

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



July 30, 2015

## Curse in Disguise of Blessing

The current rainfall in Afghanistan has proved to be a curse in disguise of blessing. It is believed that the countries and the people with limited resources and unpreparedness seem to suffer more than expected when they face any disaster. Same is the case with Afghanistan; floods resulting from heavy rainfall in certain parts of the country have taken valuable lives that could be saved. As, there is no effective mechanism to respond to the emergencies in most of the remote areas of the country, the disasters have proved to be gigantic and the poor people have suffered misery and agony.

According to Afghanistan National Disaster Management Authority (ANDMA) over the past three days 12 provinces suffered heavy flooding, leaving in the wake a number of villages facing destruction and loss. Parwan, Kapisa, Badakhshan, Takhar, Baghlan, Jowzjan, Panjsher, Nuristan, Maidan Wardak, Bamyán and Paktika provinces have all seen heavy rain and flash floods over the past week. The flooding has left two people killed and more than 2,500 families suffered major property damage and losses.

"Many families have suffered losses in the floods, and the aid we had in provincial offices we have sent to the effected families," ANDMA head Mohammad Aslam Sias said on Tuesday, July 28. "According to our reports, the rain will continue for the coming days too. The potential floods will threaten a number of houses."

Natural disasters are really accidental and it is not in the control of the authorities to stop them, but there can be measures carried out before the incidents take place and after them. However, the resources that are available at the disposal of the authorities and people in the remote areas are very much limited and do not help at all in dealing with the serious disasters. As MP Ghulam Hussain Nasiri has observed, "The main serious problem is that there is no proper management and people do not know about vulnerable areas and this is a serious danger for village families."

The government really requires being ready for such situations and at present when the wave of torrential rainfall is not slowing, the readiness has to be further improved.

It is really tragic in Afghanistan that common Afghan people have not only been victimized by the wars and conflicts but natural disasters have also made their lives fragile. Whether it is flood or famine or even earthquake, the severest of the shocks shake the existence of the poor and destitute. They are the most effected, in two different ways. First, they do not possess a strong and reliable shelter and other facilities that can safeguard them against the natural disasters, which make them easy victims. Second, the facilities that should be there after the disaster to minimize the level of destruction, never reach them, as they are at the remotest of the areas.

Leave the disaster aside, even when there are severe weather conditions, which cannot be even termed as disasters; the loss of life and property incurred by the poor Afghans is really immense. The example of the winter season, in this regard, can be mentioned here. The severe cold weather makes many poor people in Afghanistan sick and many others to breathe their last.

As the people in the affected areas, because of their wretched and torn shelters and no fuel or wood to burn, are being victimized, there is no support from the relevant officials to provide them the facilities to fight against the death. The result is nothing except misery. And when the severe cold weather turns into disasters in the form of avalanches and landslides in some parts of country, the incapacity of the government to help its people out of the disaster is exposed to a large extent. The lethargic response does no good to the people and by the time it is reaches to the people, it is already very late.

There are many lives that can be saved through proper and timely efforts. Moreover, there are many other areas as well that are necessary to be given proper attention by the government so that such disasters and incidents should be properly handled. Among them making a very well-equipped and properly trained disaster management unit is the most important one. At the same time making the different parts of country accessible through proper roads is also an important one. Many places happen to be in the remotest of the areas, where the rescue teams and equipment take a very lengthy time to reach as there are no proper roads.

Though security has been the most dominant issue in Afghanistan, there are many other issues as well that kill more people than the lack of security. The proper attention of the government in that regard and its services can save many lives. So, government must pay due consideration and concentration in such areas, as well. The lives of the people must be considered the most value able asset and every possible effort should be made to protect them.

## Mullah Omar's Demise Instigates Endless Internal Strife!

By Asmatyari

Afghanistan has been a battle ground for over a century between regional and international power players, exercising their desired interests. Following the Soviet withdrawal in 1989 and the collapse of the Afghan communist Najibullah regime in 1992, bloody civil war ascended Taliban to throne of Kabul. Taliban established a regime that was based on massive human rights violation, led by Mullah Omar. The world witnessed Taliban regime with suppression of women, coerced suspension of fundamental human rights, and elimination of right to freedom of thought and expression, harsh treatments extended to religious minorities, the list continues. The people of Afghanistan could hardly admit their humane existence.

The condemnable incidence of September 11 turned a blessing in disguise; the presence of Al-Qaida's number one leader Osama Bin Laden in Afghanistan turned a blessing in disguise for Afghans. Notwithstanding, the mercy shifted to divert the fortune of ill-fated Afghans, with Taliban's (Amir-Ul-Momineen) Mulla Omar's denial to hand over the perpetrators of attack on World Trade Center, to US. It depicted the magnanimous commitment of Taliban extending unanimous support for Al-Qaida that turned Afghanistan a slaughterhouse for innocent civilians. Taliban launched a bloody war against US-led coalition forces and Afghans that claimed the lives of thousands of innocents since US's invasion in December 2001. In that pursuit a number of Taliban was incarcerated and some met their fates, others still have resorted to give a tough time to Afghan and foreign troops.

Taliban has been fighting an insurgency against the Western-backed government in Kabul since its ouster, killing thousands of civilians and security personnel and making significant territorial gains in recent months. It is witnessed the onset of peace talks is accordingly followed by consecutive attacks on key installations, public offices, security officials and ordinary civilians. The push for peace talks amidst Taliban's increasing offensive might not be an acceptable course but it must be tried in good intention.

Factually, narrating adoption of a political strategy has always been an excuse for prevalent powerlessness and submission to breakdown -nonetheless the resilience displayed by government sparing a space for Taliban, is appraisable. The US led decade long combat mission seems futile and priceless coupled with massive destruction of infrastructures and human losses if it were to end, accommodating Taliban's precondition for peace. Taliban got inclined opting for negotiation one of most likely resort to joining back political arena and has to exercise truthfulness.

If Taliban proclaim sincerity with Afghanistan and its citizens they must respect Afghan's constitution protecting every section of society and should give up armed opposition, and begin exercising the will of majority. Adoption of political strategy to enduring security problems is evidently a just course of action. However, Taliban's assurance granting general pardon to innocent citizens paired with their public renunciation of violence and unconditional agreement to complete disarmament should be set as preliminary requisites of

negotiations. The most important figure who can figure out the pros and cons of durable solution to Afghan conflict, is no one but Mullah Omar, the de facto leader of Afghan insurgency.

A couple of days ago, a message got public that was reportedly orchestrated by Taliban supreme leader Mullah Omar, whose whereabouts was long gone mystery. The message surfaced subsequent to Marea Talks between Taliban and Afghan government representatives. Taliban leader in the message was found endorsing the ongoing peace talks. Presumably, the emergence of Taliban's de facto leader, Mullah Omar first ever surprising message let the dust of ambiguity settle. This has been the subject of greater interests reflecting Taliban's twin unilateral and uniform stance evident relative to peace talks. Earlier, a significant number of analysts seemed waiting for Mullah Omar's stance on the talk.

Earlier all the day along the rumors of suspected death of a renown decade long leader of Afghan insurgency turned a myth. The social circle left searching the truth about the death of Mullah Omar, government left confirming the credibility of broken news. The man carried a head money of \$10 million that was placed by U.S. State Department. Mullah Mohammad Omar, the United States' most sought after Taliban figure for 14 years the supreme is reportedly dead. Omar led the Taliban as it ruled Afghanistan from 1996 until 2001, when US-led coalition forces invaded Afghanistan a month after the 9/11 attacks and toppled the Taliban regime for giving safe haven to al-Qaeda leader Osama Bin Laden, the mastermind of the U.S. attacks.

It left me chase the affirmation of death of the most wanted person, who dodged the international surveillance system for many years and his rumor of death too tricked many. Nevertheless, Taliban spokesperson Zabihullah Mujahid turned down the claim false and termed it conspiracy to derail the ongoing peace talks. Some sources claim he embraced death two years ago, being affected by TB disease. 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 amongst 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.

If the news turns to be unobjectionable truth then who is to succeed him, is a question worth interrogating. Reportedly, following the disclosure if death reports of the Afghan Taliban chief, a meeting are conducted to decide who should succeed the fallen ghost leader. It is widely speculated that Mullah Baradar Akhund will succeed Mullah Omar as the supreme leader of the Afghan Taliban. Mullah Omar had appointed Mullah Baradar and Mullah Ubaidullah Akhund as deputy leaders while he was alive. The later passed away, leaving behind Mullah Baradar who too enjoys the support of Sayed Tayyab Agha, the head of the Afghan Taliban's political office in Qatar. Some sources say that Mullah Yaqub, the son of Mullah Omar, is also in favour of Mullah Baradar succeeding his father. Meanwhile Mullah Yaqub himself, is too deemed to ascend to leadership. Other Taliban sources say that the incumbent Taliban acting chief Mullah Akhtar Mansoor, a former

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## An Infertile Land for Democracy

By Hujjatullah Zia

In some forms, democracy can be exercised directly by the people, in large cities; it is by the people through their elected agents. Or in the memorable phrase of Abraham Lincoln, democracy is government "of the people, by the people, and for the people."

Therefore, what we know as democracy in its ideal form generally also includes governance by rule of law and the protection of civil liberties, or liberal democracy. Though how these two basic components of democracy - electoral and liberal - are represented may differ, it is widely accepted that a truly democratic system of governance must comprise both. The extent to which it does so will determine its quality and durability. In the words of Thomas Jefferson, without liberal democracy, electoral democracy is "nothing more than mob rule where 51% of the people may take away the rights of the other 49."

People living in a democratic society must serve as the ultimate guardians of their own freedom and must forge their own path toward the ideals. In the preamble to the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights is said, "Recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice, and peace in the world."

The electoral process lies at the heart of democratic government. It provides the institutional means of changing rulers without bloodshed. Elections, if they are competitive, provide the basis of democratic legitimacy. They provide opportunities for voters to participate in choosing leaders, and they consult an obligation on citizens to obey the laws approved by those they select. Citizens, it is believed, may be presumed to consent to laws to the extent that they have participated in choosing their leaders. Free and fair elections make representative government possible. Elections give the political system legitimacy. They provide those elected with the expectation that their decisions will be obeyed. The electoral process also influences the structure of the party system. It determines which parties will have representation in the legislative assembly and how much representation each will have.

The parliament is where the heart of democracy beats. Parliaments and parliamentarians embody the culture of democracy in a country. Legitimacy is derived from the freely expressed will of the people through national parliaments, state assemblies and local councils that, in turn, serve the people by holding the executive to account and by ensuring democracy delivers for all. More specifically, in democracies, these fundamental or inalienable rights include freedom of speech and expression, freedom of religion and conscience, freedom of assembly, and the right to equal protection before the law. This is by no means an exhaustive list of the rights that citizens enjoy in a democracy, but it does constitute a set of the irreducible core rights

that any democratic government worthy of the name must uphold. Since they exist independently of government, in Jefferson's view, these rights cannot be legislated away nor should they be subject to the whim of an electoral majority.

Mostly, democratic movements have been introduced a way to modernity. It has been said that if we want to progress and take step towards modernity, embracing democracy is must. In other words, throughout the history, our kings introduced Western countries as role models for modernity and attempted to impose the same culture and tradition on the country. Such force-feeding will lead to a counterproductive result. I do not deny that a democratic government plays a crucial role in the progress and modernization of a country, however, applying the same custom and culture of a country in a second country, that has different values and norms, is a big blunder to be eschewed.

During the reigns of some kings, democracy sparked in the country once in a while which mostly drew the condemnation of the public and extinguished forthwith. Moreover, at times when the kings themselves found their power in the risk of collapse, they suppressed the democratic parties. One may think that Afghans are against democracy; however, imposing unsavory norms were the crux of disapproval. Hence, as Afghanistan is a traditional society, they wanted democracy in the frame of their own cultural and moral values.

For instance, Amir Amanullah Khan aimed to modernize the traditional society of Afghanistan, overnight. In 1919 after the 3rd Anglo-Afghan war, Amanullah Khan who was a pioneer and modernist king claimed the independence of Afghanistan. Soon after acquiring Afghanistan's independence, he introduced a strong radical wave of modernization. When Amanullah made a trip to Europe, he was influenced greatly by their culture and modernity. He had returned from Europe in 1928 and brought with him many Western ideas, including social and cultural changes. Intending to modernize the country rapidly, he announced the same foreign culture in the traditional country of Afghanistan for earning modernity. He also introduced foreign style of clothing in a speech. He asked Afghan men to put on pants and women to put aside their scarf. Finally, the public protested against his secular view and it led to his downfall.

Currently, the democratic system seems indigestible for the religious extremists. In other words, the radical ideologue, who are involved in militancy, find their ideology in conflict with democracy and thus resort to violence against all the fans of democracy, including combatants and non-combatants. It would be near impossible to convince the ideologue militants to agree with the current system - though it is in accordance with the society's cultural norms. So, the radical ideologues are now the big destroyer of democracy. It seems that Afghanistan is an infertile land for establishing democracy.

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