

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



November 10, 2015

## Insecurity Rises and Civilians Suffer

The insecurity is on its peak in Afghanistan and the future seems bleak as the lives, livelihood and security of the people are not guaranteed. The government has not been able to control the situation and with each passing day the situation is getting worse. With the withdrawal of international security forces there were hopes that Afghan security forces would shoulder the security responsibilities throughout the country without much difficulty but that does not seem to be the situation. Afghan security forces are facing the toughest challenges of their lives as Taliban and Daesh are getting strength in different parts of the country simultaneously. They have made certain districts their strongholds and are able to threaten the security situation around the capital Kabul to a large extent.

The statistics show the rising wave of terrorism in the country since the international forces ended their combat mission. According to Tolonew's monthly security roundup, the month of October was the deadliest month in Afghanistan as the incidents of insecurity saw a sharp increase as compared to the first nine months of 2015.

According to the information from the report, 4,280 people were killed during October, showing a 28 percent rise against September. The casualty toll includes killing of 3,733 insurgents during the month, showing a 39 percent increase against September, based on the information received from the Ministries of Defense and Interior Affairs. Among those who were killed, there were 480 security force members 16 foreign nationals were also included in the figure.

October saw 897 events of insecurity and insurgency which illustrates three percent increase against September. Also, the insurgents increased their attacks by seven percent in October and Afghan forces boosted their anti-insurgent operations by 10 percent. Helmand with recording 93 insecurity incidents was the unsafe province followed by Nangarhar, Ghazni, Kunduz and Faryab - the first five insecure provinces. In addition, 542 insurgents were detained during the month. Also, 40 security force members and 36 civilians were captured by the militants.

As the security situation is getting worse, the international community is getting nervous about the situation. US has already announced that it will retain its remaining forces in the country for at least one more year. Moreover, they also claim that their support and assistance to Afghanistan would continue. EU Ambassador to Afghanistan Franz-Michael Skjold Mellbin has said, "In think actually the international community is doing a credible job in trying to help the Afghan national security forces ... and their certainly also large-scale training effort." Since the security situation is not up to the mark, the civilians are suffering to a large extent. They are losing their lives cheaply and in the most brutal ways. Currently, seven civilians including three women were mercilessly beheaded by the Daesh militants in Arghandab district of southern Zabul province. These civilians were abducted few weeks ago from Ghazni while they were travelling from Jaghori to Ghazni city and belonged to Hazara community.

Though debilitating security influences everyone, the minorities have to see the worst. Hazara community has been facing such killings for long. Just few months earlier, at least 13 Hazaras were killed by gunmen in Zari district of Balkh province, while they were travelling in a minibus.

While in February this year, 31 Hazara passengers were abducted from Zabul province while they were travelling from Herat to Kabul, most of whom were later released.

The government requires taking practical and tangible measures to control the security situation in the country before it is too late. There are fears that if the security situation remains fragile another civil war may erupt in the country. Condemning the incidents after they happen is not a sufficient policy. There should be measures that can prevent such incidents from taking place. What happened in Kunduz, can happen in other parts of the country as well if the security apparatus remains unprepared.

President Ashraf Ghani has condemned the beheading of the civilians and has called it a brutal act. He, in a statement, has said that he is profoundly saddened upon finding about the tragic incident. He has also mentioned that heartless killing of innocent individuals especially women and children, has no justification in any religion or creed and the enemies of Afghanistan gain nothing but shame in this world and wrath in the hereafter.

The current security situation clearly depicts that it cannot further survive through lip service. Afghan government along with the security forces need to design a comprehensive strategy and at the same time they need to implement it effectively. They, undoubtedly, require to seek ways for negotiation for the long term peace but to reach to the point where they can stand on a position of strength in the negotiations they have to use their strength wisely. The international community, in the meanwhile, must continue their support and should divert their support to the areas that are the most urgent and the most necessary. Otherwise, all their support will end up in smoke.



## Trilateral Optimism over Peace Talk

By Hujjatullah Zia

Reportedly, Afghan Deputy Chief Executive Muhammad Khan along with a 45-member official delegation of the Afghan government had a trip to Pakistan on Saturday to offer condolences on the death of Pakistani veteran politician Afzal Khan Lala.

Being asked about an offer made by Pakistan to facilitate the talks, Muhammad Khan said peace would never return to the region if the two countries did not adopt a joint line of action and build trust with each other. "I had cautioned a few years back that if the Afghanistan imbroglio was not resolved, the day was not far when there would be blasts in every corner of Pakistan," Engineer Muhammad Khan is cited as saying. "I appeal to Pakhtun leaders in Pakistan and Afghanistan to play their role for peace and stability in the war-torn country."

Speaking on the occasion, Awami National Party President Asfandyar Wali Khan urged Pakistan and Afghanistan to begin negotiations and build trust to eliminate terrorism. He said both countries could not make progress without peace and mutual trust was essential for peace in the entire region. He added that expectations for restoration of peace had been very high after a meeting between Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and President Ghani, but some quarters had created hurdles to spoil this opportunity.

It comes as Pakistan's adviser to the prime minister on foreign affairs stated earlier that the time was not yet ripe for restarting the Afghan peace talks to which Pakistan, at the request of the Afghan government, had previously provided assistance. This message has a sub-text: the time is not yet ripe because of the current low level of trust prevailing between the two countries.

The relation between Kabul and Islamabad went sour following the Taliban's heavy inroads in Afghanistan - as Afghan officials alleged that Pakistan supported the Taliban insurgents. In the wake of Shah Shaheed bombing on August 07, President Muhammad Ashraf Ghani said that Shah Shaheed bombing in Kabul was unacceptable and that it was a game changer for the country. "Pakistan still remains the venue and ground for gatherings from which mercenaries send us a message of war," Ghani declared. He further said that at the time Pakistan's Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif said the enemies of Afghanistan are the enemies of Pakistan, "now the time has come for him to prove it."

Meanwhile, a Taliban splinter group, which has elected Mullah Muhammad Rassoul as Omar's successor, declared to sit on the table of negotiation with Afghan government with precondition that the foreign troops completely withdraw from the country. Following the revelation of Omar's death in late July, Mullah Akhtar Mansour was appointed as his successor - this caused a gap between the Taliban insurgents. Currently, a number of Afghan Taliban hold out against Mansour and has pledged loyalty to Rassoul - who served under Taliban rule as governor for Nim-

roz and Farah provinces before the regime was ousted in 2001. China had facilitated a meeting between Afghan High Peace Council and Taliban representatives in the western city of Urumqi earlier this year. Subsequently, Pakistan hosted a rare face-to-face meeting between Afghan government officials and senior Taliban cadres on July 7 to set in motion what was later officially called the "Murree Peace Process".

"We've already facilitated. We will offer facilitation again. And if the two sides agree, we will be ready to offer a venue. But we will not mediate." China's special envoy for Afghanistan Deng Xijun is quoted as saying. However, he insisted that the Chinese government wants the early revival of the Murree process.

Mistrust between Kabul and Islamabad is blamed for the breakdown of the Murree Peace Process. Asked if China could play a role in bridging the trust deficit between the two countries, Deng suggested the two neighbors find a solution to their problems through talks.

"The best way to remove misunderstandings and to increase co-operation is to sit down and talk frankly to work out the most suitable way to push forward the peace process," he added. Deng said he agreed with what 'Pakistani friends' told him in Islamabad that "you cannot solve problems by fighting."

"We will support Pakistan to continue playing its constructive and crucial role in the Afghan peace process," said Deng, who visited Islamabad on Friday and Saturday two days after China's foreign ministry announced his appointment as special envoy for Afghanistan.

"A sustainable solution can only be achieved through political means. This is also China's policy," he said. "We hope that with joint efforts the three countries - China, Afghanistan and Pakistan - can achieve this target. It is not only in the national interest of Afghanistan, but also in the national interest of China and Pakistan, and it will also benefit the entire region, especially economic development of regional countries," the envoy stated.

About the sixth American 'strategic review' that envisages US troops in Afghanistan until 2017, Deng said Beijing hoped Washington would continue to handle the delicate issue of stationing troops in Afghanistan and transferring security responsibility to Afghan forces in a responsible manner.

In short, Afghanistan, Pakistan and China have expressed optimism over peace talk and seek to bring the Taliban to the table of negotiation and believe that military deal will not be a panacea for the country's instability. On the other hand, the Taliban splinter group also gave the green light in this regard. However, the Pakistani Taliban has not signaled whether to agree or spoil the talk. Willy-nilly, negotiation is on the way, but will it bear the desired fruit? The three aforementioned countries hold out hope, but I doubt about a positive result on the grounds of repeated failures.

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## Fifty Years of Climate Dithering

By Stefan Rahmstorf

In November 1965, US President Lyndon B. Johnson was presented with the first-ever government report warning of the dangers that could result from burning large amounts of fossil fuels. Fifty years is a long time in politics, so it is remarkable how little has been done since then to address the threat posed by carrying on with business as usual. In remarkably prescient language, Johnson's scientific advisory committee warned that releasing carbon dioxide into the atmosphere would lead to higher global temperatures, causing ice caps to melt and sea levels to rise rapidly. "Man is unwittingly conducting a vast geophysical experiment," warned the scientists. "Within a few generations he is burning the fossil fuels that slowly accumulated in the earth over the past 500 million years... The climatic changes that may be produced by the increased CO2 content could be deleterious from the point of view of human beings."

The committee's foresight is not surprising; the existence of the greenhouse effect had been known to science since the French physicist Joseph Fourier suggested in 1824 that the earth's atmosphere was acting as an insulator, trapping heat that would otherwise escape. And in 1859, the Irish physicist John Tyndall carried out laboratory experiments that demonstrated the warming power of CO2, leading the Swedish physicist and Nobel Laureate Svante Arrhenius to predict that burning coal would warm the earth - which he saw as a potentially positive development.

Johnson's advisers were not so Pollyannaish. Their report accurately predicted that the amount of CO2 in the atmosphere would increase by close to 25% over the course of the twentieth century (the actual number was 26%). Today, the atmospheric concentration of CO2 is 40% higher than it was at the beginning of the Industrial Revolution - by far the highest it has been during the past one million years, as we know from drilling into the Antarctic ice.

Furthermore, Johnson's scientific committee rebutted objections that continue to be used today by those who deny the dangers of climate change, including the claim that natural processes might be behind the rise in CO2 levels. By showing that only about half of the CO2 produced by burning fossil fuels remains in the atmosphere, the committee proved that the earth acts not as a source of greenhouse gases, but as a sink, soaking up half of our emissions.

What Johnson's advisers could not do was offer specific predictions for how much the rise in atmospheric CO2 would

affect global temperature; they said they would first need better models and more powerful computers. Those calculations formed the basis of the next landmark report, the 1979 "Carbon Dioxide and Climate: A Scientific Assessment," prepared by the US National Academy of Sciences. Widely known as the Charney Report - after its lead author, Jule Charney of MIT - it is a model of careful scientific deliberation.

Charney's report estimated that doubling the amount of CO2 in the atmosphere would warm the earth by about 3° Celsius - a number that is well confirmed today. It also predicted that the heat capacity of the oceans would delay warming by several decades.

Both findings are consistent with the global warming observed since the report's publication. "We have tried but have been unable to find any overlooked or underestimated physical effects that could reduce the currently estimated global warming ... to negligible proportions," the report concluded. Since then, the scientific evidence has only gotten stronger; today, the basic findings laid out in these two early reports are supported by more than 97% of climate scientists.

And yet, despite 50 years of growing scientific consensus, the warming of the earth continues unabated. Well-funded lobby groups have sowed doubt among the public and successfully downplayed the urgency of the threat. Meanwhile, geopolitics has impeded the development of an effective global response. The international climate negotiations that are expected to culminate in an agreement at the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Paris in November and December have been hampered by the requirement of consensus among the 195 countries participating.

If action is not taken, billions of people will suffer the consequences of drought, crop failure, and extreme weather. Eventually, rising sea levels will flood large coastal cities and destroy entire island states.

The hottest years since record-keeping began in the nineteenth century were 2005, 2010, and 2014, and last year's record will almost certainly be broken again this year. It is time that world leaders put an end to 50 years of dithering.

They must seize the opportunity in Paris, set aside their short-term interests, and finally act decisively to avert a looming planetary catastrophe. (Courtesy Project Syndicate)

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