

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

Daily Outlook  
AFGHANISTAN  
The Leading Independent Newspaper

May 07, 2019

## China-style Counter-terrorism Strategy Will Lead to Peace

Since terrorism is a global threat, a nationwide strategy to combat terrorism will lead to peace and stability. Suffering as a result of violence and terrorist acts, Afghanistan's counter-terrorism strategy has reached a stalemate, but that of its neighbor China has been highly productive.

Chinese officials have reiterated in Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region that their counter-terrorism strategy had borne the desired result as there was no terrorist attacks within the past two years in Xinjiang, which borders Afghan province of Badakhshan.

Hosting a media event titled "The Core Zone (Xinjiang) of the 'Silk Road Economic Belt' Media Event", Chinese officials showed media delegates, from different countries, Xinjiang's vocational training centers, mosques, museums, villages, etc. and briefed them about their achievements, mainly in terms of combating terrorism.

The media delegates visited "Exhibition of Major Terrorist Attacks and Violent Crimes in Xinjiang", which is established as a terrorist victims' memorial museum to show terrorist acts in Xinjiang. They were shown tragic photos of terrorist victims and violent video of the self-styled Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), which were tremendously shocking. The media delegates visited Wensu Training Center, which had three large buildings equipped with all necessary facilities, including room and board. Zulia Abli, one of the trainees in the center, said that he was sent to the center because he was downloading and watching violent videos via internet, which could lead him to radicalization. Moreover, his classmate Busaromo Ashemo, who was learning in the center for a year, told the journalists that she was also downloading and watching violent videos and learnt Holy Quam underground from videos, which is not legally acceptable in China. Answering to a question, she said that students were not allowed to practice their religion in the center based on Chinese law, which has been confirmed by Chinese officials.

### China's strategy for combating terrorism:

The People's Republic of China has adopted two effective strategies for combating terrorism:

(1) Training, educating, and employing prisoners of terrorist activities: Vocational training centers have been established to curb radicalization. For instance, trainees in the centers are those who "were incited, coerced or induced into participating in terrorist or extremist activities" or those whose involvement in such activities were not serious enough to constitute a crime, based on a white paper released by the State Council Information Office of the People's Republic of China. The second category is those who "posed a real danger but did not cause actual harm" or those who "made confessions of their crimes and were contrite about their past actions" or those who voluntarily joined the centers.

Third category trainees is those who were "convicted and received prison sentence for terrorist or extremist crimes and after serving their sentences, have been assessed as still posing potential threats to society". Hence, those who were involved in terrorist activities are not simply released after serving their sentences, but they are trained, educated, and employed, which can be a fruitful lesson for Afghanistan. For instance, the trainees in vocational centers have to pass four exams including Mandarin Language, vocational skills, law, and anti-terrorist ideas. With this in mid, it is believed that releasing prisoners of terrorist activities will be highly perilous to a country. Instead of keeping those prisoners in jails, a country has to establish vocational centers similar to those of China so as to train, educate, and employ them. That is, if those prisoners return to the country with the same radical mindset, they will resume their terrorist activities. In short, to combat terrorism in an effective way, prisoners of terrorist activities have to be de-radicalized in a healthy environment.

### (2) Poverty alleviation project:

China is also seeking to combat terrorism through economic means, namely alleviating poverty. The media delegates visited some houses in villages, which were established by government's subsidies. For example, the journalists visited the house of a vocational training center graduate Abdul Wali. His house costs one hundred fifty thousand yuan, one hundred thousand of which was subsidized by the government. Chinese government also encourages investment in those areas and supports the villagers to start their own business without paying tax to the government. Thus, alleviating poverty and creating jobs are the second strategy for decreasing terrorist activities since some resort to terrorism to make a living.

### Conclusion:

Regional and global powers and Afghanistan's neighboring countries should support Kabul government in combating terrorism through sharing their counter-terrorism strategy, brokering peace talks, etc. Meanwhile, Afghan government is recommended to adopt more cautious approaches towards terrorists, including the Taliban, and do not simply release their prisoners to give them concessions in return for nothing.



## After Public Demand for Peace, Ball is in Taliban's Court

By: Hujjatullah Zia

Afghanistan's peace process appears to reach a stalemate with the Taliban's mala fide intention for talks. Declaration of the Taliban's spring offensive showed their lukewarm response to ceasefire, which is a serious demand in the negotiation.

Despite being pressured by their interlocutors, the Taliban still hold out against direct negotiation with Kabul government. Although the Taliban held several rounds of talks with the US representatives and the names of their negotiating team have been removed from the UN blacklist, they still refuse to declare truce. Afghan government convened Consultative Loya Jirga (National Assembly) to support peace process. Issuing a communique, the Jirga called on Kabul government and the Taliban to declare truce ahead of Ramadan, Muslims' holy month of fasting. The Jirga further urged the Taliban to renounce violence and participate in the country's rehabilitation and uplift. It asked the Taliban, international community, regional countries, and other stakeholders to respect the demands of the Jirga delegates and take practical steps to reduce violence and bloodshed.

Meanwhile, Afghan President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani also called the Taliban to "respond to the voices of 31 million people" through stopping violence and playing a constructive role in the country. Addressing the Taliban's head Mullah Haibatullah Akhundzada, Ghani said that he accepted the demands of Afghan people and then the ball was on Haibatullah's court whether or not to accept. Ghani also pledged to release 175 prisoners of the Taliban in honor of holy month of Ramadan and in a gesture of goodwill.

However, the Taliban have turned a blind eye to the public demands and continue their insurgency without signaling for ceasefire. It is self-explanatory that the Taliban have constantly spilt the blood of civilians, violated the rights of people, trampled upon Afghan Constitution and international instruments, and played a highly destructive role within more than two decades. The Taliban are not a political party but a terrorist group, which respects neither national nor international laws.

The US Special Representative for Afghanistan's Reconciliation Zalmay Khalilzad is back in Doha for the next round of talks with the Taliban delegates. Khalilzad tweeted that in the opening session of talks, he said to the Taliban that "it is time to put down arms, stop the violence, & embrace peace", which, he

said, was the demands of Afghan people.

In another tweet on April 25, Khalilzad said that the Taliban had stated that "a ceasefire is not part of the agenda" adding that "for us, peace is the agenda". The Taliban are likely to play a foul game and come to the table with insincere intention as they do not want to include "ceasefire" in the agenda. If there is no ceasefire, how peace will emerge?

The Taliban should understand that talks are not for talks but for peace. They have to come to the table with clear demands and bona fide intention.

Despite receiving concessions from Afghan government and their US interlocutors, such as the release of their prisoners and the removal of their leaders' names from blacklist, the Taliban have not taken a single step forward for peace. Thus, no strides have been made in the peace talks.

The Taliban have two options ahead whether to fight or make peace. The horrible consequences of fighting is clear to all. That is, fighting will lead to mutual casualties and destruction and Afghan people would bear the brunt of the war. If the Taliban seek win-win outcome, they have to stop fighting and join the government.

If the Taliban believe that they have fought in support of Afghan people and their activities are acceptable to the public, Afghan government will provide them a platform to participate in the election and have their own candidates. For example, the leader of Hazb-e-Islami Afghanistan Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, who signed a peace agreement with Kabul government, is one of the candidates for the upcoming presidential election. The Taliban could follow the same way. But their terrorist activities, which led to heavy casualties across Afghanistan, have changed them to pariah in the country. Realizing this fact, the Taliban refuse to participate in the election.

Now as Ghani's administration and Afghan people have been urging the Taliban to stop violence and declare ceasefire, the ball is in the Taliban's court whether to accept the public demands or continue their deadly war. But it is clear to all warring sides that war and violence will not lead to peace. Resolving issues through negotiation and declaring peace will be the win-win situation.

Hujjatullah Zia is the permanent writer of the Daily Outlook Afghanistan and freelance writer based in Kabul. He can be reached at zia\_hujjat@yahoo.com

## Kabul: Peace Consultative Jirga Ends with Stress on immediate Ceasefire

By: Mohammad Zahir Akbari

The Loy Peace Consultative Jirga (grand traditional meeting) has issued final communiqué after five working days stressing upon nation-wide truce ahead of Ramadan. Nearly 3200 delegates participated from all parts of Afghanistan showing their intense thirst for immediate peace in the country. However, a number of key political figures including Ghani's own power-sharing CEO Abdullah Abdullah, former president Hamid Karzai, and former Mujahideen leader Gulbuddin Hekmatyar as well as a number of other politicians and 12 presidential candidates boycotted this session due to different reasons. The participants were divided into 51 committees to give consultation on four pre-determined questions about the Afghan peace talks. The four questions that the delegates consulted on were: How to convince the Taliban for negotiations to end the war and bring peace and stability to the country? On which gains and values should the Afghan government insist during negotiations? According to your point of view, how the government's negotiation team combination should look like and what characteristics the members should have? What policy the Afghan government should have toward its neighbors, especially the country that supports the Taliban financially and by arms?

On Friday, the Jirga concluded with a 23-article resolution mainly focused on declaration of an immediate ceasefire, launch of intra-Afghan dialogue, opening Taliban office inside Afghanistan, timeline for foreign troop withdrawal, Preserving the Islamic Republic system, national defense and Security Forces, rights of racial and regions groups and also other gains achieved in past two decades. The participant stressed that no sustainable peace is possible without preserving the political and economic interests of the country. "We don't want such a peace that women's rights are not respected, freedoms of expression are not ensured, elections are not held," committee member Faizullah Jalal told the summit. "Representatives from 34 provinces and also some members of the Jirga should be included in the negotiation team with Taliban. Its members should not have dual citizenship, and thirdly, the delegates should be from different groups such as war victims, elites, women, politicians, civil society and youths," said Masooma Hussaini, head of another committee.

The delegates of Jirga called on Taliban to stop violence, embrace peace and participate in the development of the country. They called the Taliban there is no winner in war and no loss in peace; for practical steps asked for the exchange of prisoners to establish an environment of trust. Emphasizing on Afghan-led peace process, the resolution further states that the international community must coordinate its peace efforts

with the Afghan government. The formation of an inclusive negotiating team and reforms in the structure and activities of Afghan High Peace Council have also been proposed in the resolution of Peace Jirga delegates.

Addressing the closing ceremony of the Grand Consultative Jirga, President Ashraf Ghani said the Afghan government is ready to implement all recommendations mentioned in the Peace Jirga's resolution. He said the Afghan government is ready to announce a ceasefire if the Taliban show readiness in this regard. He urged the Taliban to show respect toward the recommendations for peace proposed by participants of the meeting. "I call on the Taliban to prepare for direct negotiations [for peace]. Ghani added: "I want to say to the Taliban that the choice is now in your hands." We are ready to create an enabling environment for these negotiations," he said. President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani also announced the release of 175 Taliban prisoners as an apparent gesture of goodwill towards the peace process. President Ghani called on Taliban to send a delegation to receive the prisoners in Kabul or any other province.

In other parts of his speech, President Ghani thanked NATO, the United States, EU, Germany, Japan, India, Iran, Indonesia, and other friend countries for their support to Afghanistan and the Afghan peace process. Ghani promised that the Afghan government will implement all recommendations mentioned in Peace Jirga delegates' resolution. On the other side, there was no immediate response from the Taliban, who currently are negotiating in separate talks with a US peace envoy in Qatar. The insurgent group has so far refused to even speak with Ghani, who they view as an American stooge.

However, in response to Khalilzad's tweet, the Taliban asked him to stop calling on Taliban militants to lay down their arms and convince the United States to end the use of force instead. "In our opening session, I underscored to the Taliban that the Afghan people, who are their brothers & sisters, want this war to end," Khalilzad said in a tweet. "It is time to put down arms, stop the violence, & embrace peace." In response to this, Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid issued a series of sharp tweets saying you should forget about the idea of putting down our arms. "Instead of such fantasies, he should drive the idea home (to the U.S.) about ending the use of force and incurring further human and financial losses for the decaying Kabul administration." He said the United States must stop repeating failed strategies while expecting different outcomes.

Mohammad Zahir Akbari is the permanent writer of the Daily Outlook Afghanistan. He can be reached at mohammadzahirakbari@gmail.com

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

Daily Outlook  
AFGHANISTAN  
The Leading Independent Newspaperافغانستان ما  
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.