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Editorial

Pakistani officials still speak on behalf of Taliban

Pakistani authorities have always claimed that Islamabad policy on Afghanistan has changed. Pakistani civil and military authorities have always said that Islamabad is in favor of a peaceful solution of Afghanistan conflict, end of war and establishment of a reliable peace and stability in this country. But considering their practical steps and their recent statement, they will only support restoration of peace and reliable stability in Afghanistan in case if it would be in the interest of their country and the Taliban and save the way for return of this group to power.

Indeed, Pakistanis are awaiting the Afghan people and government to submit unconditionally to Taliban, obey their requests and demands and hand over power to them without any resistance.

In an exclusive interview with Tolo News TV channel, Pakistani Minister of Foreign Affairs Shah Mahmood Quraishi called the leadership of the Afghan government as an obstacle to before lasting peace in the war-torn country. While according to him, Taliban are ready to make peace with the Afghan government and are no longer behind the increasing violence.

Whenever Quraishi was asked that whether continuation of war and intensified violence by Taliban was indicator of their pacifism or not? He answered that other groups and circles are behind intensified violence and war in Afghanistan not the Taliban. Quraishi mentioned ISIS as one of the groups behind recent violence in the country.

In this interview, Quraishi concentrated Taliban in killings and continued violence in Afghanistan and added they are completely in favor of restoration of peace and stability in Afghanistan. Pakistani official tried to cover all crimes committed by Taliban against the Afghan people and interpreted militarism and militancy of this group as their pacifism.

Soon after the interview aired, most of the Pakistani officials, including their key lawmakers such as Mohsen Dowar, Abrarullah Khattak and others blamed Quraishi for speaking on behalf Taliban and ignoring their terrorist activities.

Indeed, the Pakistan minister was talking on behalf of Taliban in such a way that as the voice of Taliban official spokesmen, not minister of foreign affairs of the neighboring country. He completely and frankly refined Pakistan's political, military, financial and diplomatic support of Taliban. He even rejected presence and activities of Taliban leaders and their military-political councils in Pakistani territory.

Recent utterances of Shah Mahmood Quraishi on issues related to Afghanistan war and peace is indicating that no changes has taken place in Pakistan's policy and strategy on Afghanistan. Quraishi's word in his interview was indicator of Pakistan insincerity in Afghanistan peace process.

Pakistan is still endeavoring to bring Taliban to power whether through war or negotiations and then dominate and control politics and power in Afghanistan. Indeed Pakistan wants to have another Herzbollah to itself so through it dominate Afghanistan and the region's situation.

Behavior, words and action of Pakistani rulers indicate continuation of their support for Taliban. Pakistan's continued double standard policy on Afghanistan shows clearly to Afghan people and government that should never trust the neighboring country in vital peace process.

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Afghanistan: Health hazard – Analysis

By: Sanechia Bhattacharya

Year	Incidents of attacks on health facilities and personnel
2011	10
2012	21
2013	32
2014	47
2015	63
2016	119
2017	75
2018	62
2019	75
2020	90
2021 (Till March)	21
Total	615

door-to-door vaccination, but even vaccination activities in their 'territory', largely in eastern Afghanistan. Later, as reported on May 9, 2019, fumbling reasons for the ban, Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid told the Afghan Analysis network via WhatsApp.

The situation deteriorated further, when a call for nationwide ban on all vaccination was made in April 2019 for a period of five months. In 2020, hopes were raised that the Taliban would allow teams to vaccinate at control points in Taliban territory, but it still go-ahead has not yet been given as of June, 2021. He said, "The Taliban have said, 'We will not allow anyone to enter our territory, including health workers, unless they are approved by our leadership.'"

The violence against medical professionals, especially police vaccinators, causes immense worry, as Afghanistan struggles to combat a disease that has largely been eliminated around the world. Unfortunately, Afghanistan is, alongside Pakistan, one of the last countries in the world where polio is endemic. The World

Health Organization (WHO) has been warning of a health hazard in Afghanistan since 2011, he tweeted on March 19, 2021.

Also, describing Taliban activities on healthcare workers, UNAMA's Special Report Attacks on Healthcare During the Covid-19 Pandemic, published in June, 2020, noted: "In spite of the ongoing pandemic, on May 12, 2020, unidentified terrorists attacked a maternity ward run by Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF) (Doctors Without Borders), killing 23 civilians in the Dushanbe branch area of Kabul city. Security forces killed four

terrorists on the site, who, as eyewitnesses said, were wearing Afghan military uniforms." The conflict in Afghanistan has had a catastrophic impact on the healthcare sector. According to the Human Rights Watch report titled, "Would-Be Four Kids - If We Stay Alive," dated May 6, 2021,

as a result, as reported on March 18, 2020, influenced by the prospect of a coronavirus epidemic, a 60 per cent of Afghanistan under fire control the Taliban 'plotted' their readiness to work with health care workers instead of killing them. Also, reports in April 2021 indicate that many top members of the Taliban, including Taliban's chief Hakimullah Akhundzada and Taliban's deputy chief Sirajuddin Haqqani, contacted the COVID-19 crisis.

Back in September 2020, the Taliban Health Sector, and the number is rapidly increasing. The Taliban is now present in almost every province of Afghanistan and is maintaining several major cities, a report of these strategies of the mid-1990s.

The security situation in Afghanistan is slated to deteriorate rapidly because the health sector, like any other sector, will suffer the consequences of increased chaos.

The author is a research fellow at Institute for Conflict Management. This article also appeared in East Asia Review website.

