

افغانستان آزاد – آزاد افغانستان

AA-AA

چو کشور نېاشد تن من مباد بدین بوم ویر زنده یک تن مباد
همه سر به سر تن به کشتن دهیم از آن به که کشور به دشمن دهیم

www.afgazad.com

afgazad@gmail.com

European Languages

زبان های اروپایی

http://www.outlookafghanistan.net/editorialdetail.php?post_id=16386

Political Crisis Lingers

October 10, 2016

The political syndrome and protracted war in Afghanistan continue unabated and have challenged the National Unity Government (NUG). With the futility of “war on terror” Afghan government established High Peace Council (HPC) in 2010 to bring warring factions to peace table and urged Pakistan to facilitate the talks with the Taliban. The trilateral political haggling continued among Pakistan, Afghanistan and the Taliban for years and Pakistan hosted direct talks between Kabul and Taliban on July 2015, at the popular tourist resort of Murree. Moreover, the Quadrilateral Coordination Group (QCO) constituted of Pakistan, Afghanistan, China and the US held another round of negotiation in Islamabad aimed at reviving long-stalled direct peace talks between Kabul government and the Taliban. The first negotiation came to a standstill with the revelation of Mullah Omar’s death and the second with the death of his successor Mullah Akhtar Mansour – who was killed in the US drone strike.

Subsequently, Mullah Omar’s second successor Mullah Haibatullah Akhundzada intensified the terrorist attacks in Afghanistan and inflicted heavy casualties upon Afghan soldiers and civilians. He followed the very footsteps of Mansour through increasing insurgency and overrunning Kunduz – which was also overran on September 2015 for some days as a result of the Taliban’s spring offensive led by Mansour. In other words, Mansour’s death brought no challenges in Taliban’s policy towards the country and their heavy offensives and militancy continue unabated. Haibatullah is also an obstacle before peace talks, however, he moves more cautiously than Mansour perhaps fears falling prey to the US drone strike.

The escalated insurgency resulted in heavy casualties and humanitarian crisis. The UN reported earlier that at least 1,601 civilian have been killed and 3,565 others wounded in the first half of the current year, showing a record surge of four percent compared to the same period in 2015. Moreover, even without reliable Afghan government statistics for 2015 and 2016, the trends indicated by anecdotal evidence and UN figures point to a silently evolving, increasingly alarming humanitarian crisis. According to UNHCR, the total numbers of “people of concern”, including Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), refugees and returnees, nearly doubled between 2013 and 2015, rising from 985,197 to 1.77 million people. UNOCHA estimates that 265,141 more were displaced from their homes in 31 of 34 provinces between 1 January and 15 September 2016.

On top of this has come an unprecedented rise in recent months in the return of registered and unregistered refugees from Pakistan, averaging 5,000 people daily in early September. Combined with the new internally displaced, an alarming one million (57 per cent of whom are children) could be on the move just as winter sets in between September and December 2016. All will require urgent food assistance, health, shelter and other essential services. This spike in the numbers of IDPs and returnees will increase the percentage of the population facing seasonal or permanent food insecurity beyond the current estimate of 40 per cent, and will further strain already meager economic and employment opportunities and public services.

The NUG’s inability or unwillingness to respond to these challenges has profound implications for both its legitimacy and the future of the post-Taliban political order. In the Asia Foundation’s 2015 Survey of the Afghan People, citizens who believed the country was going in the right direction declined to 37 per cent from 55 percent in 2014. After insecurity, worsening economic conditions were cited as the main reason for such pessimism. While the NUG inherited problems that were already mounting before it was formed in September 2014, the Afghan public increasingly links the worsening economy with the government’s policies and/or inability to perform.

It is aptly said that “it never rains but it pours”. Afghanistan’s challenges also come in large packages and the NUG is wrestling with many crises. To tackle the issues, there are a lot to be done: First, the officials and political parties will have to cultivate trust among themselves – which will also be instrumental in bridging the gap between state and nation. Secondly, the setbacks in the government’s machinery which hamper the political reforms i.e. administrative corruptions, bribery, lack of law enforcement, etc. must be eradicated and corrupt figures are to be pursued and prosecuted. Thirdly, stronger strategy to counter insurgency is to be adopted to tackle terrorism and protect the life and liberty of the nation.

Pakistan still suggests the negotiation of peace as a panacea for the escalated insurgency despite its frequent failure. Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif has recently underlined the need for a negotiated settlement of the conflict to ensure stability in the country. He said Pakistan’s civil and military leadership were in touch with Afghan counterparts on facilitating the peace talks. “We believe that an Afghan led and Afghan owned reconciliation process is vital to long term peace. We have conveyed to the leadership of Afghanistan that the enemies of Afghanistan are the enemies of Pakistan and we have stood by our words,” he is cited as saying.

Meanwhile, Afghan government calls on warring parties to stop violence and bloodshed and join the peace process. A bona fide peace talks will be significant in political stability in the country but the Taliban are not only to show the green light but also prove sincerity in this regard through declaring ceasefire and decreasing their terrorist activities.