

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



November 27, 2018

## “Orange the World”

November 25 is celebrated in different countries of the world as International Day for the Elimination of Violence against women. The basic objective of the day is to raise awareness regarding the issues that pertain to violence against women and make efforts to discourage the practices that promote violence against women.

The date came after the brutal assassination of the three Dominican political activists, known as Mirabal sisters, in 1960, on the orders of Dominican ruler, Rafael Trujillo. On 20 December 1993, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), by resolution 48/104, adopted the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women. In this context, in 1999 the UNGA designated 25 November as the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, and invited governments, international organizations and NGOs to organize on that day activities designed to raise public awareness of the problem.

This year the theme of the day is “Orange the World: #HearMeToo so as to mark the launch of 16 days of activism that will conclude on 10 December 2018, which the International Human Rights Day. Iconic buildings and landmarks were orange to recall the need for a violence-free future for women.

It is really vital to note that violence against women is the most extreme form of discrimination.

According to the data by United Nations, 1 in 3 women and girls experience physical or sexual violence in their lifetime, most frequently by an intimate partner. Only 52% of women married or in a union freely make their own decisions about sexual relations, contraceptive use and health care. Worldwide, almost 750 million women and girls alive today were married before their 18th birthday; while 200 million women and girls have undergone female genital mutilation. In short, violence against women is as serious a cause of death and incapacity among women of reproductive age as cancer; and a greater cause of ill-health than traffic accidents and malaria combined.

Afghanistan is also one of the countries where violence against women is very frequent. It can be easily observed that the incidents violating women rights in Afghanistan have not been stopped though there have been many claims of developments. In fact, the changes are prevalent only on the exterior while from within, the Afghan society still lacks the development it needs in order to reach to a respectable position. The support and assistance of the international community has only been able to provide clean and beautiful attire not a praiseworthy soul to Afghan society. The Afghan social structure has been vehemently dominated by religious extremism and tribal nepotism.

Most of the self-designed religious doctrines and tribal norms are against the women and discriminate their basic rights. Unfortunately, these norms and doctrines have even gone to the extent of violence and have tortured women physically – mostly in the public. They, in the name of dignity of women, have in fact degraded them. The concept of so-called tribal honor and dignity has not been able to provide safety and respect to Afghan women.

There have been worst incidents of violence in Afghanistan. These incidents include even the rape of a three years old girl. This shows the example of the most heinous brutality against females in a society that considers women as the honor and dignity of a family.

Violence against women can only be reduced in Afghanistan when the policies and perceptions regarding women start changing. The authorities can play a key role in this regard. Nonetheless, it is unfortunate to note that Afghan authorities and many important personalities themselves have favored the recommendations and suggestions to limit the participation of women in social and political lives. As most of these authorities are themselves nourished in an extremist patriarchal society and do not have much consideration regarding the role and empowerment of women and consider it against their tribal values that they come out of their houses. It is difficult for them to follow a movement to save women from violence and make them achieve their due place in Afghan society. The pursuit of Elimination of Violence Against Women (EVAW) law is one of the most evident examples. Most of the authorities have shown reluctance to pursue it in its true spirit. The reason is that they do not agree with the law as a whole and have certain objections. Most of them have their self-centered motives. Unfortunately, they use the name of Islam but it should be clarified that Islam does not tolerate violence against women and urge for social and political participation of women.

There should be a movement that must use different forums to discuss and consider the overall issue of violence against women in Afghanistan seriously along with raising awareness and sensitization regarding EVAW law. The movement can involve the political and religious leaders, especially the ones who have some interest in this regard. They can also involve the authorities that have important positions in the policy-making arena and make them realize their responsibilities. Ultimately, they, along with the people as a whole, should continue their efforts in this regard and show that they have respect for women and their human rights.



## The New Tactics of War in Afghanistan

By: Mohammad Zahir Akbari

With broadening the relationship of Taliban in the regional countries, they have increasingly used new divisive tactics and approaches which is more dangerous than war in the battlefield. They have also initiated using modern technologies and weapons which is fully new in Afghanistan. Attacking religious scholars, mosques, worshipers and certain ethnic groups are some of the new approaches and tactics which have carried out in recent months. According to local experts, targeting ethnic or religious groups are based on the sinister purpose of igniting religious divisions and sectarian war in the country. The recent clashes amongst students in the Kabul University increased the fear of hatred trends in the country. Thus, they try to turn off the voice of real scholars who aware the people about a senseless war in the country. Assassinating the Head of Ulema Council for Kabul, Abdul Basir Haqqani, was one of the recent examples. Haqqani, who had outspoken stance against the insurgents, was killed by two gunmen on motorcycle in Police District 7 of the city. The event happened four days after a suicide bomber targeted a religious ceremony in Kabul, killing at least 55 people and wounding nearly a hundred. However, by targeting clerics, Quran reciters and religious ceremonies, terrorists have shown their own real face as they practically started fight against Islamic preachers and values. Furthermore, Taliban are increasingly making efforts to occupy more territory in the eve of winter season. However, military plans have always been the same on this regard. In the past few years, the Taliban seized Kunduz Province before winter. Now the Taliban will add to their ability to take up some of the most important and strategic districts. The Taliban's goal of this military effort is that the Afghan government will not be able to regain the captured districts by the coming of the cold and winter season. The reason is that the central government of Afghanistan always sends Kabul forces to recapture the areas under the occupation of Taliban while deployment of security forces is not possible in the cold winter season. Hence, the Taliban has planned to occupy some of the important districts alongside strategic provinces to maintain their military presence in important areas.

The Afghan government must recognize that it is not only important to recapture the occupied area but also protect the endangered areas. Because the Taliban will pursue their vital goals by restarting their destructive attacks on the vulnerable areas after the central forces returned. This mistake has often repeated in the past but no lesson learnt yet. Some of the provinces and districts collapsed for several times but still there is fear of falls to the hand of Taliban. The consequence is brain drains, capital out and unprecedented unemployment in the country.

Therefore, the central government and local government are required to consider and implement different strategies. The strategy must be designed and regulated in a way that central government need not to be forced for deploying Kabul support forces to distant provinces and districts again and again. Firstly, sending forces from the central government to the districts will multiply the cost of transport and logistics of the Ministry of Defense. In addition, the repeated trips makes mood of the reserved forces always tired. On the other hand, this might be a part of Taliban's war strategy to launch attacks on various districts of distant parts of Afghanistan to waste their energy and ability by towing them to those remote areas.

Of course, if it is invasive and the Afghan government is pushing the country's security forces to launch an offensive against the Taliban, it will be a good and effective one, but if the case is the opposite and the Taliban will have an offensive position in distant districts, and the country's defense forces will only be gradually tired and de-energized. Therefore, in the current situation, especially with the coming of the winter season, and the hardening of the force transfers from the center to distant areas such as the various districts of Ghazni and Uruzgan, and the regions like them, the government must use the local forces to maintain security of those areas after the return of the center.

In many parts of the country, the local defensive forces can be tasked locally in cold winter seasons provided that they are effectively directed and managed by the leadership of the central government and the official security agencies of the country and that their equipment is properly provided by the government. This method may help to save a large amount of governments expenditures wasted in frequent transportations and travels. The recent month's evidence shows that the Taliban try to tow the government and security forces to multiply the defense expenses. The fact is that the Taliban has been disappointed from the capture and maintenance of the province but focused their efforts on occupying important districts.

Lastly, the tactical consequence of Taliban attacks in the eve of bitterly cold winter is a large number of people got displaced and homeless. According to UN reports, since the start of war in Hazarajat 70% of civilian population have been displaced to Ghazni, Kabul and Bamiyan provinces. Thus, in other war-torn provinces such as Farah and some parts of Helmand are suffering from the same issues while there is no enough assistance to cover their accusations, foods and other basic needs. Therefore, government must hold proactive strategy not allowing the rebel groups to target thousands of civilian populations.

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## US & NATO Fatigue Yields the Urge to Broker Peace Deal between Afghan Government & Taliban (Last Part)

By: Mohammed Gul Sahibzada

The present governance system which is infiltrated with unskilled ragtag leaders with armed men, who had been involved in intrinsic war, campaign contributors and recently, those people with nexus to officials sitting in powerful positions in the government needs to be transformed.

More than ten billions US dollars coming to Afghan government every year – which forms the combined budget for military, cost of war and developmental projects – has turned every single government post a lucrative position, a mean to garner social recognition and wealth. Hence people sitting in higher positions have recruited individuals of their kinship and family members to occupy the posts in the government organization. Moreover, their performance is not linked to performance appraisal based upon measurable indices and people centered delivery of services. It is this hotchpotch prevailing in government system that led to loss of trust of the people on their government, and the subsequent advances of insurgency in rural areas across the country and most importantly, the loss of confidence of international community – including NATO and USA – on the ability of those running the government to change the current status quo.

Repeated failures on the part of Afghan government to sketch a road map for, and a way out of the present impasse, and to address acute ongoing social, political, security and economic problems simmering in the country since last five years, seems to have convinced international community that those sitting in leadership position of this government are failing to overcome stalemate and navigate the complexity of Afghan scenario. Bitter covert political infighting in the very ranks of Afghan government leadership i.e. the President and the Chief Executive Officer, had derailed the government services for almost two years when government of national unity was formed in September 2014. Political factions managed to appoint peo-

ple with superficial tactical experience and understanding of Afghan scenario on key positions. Also, the Independent Electoral Commission and Election Compliant Commission could not live up to the people expectations. National agenda including military strategy, economic strategy, social development strategy and a framework that could encompass execution of nationally important matters, such as eradication of corruption from government system, eradication of narcotics and crack-down on irresponsible armed groups and criminal syndicates, which have spurred destabilizing the country, have been neglected. Government responses to all the present ills of the country have been spasmodic without holistic, structural, whole of government and whole of system approach. All the efforts of the government have been to show a glossy picture of its so called 'outstanding performances' on various fronts in international donor conferences to develop accountability framework towards the donors and international community and seeking for and garner more grants. Efforts are not oriented to win the confidence and trust of people and to develop self-reliance and self-sustainability. To say in other words, all efforts – including money, resources and time – that are put into support of the present state of affair by international community is keeping stalemate and mutual coexistence of the present situation. Now, it is evident that the western countries and regional supporters of Afghanistan government have very well noticed this tragic state of affairs and that's why started unprecedented talks with Taliban. Therefore, a jump to sketch clear lines for coming out of the present impasse by international community, though belated, is the right step. People of Afghanistan and regional countries want to change the present status quo and want to enter into an era of peace and development based upon justice and equity.

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