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Growing Security Challenges

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Security is going to be a very serious challenge for the new government and it would require dealing with it with iron hands in order to make real difference. As the security responsibilities are being handed over to Afghan forces as a last phase of transition, more challenges are to be faced by the security forces and the by the government as a whole and it would definitely take time before Afghan security forces are completely in position to guarantee better security situation.

It can be observed that currently the insecurity throughout the country and even in the capital Kabul seems to be getting deteriorated. And, this trend seems to be attacking the Afghan security forces, in particular Afghan police.

In three separate bomb attacks in different parts of the country on Monday, November 10, at least 10 policemen were killed, including Afghan Local Police (ALP) chief for central Logar province.

ALP Logar Chief Sabz Ali was among seven policemen and three civilians killed in the attack that left five ALP members injured in Pul-i-Alam, the provincial capital, at around 10am. The attacker had entered the police HQ in ALP uniform and had been waiting for Sabz Ali to arrive.

When Sabz Ali and other ALP officials arrived at the police building, the attacker detonated his explosives, killing Ali and several others.

At the same time in Nangarhar province, three policemen were killed in the city of Jalalabad by a bomb planted in a rickshaw.

In yet another incident in the capital Kabul, three people were injured by a roadside bomb.

These incidents happen only a day after a suicide bomber attacked the police headquarters in the capital Kabul, which resulted in death of police chief's office manager Col. Yasin Khan and injury to six policemen and a child.

This wave of bombings seems to be very threatening and gives rise to certain questions, as well. The main question remains that how could the bombers enter the highly guarded police headquarters both in Logar and in Kabul. This indicates that some insiders could have been involved in these bombings and Afghan national and local police have to take serious notice of the incidents.

At the same time these incidents have targeted Afghan police who are basically to protect common people and ensure security. By targeting them the insurgents want to dominate the psychology of the people with fear and uncertainty.

According to the US figures, this year alone, more than 4,600 Afghan soldiers and police have been killed in fighting, which is not a small number. The sacrifices of our soldiers and police should not go in vain and tangible measures have to be taken by the government to ensure that security is guaranteed for all the people of Afghanistan.

On the other hand, Afghan police has to tackle the situation with a very clear planning. This current wave is directly targeting them and they have to be prepared for such attacks in coming times, as well. There have to be measures carried out not only to control the attacks from outside but also from within. There have to be procedures and methods to identify the culprits from amongst the forces; otherwise, such incidents would repeat.

The security situation, as a whole, is the matter of discussion at the moment as most of international security forces have withdrawn or are withdrawing. As they complete their withdrawal, Afghan security forces are left with inadequate capabilities to fight the increasing insecurity. Amongst them the most dominant one is the limited air support that is very important during the clashes with insurgents.

Taliban insurgents have always claimed the responsibilities for the attacks openly. For the current attacks in the police headquarters as well they claimed the responsibility and their spokesman, Zabiullah Mujahid said the attack on the Logar police headquarters was part of their operation codenamed "Khyber." He said 12 policemen, including Sabz Ali, were killed and several others were wounded in the suicide attack.

Such attacks are also dangerous in a sense that they increase the confidence of the insurgents and they can start claiming that they can target anywhere they like.

There have been commitments by international community that the support for Afghan security forces would continue but that requires to be quick and timely so that Afghan security forces and people do not incur heavy loss. Security would play a very prominent role in the times to come. The political stability and economic growth would largely depend on it. In the short run, government with the support of security forces has to develop a plan on how to counter the attacks by the insurgents, while in the long run government needs to make practicable and committed efforts to pursue peace talks with the insurgents based on a comprehensive and clear strategy.