

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

# Daily Outlook

## AFGHANISTAN

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### Government Blamed for Undeterred Attacks

Everyday our beloved country bleeds with blood of innocents either civilians or security officials while serving their motherland. The insurgents are exerting their might to let unity government to subjugate their say. Sunday turned out to be another unfortunate day for Kabul residents – it was early in the morning when car laden with arms and explosives struck a convoy of foreign troops in a busy part Juy-e-Shir area in the city center near a market of central Kabul. Soon after the blast security forces and ambulances were heading down to the site to rescue the injured. The explosion injured seven civilians, including a child and woman, car bombing that targeted British troop carriers in central Kabul. It reflects as if the insurgents are using their full capacity to let the government know of their in-depth presence.

Formerly, Taliban had launched storming attack, involving hundreds of fighters on the northern Afghan city of Kunduz that finally fell to Taliban. Subsequent to overrunning Kunduz, Taliban made resilient victory capturing Baharak district of Badakhshan Province and Kohistanat district of northern Sar-i-Pul province. The Badakhshan provincial council had testified Taliban are making gains in some other parts of the province after taking control of Wardoj and Baharak. Ministry of Defense has confirmed that after a large-scale military operation, Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) managed to retake Baharak district in the north-eastern Badakhshan province.

The ongoing war in Kunduz between insurgents and forces has seized large number of civilians – great numbers have succeeded fleeing the warzone and other are still date managing to escape. It is said that after heavy fight between insurgents and security forces that steadily pushed back insurgents in the battle-weary city of Kunduz. Conversely the desperate residents have complained of scarcity of basic amenities of life. The Minister of Refugees and Repatriation Sayed Alimi Balkhi states 20,000 families have displaced in the Kunduz crisis. Meanwhile, as the number of people fleeing Kunduz rises, and the need for aid increases, the World Food Program (WFP) announced it was seriously concerned about the safety and food security of the people remaining behind in the battle-torn city.

Earlier Taliban insurgents stormed a prison in the capital of central Ghazni province releasing about 350 prisoners. According to officials, the prison housed 436 prisoners in total of which 355 escaped during the siege. The security officials declared at least 148 to be a serious threat to national security. It was cautioned the Taliban set free would cause serious blow to the already volatile security situation of the country. The seizure of such a city justifies the said reservations.

As widespread clashes between Taliban and ANSF continue in Kunduz, displaced families, who fled over the past Two weeks, staged a demonstration in Kabul in an effort to mount pressure on government do more in a bid to clear the strategic town from the Taliban. Protesters blocked several roads connecting the presidential palace and office of the chief executive to traffic and chanted slogans against Pakistan and the Taliban. They asked government to act and clear the city from Taliban so that displaced families could return to their homes. Some other protesters accused the government of not been able to provide necessary aid to displaced families.

Meanwhile, some Afghan lawmakers in parliament have also blamed government of negligence over the issue of displaced Kunduz people. Kunduz city collapsed to the Taliban nearly two weeks ago after the group's fighters backed with heavy and light weapons launched a major offensive from three directions. The collapse of Kunduz is said to be one of the major gains Taliban has made over the past fourteen years since a US-led NATO coalition toppled the regime in 2001.

The Taliban multidirectional attack leading to conquest of strategic city of Kanduz came prior to Afghanistan's CEO's address to the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA). During his address to the UNGA, Dr. Abdullah had called on Pakistan to keep its promise to crack down on Islamic extremists blamed for carrying out cross-border attacks and destabilizing the impoverished war-torn country. Abdullah said without external support "this guerrilla-style low intensity warfare would have been history by now." Admitting the Taliban is equipped with latest weaponry, familiar with war tactics and supported by some of states or groups, unless is responded uniformly by all section of Afghan society, may not be weakened. Taliban following the news of demise of Mullah Omar and selection of Mullah Akhthar Mansoor tries to win their horrific disposition and let Afghan government know Taliban is not weakened and should not be deemed out of race. The series of storming attacks on potential sites is meant to be back to power either through use of force or negotiation inclined to their demands. The government falling short of proper security arrangement and curbing capacity may be left to surrender to majority demands of Taliban if peace talk is staged.

The countless efforts made by security official at the scene are laudable who strived hard to contain the militants at minimum harms and succeeded to some extent. However, serious questions related to plagued performance of security forces at entrances and deficient intelligence reports are raised that seemed short of timely co-ordination. How an explosive, automatic guns and suicide jackets laden car could easily pass the security check points? Why there was no intelligence report prior to the incidence? If the aforementioned drifts are not bridged then the future prospects of a perpetual deteriorated state of affairs can not be ruled out.



## Slowly Changing World Order!

By Muhammad Rasool Shah

The ongoing worsening security situation also threaten US and its allies and it is not late when a day will come when the blazes of the fire will be knocking at their doors. A decade and a half into the 21st century, we are still living through the aftermath of two epoch-making shocks. The first was the demonstration of the limits of US power in the killing fields of Afghanistan and Iraq – the war on terror that broke the spell of invincibility of the world's first truly global empire. The second was the financial crash of 2008 and the crisis of the western-dominated economic system it unleashed, still playing havoc with economies and lives across the world more than six years later.

That crisis will shape politics in Europe in 2015, from London to Madrid. But the impact will be felt first in Athens. The slump and stagnation that followed the crash has already fuelled the rise of the populist right. Now, after years of self-defeating austerity and falling living standards, the radical left has leapfrogged ahead to challenge for power in the most devastated euro zone economies of Greece and Spain.

It was a backlash waiting to happen. In Greece the leftwing Syriza party, which rejects the austerity enforced across the euro zone by its unelected troika, not only won the power for the second time but it also showed how people have lost hope from those who are still busy in deceiving them on the name of capitalism. Syriza may have stepped back from its one-time demand for unilateral debt cancellation, its program to boost living standards in the wake of a 1930s-style depression may be modest, and mainstream voices across Europe may also be calling for a change of direction. But Europe's governing elites will have none of it.

Expect a ferocious campaign to terrify Greek voters, who have already been warned by the European commission's Jean-Claude Juncker not to vote the "wrong" way. If Greeks still insist on making their own democratic choice, everything will be done to force Syriza to retreat. If all else fails, Greece will be punished for fear that others, such as Spain's new Podemos party, might go down the same route later in the year.

The powers that be in Europe are determined to prop up a failed economic model regardless of the cost. The aftershocks of the breakdown of that neoliberal regime are still being felt across the world economy – in falling commodity prices, capital flight, stagnation and recession. But the interests that depend on it won't let go without a serious challenge.

That is just as true in terms of global power. The US and its satellites, including Britain, may have suffered a strategic defeat in Iraq and Afghanistan – symbolized by last weekend's ceremony to mark the end of NATO's combat mission, held in secret for fear of Taliban attacks. But they're not letting go either. Some 13,000 troops are staying on as "trainers", just as thousands of western troops have been returning to Iraq for the war against ISIS – the al-Qaida breakaway spawned by their own invasion and occupation – with talk of a major assault in the spring.

In the same spirit, every effort was made at the time of the Arab up-

risings of 2011 to hijack, control or crush them. Some of the results can be seen today in the disaster zone across the Middle East, the growing power of the western-backed autocracies of the Gulf, the brutality of Egypt's new dictatorship and the maelstrom in post-intervention Libya, whose civil war is likely to intensify in the coming months.

Meanwhile, Russia's challenge to untrammelled US strategic power, which began in Georgia in 2008 and intensified through Syria's proxy war, came to a head in the conflict in Ukraine. Now, with Russia's full-fledged intervention in Syria, America has found itself in a position where it neither move forward nor backward. There has been much western crowing in recent weeks that the combination of collapsing oil prices with US and EU sanctions has plunged Russia into recession, while knocking chunks out of the economies of other independent oil states such as Iran and Venezuela into the bargain. It seems clear enough that the Saudi regime's decision to boost oil output when prices were already falling was designed not only to protect market share and undercut fracking, but to punish Iran and Russia for their role in the Middle East and Europe to the benefit of Riyadh's US sponsor.

It is a form of economic warfare – hailed by President Obama as the fruit of "strategic patience" – the consequences of which will be felt across the world in the months to come. But along with the global power and economic shocks of the past decade, two other crucial shifts have defined the early 21st century: the economic rise of China, in defiance of market orthodoxy, and the tide of progressive change that has swept Latin America, opening up alternatives to neoliberal capitalism.

Both have continued despite the backwash from the crash, which has taken its toll on the "BRICS" countries and the wider global south. Progressive governments have carried on being elected from Bolivia to Brazil, while China's slowing growth rate is still almost double that delivered by the US recovery. Political and financial pressure on Venezuela, which has been crucial to Latin America's transformation and already faces serious economic problems, however, looks set to increase in the coming year. The key to riding the storm, as elsewhere, will be who is made to shoulder the burden of falling income and reform.

What seems certain though is that, however the west tries to recapture lost ground, the global order will not revert to the status quo ante. There may be growing conflict, but there will be no return to unchallenged US diktat or uncontested economic catechisms. Alternative centers of power are forming. Both internationally and domestically, the old order is coming apart. The question will be what replaces it. In the light of these grave realities, it would be best in the benefit of the old order dictators and the whole world to accept this change warmly and without any conflict. Otherwise, such a conflict may only intensify the rate of destruction for everyone. History is full of examples that when one nation crosses its limits, it is altogether eliminated from the pages of history but in our present world.

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## Financial Hub to Growing Insurgency!

By Asmatyari

Sky-scraping illiteracy, bad governance, shooting corruption, escalating human rights violation and growing insurgency are not the only reason earning universal fame for this landscape, mass production of opium is another distinction, and it is widely known for. Financially speaking opium production might bring handsome revenue for the poverty stricken country, nevertheless its magnitude of losses supersede its gains pushing large number of young blood to irreversible death valley.

The prevalent social evil, the drug production and addiction is a black scare on the face of humanity that claims to be civilized. You must not be aware of the fact that it is killing thousands of people across the world each year. Well yes it is right that it does not kill all its patients but those who survive with it are living a life worse than hell. The worst part is that it is most popularly seen in the younger generations who can not cope up with the pressures and social demands. It is sad to know that the upcoming generation is getting involved in such life taking social evils. Well not only talking of the teens, this drug addiction culture and easier accessibility has left no particular level of the society or a people of particular age group.

Earning a distinction in opium production, how can Afghans are spared of wreckages, the drug produce? Afghanistan is confronted by one of the highest levels of addiction in the world. According to United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) data, nearly one million Afghans, between 15-64 years of age, are affected by drug use in the South Asian nation. The opium produced is smuggled across the globe in particular neighboring countries. Consequently large number of new drug addicts is added to existing one, each year.

This life claiming drug is widespread across the country and easily accessible whilst government turning a blind eye and deaf ear to its illegal sell. Many Afghans are taking drugs as a kind of self-medication against the hardships of life. Addictive drugs are not only sold through the drug dealers but they are very easily available at any pharmacy. It is very hard for a person to come out if this habit, but they are really willing to do that then there are ways where normal life routine can be restored.

Opium at large is cursed seeing the human calamity inflicted due its blatant use. Admittedly asserting, opium is not liable but the government who's either supervision or negligence to regulate its trade and dealing, of-course is. Opium is the dried latex obtained from the opium poppy. Opium contains approximately 12% morphine, frequently processed chemically to produce heroin for the illegal drug trade and for legal medicinal use in some countries. It is illegal use is often converted into heroin, which is less bulky, making it easier to smuggle,

and which multiplies its potency to approximately twice that of morphine. Heroin can be taken orally, by intravenous injection, intra-nasally, or smoked and inhaled. When used in medicine, it is typically used to treat severe pain, such as that resulting from a heart attack or a severe injury. The name "heroin" is usually only used when being discussed in its illegal form.

Afghanistan is already the world's largest producer of opium, and last year accounted for 75 percent of the world's heroin supply. The United Nations' top counternarcotics official assumes it will reach to 90 percent in the subsequent year. For the first time over 200,000 hectares of Afghan fields were growing poppies, according to the UN's Afghanistan Opium Survey for 2013, covering an area equivalent to the island nation of Mauritius. The 2013 figure represents the highest total cultivation ever for Afghanistan, surpassing the previous peak of 193,000 hectares in 2007. Total opium production reached roughly 5,500 tons, an increase of 49 percent since 2012. Opium prices fell slightly, but according to the report, the farm-gate value—the price of a crop when the farmer sells it—increased by almost a third. Nearly \$1 billion of raw opium came out of Afghanistan last year, accounting for 4% of the country's GDP.

It is found, the opium trade has become the key economic activity in the village. Now, all the irrigated land is given over to the poppy cultivation, and most of the men and women who worked in the livestock trade are involved in the opium trade. Consequently, some province owing the status of poppy free province like Balkh, Faryab and Takhar in the north and west, are in danger of losing their status, according to United Nations report. They are among 16 provinces that had been declared poppy-free; such provinces receive \$1 million awards from the American Embassy.

The illegal drug production has set close ties with insurgency and terrorism. It is widely accepted that illicit drug production and trade serve the greatest funding source for insurgent's activities. The increasing might insurgents acquire will be a dominant threat to security institutions, unleashing the terror plots. Afghanistan's security condition deteriorated to greater extent is clear intimation to the underlying fact. There are credible reports suggesting that Taliban insurgents took advantage of insecurity in several provinces to assist opium farmers and win popular support -protecting an important form of income for their operations. Opium cultivation has increased the most wherever there has been insecurity.

It can confidently be claimed that if illegal opium production discouraged and instead legalized, it not only brings economic gains but also curtails terrorism and insurgency. Let's wait and see, whether the government takes satisfactory measures, ruining the financial hub to growing insurgency.

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