Narcotics; silent tsunami in Afghanistan

26 June is observed as the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking. Cultivation, production and illicit trafficking of drugs are considered as the biggest dream of world countries in the 21st century.

International Conference on Counter Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking was formed by the United Nations in Vienna city from 17 – 26 June 1987 to express full political determination in connection with counter narcotics. In the conference, a document titled C.M.O was approved by member countries. The document is considered as an expression of its determination to strengthen action and cooperation to achieve the goals of an international society free of drug abuse.

The document is also considered as a comprehensive policy in fighting and controlling drug and narcotics and making member countries to seriously follow measures towards counter narcotics.

In this conference, a document was prepared in 4 chapters in which more than 35 practical measures such as assessment of consumption, prevention via education, role of media in returning addicts to society and their treatment, eradication of illegal poppy fields, rooting of major drug trafficking networks and the legal cooperation of countries are included.

Afghanistan is now facing with increasing narcotics as poppy cultivation and production are increasing by passing each day in the country. The main reason of increasing poppy cultivation and production of narcotics in the country is continued war and instability. Despite financial support from Pakistan's ISI, the Taliban need some domestic financial resources to continue war in Afghanistan. To do so, the group promotes poppy cultivation under their control areas.

In addition to promotion of poppy cultivation, some Taliban commanders are involved in drug-trafficking and trade of drugs; therefore, poppy cultivation has increased in most areas in the country. On the other hand, a number of Afghanistan's neighbours have some parts in increasing poppy cultivation.

For example, chemical materials are needed to produce narcotics and other types of drugs. Therefore, neighboring countries help the Taliban group to produce different types of drugs to traffic to other countries of the world. It is said that 14,000 tons chemical stuffs provided only by Pakistan and Iran are needed to produce 7,000 tons of narcotics in Afghanistan. Pakistan's intelligence network is clearly supporting the Taliban group in producing narcotics and drugs in Afghanistan to destabilize the country and destroy the country's economic system.

Areas where poppy is cultivated is mostly in Afghanistan's south, west and east. Afghanistan's Helmand and Kandahar are producing the country's 65 percent of poppy. Besides, Nangarhar, Farah, Nimroz and Herat are other provinces cultivating poppy and producing narcotics, while in the country's central and northern provinces, hashish is widely producing. So far, no comprehensive plan has been made for reduction and full eradication of narcotics and poppy cultivation in Afghanistan. On the other hand, continued war has prevented from most plans if made for fully rooting out the phenomenon in the country. Now, we should wait and see whether any peace agreement can prevent from increasing poppy cultivation in the country or not. **Lailuma Noori**

NATO provides $320m for upgrading Afghan forces

KABUL: In a recent meeting with Afghan Authorities, NATO officials said that the organization would spend up to $320 million for improving Afghan forces capacity.

The Ministry of National Defense appreciates NATO's cooperation in strengthening the country's defense and security forces, and considers the role of this assistance in increasing the capacity and capabilities of these forces important and effective.

"The support of the international community, especially NATO, has an effective role to play in enhancing the combat and professional capabilities of the Afghan forces," said Fawad Aman, deputy spokesman for the Ministry of Defense.

"The defense and security forces are ready to defend the country independently and will not allow the Taliban to once again impose an 'illegitimate regime' on the people through war and bloodshed," he added.

While welcoming the continued cooperation of NATO with the Afghan military forces, a numbers of experts and representatives of the people in the Parliament emphasize that Afghanistan needs the strong cooperation of the international community in the fight against terrorism.

"Unfortunately, the current strategy for combating international terrorism is geographically incorrectly focused, and this strategy has somehow failed," said A. Hadi Khalid, a former deputy interior minister and senior military official.

"Therefore, the fight can only be effective if the Afghan security forces are fully equipped to be able to defend the security of the people and their country well," he said.

"The Afghan government has no doubt been unable to fight terrorism alone because the fight against terrorism requires global determination. The world knows that Afghanistan is a victim of terrorism, which is why NATO has repeatedly emphasized the need to equip Afghan forces," he said.

"Unfortunately, the 20-year presence of foreign forces in Afghanistan has not been able to provide security. As promised, the world has equipped Afghan forces as promised. Now is a very good time for NATO to pay more attention to the training and equipping of Afghan forces," said Amir Mohammad.

Meanwhile, a number of citizens say: "Despite the 20-year mission of these countries in Afghanistan to fight terrorist groups, unfortunately, terrorism is taking its toll on our innocent people every day and now Afghan forces are in a fierce battle with the Taliban."

"The international community should not leave Afghanistan alone and cooperate in training and equipping the Afghan security forces so that they can act alone in the fight against terrorism and ensure the security of their country," they said.

"As NATO insists, the end of our mission in Afghanistan does not mean the end of security threats, so the international community has not been able to eradicate terrorism in spite of billions of dollars in its 20-year presence. Afghan security forces are scarce," military experts say. How can they deal with these threats? Serious attention needs to be paid to funding and equipping the Afghan security forces.

Unfortunately, the spread of insecurity in Afghanistan, especially in insecure provinces, the hands from outside of the country are increasingly involved and they want the war in Afghanistan to continue so that they can use it to their advantage.

The capabilities of the Afghan security forces are currently increasing, and they are fighting the government's armed opposition on the battlefield with a high fighting spirit.

What is happening in the country today is only the blessing of the sacrifices of the Afghan forces who provide security for the people and their country by shielding their chests, so the only option that can affect their capabilities and prevent their losses is to end the war and ensure peace in Afghanistan.

Over the past 20 years, NATO has spent billions of dollars to fight terrorism in Afghanistan, but terrorism will still be a threat not only to the Afghan people but to the region and the world. **Suraya Raiszada**

Photos: President Ghani and his accompanying delegation paid a two-day official visit to US and met with key officials, including President Biden, Defense Secretary Austin, House Speaker Pelosi, Senate Majority and Minority leaders at the Capitol. US reiterated enduring political, military and economic supports to Afghanistan post foreign troops withdrawal.

1. President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani arrives at the West Wing of the White House to meet with President Joe Biden in Washington, Friday, June 25, 2021.

2. President Ghani & HCNR Chairman Abdullah meeting US President Biden in the Oval Office on June 25.

3. US Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin welcoming President Ghani and HCNR Chairman in Pentagon, June 25, 2021.

4. President Ghani and US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi addressing media after bilateral talks at US Capitol, June 24, 2021.

5. From left, Chairman of HCNR Abdullah Abdullah, U.S. Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, Afghan President Ashraf Ghani, and U.S. Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, pose for a photo on Capitol Hill in Washington, June 24, 2021.