People mobilization forces will be legalized, Shinwari

KABUL: Following the spread of Taliban militants attacks on a number of districts, the people mobilization has been formed alongside the security forces against the group. However, there are concerns that the people's forces may turn into a headache for the people and the government, but the security agencies said that the forces would continue operating legally within the framework of the regional army.

Ajmal Omar Shinwari, the Joint Spokesman of the country's national defense and security forces, addressed the same issue in a press conference as saying the people's mobilization forces are an achievement for the people and the security forces of the country and in the near future they will be integrated with small units of the regional army.

The spokesman for the security forces said that the people's mobilization forces would be part of the regular military framework and would operate within the form of a regional camp alongside the security and defense forces of the country.

This remark can be a response to the concerns that a number of people have about the consequences of people mobilizations being formed by each passing day to fight growing insurgency. Some believe that the local mobilization force can be a barrier to the Taliban's offensives and hegemony, and some see it as militarization that will ultimately equip more irresponsible gunmen to may turn into a headache for the system.

Reacting to the Amnesty International's accusation of the government forces and the Taliban militants of violating human rights standards, Shinwari added that the principles of warfare are fully respected by the security and defense forces, while the Taliban don't abide by the principles and rules of law. "They do not adhere to war and human rights and their acts area contrary to the Islamic teachings, national interests and national and international human rights laws as they kill innocents and destroy public facilities," the spokesman noted.

According to him, regular military organizations have already been provided for the popular mobilizations, and the security agencies have also considered the training conditions of these forces, and the regional army after professional training at the level of military tactics with the security forces will carry out operations under the army's command in war on insurgency.

Shinwari also noted some other security programs to be launched through discussion with a number of the country's retired experienced officers and generals. He said the Ministry of Interior creates reserve units from the existing 4,000 troops of the ministry waiting for high security and emergency threats in the country, which will be led by retired generals and officers.

Meantime, Shinwari confirmed the presence of Pakistani citizens in the ongoing war in Afghanistan, saying that during the past month, 33 Pakistani citizens fighting alongside the Taliban militants against government forces were killed and 9 others wounded.

On the other, Mir Rahman Rahmani the Speaker of the House of People said that the government should use the people uprising forces against the Taliban within the framework of the local army to provide full support to the government forces. He stressed that mobilizing of the people to defend the territorial integrity and preserve the values of the system under such circumstances was very important and their activities need to be legalized. About people mobilization, opportunity or threat Ali Akbar Jamshidi, a member of parliament, also said that mobilizing the people uprising against the Taliban was important in the current situation, but the program should be lodged within official security institutions.

"People's forces should be subordinated to the security forces, not their commanders otherwise, it will be problematic in the future," he said. Nevertheless, concerns about the future of the people forces mobilization continue to grow as no one knows what stronger force, in the future would able to manage and control this emerging and gaining-power formations.

A serious concern is the situation in Iraq as in the ISIS-affected nation, people uprising and local mobilization were formed with the historic fatwa of Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Sistani to fight ISIS and help prevent the Iraqi army from collapse, while today, these forces themselves have become a serious and fundamental challenge to security in Iraq. The army led by the Baghdad government is unable to contain these forces, and the main opposite side to their war now is not ISIS but American forces. This is a serious question, and the government's announcement that it will reorganize these forces within the local or regional army is not thought to be a convincing answer to this concern, because the formation of a local or regional army is, in the opinion of military experts, a risky and unreliable plan, especially in a situation where other similar initiatives, such as the creation of a local police force, have already failed with detrimental consequences. **Suraya Raiszada**

Afghanistan welcomes results of Ministerial Meeting of Global Coalition against Daesh

Afghanistan Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) in a statement has welcomed results of the Ministerial Meeting of the Global Coalition against Daesh held in Rome, stressing on joint and overall regional and world effort towards address threats posed by international terrorism.

The Ministerial Meeting/ of the Global Coalition to Defeat Daesh/ISIS was held days ago in Rome. US Department of State in a statement has said that participants in the meeting praised Afghanistan government for its efforts towards fighting the IS-Khorasan in the country.

The meeting's participants reaffirmed/ their shared determination to continue the fight against Daesh/ISIS, and to create conditions for the enduring defeat of the terrorist group,/ which remains the Coalition's sole purpose,/ through a comprehensive, coordinated and multifaceted effort.

The meeting's participants emphasized/ the protection of civilians/ as a priority/ and affirmed that international law, including international humanitarian law and international human rights law, as applicable, as well as relevant UN Security Council/ resolutions, must be upheld under all circumstances./

The participants committed/ to strengthening/ cooperation across all Coalition lines of effort in order to/ ensure that Daesh/ISIS/ Core/ in/ Iraq and Syria,/ and its/ affiliates and/ networks/ around the/ world/ are unable to reconstitute any territorial enclave or continue to threaten our homelands, people, and interests./

Participants in the meting remain firmly united in their outrage at atrocities perpetrated by Daesh/ ISIS and in their determination to eliminate this global threat, and stand alongside survivors and families of victims of Daesh/ISIS crimes working for accountability.

The Ministers/ tasked the Coalition Working Groups to assess ways in which they can contribute to counter Daesh/ISIS efforts in/ the affected regions./ / The Ministers also welcomed Afghanistan's efforts to counter the Islamic State-Khurasan (IS-K).

The Coalition reaffirmed its belief that a/ comprehensive and collective effort/ remains necessary to achieve a full and enduring defeat of Daesh/ISIS worldwide. The Global Coalition to Defeat Daesh/ ISIS has proven that it is a cohesive, responsive/ tool that has achieved notable successes/ through military, political, stabilization, counter-messaging, financial, and law enforcement lines of effort.

Currently, Daesh seriously intends to organize a large-scale uprising and recruit fighters in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and in Central Asian countries. We wetness that a number of elements of the "al-Qaeda terrorist organization", including Tajiks, Uighurs and Uzbeks, all of whom, of course, formed the outer body of ISIS in Afghanistan. However, most experts in Afghanistan believe that what they are committing in the name of ISIS in Afghanistan is a branch or other group of Taliban that is equipped by Pakistan. But Pakistan's direct and indirect role in the growth of ISIS in Afghanistan is also important. It is worth mentioning that Pakistan was and is a good place for terrorist groups having safe havens, training centers and good place to recruit fighters for fighting in Afghanistan and other countries in the region.

Lailuma Noori

Taliban have no way except returning to peace talks

In the wake of mobilization of people in support of ANDSF in northern areas, Kapisa, Salang, Khenjan, Khost-o-Fering, Andarab, Tala-o-Berfak, Central Bghlan, Kunduz, Takhar, Samangan, Jawzjan, Faryab, Balkhab, Mazar-e-SDharif, Uruzgan, Paktia, Paktika, Nangarhar, Herat etc, the Taliban reduced their military activities and refused on many occasions to invade other regions.

Particularly when in Baghlan and Balkh province people uprisings entered the war practically in support of the government forces and recaptured Khenjan and Doshi districts from the Taliban.

After Gen Besmillah Mohammadi's appointment as acting defense minister, in a statement he asked the people to stay alongside the government forces.

He said that the government would distribute weapon to those who want to fight the Taliban beside the government and would spare no cooperation.

Gen Muhammadi has written that the original and spiritual owners of ANDSF are the people.

"ANDSF are the pillar of power and sustainability of Afghanistan and this pillar will be sustainable with people's mass support. I kindly request once again all countrymen to continue their support of ANDSF," he said.

Since US president Joe Biden announced a complete withdrawal of his country's forces by Sep 11 of the current year from Afghanistan, the Taliban under different pretexts left the negotiation table and intensified conflict in all parts of Afghanistan that caused a deadlock to the intra-Afghan peace talks on one hand and shed the blood of thousands innocent people on the other.

Since the beginning of intra-Afghan talks, the Afghan armed forces were in defensive position at the order of Afghan president and supreme commander of the armed forces, Taliban managed to gain control of a number of districts in some provinces and announced it their final victory secretly.

Wise people easily know that the Taliban will not reach political power through force because neither the regional and international atmosphere is suitable nor national conditions allow them.

Intensification of war by Taliban is a symbol of their carelessness to the blood and property of the people of Afghanistan. Because in all these wars, only Afghans are killed, the Afghan people assets and properties are destroyed or burned in the flames of fire.

Only in the first six months of 2021, over 13,000 people have been killed in Afghanistan with no foreign national among them, and the blood of no non-Muslim was shed. These shocking and painful data were released by Iran International reporter Haroon Najafizadas from a western document.

Intensification of war obviously sends this message that Taliban attach no importance to talks and negotiation on one hand and on the other they don't believe in peace with Afghans, while everything was possible to be discussed and agreed upon.

Most likely, people mobilization in support of the Afghan government on one hand and the US financial, military and political support of the Afghan government post-troops withdrawal, on the other has changed the Taliban believe, a thought that at least for over 27 years has recognized nothing except war, bloodshed and killing and has always been dreaming power.

The Afghan people and world have no good conception of Taliban rule and the people no longer want to be slashed on every street and road and the world people don't want to witness another Sep 11 once again.

This would be better for the Taliban to return to the negotiation- table honestly as this is the only option to pave the way for the group to share power with other Afghans. **The Kabul Times**

The Booksellers of Kabul

A tale of two booksellers in Kabul whose personal histories and unlikely friendship epitomize Afghanistan's contradictions and offer hope for its future

By Emran Feroz

For the last 25 years, Shams ul-Haqq and Haji Sherazuddin have been selling books next to each other, near the Bagh-e-Omoomi bridge close to Kabul's grand bazaar. One is a former communist, the other a former mujahid. Both have witnessed and participated in Afghanistan's turbulent history over the past half century. They have seen the rise and fall of regimes and today sell books about the men who made and unmade them.

Shams is in his 60s, with a white beard. He sells political biographies and history books. On his shelves lie volumes that describe the very history he has lived through. A biography of the mujahideen commander Ahmad Shah Massoud sits beside one of the country's last communist dictators, Dr. Mohammad Najibullah. Farther down the shelf is a biography of Mohammad Zahir Shah, the country's last king, who in his later years came to be known nostalgically as Baba-ye Mellat (Father of the Nation). The choice of foreign biographies hints at the country's eclectic political sensibilities. Farsi and Pashto translations of Hitler's "Mein Kampf" lie next to a copy of Che Guevara's "Bolivian Diary." Some of the books are in English.

"Most of these men and their ideologies destroyed our country," says Shams. "However, fewer people buy these books these days."

Sherazuddin has sold textbooks from the start.

It was during the Taliban era that the two set up shop next to each other in the bazaar. Back then, both men received their books from Iranian and Pakistani distributors. Today, most books are printed in Afghanistan. During the Taliban era, book sales were restricted. "Although controls only happened occasionally, the Taliban obviously did not like books about secularism, socialism, or communism, and Iranian books, too, were unpopular because of their Shiite state ideology," Sherazuddin recalls. Books about the Muslim Brotherhood and their ideology were also banned.

Most of their customers are young Afghans, mainly students. "Unlike the past, there are many schools and universities in today's Kabul," says Shams. "We benefit from that." Other customers are known intellectuals or former politicians and military officials. Thanks to their demands, he earns around 500-600 afghani each day ($6-7) with which he can feed his family of 10. His sons sometimes help him run his open-air shop.

Unsurprisingly, the two booksellers at first did not get along. "He took the place next to me by force, typical mujahideen style," Shams chuckles. "It's fate that we, two former enemies, ended up here together. If we can make peace, so can other Afghans," he adds.

During the 1980s, Shams was a reconnaissance officer in the Afghan communist regime's air force. Though he wasn't a member of the party, he still holds a favorable view of the Saur Revolution, the April 1978 communist coup. "Call it whatever you want, coup or revolution, but I can confirm that many young people in Kabul supported it. I grew up amongst them," he says.

As a young urbanite, he believed that true progress could only come through fundamental change. Like many Kabulis, he was not satisfied with the policies of President Mohammad Daoud Khan, who had come to power in 1973 after toppling his cousin King Mohammad Zahir Shah in a bloodless coup. Daoud's rule alienated both Islamists and communists, who were imprisoned in large numbers.

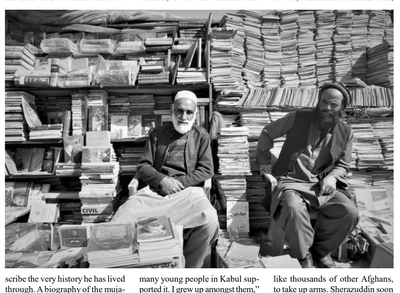
After Daoud's murder, the communist reign of terror began. Many politicians, intellectuals, activists, writers, and religious figures were arrested and killed. Noor Mohammad Taraki, Afghanistan's first communist dictator, pronounced that "all enemies of the revolution" needed to be executed, as once dictated "by Lenin himself." After Taraki was killed by his protege, Hafizullah Amin, things only became worse. Detentions and executions increased. Finally, during Christmas 1979, the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan, toppling Amin and replacing him with the more pliant Babrak Karmal.

"At first, it was not that different than in 2001, when the Americans and their allies entered Afghanistan," says Shams. "A lot of people in Kabul were happy that someone intervened to end the mess." But during the 10-year Soviet occupation, the situation deteriorated. While Karmal and the Kremlin's other clients ruled in Kabul, Soviet-led counterinsurgency operations devastated the countryside. The insurgency grew, and the mujahideen rebels received global support from rich Persian Gulf countries, Europe, the United States, and Pakistan.

"I did not like the mujahideen," says Shams. "I believed the state propaganda. I thought they were the main problem, not the regime."

Later, like thousands of other communist functionaries, he changed sides. It was not uncommon in the 1980s for many to be working for the Kabul government while secretly holding a membership card for Hizb-e-Islami, the largest mujahideen faction, led by Gulbuddin Hekmatyar.

Sherazuddin, originally from Kabul's Chardee area, joined Harakat-e Inqilab-e Islami, the mujahideen faction led by Mawlawi Mohammad Nabi Mohammadi, when he was 17. After the Saur Revolution, several of his family members were imprisoned and executed, which forced Sherazuddin, like thousands of other Afghans, to take up arms. Sherazuddin soon developed a reputation as a tough fighter.



"I regarded the Afghans who were supporting the Soviets as traitors," he says. "In my eyes, they were worse than the occupiers. But later I realized things were more complex and that we were all gears in a large machine. From that history, we have to learn." Sherazuddin fought mainly in the southeastern provinces of Logar and Paktia, areas that would later also become centers of armed resistance to the U.S.-led occupation. Unlike him, many of his fellow fighters had never even seen the Afghan capital and believed that all its inhabitants were hedonistic apostates, living a desultory life of drink and debauchery. "Meanwhile," says Sherazuddin, "many Kabulis thought we were heart-eating monsters who drank the blood of their victims."

After the Red Army withdrew in 1989, the communist regime of Mohammad Najibullah remained in power, buttressed by Soviet military and economic aid and attended by Soviet advisers. Najibullah's government survived three more years. The mujahideen conquered Kabul in 1992, and a civil war broke out among their factions for control of the capital. But many former rebels like Sherazuddin refused to participate in the fratricide and returned to their homes.

Shams calls his friend "a true mujahid" because of this. "It was a dark time for the people of Kabul," he says. "And the crimes of the former mujahideen gave the Taliban the reason and opportunity to take over the country. Many people, including myself, welcomed them." Shams senses a similar desire for order and security now. During recent weeks, bombings and targeted assassinations have increased throughout the

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