comprised of Afghanistan, Pakistan, US and China - has now established a roadmap for negotiating peace with the Taliban. The four-nation coordination group now expects the Taliban to agree a date for first peace meeting. It is too early to predict the course and the successes and failures of the upcoming peace negotiations with the Taliban. The growing power of the main Taliban faction and the ongoing reunification efforts going on within the movement would present profound challenges for the peace process when it is at its early stages. Disregard of being weaker or stronger, the Taliban would anyway discuss demands such as withdrawal of foreign forces, establishment of Sharia system in the country and nullification of the Afghan constitution along with other political concessions such as power-sharing.

A stronger Taliban group negotiating peace with the Afghan government would demand more concessions in return for ceasefire and peace. This would make the peace efforts very difficult. It would fail the whole process. In this scenario, it would be easier for the government to discuss peace with weaker but various militant groups. This is because it would be possible to reconcile some factions by granting political concessions and confronting irreconcilable factions militarily. However, if there is a real possibility of making peace with all the Taliban groups particularly the main faction the government obviously would prefer to make peace with all or as many more militant groups as possible. Gen. John Campbell, NATO commander in Afghanistan, just warned the Taliban that they would not be allowed to come back to power in Afghanistan. The NATO commander stressed that the Taliban should accept the Afghan constitution and respect the achievements of the past fifteen years. The question will be the extremist groups agree a peace deal with these conditions. well, it is hard to answer now.

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## Political Turmoil Continues

By Hujjatullah Zia

At least 20 people were reportedly killed and 25 wounded in Tuesday's suicide bombing outside a police station in Kabul, for which the Taliban claimed responsibility. Despite the re-verboration of resuming peace talk, the blood of Afghan police and civilians are spilled frequently and their rights to life and liberty are violated on a large scale by the Taliban militants. To the officials' unmitigated chagrin, the terror and insurgency continue unabated, although the Taliban have given Afghan government the green light to sit around the negotiating table.

Afghanistan's Former President Hamid Karzai has inveighed against the US officials for lack of tendency to support this war-torn country in campaign on terrorism and believed that signing Bilateral Security Agreement (BSA) was futile since no peace and security exist. "At a time when there is no peace, inking the security pact with the US doesn't benefit Afghanistan. We had demanded the US to start the process of peace in Afghanistan more serious and tangible and if the US acted upon its undertakings and the Afghanistan peace process, we would consider the security pact as fruitful," he is quoted as saying. According to him, the security situations deteriorate with each passing day and there is no hope in public air for peace.

During the last months of his presidency, Hamid Karzai spoke in strong tone against the Obama's administration as US officials urged him to sign the security pact. He criticized the way the US aid was spent to Afghanistan and said the money paid to security firms created militias which caused lawlessness, corruption and highway robbery. He said, "They then began systematically waging psychological warfare on our people, encouraging our money to go out of our country. What they did was create pockets of wealth and a vast countryside of deprivation and anger." Exchanging harsh tone between US officials and Karzai's government created a deep mistrust between Kabul and Washington. For instance, president Karzai accused America of torturing innocent Afghans in Bagram Detention Center, blamed US forces for civilians' deaths, night raids and air strike and likened the United States to a "colonial power."

In an interview with Washington Post, the salient points of Karzai's talks were about the casualties inflicted on the innocents. On an effort to raise concerns with President Obama during a 2010 visit, he said, "I went to Washington and I carried a picture with me. It was a picture of a night raid where an extremely poor family - it's night and it's dark in that picture, a frightened, weak, afraid woman sitting there with two or three children around them - and the hand of the man lying there. ... And this frightened family, looking into nothing, just gazing, with fright and fear. And I took that picture to the president of the United States, and I said, 'President, this is what I'm trying to end,

the intimidation of Afghan families at night, in the name of fighting the Taliban."

However, on September 30, 2014, National security adviser Hanif Atmar and US Ambassador James Cunningham signed the long-delayed security agreement, in a televised ceremony at the presidential palace, to allow American troops to stay in the country after the end of the year, filling a campaign promise by President Ashraf Ghani. "As an independent country, based on our national interests, we signed this agreement for stability, goodwill, and prosperity of our people, stability of the region and the world," Ghani said in a speech after the signing.

Subsequently, US officials applauded the BSA as a new chapter in US-Afghanistan relations. Secretary of State John F. Kerry, who played a key role in brokering the new Unity Government, said that the Afghan people "are determined to choose unity over division."

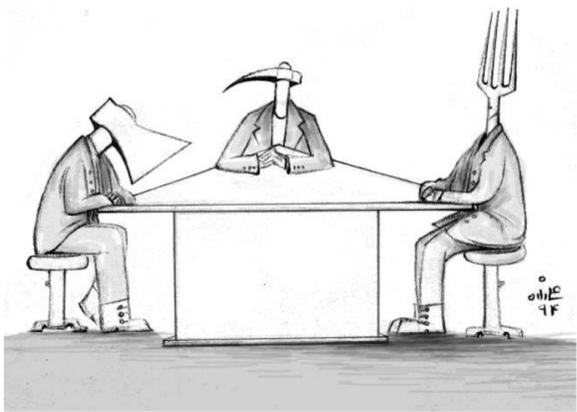
"This is a beginning not an ending, and with all beginnings the toughest decisions are still ahead," he said. "As Afghanistan enters this new chapter in its history, the United States looks forward to deepening its enduring partnership with a sovereign, unified and democratic Afghanistan." In his address, Ghani called upon the Taliban and another armed faction, Hezb-i-Islami, to enter "a political negotiation" with the new government, saying that "we are tired of fighting and our message is peace, but this does not mean we are weak."

However, Taliban reacted angrily against signing BSA. Zabiullah Mujahid, denounced the security pact, declaring it an attempt by the United States to assert its authority over Afghanistan and its people. "Under the cover of the Security Agreement America wants to occupy our land and nation, and make our people suffer," Mujahid said in an e-mailed statement.

But the Afghan people, who wished and prayed for having the security pact signed, breathed a sigh of relief and believed that violence and bloodshed had ended with this agreement and the US soldiers would adopt more serious strategy towards the militants. To be honest, the situation did not change for better, rather the political turmoil emerged stronger and the self-styled Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) also gained foothold in the country.

Now, the US along with China and Pakistani officials seek to bring the Taliban to the negotiating table. But it should be noted that in final days of his presidency, Karzai said that peace negotiation was a correct strategy to end terrorism. However, Karzai's misadministration such as releasing the Taliban militants, who were considered dangerous by the US officials, from Bagram prison also got the public blame. Now the public hope that resuming peace talk will be a panacea for their bleeding wounds.

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