

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



**Daily Outlook**  
AFGHANISTAN  
The Leading Independent Newspaper

February 11, 2019

## Afghans Back an "Afghan-led" and "Afghan-owned" Peace Process

The second round of talks held in Moscow, this time between Afghan political parties and the Taliban representatives, ended without a breakthrough although it was declared a "big achievement" that would result in "peace, stability and an Afghanistan free of foreigners". But a backlash from Afghan government and grassroots ensued the unofficial talks.

The heads of heavyweight political parties pretended to represent Afghan people, however, they had neither their permission nor their support. The public backlash against these negotiations indicated that Afghans stand with the government and will disapprove of any talks held without the presence of officials from Kabul government. That is, the absence of Kabul officials at the table indicates that any agreements signed between political parties and the Taliban will not carry any official weight as President Ghani made it clear that the Taliban's Moscow interlocutors lacked executive authority.

In the wake of black record of political parties, which were widely involved in civil unrest, Afghans are likely to have lost their trust in them and fear that they will trade their rights and freedoms for their self-interests.

The gathering of the Taliban and their unofficial Afghan interlocutors, who exchanged hugs and smiles, around a large circular table in a jovial and festive atmosphere in a Moscow hotel and the prayer of Afghan politicians behind the Taliban's Imam drew criticism and satire from Afghan people, who mocked them on social media.

The second round of Moscow talks made as little headway as that of the first round, in which an unofficial team from Kabul participated. For example, in the first Moscow talks, the Taliban's top political envoy Mohammad Abbas Stanekzai said, "Considering our main demand is the withdrawal of foreign troops, we will discuss peaceful settlement with the Americans. We do not recognize the incumbent government as legitimate." The second round of Moscow talks ended with the same rhetoric without a palpable result. The talks were highly symbolic and the Taliban members simply patronized their interlocutors.

In the statement issued by the two sides, the Taliban said they would entitle women similar to that of Islam, which is a highly vague term. It is unclear whether the Taliban mean moderate Islam or what they imposed on the public, especially on women, during their regime (1996 - 2001). If the Taliban mean their own Islamic Sharia - which is a combination of their warped mind and tribal code of conduct rather than moderate Islam - it will generate a myriad of problem and put democratic principles and human rights and women rights at stake.

Amending Afghan Constitution, which is one of the Taliban's main demands, is very frightening for Afghan people. The public simply imagine the strict sharia imposed by the Taliban during their regime. Hence, they believe that the Taliban intend to tailor Constitution in the frame of their own mindset and ideology and will curtail the rights and freedoms of the public, which have been obtained as a result of many years of suffering. That is to say, Afghans paid heavy price to achieve democratic values, human rights, freedom of expression, etc. If the Constitution is tailored based on harsh ideology, all democratic achievements will be undone.

Now the main reason Afghans support the government in this regard is to have their rights and freedoms safeguarded. The rights and dignity of each individual, which are supported by national and international laws, are claimed to be "the red line" for Afghan people that must not be traded for anything. Since government promises to protect the rights and freedoms, mentioned in the Constitution, Afghans also support an "Afghan-led" and "Afghan-owned" peace process.

Holding talks behind the closed door is highly worrying for Afghans. In other words, Afghans are angry for being kept in dark. The talks should take place under the observation of Afghan government and international community similar to that of Bonn Conference, which led to the establishment of interim government, so that Afghans must not be exposed to a signed agreement without having a role. Giving Afghans a passive role and disregarding the government is neither reasonable nor acceptable.

Now regional and global stakeholders, including the US, have to push the Taliban to negotiating table with Kabul government. Political pundits believe that if Afghan government, locals and tribal elders engage in peace talks, sustainable peace and stability will surface in Afghanistan. To catalyze the peace process and make it more fruitful, Afghans' true representatives should engage in the talks and regional stakeholders and world powers have to back an "Afghan-led" and "Afghan-owned" peace process.

## Learning Through Political Socialization

By: Dilawar Sherzai

The role of politics in a society is paramount. Since most of the matters in the society are determined by the political system and process; therefore, it is imperative that people should have a proper understanding of politics. One of the ways the people can be educated in this regard is the process of political socialization. Being a significant process, it orientates the people towards a particular type of political behavior, philosophy and ideology. At the same time, it causes stability or instability, continuity or change and strength or weakness in a political system, and in the government of the country. It determines the type of participation in politics and government by the people. It is, without any doubt, the political aspect of the general process of socialization which is always taking place in every society and culture.

Political learning begins early in family life, when the child is still young, when different treatment of the little boys and girls produces different political attitudes and behavior in them. Generally speaking, boys are expected to be active in politics, while girls are deliberately denied political orientation and participation by their parents and other people around them. Class differences also produce differences in political attitudes and behavior. Rich stratum of the society expects that its members should learn political skills and the attitude of domination or superiority. On the other hand, the poor people, in most of the cases are humble and docile and they socialize their children in the same way. Therefore, their attitudes and behavior are mostly submissive.

There are different agents of political socialization. Some of them are relatively active and instill the political attitude among the individuals in a compelling manner, while some others are passive in this regard and do not directly promulgate such socialization. Family is among the active agents of political socialization. Most of the basic political socialization takes place within the family. In tribal societies, like Afghanistan, the political socialization within the family is also influenced by certain groups that are outside the family; such as tribes, castes, clans and ethnicities. Another powerful agent is educational institution. Not only the political attitudes and beliefs of the teachers influence their pupils but civic education is purposely imparted to them. This is one reason why certain subjects relate to the civic education. Moreover, patriotism is also taught in schools by different methods. However, certain formal and modern ways through which basic political understanding can be taught to the children in school are not taught to the children. Mostly, in our country,

such education is not part of school course.

Among the other agents of political socialization, TVs, radios, newspapers and journals, political parties, pressure groups and interest groups are the most dominant ones. Sometimes, the influences of these agents are deliberate and consciously inculcated but most often they are not so. In addition, their influence produces some destabilizing effect on the growing minds of young people as they sometimes learn the political cynicism of the adults around them. Resultantly, they start downgrading political sentiments of loyalty and patriotism. This sort of dichotomy in political socialization, in certain cases, causes the phenomenon of revolt of the youth, more dominantly among the college and university students. Meanwhile, in certain strictly ideological countries, deliberate political socialization, even indoctrination is considered as one of the primary duties of the state.

Once an individual is properly socialized in politics, he can then participate actively in political matters. Such participation is really important for a society, particularly when the society is based on a democratic political system. Democracy demands from the people that they should be vigilant and participatory so that they have their share of participation in the matters of the state. Properly politicized person, having enough political awareness, can have continuous look over the decisions of the government, the policies of the policy makers and the decisions of different political institutions. They are also in a position to take actions, which may be necessary if the decisions and the policies are not for the advantage of the people.

Unfortunately, politics is considered to be very much negative in our society and different institutions, other than the political ones, make sure that they are not politicized in any manner. They keep their members away from politics and advise them to keep a distance from it. In such circumstances, the individuals start losing confidence from politics and consider it to be an evil instead of a blessing. This gives rise to individuals who are not fully aware of their political circumstances and can easily be fooled by the politicians and utilized in different ways by them. Human beings are political beings. If they are not interested in politics, politics is interested in them; therefore, we must make efforts to have political awareness and understanding and also strive so that the younger generations are also socialized properly in this regard. The different institutions in the society should also take steps to facilitate the political socialization so that we have a politically aware and active young generation.

Dilawar Sherzai is the permanent writer of the Daily Outlook Afghanistan. He can be reached at email.urya@gmail.com

## Breaking Germany's Coal Addiction

By: Johan Rockström and Owen Gaffney

Germany is about to break its coal addiction. Last year, the government created a 28-member "coal commission" - comprising scientists, politicians, environmental campaigners, trade unions, and utilities representatives - with the unenviable mandate of deciding when the country would get clean. Balancing pragmatic considerations with recognition of the reality of climate change, the commission has now set 2038 as the deadline for reaching zero coal, with the withdrawal beginning immediately.

The Wall Street Journal calls it the "world's dumbest energy policy." In fact, Germany's shift is vital and long overdue. The real question is whether it will be enough to support meaningful progress in the global effort to mitigate climate change.

It is scientifically well established that if the world is to keep the average increase in global temperature "well below" 2°C relative to pre-industrial levels - the "safe" limit enshrined in the 2015 Paris climate agreement - no more than another 500-800 billion tons of carbon dioxide can be emitted. On current trends, this would take just 12-20 years.

Instead, the world needs to follow a trajectory called the "carbon law," which requires reducing CO2 emissions by half each decade until, 30-40 years from now, we have achieved a carbon-free global economy. Growing evidence shows that adhering to the carbon law is technologically feasible and economically attractive. In this process, coal - the most polluting energy source - must be the first to go, exiting the global energy mix entirely by 2030-2035.

This will be particularly challenging for Germany, which, despite its reputation as a climate leader, has long had a dirty secret: the most polluting type of coal - lignite - remains the country's single biggest source of electricity. Although renewables have penetrated 40% of the electricity market, coal still accounts for 38%.

A decision to phase out nuclear power, spurred by the 2011 Fukushima disaster, left Germany with a significant energy gap, filled partly by coal. Germany has built ten new coal-fired power plants since 2011, bringing its total to about 120. As a result, it is set to miss its 2020 emissions goal (a 40% reduction, compared to 1990), and, barring decisive action, it could miss its 2030 target (a 55% reduction) as well.

The coal commission's plan - which still needs to be turned into legislation by Chancellor Angela Merkel and the Bundestag - would reduce Germany's coal emissions from 42 gigawatts today to 30 GW by 2022, and to 17 GW by 2030. This is a cut of more than 50% over one decade, making it even more ambitious than the carbon law trajectory - but only if coal is not replaced by natural gas. Indeed, if the coal phase-out is going to work, it will need to happen alongside a rising carbon price.

In any case, 2038 is still a long way off. A sluggish exit from coal by Germany - the world's fourth-largest economy - could send a sig-

nal to other coal-dependent European Union countries that there is no rush. Countries like Hungary, Poland, and the Baltic states may even pursue a coal renaissance. This would further weaken the EU's climate leadership and its ability to reform its carbon-trading system. Confident that coal will continue to be burned in the long term, investors would keep the money flowing.

Moreover, because Germany's influence extends far beyond Europe, a weak stance on coal could trigger a domino effect - what we call the "road to hell" scenario. US President Donald Trump might cite Germany's slow action as proof of its double standards on climate change - and even attempt to use it to justify, however weakly, his effort to revive the US coal industry. Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro might do likewise, as he distances his country from the Paris climate agreement.

Australia, where climate politics are tense and an election is pending, could also be tempted to increase coal use. China and India, too, could become more inclined to expand coal-fired power plants. With that, meeting the 2°C threshold would become impossible, and the devastation of Hothouse Earth would potentially become inevitable.

But there is good reason to think this will not happen. Even if the 2038 deadline is not ambitious enough, the immediate pace of the coal phase-out follows the carbon law. If Germany implements what it has agreed on paper, one should not underestimate the symbolic value of a coal-dependent industrialized economy setting a clear end date for coal, and locking itself to a quantified phase-out plan. This, together with definitive shorter-term targets, would signal to investors that they can confidently invest in alternative energy sources.

This dynamic could well accelerate the timeline for Germany's exit from coal. A clause in the agreement creates the potential for an earlier exit from coal. After all, the best-performing major commodities in 2018 were European emissions allowances. Designed to make coal less competitive, those allowances are expected to double in price in the next year or two. Hedge funds and other investors have already taken notice.

A deadline on German coal use would reinforce confidence that the value of allowances will keep increasing, creating a positive feedback loop of rising prices. Add to that a precipitous drop in the costs of wind and solar power, and it is not unrealistic to imagine that the markets will bring about a much faster departure from coal than any policy would.

Sometime in the 2020s, it will become cheaper to build new renewable systems than to continue running existing fossil-fuel plants in parts of Europe. At that point, there will be little chance of stopping the fastest energy transition in history.

Johan Rockström is Director of the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research. Owen Gaffney is a global sustainability analyst at the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research and the Stockholm Resilience Centre.



Chairman / Editor-in-Chief: Moh. Reza Huwaida  
Vice Chairman / Exec. Editor: Moh. Sakhi Rezaie  
Email: outlookafghanistan@gmail.com  
Phone: 0093 (799) 005019/777-005019  
www.outlookafghanistan.net

افغانستان  
The Daily Afghanistan Ma

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.