

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



May 23, 2016

Death of Mullah Akhtar Mansoor

Taliban leader Mullah Akhtar Mansoor is believed to be dead. Afghanistan's intelligence agency, National Directorate of Security (NDS) confirmed on Sunday, May 22, that he was killed in a US drone attack in Balochistan province of Pakistan. Afghanistan Chief Executive Officer Abdullah Abdullah said in a tweet on Sunday, "Taliban leader Akhtar Mansour was killed in a drone strike in Quetta, Pakistan, at 04:30 pm yesterday. His car was attacked in Dahl Bandin."

US authorities had earlier said that Mansoor's vehicle was attacked near Afghanistan-Pakistan border area, and the authorities were still assessing the results. A US official said in a statement that he was attacked in Ahmad Wal by multiple unmanned aircraft operated by US special operations forces. However, US has not yet publically announced that Mansoor has been killed.

US Secretary of State John Kerry speaking at a news conference with Myanmar's Foreign Minister Aung San Suu Kyi said, "Yesterday, the United States conducted a precision airstrike that targeted Taliban leader Mullah Mansour in a remote area of the Afghanistan-Pakistan border region. Mansour posed a continuing, imminent threat to U.S. personnel in Afghanistan, to Afghan civilians, Afghan security forces and Resolute Support coalition members across the country. And this action sends a clear message to the world that we will continue to stand with our Afghan partners as they look to build a more stable, united, secure and prosperous Afghanistan... The United States has long maintained that an Afghan-led, Afghan-owned reconciliation process is the shortest way to achieve peace and peace is what we want. Mansour was a threat to that effort and to bringing an end to the violence."

It is important to see how this would help in the reconciliation process as after his death, there would be a leadership vacuum in Taliban and that may start another war for succession most probably between Mullah Omar's brother Mullah Abdul Manan and son Mullah Yaqub, and Sirajuddin Haqqani, the Haqqani network chief as Haqqani was Mansour's deputy and operational commander. If this happens it would ultimately delay the reconciliation process. That is what happened after the announcement of death of Mullah Omar. Mullah Mansoor had recently gained the support of some of the leaders of Taliban groups.

Afghan Presidential office, however, believes that the death of Mullah Mansoor would provide an opportunity for those groups of Taliban that want to stop fighting and bloodshed and join the peace process. Nonetheless, only time would decide whether the Taliban groups would take his death as an opportunity or excuse for further fighting. This attack would, nevertheless, give them a huge blow and it should make them understand that fighting would lead to further destruction and deaths; therefore, they should come to the negotiation table.

It is also to be seen whether Afghan and Pakistani officials were taken into confidence regarding the attack. John Kerry had earlier on Sunday mentioned that he had notified Afghan President Ashraf Ghani and Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif; however, Pakistani Prime Minister has not yet commented on whether he was notified or not. Pakistan Foreign Office Spokesman, Nafees Zakaria said that Pakistan was seeking clarification. He also added that that Pakistan wanted the Taliban to return to the negotiating table to end the long war in Afghanistan as military action is not a solution.

Recently, a session of Quadrilateral Coordination Group (QCG) was held in Pakistan. However, Afghanistan did not participate in the Group with the zeal and enthusiasm it had shown earlier. After the deadly attack in Kabul on NDS office, Afghan President had asked Pakistan to do more regarding measures against the Afghan Taliban. He had also mentioned that Pakistan was not doing its part that was promised in the earlier QCG meetings and, therefore, Afghanistan would not seek Pakistan's support for a peace deal with Taliban. It would be interesting to see how the efforts would be made in coming times regarding the reconciliation process with Taliban. If not in the framework of QCG, what are the other options for Afghanistan? Would it want to pursue a process without the involvement of Pakistan? If so, how influential and productive such a process would be and what are the odds that Taliban would ultimately join that process? Especially, what would be the options after the death of Mullah Mansoor? The reconciliation process with Taliban has always been a Herculean task for the Afghan government and even the US. There have been many occasions when certain achievements have been made only to result into confusions later on. The poor Afghan people have suffered as a result. They have never been given the good news of peace and tranquility which they have been demanding for many years now. The death of Mullah Mansoor would be a good news for Afghan people only if it would result into peace and tranquillity, otherwise, it would be any other highly celebrated piece of news with no fruitful outcome.

Bringing the Caspian Tiger Back to Life

By Saikat Kumar Basu and Peiman Zandi

Exclusive for the Daily Outlook

The global tiger conservation efforts has recently received a big boost with significant rise in tiger populations in the Russian Far East (Amur subspecies), the Indian subcontinent (India, Nepal, Bhutan and Bangladesh-the home for Royal Bengal tiger subspecies) and parts of South East Asia; namely Thailand (Indochinese sub species), Malaysia (Malayan subspecies) and Indonesia (Sumatran subspecies). The heart-warming good news is also associated with some unfortunate bad news indicating tiger population reaching single digit numbers in south China (the South China subspecies and the Indochinese sub species) and in the Indochinese region of South East Asia (Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos) home to the Indochinese sub species of tigers. In other words, wild tiger populations have almost reached the status of extinction in the wild in case of China, Vietnam and Laos. The wild tiger population has been already declared extinct in Cambodia. Myanmar that has a substantial presence of Indochinese species of tiger is considered along with Thailand as the last wild habitat for this sub species outside China and the Indochinese region was not included in the current tiger census. The country wise tiger population presented in the global tiger census are as follows: Russia (433), India (2226), Nepal (198), Bhutan (103), Bangladesh (106), Thailand (189), Malaysia (250), Indonesia (351), China (7), Vietnam (5), Laos (2) and Cambodia (0).

Nonetheless, the significant rise in global tiger population with India representing 70% of the wild tigers of the world has created great enthusiasm and hope for successful conservation of tigers around Asia and a new initiative by Iran warrants special mention. The majestic Caspian tiger, a dominant tiger sub species once roamed across parts of Russia, China, Turkey, Iranian highlands and parts of Central Asia and Afghanistan. Unfortunately anthropogenic pressure in the form of relentless and unrestricted hunting by both members of the royal family, other aristocratic families, bureaucrats, foreign tourists as well as locals, high rate of deforestation and fragmentation of habitats and severe reduction of prey base for the predator; completely decimated and wiped out the last small and fragmented sub populations of the once dominant Caspian tigers from its homeland range completely. There are no Caspian tigers surviving either in the wild or under captive condition anywhere in the world now; although there have been few unconfirmed reports of their mystic sightings across the former range. However, there is very little or no scientific credibility to such sightings. The extinct Caspian tiger like its extant cousins, the Siberian or Bengal tiger sub species used to be one of the largest members of the cat family. Genetically, the extinct Caspian tiger has been found to be the closest relative of the Siberian or Amur tiger.

Recently some attempts were made by Russia and Iran to reintroduce lost species back to their wild habitats through captive breeding and reintroduction into the wild. Iran and Russia have exchanged some Persian leopards and Siberian tigers with one another to try and reintroduce them in each other's territory in an attempt to bring those spe-

cies back to their habitats through their closest genetic relatives. How far the attempts would be successful only time will say; however, with excellent example of the successful reintroduction of the Arabian Oryx in the Arabian Peninsula after the species was completely decimated from the region could serve as a burning inspiration to try and attempt such new introductions to enrich the faunal diversity of the region. Several conservationists have off course objected such reintroduction attempts suggesting often foreign species fail to properly adopt and acclimatize to their new environment and eventually die out due to failures in adjusting to their new ecosystem; while others have supported the drive, suggesting this is the only way to re-establish lost species in their old habitats.

The Amur tigers are the closest that can help the revival of the once freely roaming majestic Caspian tigers that are now unfortunately extinct. Afghanistan in spite of decades of destabilization, armed political struggle as well being one of the active sites of global flashpoint of armed conflicts; has survived as one of the best habitats of snow leopards in the remote mountainous regions. A similar attempt of also bringing back the ghost of Caspian tigers back to Afghanistan, side by side with Iran could be a big boost to captive breeding and release of Amur tigers in the remote northern mountainous regions or other suitable habitats within Afghanistan. Introduction of the majestic predator across Iran, Afghanistan, Central Asia, northern China, Korean peninsula can helpfully merge the ranges of the extinct Caspian tiger and extant Amur tigers over time to repopulate these premier habitats. The proposal will not only help in restabilizing the ecosystem of this vast region with the major predator slowly introduced back into the system; but will also add to the conservation value and tourism opportunities for both Iran, Afghanistan and adjoining Central Asian countries over time. As peace and stability returns to Afghanistan in the future, such initiatives could pay rich dividends in terms of earning foreign exchanges from wildlife tourists visiting the country.

Under these circumstances, it will be important for the SAARC (South Asia) and ASEAN (SE Asia) member nations to work together on a common platform for introducing Joint Conservation Initiative (JCI) across all the member nations to prevent poaching, prevent wildlife trade, trafficking and underground wildlife markets operating in this vast geographic region.

This could help in broadening the scope of successful conservation of vulnerable wildlife and forests in South and SE Asia. It is important to mention that SAARC-ASEAN region include three megabiodiverse countries, namely India, Indonesia and Malaysia. If China, another megabiodiverse nation from Asia also joins the Joint Conservation Initiative (JCI) along with SAARC-ASEAN member nations, a significant part of rich biodiverse region of Asia could thus be effectively conserved.

Saikat Kumar Basu is a Canada and India based freelance journalist specializing in global geo-political, strategic and foreign policy issues, science & technology and environment & conservation related themes. Regularly contributes to newspapers, newsletters, bulletins, magazines and journals in Asia, Africa and the Americas. Peiman Peiman Zandi is an academic from IA University, Takestan, Iran specializing on agriculture crop production and regional economics.

How to build Self-Confidence?

By Ahmad Shah Karimi

Self-confidence essentially is the belief in one's ability to succeed despite the odds, difficulties and adversities. It is the talent to cope with one's limitation and problems. Besides, it is a feeling of trust in one's capabilities, qualities, and judgment. Having confidence enables us to go beyond our limitations and it paves the way to go towards success; achieving greatness. Confidence is crucial to a happy and fulfilling life. It influences our success work, our family life and relationships. It effects our performance in everything we do and increases the chances of overcoming the hardships and difficulties that encounter it on our way while we work on the things that really matters to us. On the other hand, self-confidence is the belief in oneself and knacks, it describes an internal state made up of what we think and feel about ourselves. This state is changeable according to the situation we are currently in and our responses to events going around us. It is not unusual to feel quite confident in some circumstances and less confidence in others. It is also influenced by past events and how we remember them; recalling a former success has a very different outcome in terms of our confidence levels than thinking about an occasion when we faced failure. If we are fortunate and had relatively favorable conditions and experiences whilst we are growing up, we are likely to develop a healthy self-esteem and become confident. However, if conditions and experiences are unfavorable we are more likely to experience difficulties developing confidence. Some of the negative messages that received from these kinds of circumstances are the major obstacles that do not let us to do or terminate the works that we have started but never succeeded and the reason is that we faced setbacks or could not perform well; therefore, we think and feel that we can not do since the last shot did not result as we expected. Hence, confidence is a really personal thing that is not the same for everyone. Different people have different levels of confidence, but there are some signs of a confident person which can give insight into where it comes from. Even if we're not naturally confident, there are a number of ways we can build our confidence over time and just like everything else it is attainable, not out of the question. It is well said that "self-confidence is a super power. Once you start to believe in yourself, magic starts happening"

Building self-confidence
It is your responsibility to build your confidence, only one person can build your confidence - guess who? That's right, you. If you do not do it who will? It only will happen if you make a firm commitment, set goals, plan a strategy and take action. All of this means accepting full responsibility for yourself - deciding to be confidence and refusing to allow anyone to deflect you from your chosen course. Accepting responsibil-

ity adds up to never, never blaming people for.

Assume that everything that happen from now on is your own doing. Think and behave accordingly. You'll find it's one of the most liberating things you can do.

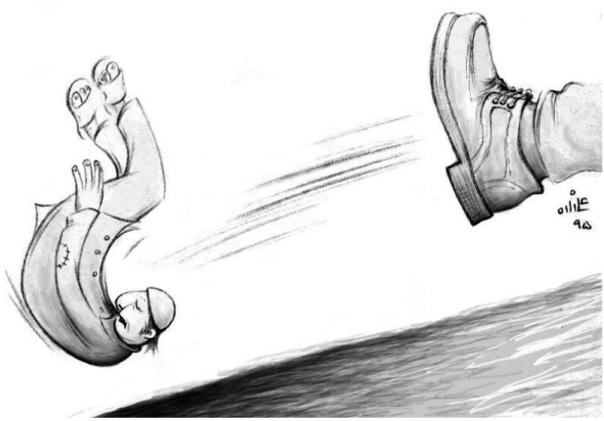
Imagine yourself as a confident person, our imagination will stretch to any scenario, but people lacking in confidence usually imagine themselves as failures. They do not realise that they cannot succeed at anything if they imagine themselves doing so. How you imagine yourself may bear no relation to the truth, but it is, rather than the reality which governs your feelings and behaviors. Changing what you imagine about yourself can bring about a profound growth in confidence. When you imagine yourself as a good, capable, confident person, it becomes easier to think and behave like one.

Focus on achievements. If you make time to think you will realize that you have accomplished so many things in your life. It really does not matter what these achievements are only that they are important to you and that is all that makes a huge difference in your confidence. List your accomplishments and remember what they meant to you. It does not matter what you think about your life at the present if you are honest with yourself you will make a long list and that will make you feel extremely good. Every small thing you are proud of like winning a competition, being honest, talented, benefactor and so on... should be added to your list. The fact that you are focusing on positives will also help you to increase your level of self-esteem.

Celebrate strengths, we all have strength - things that set us apart from others and that you should celebrate and assert in everyday situation. All you have to do is to accept them and assert them. It takes a lot of courage to celebrate your strengths. This is especially the case because many times the things that you see as strengths may be viewed as weaknesses by your peers. For instance you may feel that compassion and kindness are your strengths. However, your friends and peers may feel that when you are kind, you're wimpy and not good. If this is the case, you may choose not to hang around such people or you may want to assert your strengths anyway and not to pay attention to their reactions. You do not have to give in to another person's idea or view of what should be right for you just to fit in. So, take stock of strengths and celebrate it in everyday situation. Not only you will be asserting yourself but you'll feel great about yourself and so will your true friends.

To sum up, confidence is within ourselves which needs exploration. It expands all performance and brighten days. Moreover, you feel at ease even the time that things goes wrong and is not favorable. Be optimistic and do the things that are mentioned above.

Ahmad Shah Karimi is the newly emerging writer of the Daily Outlook Afghanistan. He can be reached at ahmadshahkarimi@hotmail.com



Daily Outlook
AFGHANISTAN
The Leading Independent Newspaper

Chairman / Editor-in-Chief: Dr. Hussain Yasa
Vice-Chairman: Kazim Ali Gulzari
Email: outlookafghanistan@gmail.com
Phone: 0093 (799) 005019/777-005019
www.outlookafghanistan.net

افغانستان
The Daily Afghanistan

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.