

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



July 14, 2019

## The Emirate system, the Basis of Discrimination

The Intra-Afghan talks between representatives of Taliban and Afghan delegation, without a representative of the Afghan government –in Doha, Qatar, ended in Doha, Qatar, after the two sides agreed on a declaration. Therefore, it is necessary to have a brief review on the two systems here.

Emirates and Sultanates are analogous to kingdoms and duchies. A Sultan is the king of an Islamic state, similar to the way a European king was the ruler (in the Middle Ages) of a Catholic/Christian state. An Emir can mean a military commander and/or ruler of an Islamic State.

The best analogy is this: a sultan or an emir will rule a Muslim nation, and will be (or claim to be) themselves a Muslim, but they will rule based on their personal authority.

However, a republic system is a form of government in which the people, or some significant portion of them, have supreme control over the government and where offices of state are elected or chosen by elected people.

### Emirates and Sultanates as the Causes of Conflicts in Afghanistan

In Afghanistan there has been a great deal of discrimination including gender, racial and religious discrimination during the course of the history. Specific groups of Afghan citizens have suffered a lot due to lack of a democracy, a fair government. As a result, there have been tensions between religions and racist beliefs in the country. Afghanistan is one of the poorest countries in the world. Discriminatory constitutions that enabled the unfair rulers to govern and bad governance system to suppress the people have been the consequences of discriminatory constitutions in Afghanistan in the past.

Based on these constitutions, women and girls were discriminated against and isolated, and their human rights were taken away. This resulted in the failing economic and social conditions of women and girls in all areas of the country. Women and girls continued to be severely restricted in their access to education, health care facilities and employment. They also severely limited women's freedom of movement.

### Islamic Republic, the Biggest Democratic Achievement of Afghans

The new constitution of Afghanistan that was approved in 2004 is one of the most outstanding achievements of Afghanistan. The charter, which embraces democracy, human rights, and equality for women, holds the promise of taking Afghanistan out of the Dark Ages toward modernity. Needless to be mentioned that it is one of the most enlightened Constitutions in the Islamic world. The first Article of this constitution declares Afghanistan an "Islamic Republic." Islam is declared to be the official religion of the state. And the Constitution expressly prohibits any law "contrary to the beliefs and provisions of the sacred religion of Islam. Meanwhile, this Constitution is uncompromisingly democratic and pro-human rights. It has obliged the state "to create a prosperous and progressive society based on social justice," to "protect human rights," and to realize "democracy." The new constitution provides mechanisms and has obliged the state to enforce the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women; that is especially significant for women because Afghanistan has acceded the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). Thus, under the new Afghan Constitution, the Independent Human Rights Commission is able to enforce CEDAW, among other "international conventions that Afghanistan has signed.

The Afghan Constitution is the redline of the Peace talks. However, it was deliberately ignored and not mentioned in the Qatar Intra-Afghan peace talks declaration. This shows that Taliban's mindset has not changed and they do not believe in democracy and equality of all Afghan citizens before the law. Refusing the current constitution, elimination of "Republic" and emphasizing only on Islamic system and not the "Islamic republic", indicate that Taliban only pursue their own version of the government, "The Emirate", that can be once more the basis of discrimination against different groups of people in the country.

## Three Years after the Coup Attempt in Turkey by FETÖ, Turkish-Afghan Solidarity Yields New Investments in Afghan Education System

By: Oğuzhan Ertuğrul

This week, Turkey marks the third anniversary of the July 15, 2016 coup attempt that was orchestrated by Fethullah Gülen and his terrorist group (FETÖ). The assault on Turkey's democratic institutions resulted in loss of 250 lives and over 2000 injuries.

For the first time in Turkey's history, the perpetrators of a coup bombed the Turkish Parliament, Presidential compound and numerous other strategic government buildings. Hundreds of civilians protesting the coup attempt in Ankara and Istanbul were shot to death. It was a direct assault against Turkey's democratically elected government and the free will of the Turkish nation.

The resolve and resilience of the Turkish people and their strong commitment to democratic rights, thwarted the threat that could have destabilized Turkey and its neighbors for years to come. But the Turkish nation was not alone in its desire to preserve democracy. Afghan Government was among the first to condemn the coup attempt and to demonstrate its solidarity in the aftermath of events. Many Afghan brothers and sisters whom I met for the past two years had shared with me how they followed with concern that eventful night in Turkey until early morning and prayed for the wellbeing and stability of a country they feel fraternal ties towards.

All the evidence collected so far throughout the investigations and trials demonstrates that the bloodiest terrorist attack in the history of Turkey was orchestrated by FETÖ under the instructions of Fetullah Gülen. Together with his followers, he planned and tried to capture the Republic of Turkey on that date.

However, judging the deeds of Fetullah Gülen and FETÖ only with what transpired on July 15th would be a mistake. The crimes committed on that night were just the tip of an iceberg.

It all started under the guise of a charitable education effort back in the 1970s. Fetullah Gülen and his followers disguised themselves as a benign education movement, when they started the campaign of establishing schools in Turkey and later around the world. At the peak of their power, they controlled thousands of schools in Turkey and more than eight hundred educational institutes worldwide.

For more than 30 years, Gülen has encouraged his followers to infiltrate state institutions in Turkey, first and foremost the military and judiciary. In the past decade, we witnessed in Turkey how Gülen network carried out mass-scale exam cheating to this end, where FETÖ affiliated students were provided with the answers to entrance exams. The FETÖ members infiltrating critical state posts abused their power to eliminate who opposed the organization, by illegal wiretapping, fabricating evidence, unlawful arrests, thereby intimidating and blackmailing a large segment of the society including politicians, businessmen, journalists, even athletes and artists among many. Thus, the organization that disguised itself as an education movement gradually turned into a secretive operational structure aiming to transform the society by taking control of the Turkish state from within. As FETÖ became more affluent, it started meddling in business transactions and government

tender processes. Laundering enormous sums of money, arranging illegal transfers of cash and other financial crimes became business as usual.

Today, FETÖ is present in around 160 countries, with thousands of schools, businesses, NGOs and media houses. Their modus operandi is the same all around the world. As they aim to infiltrate and enlarge their global economic and political influence, they constitute a direct security threat for any country where they operate. Afghanistan is still one of them.

In Afghanistan, Afghan-Türk Schools operated by FETÖ-linked NGO namely Afghan-Türk Çağ Education have been providing education to Afghan students for close to two decades. In reality, this NGO was part of the broader network that financed the FETÖ organization and its branches to carry out its deceitful activities across the globe. It is highly likely that they had transferred all the revenues they generated from the schools outside Afghanistan.

I witnessed this first hand, when I visited the Afghan-Türk Momin High School this month in Jalalabad. When the school was handed over to Turkish Maarif Foundation (TMF) in March, it was in such a bad shape that we could not believe that a private education was provided in such a ramshackle location. Now, we are making a complete overhaul of the whole infrastructure and we promise to build a new conference hall and a dormitory before the new school year, as well as to start constructing a girl's high school in the same complex in a year.

The school in Jalalabad is only one example. Through joint determination of the Governments of Afghanistan and Turkey, Education Ministries of the two countries signed a Memorandum of Understanding last year and agreed to transfer the management of 15 FETÖ linked schools and education centers to TMF. In return, Turkey promised to raise the quality of education, build new schools across Afghanistan, reduce student fees, provide education free of charge for the children of martyrs, enable scholarship opportunities in Turkey for students who graduate with highest marks and invest all the revenues to be generated from these schools back in Afghanistan. Since last April, commendable progress has taken place in the transfer of 12 schools in Jawzjan, Kandahar, Balkh, Nangarhar, Herat and most recently in Kabul to its new management under TMF.

As the Afghan public witness the positive transformation that begun in the Afghan-Türk Maarif Schools under the new management of TMF and implementation of Turkey's promises, we receive demands for Turkey to deepen and widen its engagement in Afghanistan's education sector as well as in the fields of higher education and scholarships. As Turkey, we are committed to fulfilling this demand, not only because it serves our joint objectives to eradicate the threat posed by FETÖ in Afghanistan, but also due to our longstanding, time-tested ties to Afghan people whom we see as our brothers and sisters. Besides, investment in education is an investment in the future of Afghanistan. We will continue to support Afghanistan as long as our help is needed.

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## General Kankur: New Example of Good Management in Afghanistan

By: Mohammad Zahir Akbari

Last Wednesday, the Ministry of Higher Education announced the kankur (university entrance exam) result of 2019 indicating that 61 thousand students admitted to the public universities. According to the acting minister of the higher education, Abdul Tawwab Ballakarzai, 180,000 students were registered to enter universities of which 170,000 participated in the Kankur exam while 61 thousands succeeded to admit the state universities. Mr. W. Karzai also added that other 15 thousand individuals went to semi-higher educational centers; 77 thousand went to private higher educational centers and 20 thousand people failed.

According to most students and people, the Kankur system have relatively been improved comparing to few years ago; indeed, the new kankur management system is a good example how to restore the public trust as it has been taken in a peaceful and transparent manner while few years before, there were a lot criticisms and protests against Kankoor exam when it was announced. Sound and successful management of nearly 200 thousand volunteers of Kankur exam is a great and positive experience for the Afghan leadership and considered a fundamental step towards system building in the country. It is expected to expand the model into other administrative arena of the country.

It said that this year's exam was taken according to the new plan in which 33 provinces of the country were divided into 6 zones, the eastern zone including Nangarhar, Laghman, Kunar, Nuristan and Kuchi. In the south-east, there are Khost, Paktia, Paktika, Logar, Maidan Wardak, Ghazni and Kuchi. Provinces of Kandahar, Helmand, Uruzgan, Zabul and Kuchi are in the southwest zone. The western zone comprises of Herat, Badghis, Farah, Nimroz, Ghor and Kuchi. In the north-east zone, there are Kunduz, Badakhshan, Takhar, Baghlan and Kuchi. In the northern zone, there are Balkh, Jawzjan, Samangan, Saripul, Faryab and Kuchi. In central zone there is Parwan, Kapisa, Panjshir, Bamyan, Daykundi and Kuchi. According to this plan, 75% of university entrances are as before but 25% are privileged to native students. However, this point has raised some criticism in the social media networks. For example, this morning several students were posted in face-book which has not been accepted with 300 points while the native privileged students were accepted with around 160 points.

Anyway, the earlier mechanisms and systems that existed in the country, especially in the field of Kankoor exam faced great frustrations and failures in the country. The failures of past years and the great controversy that arose after the announcement Kankoor result, is not far from expectation in the countries like Afghanistan. From 2012 onward, we have witnessed widespread controversy and protests over the Kankoor result, but in two or three last years it greatly decreased. Undoubtedly, part of these protests and controversy were righteous as result of corruption, poor performance of relevant institutions and weaknesses in the Kankur management sys-

tem. But more important and more destructive than the protest was the prevalence of distrust vastly promoted in the public arena, especially when people completely lost their confidence in the Kankoor public exams.

Unfortunately, the mistrust was not limited to the Kankur process or just inside the Ministry of Higher Education, but it was the basis for all distrust, controversy and subsequent crises. The root of this distrust was in the old management system and lack of technological infrastructure in the Ministry of Education. But in recent years, the situation in the Ministry of Higher Education has improved, especially in the Kankur management system no longer witnessing any controversy after the Kankoor result announcement. This indicates that the ministry has built an efficient system for kankur exam, and so the public trust in this office is being gradually restored. Now, the Ministry of Higher Education and the National Center of Examinations can be highlighted as a successful model of management among other ministries to learn from these experiences.

We should not forget that the name of our country is still lie in the top list of corrupt countries, and many of the country's departments have not been able to take an important step towards eradicating corruption and returning public confidence. According to experts, the main barrier against fighting corruption is the corrupt structure and so, the success of Kankur is more likely to come from its structural changes. Undoubtedly, structural reform is not an easy job as considered as history rooted corruption but nothing is impossible; history rooted corruption is naught against historic will to bring deep and structural reform in the country.

Therefore, it must be acknowledged that still there are some deeper rooted issues which needs firmer will. For example, despite major reforming efforts in recruitment process, still there are challenges and problems in the system. However, the Administrative Reform Commission, which somehow deals with the exam and the national curriculum, has taken good steps towards recruitment test but there are still a lot of tales and talks about the performance of this department. In spite of the modification of the civil service law and creating of new hiring mechanism, the success of the department has been very low in the field of exams and public trust building. Therefore, it is suggested that not only the Administrative Reform Commission, but also all departments of the country should learn from the higher education, especially in victorious management of Kankur exam in the country.

Finally, as much as the infrastructure of the agencies is corrected, the corruption and injustice will decrease. As much as corruption and injustice go down, the public confidence will increase. Because there is a serious link between sound management, provision of better services, provision of social justice, return of public trust in the government, and, ultimately, the reduction of historical crises in the country.

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