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Distribution: 2300337 - 0795551313
Address: 2nd Floor, Liberty Printing Press Building
2nd Microayon, Kabul, Afghanistan

Editorial

Winning elusive peace in Afghanistan

Afghanistan has made eye-catching progress in every sector since 2001, but the country still remains the regional and global frontline in fight against terrorism, narcotics, and criminality. Thousands of innocent Afghans, including women and children, have been killed and wounded, due to non-stop terrorist attacks on Afghan villages, towns, cities, as well as public and private institutions.

The country's neighbors fail to act on the fact that a stable Afghanistan ensures and enables a stable region. Even though consensus on the need to stabilize Afghanistan often emerges in rhetoric, it rarely translates into tangible results for achieving durable peace, which the Afghan people desire the most.

The Afghan government time and again has called upon Taliban and those countries having influence on them to make peace a reality in the war-torn country. Despite holding of several peace talks in the country and abroad, the peace still remained elusive as Taliban's supporting states lacked honesty in the process.

Facing much pressures from US and the allies, Pakistan has shown green light to once again resume the peace process. Recently a meeting of the Quadilateral Coordination Group (QCG) is due in Muscat, the capital of Oman, next week to discuss Afghanistan's peace process after a long gap, an official said on Monday.

The group, involving senior officials from Afghanistan, Pakistan, China and the US, last met in May 2016 in Islamabad, when they had agreed to give peace a chance.

In their fourth meeting that held in Kabul in February 2016, the group announced that representatives of the Afghan government and Taliban insurgents would meet in Islamabad by the first week of March for direct talks. But it did not happen and the Afghan government accused Pakistan of not honoring its previous made at such meetings and withdrew from the process.

According to Afghan officials, the Muscat meeting will define goals for the next three months and discuss making a mechanism for continued negotiations. The meeting would be attended by delegations from the Afghan government and the High Peace Council (HPC).

There is no doubt that when sources of support for terrorism dry up, militants would automatically be compelled to opt for a win-win political solution through peace talks. Afghanistan needs nothing less for sustainable peace to take root in the country and the rest of the region.

Measurable sincere regional cooperation is essential for ensuring that any joint peace efforts will bear the results Afghanistan and the region ultimately seek. And that is an end to the suffering of the Afghan people, which would enable them to further consolidate their hard-earned gains of the past 16 years, in continued partnership with the international community.

Taliban must realize that they cannot win militarily. The way forward shouldn't be more of the same: violence and bloodshed. Instead, Afghan message to them is clear that the Afghan government and people want peace; that they seek to achieve peace through direct talks with the authoritative leadership of the Taliban and that the best venue for their face-to-face peace talks is in Afghanistan or at a location mutually acceptable to both sides.

Press Review

The daily Reporting about citizens concern over election's process, the state-run paper in its editorial said that the NUG leaders were the people's concern about election process is comprehensible, as the electoral commission faces the challenge to take comprehensive plans as well as the commission is responsible to work hard to hold fair and free elections in the country, the paper added.

The daily said: The state-run paper in its editorial urged for serious and practical steps for providing fair conditions in the country, adding that recently the Taliban commanders has said that they are increasing their attacks on Afghan security.

Therefore, the government should make efforts to undertake effective and serious plans to end war and prevent insurgent groups' attacks in the country, the paper added.

The News Daily Calling Pakistan as serious supporter, the private paper in an article said that the US while announcing its new strategy had said that however presence of insurgents' sanctuaries in Pakistan is not tolerable.

So, now it's the time that necessary political pressures should be exerted on Pakistan to stop its intervention and financing of terrorist on its soil, the paper added.

Desk of Reporters

NUG making efforts to hold transparent parliamentary elections

As concerns and criticisms has increased recently over holding parliamentary elections, the National Unity Government is informing of efforts for holding the elections next year.

National unity government considers increasing concerns of the people over the elections as perceivable and is asking electoral commission to address the people's concerns.

In a session of council of ministers, chief executive Dr. Abdullah Abdullah has stressed that previous experiences should not be repeated, adding that it was necessary that trust of the people related to accuracy, precision and transparency of election process should be harmed.

President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani has also instructed security organs of the government to prepare and finalize security program for upcoming parliamentary elections, insisting that national unity government would ensure security of the people during the elections.

A number of civil society and electoral monitor organizations have considered holding the elections on its time as necessary and asked the government to take practical steps in this regard.

Nawaz Ayoubzade, head of Afghanistan Fair Election Organization has also considered holding reforms in electoral system as effective for holding the upcoming elections, adding that the people of Afghanistan wanted the government to specify its program to prepare and finalize security program for upcoming parliamentary elections.

On the other hand, a number of experts while considering interference in electoral commission as serious concern have said efforts should be made to national unity government to provide better facilities for holding transparent parliamentary elections in the country.

Arman Ashrafmand, an Afghan political expert says 2014 presidential elections was one of the worst elections in history of Afghanistan, so it is necessary that upcoming parliamentary elections should be held free of any violations and frauds so that the people's trust earned in 2014 presidential elections could be revived again.

Another Afghan expert about the violation of part of elections issues, but electronic machines should be distributed in order to avoid frauds and enhance in upcoming parliamentary elections.

These experts say after a series of changes in Afghanistan electoral commission, hopes of the people have increased. On the other hand, national unity government is also making efforts and fully determined to hold parliamentary elections on its exact time and the people's trust over Afghan parliamentary elections can be once again revived.

Surya Kaleasa

Successful war on drug needs joint sincere strategy

A two days meeting of war on drugs was held in Kabul with the participation of senior officials from Iran, China, Russia, Pakistan, Tajikistan and Afghanistan.

The participants discussed important issues including issues of regional cooperation for enforcement of law, intelligence exchange, eradication of criminal, money laundry, improvement of border control and prevention of precursor, distribution of drug trafficking literature, regional cooperation in the field of decreasing

addition of their citizens at any cost.

Currently, Afghanistan is engulfed with three vital challenges: corruption, money laundry and terrorism. They need to support the other respectively.

If all these three are not fought simultaneously, we would not manage to witness silver over the single one. All dimensions of drug including cultivation, production, sale and trafficking disturb our ethics, health, religion, economic-political life and national identity.

The Afghan MACN has started work on verification of counter-drug strategy at a time that poppy cultivation and drug trafficking have impressively increased, and over 20000 souls have lost their lives.

Such an agreement and taking practical steps in war on drugs in Afghanistan would not be from current chaotic situation and in case of continuation of such situation we can never be changed to a capable and self-reliant country.

Lailana Dost

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