



AFGHAN PEACE AND RECONCILIATION: PAKISTAN'S INTERESTS AND POLICY OPTIONS

Report of PIPS Consultation-4
held on June 09, 2022 in Islamabad



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BY

PAK INSTITUTE FOR PEACE STUDIES (PIPS)

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ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Pak Institute for Peace Studies (PIPS) expresses gratitude to the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Islamabad for its generous support to this programme, helping the organisation to conduct policy-driven experts' consultations on Pakistan's role in promoting peace and stability in Afghanistan.

Likewise, PIPS is thankful to all the learned resource persons who participated in this third quarterly consultation and shared their expert knowledge on the subject. PIPS hopes to benefit from their knowledge and insights in the future too.

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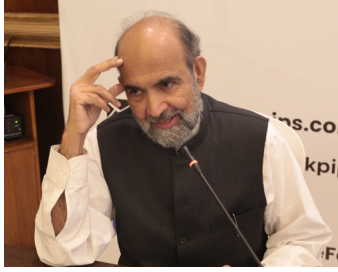
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(Moderator)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Is there a viable administration in Kabul? Should Pakistan have initiated table talks with a 'defeated phenomenon', the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan? Will the Afghan Taliban use their influence on the proscribed TTP to facilitate peace talks? How legitimate is the jirga that was sent to Kabul? These are some of the key questions that were raised by participants of the fourth PIPS-led expert consultation on Afghanistan held on June 9, 2022. Pakistani leadership and public hailed Taliban's capture of Kabul mainly because they had anticipated that this power shift in Afghanistan meant more pressure on the TTP. Opposed to the common view, many experts were of the opinion that this was an unpragmatic expectation from the Afghan Taliban. Because of their tribal affinities and blood relations, TTP and the Afghan Taliban might be considered two sides of the same coin, but their targets and sources are very different. Also, because of the Afghan Taliban being indebted to the TTP for their support during decades long war on terror, they are least likely to pressurise the group for Pakistan. Owing to these reasons, experts were of contrasting opinion. While some believed that since Pakistan has this time adopted the channel of jirga, the talks might be successful, but others asserted that jirga is not a remedial measure as already signalled by TTP's unreasonable demand to govern a territory of Pakistan, ie ex-FATA. Moreover, the legitimacy of these talks has also been questioned. Experts unanimously viewed that Pakistan needs to be "assertive" and must negotiate with the outlawed TTP from the "position of strength". As far as the nature of the jirga is concerned, many held that jirga lacks authority, influential representation and consent of the Council of Islamic Ideology.

The Taliban had announced their government precisely three weeks after capturing Kabul, however, whether they would be able to deliver on governance and intra-Afghan reconciliation still remains an unresolved mystery.

Some experts viewed that it was unreasonable to attach high expectations to the Taliban majorly because they have so far sidelined everyone who was associated with previous governments in Afghanistan and despite repeated calls have not reversed their repressive women centric policies. However, others lauded Taliban's efforts to restore peace in Afghanistan. Similarly, about Taliban's relations with neighbouring countries it has been observed that on one side the Taliban project doubts when engaging with Pakistan, but on the other side they have demonstrated pragmatic approach towards other neighbours. Pakistan though initially left no stone unturned in lobbying for the Taliban administration, but the recent Pakistani air strikes targeting alleged TTP hideouts in Afghanistan have added to anti-Pakistan sentiments in Afghanistan.

Pakistan needs to devise a parliament-led mode of reconciliation and must deal with Afghanistan as a neighbour which has a voice of its own. Meanwhile, though Pakistan claims to have moved towards a well-designed visa policy for Afghans, the reality is just the opposite. While criticising Pakistan's approach, experts opined that a child goes on to become part of black market because due to our stringent immigration policy a child that is born in Pakistan is neither given immigrant status, nor citizenship of Pakistan. Hence, Pakistan must focus its energy on devising an all-encompassing immigrant policy, while also encouraging the world to engage with the Taliban administration to expedite Afghanistan's economic restoration.

EXPLORING PAKISTAN'S POSITION, INTERESTS & POLICY OPTIONS



Moderator: *Today is our fourth consultation titled, “Afghan Peace and Reconciliation: Pakistan’s interests and policy options”. This consultation usually has two sessions in which we discuss some emerging issues in Afghanistan in the quarter under observation. Moreover, the consultation also aims to discuss the challenges faced by Pakistan in that quarter, thereby making it possible to develop some suitable policy recommendations. The proceedings of this consultation are published in the form of a report*

In the first session, the main themes of the discussion will be “Negotiations with the TTP,” and “Taliban’s relations with the neighbouring states of Afghanistan.” I would like to request our keynote speaker Lt General (retd) Naeem Khalid Lodhi to start the discussion.

Lt. General (Retd) Naeem Khalid Lodhi, former Defence Secretary and Minister of Defence of Pakistan

First, let us understand what our sources of information on Afghanistan are. Though, preferably it should have been our journalists and analysts, but unfortunately, we get all the information through CNN and BBC, with almost little to no idea about the authenticity and timeline of news shared with us. Because of this I would say our perspective on Afghanistan is very limited. Coming to Pakistan's main interest in Afghanistan, it is the economic and political stability of Afghanistan, and good relations with Afghanistan will just be an additional interest. So our fundamental interest is that Afghanistan remains peaceful and stable and our additional interest is that it becomes our friend. Whatever, I will share with you my perceptions.



My opinion on current negotiations with TTP is a bit controversial. I slightly agree with the common notion that the TTP and Afghan Taliban are two sides of the same coin because TTP and Afghan Taliban share tribal affinities and blood relations, but I would like to add that their targets and sources are very different. While the Afghan Taliban were fighting for the freedom of their country, TTP despite having relations with them has been nothing more than a group enforced on us. The question now is why are these talks different from previous talks or why are there more chances of them being successful? As far as Taliban's relations with the rest of the world are concerned, it is no hidden fact that Pakistan's main concern is TTP, China's main worry is ETIM, and Iran is pursuing welfare of Hazaras. So far, at the part of Afghan Taliban a sluggish approach has been observed because there hardly is any development on these issues. I believe in order to give impetus to solutions, regional countries must collectively engage with the Taliban government and Afghan populace.

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Coming back to the uniqueness of current talks with TTP, I believe they are different for two main reasons. First reason is that earlier the Pakistan government or establishment used to initiate talks with TTP while encountering a number of limitations, however this time a channel of Jirga has been chosen which should overcome some of these limitations and increase probability of success. The second reason is that unlike previous negotiations, these negotiations are initiated under the umbrella of Afghan Taliban, thereby guaranteeing their support and enhancing chances of breakthrough. The format of negotiations usually is that initially stringent conditions are proposed by both parties, and finally with some give and take from both sides a settlement is made. Expecting that we would be losing nothing is a naive perception. For instance, if they ask for FATA to be separated from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan should perhaps seriously consider it because Pakistan already is thinking in the direction of making smaller provinces. So, Pakistan should maintain a realistic approach keeping in mind that if they can negotiate with a super-power like America, they certainly have sharpened negotiation skills. Furthermore, Pakistan has relatively more peculiar interest in Afghanistan so Pakistan, instead of completely aligning with the choices of other states, must base its decisions on its national interest.

Moderator: *Thank you General Lodhi. I feel we have gotten the fruit of thought on which we can proceed our discussion. Now I will request Mirwais Yasini to give his opinion on the pace of development of relations between the Taliban government and regional countries. According to you, what are the reasons behind this slow pace?*

Mirwais Yasini, former first deputy speaker of the Lower House of the Afghan Parliament

First let me come back to the point Mr. Lodhi has put forth that our main sources of information are BBC and CNN. I would like to highlight that Afghans are living under draconian laws; there is no freedom of speech, freedom of political activities, and freedom of media. Even those living in Kabul are deprived of this news. And this is

one reality that the Afghan nation and international community is paying the price for. As far as Afghanistan's inability to efficiently move in the right direction is concerned, I do not see a viable government in the country and that is the main reason behind it. So, firstly they have to find a viable entity in Afghanistan. I believe Ghani, Hamid Karzai and Khalilzad are [equally] responsible for that. Corruption, mismanagement, and inflated egos led Afghanistan to the failure over the past twenty years. Previous governments made a lot of blunders and then concealed them under co-



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lourful reports that were sent to Washington. So, there was all types of corruption, be it financial, political or judicial and even some of the international agencies were involved in that while raising the slogan that they were there for the sake of democracy. However, there was no democracy.

Secondly, as far as TTP is concerned, one must accept that TTP cannot be separated from the Afghan Taliban. Their past was similar and their future will be the same. They lived together and even now they are living together. We are the ones who are majorly paying the price, so the bloodshed has to stop. Talking about reconciliation with the TTP, it will be very difficult or almost impossible to accept that [ex]-FATA has to be made independent [of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa again]. Pakistan has in some way sheltered the Taliban for the last 20 years, so they have to accept that we must not damage Pakistan. As far as Afghanistan is concerned, it is on the verge of collapse. Economically, it has collapsed and educationally it is collapsing. I could not find any reference from the Quran and Hadith which might be their rationale for closing girls' schools. God forbid if this situation continues in Afghanistan, it will directly impact Pakistan. So, the government of Pakistan has to play its role along with the *ulema* in Pakistan to improve circumstances in Afghanistan.

Moderator: *How is the situation evolving for the region and what are the main challenges for Pakistan? As it has been mentioned that TTP talks are a one way process, so we can start our open discussion with this one point and later come to other points that have been mentioned. Tahir Khan is not only closely monitoring the situation in Afghanistan, he is also in contact with members of the jirga and members of TTP and Afghan side stakeholders, so let us ask him to enlighten us on this area.*

Tahir Khan, journalist and expert on Afghan affairs

Based on my comprehensive discussion with a significant jirga member, a ceasefire according to Mufti Noor Wali has been announced as a token of respect. This announcement also came in the news. However, both parties also maintained that if a big event takes place, they will break this ceasefire agreement. Meanwhile, some events took place in northern Waziristan but it is not confirmed that the people who were



killed belonged to which group. Some people claim that casualties were from Hafiz Gul Bahadur's group, but one has to keep in mind that this group never really fought against the state, nor have they been part of the TTP. So, this remains an unsolved question of who were the people killed in these incidents [of anti-militant operations].

Security establishment is facing the issue of militancy and political unrest. Jirga has told them that they hardly have any authority, and it is in fact true because there is no political ownership in Pakistan. Jirga has now given them three months' time regarding the ex-FATA merger, which has political, legal and constitutional issues. Hence, we must not completely deny

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the authority that jirga holds, because it is not a tribal jirga, it is a “Pashtun Joint Jirga”. One thing that has come to surface amidst these talks is that the Afghan Taliban will never force TTP for Pakistan. They are of the opinion that since the TTP members have fought along with them against the USA, they are not going to pressurise them. Secondly, there might be some sections of the Afghan Taliban who are in favour of Pakistan, but overall they have no trust in Pakistan. So, yes we cannot completely deny authority of the jirga but I believe if instead of jirga people like Mehmood Khan, Mohsin Dawar and Afrasiab Khattak had gone, it would have been more impactful, because these leaders are trusted more. Hence, we must learn from past mistakes and stop lying to Afghan policy makers. We have been hinting that TTP is in Afghanistan because of the Afghan Taliban's consent. Last year when the Taliban took over in Kabul, around 2000 TTP members were released [from prisons] and many of their leaders were secured. So, TTP and Afghan Taliban's relation will never end. Moreover, we need to end our 'gun policy' because the Afghan Taliban have covertly told the Pakistani government that they will not respond to it. Why has Pakistan conducted air strikes? Have you killed Mufti Noor Wali or his deputy or you have just killed innocent Afghans there? Afghans will never forget this.

Moderator: *We would now like to take Mohsin Dawar's take on the legitimacy of the jirga. Moreover, he surely will have an opinion on talks with the TTP, but what is the opinion of the common man in Waziristan? And thirdly, who are the people who are waging attacks [while the TTP has announced a ceasefire]?*

Mohsin Dawar, member of the National Assembly of Pakistan

Basically jirga whenever made has just been an eyewash. Such authority has never been given to the parliament so why will it be given to a jirga. The recent talks had been initiated by them [security forces], and to an extent agreement also took place. But in my opinion the objective of these talks is not to completely resolve the issue, but just because such initiatives add to the profile of the incumbent commander. As far as the ceasefire is con-



cerned, it would be interesting to know on what terms and conditions this ceasefire has taken place. Talking about the outcome of talks, it can either be deduced from the past when our state negotiated with the TTP or it can be determined keeping in view the current scenario because the current scenario is very different. In earlier negotiations, the Pakistani state used to talk from the position of strength, whereas in recent talks the TTP talked from the position of strength. Moreover, I do not know why we are so optimistic that the Afghan Taliban will pressure the Pakistani Taliban. Firstly, because there is power struggle and rift between the Haqqani network and Mullah brothers and the TTP has lifelong worked under the umbrella of the Haqqani network. Secondly, the Afghan Taliban's negotiating position is weak because TTP asks them to choose the same thing for them that the Afghan Taliban had chosen for themselves, which is a sovereign state. Thirdly, in terms of political strength Haqqanis in Afghanistan need the TTP. So, all in all Afghan Taliban and TTP need each other. Against this backdrop it can be said that Pakistan is currently moving towards surrender. There is no debate about these talks in the parliament, so it must be ensured that at least we know what the progress is. Furthermore, there has been gossip that TTP representatives are being very rigid. They have appointed their shadow governors for each area who are controlling de facto activities. The solution now is that we learn from our past mistakes, because if we continue operating the same way we will not be able to bring the Pakistani state out of these circumstances. Talking about ideology, I would like to say that even during the war in Afghanistan several religious scholars gave fatwas that what the Taliban were doing was not Jihad. Similarly, a lot of religious scholars claim that TTP's actions are also not jihad. However the Taliban have their own narrative which supports their actions.

“ TTP representatives are being very rigid. They have appointed their shadow governors for each area who are controlling de facto activities.

About what is happening in North Waziristan, let me tell you that there is no organised force. Five individuals who have been killed belong to the Gul Bahadur group. Such events will continue to take place because even if the talks with a certain group are successful, the foot soldiers [of militant groups] will question their benefit in these talks. When they see no benefit, they will shift to another group like Daesh.

Hence, we must have a clear policy against violence. We are already facing the implications of what has happened in Afghanistan. Instead of protecting ourselves from those implications, we are continuing the same policy.

Moderator: *How do you view the negotiation with TTP and what will be the outcome of these negotiations?*

Lt. General (Retd) Tariq Khan, former Corps Commander, and IG Frontier Corps



I have never favoured negotiations with TTP, as the members of TTP entered Pakistan of their own will. They were supported by CIA, RAW, whereas Pakistan was trying to counter TTP. Negotiation with TTP is mainly the proposition of Intelligence. Some groups among the TTP are ready to negotiate while others refuse to negotiate, who are then tried to be convinced through various incentives (money, arms and power). The peace committee is formed, becoming the representatives of a government that is not supported by the community.

“ I was one of many, who proposed the idea of Jirga but it was not to select a few for negotiations, but rather to establish a group of advisors from all tribal districts, in accordance with the code of honour of Pashtuns.

I was one of many, who proposed the idea of Jirga but it was not to select a few for negotiations, but rather to establish a group of advisors from all agencies, in accordance with the code of honour of Pashtuns. As far as the government of Pakistan is concerned, it can only discuss the terms and conditions for surrender. The parallel constitution in KP is functional, and no one has taken action against it. Similarly, we need to learn lessons from the rise of Sufi Muhammad and his militant organization. So, I believe negotiations are not the way out.

Moderator: *If the negotiations succeed, what will be its dynamics?*

Ihsan Ghani Khan, former National Coordinator NACTA

I cannot precisely predict the dynamics of negotiations, but if we are releasing the militants then it appears that the state will surrender. State will have to accept the conditions laid forward by TTP, as rightly said by Churchill “The farthest you can look back, the longer you will look forward.” We are following the similar pattern for long that revolves around terrorism, negotiations and deals, which is claimed to be violated frequently by splinter groups. Therefore, the dynamics and demands remain the same, generally the actors change. The negotiation is least likely to be a success, but if it did it will be momentary.

Moderator: *Earlier there were support pockets of TTP in Madrassas. Do you think religious groups still support TTP, and how do the religious groups discern negotiation with TTP? Moreover, as pro-TTP editorials and sentiments have been fundamentally declined in religious groups, what do you think it signifies?*

Zia Ur Rehman, journalist and analyst based in Karachi

Currently, Pakistan has security challenges mainly by three major organisations, BLA, IS-K, and TTP. I believe the objective following the negotiations is to counter security challenges at one end or at least buy the time to protect CPEC, BRI and Chinese nationals. TTP and IS-K are apparently also taking refuge in Karachi or considering it as a safe haven, as we have not witnessed



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any major attack by them in Karachi for the past few years. The primary focus of the militant groups remains set on Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. We also witnessed infighting between TTP and IS-KP, but members of TTP, who are not in the favour of negotiations will most likely join IS-K, which possibly can enhance the threat. IS-K does not support the concept of nation states, therefore, we saw the Peshawar suicide attack was executed by an Afghan, attack in Kunduz by a Baloch and attack in Kandahar by a Uyghur. I think terrorist violence by IS-K can pose severe consequences, as they have been playing a major role in exploiting the negotiations between Taliban and U.S. IS-K's Urdu-language magazine Yalghar (Invasion) specifically criticised Paigham-e-Pakistan and Mufti Taqi Usmani.

After the fall of Kabul, Abdul Wali of Jamaat ul-Ahrar (JuA) helped in incorporating groups of Lashkar-e-Jhangvi and Al-Qaeda into the TTP. Therefore, TTP symbolises not only tribal groups but also various Urban militant groups.

Abdullah Khan, expert on militancy and regional security



Since Mufti Noor Wali Mehsud has been appointed as the head of TTP, there seems to be an ideological shift which is similar to the ideology of PTM, as TTP is demanding for a separate state because Pakistan has failed to implement Sharia laws. They want to segregate FATA and several Pashtun areas to establish their own governance or an independent Pashtun state.

TTP is practically defeated, but if we are negotiating with them, as they are least likely to surrender, then what can we possibly give them for successful negotiations? If we provide them a certain area as a safe haven, then they can be carefully observed, but the possibility and success of it is questionable. Secondly, they are a threat to Pakistan. Afghan Taliban took action against ETIM and their members were handed over to China from Badakhshan region. Similarly, Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan cracked down against ETIM and refugees in Kabul. When

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it comes to our concerns, they raise various objections. It is the responsibility of the leaders of Afghanistan to not allow anyone to use their soil for their means. Overall, I do not expect positive outcomes from negotiations being carried out by states.

Maulana Abdul Qadir Luni, head of JUI- Nazaryati Balochistan

According to our Pashtun culture, when a Jirga is sent, it is preferred to approach friends and families of the affected. I find the current Jirga highly ineffective as it is less likely to impact the Taliban. Although I appreciate the effort for reconcilia-



tion, Afghans are dissatisfied with Pakistan, as they believe Pakistan does not abide by its own decisions. So, we need to establish confidence in Afghanistan, in order to have an effective reconciliation process. I am glad that Pakistan has established peace and Afghans are satisfied by their current government. Moreover, anarchy in Pakistan, as I have

discussed before about attacks on me and my party members, is not due to the Afghan Taliban or TTP. We do not know who our enemy is, and I find the reason for the prevalent uncertainty arising out of our state policies. If I do not confide in the state policies, how can we expect Afghans to do so. Therefore, Pakistan needs to establish a firm policy and take neighbouring states in confidence.

Zafar Nawaz Jaspal, professor at School of Politics and International Relations, Quaid-e-Azam University, Islamabad

We have been witnessing the continuous repetition of the cycle for the past 2-3 decades, yet the state is not certain about its policies. Does the state want to create another state with-

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Peace committees are disastrous, the state does not need to hand over power to TTP or any militant groups.

in the state? If you are sending Jirga for 4000 members of TTP and inviting them to establish their authority in KP, then it is unacceptable. Peace committees are disastrous, the state does not need to hand over power to TTP or any militant groups. The respon-



sibility to frame a foreign policy must be identified by the government and later, it needs to act on it. We need to focus on our state interests, it cannot be carried out by focusing on the community of other states. The policy to let go off those who attacked the state, armed forces and the residents of KP or FATA, will not be accepted by the victims.

Moreover, as an academic and practitioner, I assert that the dialogue with TTP can never be a success, as they have a different economic system, and if we are negotiating with them, we are giving them status and recognition, that should not have been the case. We need to fight against them, and need to end the system of Jirga or peace committees where religious groups are used for negotiations. I believe it is not a religious war, and being an organised and structured state, we need to form our Jirga and dialogue in an organised structure. If we are not doing it, we are deliberately leading towards dismemberment of our state.

Senator Anwar-ul-Haq Kakar, member Senate of Pakistan

I agree with Prof. Jaspal that negotiation of state with any terrorist organization, be it TTP or any other organization, never succeeds. As per the scholarly research conducted on this issue, in the post-WWII armed conflicts, 38 percent are won by insurgent groups, 39 percent by state forces and the rest ended in a draw, with no clear winner. The fallacy of the idea to talk to a terrorist organization [is that it] falls in the post-conflict situation. As the US agreed to withdraw its forces from Afghanistan, the Taliban agreed to negotiate. I believe Pakistanis have a tendency to tag violence as good or bad: Liberals want the state to negotiate with the Baloch insurgent groups while conservatives want the state to talk to TTP. We have to have a uniform policy. Can violence be privatised or outsourced to the non-state [actors], or the state has to monopolise it? If the state has to monopolise it and we hate the violence, we need to surrender before the state. Our peaceful existence or our social contract



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with the state through the constitution is founded on this condition that I will be a peaceful citizen. Once I opt for violence and take up arms, then all my rights are presumed to be suspended. After taking up arms one's inherent claim over fundamental rights is compromised as you bring the society at war. So be it TTP or anyone for that matter, violence cannot be tolerated. I assert that to go for the establishment of the nation state, one has to take the journey in that direction [of monopolisation of violence by state alone]. In this process, I cannot be allowed to use violence against ones I do not like and let go of others that I like means the state cannot opt to have a disbalanced policy towards insurgent groups.

Moderator: *How do you view the shrinking number of the supporters of Afghan policy and the growing criticism of the state policy towards Afghanistan?*

Lt. General (Retd) Naseer Janjua, former National Security Advisor of Pakistan

It is hard to declare policy towards an ongoing situation as good or bad. State has already launched an endeavour and one can question its composition, but its discretion falls on the very people who have initiated this dialogue process with TTP. On the whole, it is hard to expect something positive to come out of a war of over 20-30 years; it naturally leads to multiple misperceptions and creates divisions. Considering the significance of Afghanistan, the multiple stakes attached with it has created a relatively larger number of divisions. However, despite all differences of opinion we must recognize that Pakistan, after waging a war against terrorists for over 20 years, has now reached a point that TTP has been dislocated, dislodged, and defeated. Now that we have resolved most problems, we are facing a new set of minor problems. We are not performing really well in other areas such as political stability or security in Balochistan. Our plate is al-



ready full. In such a situation, the effort to resolve the TTP issue peacefully through negotiation must be with some good intention. Regarding the trust deficit between the two sides, I believe that it is a common outcome of conflict. If Pakistan wants to reach a final solution to the TTP problem, we must begin by recognizing that TTP is a defeated phenomenon. When we started the military operation against them, there was a rising trend of FATA youth joining TTP. Their motivation and activism was high, and they fought powerfully with us, and our army responded with equal passion and strength. We sacrificed over 8000 lives. So my question is whether there is similar motivation to join TTP now? The success of a movement depends on its popularity among masses that eventually helps it establish a new state. Is TTP popular enough to establish a new state or to achieve any other success? If not, it is clear that the TTP phenomenon has lost its appeal. Hence, Pakistan's eagerness to talk to the TTP, despite its weakness has put the Afghan Taliban under stress. We put them in a difficult situation immediately after their takeover, by imposing that either they are to be with TTP or with Pakistan. Indeed there was no need to show this urgency in dealing with a defeated phenomenon. We should have instead dealt with this problem with some restraint.

We need to seek for the closure of the conflict, as we nearly attained harmony with the Baloch, and had we integrated them with ourselves, the motivation to continue the conflict would have been undermined.

How can we bring the conflict to an end? First of all, I believe that we need to request the Government of Pakistan and Afghan Taliban to give refugees the nationality because the growing resentment in Afghans is causing unrest at the border. When the

attacks on the border are retaliated by Pakistan, the local community of Afghanistan has to suffer, thereby increasing the grievances of Afghans. In order to lessen the exasperation of residents of Afghanistan, we need to request the Taliban Government to provide the people living near borders with the nationality, similar to Pakistan providing refugees with nationality, otherwise, unrest at the border will prevail. In an attempt to ensure peace, Pakistan has initiated dialogue with TTP. Dialogue majorly is a means to enhance relations, and gradually, we can engage

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Pakistan after waging a war against terrorists for over 20 years, has now reached a point that TTP has been dislocated, dislodged, and defeated.

important individuals, such as Afrasiab Khattak, Mohsin Dawar and Maulana Luni, to resolve complications. We need to work on conflict resolution, and we must understand our future will remain attached with Afghanistan, therefore, we must not be a source of aggravation for them and work slowly but surely for dialogue and peace. Keeping in view the economic condition of Afghanistan, if TTP believes that it can nurture in Afghanistan then it is an illusion. Similarly, the state needs to devise certain policies such as alienation from TTP and banned outfits to reduce the number of TTP members. Overall, I asserted that the state needs to consider its responsibility and take initiatives to encounter TTP.

Lt. General (Retd) Tariq Khan

We have to understand why we are restricted. Decision making takes place at government institutions, civil society, political figures and think tanks, but the level of incompetence in Pakistan is quite high, due to which the decision making process is dominated by the intelligence agencies.

“ Decision makers rarely carry out field research, rather prefer to use secondary data provided by intelligence, which is the prime problem of our state.

Decision makers rarely carry out field research, rather prefer to use secondary data provided by intelligence, which is the prime problem of our state. I believe the civilian decision makers need to enhance the level of competence and own their responsibilities.

Senator Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar

Pakistan used the model of negotiation in Balochistan through tribal elites, which was ineffective. The dynamics of insurgency in Balochistan are transforming continuously; for example the Brahui poetry by Rahman Gul (Mureed) has been used as a means for idealising and proliferating insurgency. In order to

“ We need to understand how the rest of the world has done it; none of the states have negotiated with militant groups. We need to examine and re-examine our policies because neither force nor the negotiation policy has delivered the required outcomes.

combat the ETA militant organisation, Spanish authorities established an organisation that targeted militants taking heaven in France. Following the same model, Pakistan's intelligence needs to devise "Smart Kinetics," the smart application of force, to counter militant organisations. We need to understand how the rest of the world has done it; none of the states have negotiated with militant groups. We need to examine and re-examine our policies because neither force nor the negotiation policy has delivered the required outcomes. Therefore, we need to propose a pragmatic policy for reconciliation.

Moderator: *This is an important point raised that the model of reconciliation is still missing. Now that we have opened discussion on the Balochistan insurgency and the element of comparison between TTP and Baloch, let us take Abdul Malik Baloch's opinion.*

Dr Abdul Malik Baloch, president National Party and former CM Balochistan

I would like to thank PIPS that gave us an opportunity to discuss the dynamics of Afghanistan. Till when are we going to make Afghanistan a hero or a villain? Can we not leave Afghanistan alone?

The militant and Jihadist culture was produced by the state, and the state was contented with it until it did not impact Pakistan. I believe our policy mainly is to maintain the established status-quo that needs to be ensured regardless of the negotiation initiatives with TTP or Afghan Taliban. Our foreign policy with India and Afghanistan is inept; and despite our claims about improved relations with Iran, they have not improved. Similarly, our relations with Russia are less likely to turn out well as Pakistan lacks the capacity to fulfill the expectations of Russia. Therefore, we need to consolidate our foreign policy and diplomatic relations, while establishing a policy of coexistence.



As far as the problem of Balochistan is concerned, I along with few others was asked to initiate negotiations with Baloch [insurgent] leaders. Two stipulations were laid forward, to accept the constitution and to not to challenge the security forces, which were accepted by them. But we could not comply with the propositions decided during the negotiations with Brahamdagh Khan Bugti. Now with the passage of time the circumstances have changed, the power has been shifted to the young generation and youths are continuously joining insurgent groups.

Lastly, the history of Balochistan cannot be attached with Spain or Columbia. We have been suffering for the last 20 years, and it has different dynamics than other states. Hence, Pakistan needs to consolidate its internal and external policy along with an autonomous parliament that can discuss the problems of Pakistan. We must not push Pa-

kistan into more difficulties by dividing nationalist units into administrative units. Pakistan has been suffering from political, social, economic and diplomatic turmoil, whose solutions cannot depend on intelligence reports only, but rather inculcate the opinion of the people as well.

“ But we could not comply with the propositions decided during the negotiations with Brahamdagh Khan Bugti.

Moderator: *Can you enumerate differences between TTP and Baloch insurgency?*

Afrasiab Khattak, political analyst and expert on Afghan affairs

Generally, the discussion revolving around “how to manage Taliban” signifies the acceptance of Taliban, and thus appears to be flawed. Secondly, insurgencies can only be culminated with the end of the projects like Talibanization. The agreements were laid out with the Taliban, as the military wanted to have negotiations with

them. The resolution was passed by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa assembly to take action against Taliban in Swat, but the military gave ANP three days to negotiate with Taliban. Unfortunately, the Taliban project has been a means to deconstruct Afghanistan, which remains to be the bone of contention between Afghanistan and Pakistan. When I met President Daud Khan, he showed no intention to disintegrate Pakistan, rather asked to allow Pashtuns to partake in political activities. Hence I believe that we do not have any conflict with Afghanistan, but the policy to support Taliban is escalating disagreements. I have looked at the entire process of Taliban development. I understand that the policy to restrict women from attaining education has been a process to liquidate and retrograde Afghanistan. Although Afghanistan has the capacity to survive and resist such strategies, we still cannot develop cordial relations with the Taliban. Therefore, the policy to assist Taliban is a suicidal policy for Pakistan.



In 2007, TTP was created to counter Afghan Taliban and Al-Qaeda who were likely to enter Pakistan after the surge of NATO forces in Afghanistan. The purpose was to overcome the threat that Taliban will control the territories (North Waziristan and Balochistan) of Pakistan. Despite all efforts, why Faqir Muhammad, Mullah Fazlullah, and Gul Bahadur, and many more were not captured and how peace will be attained

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The narratives of IS have already begun to disperse through various books with their translations in Urdu, English [and Pashto], in which that directly target Taliban labelling them as infidels.

if the key actors are not targeted. Moreover, before Operation Zarb-e-Azb in Waziristan, members of TTP were allowed to relocate. Therefore, I would assert that the segregation between the good and bad Taliban, and the entire Taliban project needs to be put to an end.

Abdul Wali Khan used to believe that the segregation of the subcontinent in the name of religion was to counter communism. Xinjiang, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran, Central Asia, West Asia and North Africa were prevented to enter communist/socialist bloc by introducing Jihad, which was efficiently utilized in 1980. However, it was believed that Western states were most likely to call off the militant groups' support after 9/11, as it started to affect them as well. Contrarily, the West is more likely to continue their support for militant organizations, because China and Russia remain to be their significant competitors.

We need to dismantle the Taliban forces, or else we would have to deal with Islamic State (IS/Daesh) and the cycle will continue. The narratives of IS have already begun to disperse through various books with their translations in Urdu, English [and Pashto], in which that directly target Taliban labelling them as infidels. The propagation of such narratives signifies the initiation of new hostilities and continuous conflict between the two groups. The enmities are likely to escalate, if Pakistan did not play its role in undermining the rise of these forces. Being the member of National Action Plan Committee 2014, Aitzaz Ahsan clearly stated that these laws will not be implemented against Baloch, who are not jet black terrorists. The committee headed by Akhunzada Chattan was appointed by General Faiz to negotiate with TTP, but the negotiations with TTP have explicitly dismantled the National Action Plan, 2014.

We need to develop relations with Afghans. The railway between Peshawar and Torkham has been long forgotten for decades, because these are not our priority. Iran, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan have already developed trains that enter Afghanistan. To export Taliban has been our main policy as we do not want to construct Afghanistan.

We need to rethink Pakistan's approaches and how we are obliterating diversity, which used to be the strength of Pakistan. Zia ul Haq and his administration were of the view that Baghdad was segregated from Pakistan because it was not Islamized. Therefore, in order to suppress separatist movements, Islamization was introduced. Pakistan needs to revisit its nation-building strategies, as the communication gap among ethnicities has been growing. Overall, federal democratic Pakistan needs to be established by re-evaluating our constitution and terminating

the support to Taliban.

Senator Anwar-ul-Haq Kakar

Baba Ghulam Farid, Khushal Khan, Shah Abdul Latif and many more are the source of resilience for nation-state building. As a representative of state, I do not have a problem with Baloch identity, in fact state sponsors Baloch Academy in Quetta. The concerns arise when violence is unleashed on the basis of identity, and such violence must not be attached with diversity. We are discussing uniform policy vis-à-vis violence, and the state will not question or admonish the initiatives and narratives of nation building, inclusion of

“ The violence under the discourse of secularism is portrayed biasedly by ideological liberal individuals. We cannot categorize terrorism as grey and yellow terrorism with respect to national or religious objectives.

diversity, parliamentary democratic politics and non-interference in politics. The violence under the discourse of secularism is portrayed biasedly by ideological liberal individuals. We cannot categorize terrorism as grey and yellow terrorism with respect to national or religious objectives. I agree with Afrasiab Khattak that kinetic force is required instead of dialogue with TTP, who are transgressing all rational narratives. Overall, we need to initiate a critical and open dialogue on the subject of diversity to challenge the conditional thought processes, but no one has the right of violence.

Mohsin Dawar

If the state is concerned about the violence on the basis of national identities, then the state should not practice violence against peaceful citizens. I do agree that violence needs to be condemned regardless of anything, simultaneously, state violence and abduction of Baloch students should be chastised, and it cannot be justified.

Moderator: *Should Council of Islamic Ideology be made the part of the Jirga that went to Kabul for negotiations with TTP?*

Dr Qibla Ayaz, Chairman Council of Islamic Ideology

The purpose of Council of Islamic Ideology, Pakistan (CII) was to develop a diplomacy to integrate ulema, Islamic scholars, internationally. The conference was held among Islamic scholars hosted by CII in Indonesia, where various scholars of Afghanistan did not support Taliban's ideology. Similarly, when delegations met in Saudi Arabia, a proposal was laid forward that proposed to condemn the Taliban. But Pakistan proposed to initiate negotiations, rapprochement and reconciliation with the Taliban, which was signed by majority of the delegations. Currently, an international meeting among the ulema of the Muslim-majority nations to discuss the problems of Afghanistan is under consideration. As far as Jirga is concerned, CII has neither been consulted nor been made a part of it.



Moderator: *As media reports indicate, there are possibilities of a broader and comprehensive Taliban regime. Can a new [revised] Taliban cabinet be inclusive, and what will be its dynamics? And what is happening right now in the capital of Afghanistan for a future [governance] discourse?*

Muzhgan Feraji, journalist and educationist from Afghanistan

Afghanistan does not appear to be in a satisfactory situation, especially when it comes to Afghan women, who lack the access to basic human rights. Similarly, Afghans who raise the voice against the Taliban regime have to face the consequences. Overall, Afghans are not safe in Afghanistan under Taliban's regime.

As far as Taliban policy is concerned, it has not changed a little when compared to the Taliban's regime 20 years ago. Similarly, the media portrays peaceful Af-

“ The media portrays peaceful Afghanistan under Taliban, but in reality disputes and oppression of Afghans are widely prevalent, especially in northern Afghanistan.

ghanistan under Taliban, but in reality disputes and oppression of Afghans are widely prevalent, especially in northern Afghanistan. Pakistan proposes to have negotiations with the Taliban, in order to serve its national interests, but I believe Afghans may not have given Pa-



kistan the responsibility to discuss their rights on their behalf. We have experienced the Taliban twice, and I can assure that they have not modified their discourse. Lastly, I would like to suggest that if Pakistan prefers to discuss the rights and freedom of Afghans, they need to be in accordance with Afghans preferences. To conclude, I am grateful for PIPS and its team for giving me an opportunity to discuss the dynamics of Afghanistan, as we are deprived of similar opportunities in Afghanistan.

Moderator: *Can Taliban deliver on governance, security and intra-Afghan reconciliation?*

Mirwais Yasini

Firstly, I would like to thank PIPS who has provided us with the platform to discuss miseries and calamities that have occurred in Afghanistan over a decade. Whenever the subject of coalition, reconciliation and peace is discussed, I find myself in a challenging position. We have barely seen our “Amir al-Mu'minin” [Leader of the Faithful] Hibatullah Akhundzada and I am unable to define myself, whether I will be a Muslim or Dhimmi (non-Muslim living in a Muslim state). Hibatullah Akhundzada appeared on Eid festival, hardly for 10 minutes. I think such behaviour by the leader, in the 21st century, is an embarrassment, who still refers to himself as the leader of Afghanistan. Similarly, Afghans are unaware of the political situation of

Afghanistan, and unacquainted with their domestic and foreign policies. Afghans lack basic human rights, as we do not have freedom of speech, expression and freedom to protest. Moreover, Afghanistan is going through an economic collapse and the society of Afghanistan is in severe economic and social crisis.

As far as negotiation with TTP is concerned, TTP impacts Afghanistan at the end of the day. Pakistan cannot unilaterally imitate negotiations with TTP, considering it as an independent militant organisation. Pakistan has provided TTP with all basic

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facilities and access to commute for the past 20 years, yet claiming TTP to be independent is groundless. Unfortunately, the consequences of these policies have claimed several innocent lives.

We look up to Pakistan and its 200 million Muslims that they will support us in ensuring peace in Afghanistan. The US was never in Afghanistan for Afghan people, but rather to achieve their own objectives. Therefore, we bear the responsibility to bring stability

in Afghanistan, because instability in Afghanistan will impact Pakistan as well. Terrorism and insecurity will amplify if the right course of action is not taken now. I would like to request that we are in a state of emergency, and Afghanistan and its immediate neighbours need to resolve it. 98% of Afghans blame Pakistan for their support to Taliban, and these sentiments need to be addressed properly. Lastly, Taliban believe that they have overpowered 49 NATO allies, thus, TTP aims to take over Pakistan to consolidate their organisation. Today's grief for Afghanistan will be the grief for Pakistan tomorrow, if Pakistan did not change its course while dealing with militant organisations.

Moderator: *How do Taliban perceive the concept of governance, and do they have the capacity to ensure good governance in Afghanistan?*

Tahir Khan

Beginning from Intra-Afghan reconciliation, I believe the probability of successful peace talks is practically nil, as Taliban are less likely to provide space to anyone. When the Taliban came into power, Mohammad Hassan Akhund stated in his meeting that “we do not have room for those who were associated with governments that were in power for the last 20 years.” They have been following a similar narrative for the past 10 months. The entire cabinet and officials are mainly Taliban themselves and their supporters. When Foreign Minister of Afghanistan, Amir Khan Muttaqi, met Ahmad Shah Massoud in Iran, he asked Massoud to come back to Afghanistan, but Taliban did not seem to be in support of it. Similarly, Hekmatyar and Hamid Karzai, who accepted the Taliban but objected to policies against women, had to face consequences. Therefore, I believe reconciliation with the Taliban seems to be unachievable.

Riots that recently broke out in Panjshir, and Taliban do realise that the force used by them in Panjshir was inequitable, but they are unlikely to acknowledge their mistake. Mullah Yaqoob, Mullah Abdul Ghani and Mullah Fazil, who visited Panjshir, asked residents of Panjshir to cooperate in the maintenance of peace, but they did not support the Taliban. Since 1980s till now Panjshir residents do not own or support use of arms, therefore, the use of force by Taliban cannot be justified. Overall, there are severe security issues, which are worsened with the presence of IS-K.

As far as governance is concerned, high expectations cannot be attached to it. Hibatullah Akhundzada repeatedly mentioned not to make appointments on the basis of associations, which signifies governance issues. When appointments are made on the basis of lineages, the capability to improve governance is hindered. Similarly, members of Haqqani Network are dominant in Kabul, as they entered immediately after Taliban took over Kabul.

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Overall, I believe, if the ministers and officials are selected with respect to their connections, a structure of good governance cannot be satisfied.

Moderator: *Do you think when non-state armed groups are given power, they progress towards good governance?*

Aziz Ahmed Khan, former ambassador of Pakistan

Keeping in view the circumstances, we need to put forward an objective analysis. I believe that there is a difference between the current Taliban and the Taliban of the 1990s, to an extent that they will allow you to have technology. But the Taliban will not be prepared to establish an inclusive and diverse government. Taliban are not of the view to share power with those who can oppose their policies. They will not establish a broad-based government, but they might not be as rigid as the previous Taliban government. The solution to the prevalent issues is to chip away slowly; Taliban cannot be coerced but they need to be aware of the unacceptability of the world about their policies. Countries need to continuously hammer away the problems they have with the Taliban.

Moreover, it was evident that Taliban will be ready to establish relations with India and I believe that India could have availed it long ago, therefore agitation of growing relations between them is unsubstantiated. When asked to condemn India on atomic experiments, Mullah Hassan argued that if the USA can be an atomic power, so can India. Therefore, I believe they are pragmatic and they will maintain relations as long as their interests are served.



Similarly, Pakistan need not to act vulnerable, but rather lay forward our stance pragmatically and firmly. We need to engage the international community (World Bank and International NGOs) to resolve the humanitarian crisis. I believe the Taliban will not resist humanitarian assistance and must bring flexibility, in order to serve their national interest. It needs to be

handled carefully and to expect a sudden change in Taliban is mistaken, as it will be an extensive process. Lastly, although Hibatullah Akhundzada follows the practices of Mullah Omer, he does not enjoy similar authority as that of Mullah Omer, and since the power is centred in Kabul rather than Kandahar, change can be expected.

Moderator: *It has been noticed that trade volume has increased at Chaman border since Taliban's resurgence in Afghanistan, what is the capacity in which illegal trade is being carried out? And is it in Taliban's knowledge or under their support or not?*

Shahzada Zulfiqar, Quetta-based senior journalist, president PFUJ

There was a little problem regarding the trade. People who run this business know that there is transit trade and after that everything passes through the border and reaches Karachi, Islamabad and Lahore. The border has been closed multiple times in the past few days due to which a local tribe's group was formed and sent to governor Kandahar to request for cooperation to which he agreed. There were attempts to break the fences at

Chaman border and in resistance shots were fired in the air as a warning and upon further resistance a few people got injured and problems escalated. Furthermore, in the last few days it has been written on so-

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cial media platforms that the Baloch border on Naukundi side is divided on both sides which is quite favourable for Taliban as whatever goes through Pakistan, they will get something out of it. It was closed by drivers from that side after an incident of firing at a helicopter was reported. According to some of the audios I have heard myself, they were instructed from Pakistan that they should release our men as they engaged in the firing first in the presence of our major general who

was passing through. (There was no damage but emergency landing was initiated) Hence, the border was closed and they were advised to clear the area in 48 hours or otherwise forces will start shelling. Plus, a viral video you must have seen circulating showing 60 to 70 cars with people in it all chanting anti-Pakistan statements.

The trade has been affected a lot due to these incidents but the traders are free people as they come to Pakistan and say that many people are suffering economic pressure. So, the trade is actively taking place but it depends on the connectivity and relations. There was another incident in which a video was showing fences being broken and video went viral and there was a meeting held with Mr. Ambassador. They said it's against their policy on which I had commented that we have the capacity to stop it then why is it happening? On which they replied that we have told Pakistan that stop your further proceeding regarding the fence work; it should be stopped where it is. But Pakistan has a rather agitating effect due to the breaking of fences. Small incidents like these keep taking place off and on and it has overall impact on trade because villages are also divided and both are engaged from two different locations, Nok Kundi [also written as Naukundi] and Mashkay and when both of these borders were closed Taliban were to be given a passage from third side of the triangle but it was very inconvenient and costed largely and the passage from Qila Saifullah side, border was to be divided instead of all of the trade coming from Chaman. So things are not happening as we expected happening under Taliban so we are stuck in policy making.



Moderator: *It was discussed earlier that we don't have an effective model for reconciliation. Would you like to add something on that topic? Moreover, as many people of BLA and BLF are still in Afghanistan, how are Taliban reacting to that? Are they inclined towards cooperation or non-cooperation?*

Yar Muhammad Badini, Quetta-based senior journalist and writer

Around a month ago the chief of army staff spoke in a gathering of students in which he was questioned to which he replied in clear words that we have made a mistake of making BAP (Balochistan Awami Party). Ministers were also present in that gathering and he vividly said to them that they haven't even worked 5% out of all the work that was carried out in Turbat by Dr Malik. I am saying this because unfortunately like you have seen in the senate there was a problem of chairmanship that has ruined Pakistan's parliament. There was such a carefree attitude and there was no respect for parliament or senate and the only aim was to bring Sadiq Sanjrani who had no political background whatsoever and was given something above his understanding. Such political interventions have been hurting democracy and governance in the province, [creating indirectly spaces for insurgent groups to operate].

When the Taliban came, a few people were arrested by them, a few were killed but after a little time silence grew on this chapter. Now we cannot declare Afghanistan as a sovereign state under Taliban because since they took control, they don't have legitimacy. They will have legitimacy once elections are being held and rightful people will be selected through a process to have power to control. Taliban don't take human rights into account but unfortunately, I am seeing that Pakistan is also not taking care of human rights in the case of Afghan people. Chaman border is 2 to 2.5 hours away from Quetta and there is no arrangement of medical facilities in Kandahar or in nearby locations.



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A patient was brought from there to Quetta and was charged PKR 30,000/- I have seen this myself. And you can see for yourself that these people are not treated fairly when they go to a doctor after travelling for 3 hours, they are charged hefty bills and given a long list of medicines. And unfortunately, among all the Afghan

people there including Tajik, Uzbek, Hazara, Turkmen, Bloch, only those who are Pashtun are facilitated. During the wheat season, the wheat goes from Mashkay to Afghanistan as there is food scarcity. The contemporary Ukraine Russia crisis has also added to the problems since a lot of wheat used to come from there. Among all of these problems we should still take care of the people as a human being.

Moderator: *Under Taliban what is the nature of Afghanistan's relation with the neighbouring countries?*

Mir Sher Baz Khetrn, Research Fellow at the Institute of Strategic Studies, Islamabad

First of all I would like to speak on Balochistan issue that to counter it we need to engage youth and let the people decide and introduce fair elections where everyone can vote for their own representative instead of Islamabad interfering with Balochistan issue and in my opinion free and fair elections can solve a whole lot of problems as people themselves will manage their accountability so Islamabad should focus on this policy.

Now coming to Afghanistan in my opinion, before the fall of Ashraf Ghani government, the operations being carried out by Pakistan in Afghanistan were too much but we couldn't meet our expectations after Ashraf Ghani's fall. What is happening now is totally opposite of what we perceived. So right now, we can facilitate the TTP negotiations. We were expecting that they would force them in return. Pakistan would make the violence stop. That is how we could not succeed in our goal. Now they are playing smart as they have policies and groups against everyone in regions like China, Iran, Pakistan and even central Asia and they can threaten to destabilise any one based on these policies and groups. In my opinion the state of Pakistan is suffering more than any other state as we sort of created a bad name for the Taliban in the world.



Moderator: *We need your views on the ways through which the Taliban are running the government. Is it good or not? If not, then how far in the future will we see it getting better?*

Maulana Abdul Qadir Luni

Two major powers have been in power struggle in Pakistan for 40 years and here in Pakistan, people were referring to the Taliban as Jihadis but tell me who has made those jihadis? The people who took pride in being Asians made jihadis, America came later into the picture and why would they pressurise Afghanistan without any reason? The movements named "Taliban" or "mujahideen" were for defence. If someone has attacked their house carrying arms and ammunition along with proper facilitation to engage the whole country in a war, can't they fight for defence purpose or retaliation? I have been in those fights in Afghanistan when Russia attacked and for the past 20 years I have been there. Maulanas and Talibs (students) were there in mosques; there was no government whatsoever; there were only Maulanas who taught in madrassas and mosques. If we compare Pakistan, the government system was there from the creation of the country, in Afghanistan there were no political figures and no weapons in homes and mosques, it all happened out of destitute. From where did the Taliban get these weapons? Did they make it themselves? All of the weapons Taliban possess either came from America or Russia. I have met all the ministers of Kandahar and their management and according to my information Afghanistan has fought 40 years of war and over this time period thousands of people have been martyred and all of them sacrificed themselves under one slogan. It was not easy for them to compete in elections. There is no one in this government who hasn't lost a family member in drone attacks and bombing attacks after going through these hardships and making these sacrifices, the people fought for a cause. I openly declare that I was a supporter of the Taliban and will continue to be.

And all of these discussions held here, I am the only one who opposes it. What I mean to say is that all of these sacrifices are for a cause and that cause is Islamic system of justice and this is also the Taliban's first priority and centre of attention. They want to make Afghanistan not only an Islamic state but a model for Islam-

ic states worldwide. Amir al-Mu'minin's order extends to all who are responsible which include the whole army down to the very last soldier and the one who will be caught going against the orders will be punished according to Islamic way of justice. This statement is circulated there in government institutions in written form and written on big posters. If you go to any government regulated institutions there the first thing you will see is this message written on a wall or a poster. The Amir Al-mu'minin are fulfilling their duties. Recently he visited all of their provinces, invited and addressed the natives he travelled in a small car without any gun man around unlike Pakistan's ministers who have a lot of cars for protocols and security. In his address to natives he told them not to work for themselves or their ethnicities, but only work for the country and the law will be equally imposed on every one and all of this was delivered by the head himself.

“ All sacrifices are for a cause and that cause is Islamic system of justice. Taliban want to make Afghanistan not only an Islamic state but a model for Islamic states worldwide.

There was one incident in the North when one man was killed and management went to murderer's house and asked the family whether they wanted to kill the murderer or you chose to forgive. The family forgave the murderer. The economic challenges will prevail because of the 40 years long war period but Afghanistan has faced more challenges than Pakistan. Contemporary situation in Afghanistan is still much better than Pakistan. If we compare inflation Afghanistan is standing in a better position as petrol prices in Pakistan are now 210 Rs per litre while in Afghanistan, petrol is 85 Rs per litre. There is a huge difference in the wheat prices because it's exported from Pakistan. Other than that you can see prices of oil, ghee and tea all cheaper in Afghanistan. The incidents on borders take place off and on. Taliban complain that the Pakistan government does not comply with the agreed negotiations with us. Taliban accuse Pakistan for not following the terms and agreements of the agreed upon pacts.

Another prevailing problem that we have discussed earlier also is the problem of Fences. Pakistan's newly installed border before this government before the takeover of Kandahar, Kabul and north we were present there and Pakistan used to

cross the Taliban check posts. You can check the nearby areas on Nok Kandi and Mushki, you will observe that Pakistan has reached miles deeper in those areas just like this. If someone wants to take over my home I would not give it up just like that. And then they say that the Taliban have broken the fences. I am a witness to Pakistan's invasion of Afghanistan. Afghan people have the same sentiments for their lands as we have for ours. Like that if afghans come to Islamabad despite the fact that I have compassion for them, I will not let them take over Islamabad. Similarly, afghans won't give up their land to you. There is a little hatred against the Pakistan army based on some of the things they did which shouldn't have been done in Afghanistan. So, I am saying it to you that Afghanistan is going in the right direction and Taliban are working towards achieving better circumstances gradually and are happy with current situations as their major concern was achieving peace. Kandahar is now very safe and all the weapons are now in hands of the government and no one is allowed to keep firearms in their houses and they want better relations with neighbours like Pakistan and Iran. Recently Afghanistan has coordinated with China for their economic interest. They have also made a pact with Russia and Iran. All of these pacts were agreed upon very recently. In my opinion if agreements have started taking place in light of economic interests already, Afghanistan will be standing on its feet in one-year time.

I would like to add one last thing about the earlier discussions on Balochistan that you can never make an Afghan or a Baloch agree to your terms on a gun point. Baluchistan's problem is a political problem, their terms are political and if the government thinks that we can make them agree to our terms by killing their people then they are wrong. The only solution to that problem is table talks and I believe that guns are not a solution to any problem within the state.

Moderator : *It has just been mentioned that Afghanistan is now a weapon free state, but according to recent news, weapons from Afghanistan are being imported into Pakistan now and if weapons are banned in Afghanistan then where is it coming from in Pakistan?*

Adil Shahzeb, anchor person and Afghan affairs expert

Pointing towards the weapons discussion, I would like to give an example of Peshawar where an M4 gun costs around PKR 3 to 3.5 lakhs and other weapons are available as well and its property of the U.S government. The weaponry issue has been prevailing from Soviet "jihad" times especially in the areas of Balochistan KP belt.

When Taliban took over Afghanistan, 8 to 10 days of coverage was held by us in Kabul and Kandahar. I raised 3 to 4 points on that event which I even discussed in our close gathering afterwards on which the majority didn't agree with me. But after listening to today's speakers, it occurred to me that the Taliban were not able to proceed much further in one-year time. Now if we talk about intra-reconciliation in Afghanistan I am convinced on my earlier takeaway that inclusiveness for Taliban means the Hazara Talib, Uzbek Talib and Tajik Talib. Other than this there is no concept of inclusivity among Taliban and Afghanistan cannot grow like this. The only difference is that the resentment on roads of Kabul that we are talking about today was there before but was a silent one. Now people have started talking back; then there was a fear among people which has almost vanished now

Secondly, coming onto TTP, their figures are rather disputed but 4000 to 7000 foot soldiers of TTP are in Afghanistan. I am still convinced on it today that TTP is still a part of rank and file of Afghan Taliban. They have fought against the U.S.



for 20 years and if we are sitting here thinking that Taliban who are fighting against us are Pakistani Talib and those fighting against the US are Afghan Talib, that is not it. Talibs are fighting against us and U.S. as well. They both are similar on ideological basis but they may differ operationally. So when we were in Kabul, the highest official (not talking about Taliban) that we could meet at that time invited us over for dinner and when we were leaving from there, Taliban stopped us on a check post to check our passports and their accent was similar to that of North and South Waziristan, so we knew these people are from TTP. When we reached the hotel, we called our host to tell him what happened with us to which he replied that I have gone through similar things multiple times and we were shockingly

surprised. The situation is still the same so you can see what's happening with an ordinary Afghan. We cannot imagine what they are going through while sitting here in Islamabad. The humiliation they do on check posts and the way they do it is ugly. There are a lot of people from TTP on the check-posts.

Thirdly, the situation from a security point of view. The Taliban will never pressurise TTP for now and even before this, the Taliban officials we met categorically said "we cannot do anything as we are part of the same family." We could not realise these things at that time. When I came back to Pakistan and shared this opinion of mine, it was not the most popular opinion because we were provided with this argument that since the Taliban have

taken over Afghanistan it makes Pakistan secure and Afghanistan would not be used against Pakistan anymore. You can see the figures and see that TTP is using Afghan land against Pakistan. You can look

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An anti-Pakistan sentiment prevails in Afghanistan and Afghan rulers have exploited this sentiment from time to time.

at the casualties of Pak army alone ever since Taliban attacks, you will see the difference. To this day I am not able to understand [Pakistan's] Afghan policy. What have we achieved in the prior years? And our ex-prime ministers spoke so highly of the Taliban.

My second takeaway was that anti-Pakistan sentiment prevails in Afghanistan and Afghan rulers have exploited this sentiment from time to time. I am still of the opinion that a very similar sentiment will be used by the Taliban against Pakistan. And why does anti-Pakistan sentiment exist? Because we praise Hekmatyar and see Ahmad Shah Masoud as our enemy. Because we see the Taliban as friends and the rest of Afghanistan as an enemy.

Furthermore, as Maulana [Luni] has said that Kandahar is going towards the right direction now under the Taliban rule. If you are referring to the burning of musical instruments and banning music then we can understand this 'right' direction. Otherwise, the city of Kandahar is still the same. Secondly, he [Mr Luni] said that you can never make Bloch and Pashtun agree on your terms by pointing a gun at them. I think we should get out of this thing. Pashtun have already taken enough

defending their honour; they fought for Americans, they have fought for Afghanistan, and similarly Baloch people have fought enough. If I talk in a political manner, Mr Shahbaz Gill in Peshawar is making a statement like "a Pashtun never forgets his revenge even after 100 years". You should see that Pashtun are not part of this fight the why are you including Pashtun in this? It is a political fight which you should resolve locally.

I would like to say that our new generation is pragmatic, the gun violence period is now over. We think from mind not from hearts. Secondly, we say that the Taliban are pragmatic now. Why should they not be?

Now all of these problems are still prevailing but how do we go forward? Taliban are now reality; we have to deal with them. We share a 2500 to 2600 Km long border. We should talk more on this subject.

Taliban are trying to lead the country on their way which suits them. In my opinion Pakistan should come on front foot, and should not feel threatened as they [the Taliban] have already done what they wanted to do through TTP and further if they want to put TTP to use, they will. You should forget that there will be any agreement or FATA merger will be reversed or FCR will come again. These problems would not be fixed like this. We need to be assertive.

Moderator: *Can you tell us how many people of BLA and BLF were expelled [from Afghanistan]?*

Shahzada Zulfiqar

I am of no opinion as I do not know where does the list start. Maulana [Lunji] has officially said that if a Baloch person comes to Afghanistan [the Taliban] cannot force them out and similarly he said it for the TTP. I have no idea how many camps of Lashkar-e-Jhangvi were destroyed and if they did so, why was it not protected? Why did they escape? They should have been handed over to Pakistan.

Maulana Abdul Qadir Luni, head of JUI-Nazaryati Balochistan

The problem regarding Baloch as I have already addressed is that there are more Bugtis in Kandahar. When Shazain Bugti was appointed as advisor to Mr. Imran Khan [on Baloch reconciliation], he came to me and asked what would happen to our people (Bugtis) who are in Kandahar? I talked to the Governor there and sent a message regarding the Baloch people there, and they clearly replied that “we cannot expel Baloch people from here and people who came here we won't sabotage them as there is no restriction. We allow them to move out freely but if they want to stay here then they are welcome to because Afghanistan also belongs to Hazaras and Balochis so we would not compel anyone to leave.”

Secondly as we have this complaint that Afghanistan is interfering in Pakistan through TTP, then Taliban also have grievances. I will present an example now. About 3 days ago, I had a conversation with the Governor of Jalalabad when he said that they have captured some people who were transporting gunpowder from there to Pakistan. So, examples like these exist. Thirdly, about Kandahar, it was not a safe city. I have seen it myself; no businesses and lives were safe there but now there is peace.

Moderator : *We need you to provide us with your comprehensive view on Pakistan's experience with Taliban since they came into power, and will Pakistan be affected by its Afghan policy?*

Lt. General (Retd) Tariq Khan

Before talking about the Taliban government and Pakistan government's relation and how will it proceed, I have heard this discussion about how TTP and Taliban have been fighting together against U.S. and their relations are still there. I will tell you about a logical point on this. At their peak time, the TTP troops were estimated to be between 5000 and 6000. How is it possible that with this small numbers they were able to fight here [against Pakistani security forces] and in Afghanistan

against Americans as well? The TTP was a criminal gang, that had no overall strategic objective. They served in their tribes and made people hostage there and heavily trained them. This is how they expanded and their intent was criminal, not ideological or political. Their relation with the Afghan Taliban was a safe haven. In 2007 a fatwa was generated against Pak army and Mullah Omer sent a letter to Baitullah Mehsud that you cannot fight Pak Army so it's a wrong perception that TTP was fighting against Americans. As long as the Afghan Taliban were concerned, we were convincing them but there was no influence, they would not listen to any one and the world has started to understand this also that our foreign policy's leverage is now diminished; we don't have that kind of influence internationally anymore. Afghan Taliban are still independent, they will make their own decisions and will make those decisions in their own interests.

Afrasiab Khattak

I would like to add that Taliban are getting limited education in madrassas, and their occupation is war. They do not have anything more than that; politics is not their strong point so I think they will stay like this for another 5 years or 15 years. They could not resolve their internal issues. Secondly, referring to Maulana Luni's statement, it is also possible that the Taliban want to keep BLA close so that if Kabul is under Haqqanis they can use BLA to deter. But it is not entirely possible as Afghanistan is not Nepal. Nepal's neighbours did not intervene. This would not happen in the case of Afghanistan because all of the neighbours of Afghanistan are looking out for any opportunity [to intervene]. There is diversity in Afghanistan, like Uzbeks, Hazaras, Baloch etc. Most important thing is that there were concerns over the Persian language and if we look at Persian language, it originated from Afghanistan near Hindukush, it reached Iran much later. Recently in Panjshir there was oppression against some people on the basis of disrespect of Ahmad Shah Masood's grave. So these kind of provocations are still there and I do not think it can work. I think there will be a rebellion in the North and people will come out in cities as well. In my opinion under given circumstances, Pakistan should befriend everyone who is Afghan. In my opinion we have betrayed Afghanistan before and what we did all those years ago we are still bearing the aftereffects and we need to get out of this and go towards peace.

Moderator : *How do you see the situation in old Afghanistan and new Afghanistan?*

Azaz Syed, journalist and security expert



One thing that we are ignoring is the immigration policy of Pakistan towards Afghanistan. There is a big issue on that. We have shown that the visa process for Afghan citizens is easy but in reality, there are too many challenges. Even today Afghan people living in Pakistan face huge problems in acquiring and extending their visas. In many other cities and in Jalalabad we have observed that Pakistani visas are being sold for money. Then literally there is a business of Pakistani visas going on. We must necessarily have to see these things to give immediate facilitation to people that are in our hands. Secondly, if an Afghan citizen is born in Pakistan, we are not ready to give him/her immigration, our immigration policy is very strict. He/she also does not get the status of a refugee, it is what UNHCR gives them or not. There was a woman named Salma Zahid [October 1999], who took her children and went to her husband in Canada. After 15 years, in 2015, she was not only a citizen of Canada but also a member of parliament till date. Here in Pakistan, if an Afghan citizen migrates or if he is born here, we are not ready to accept him and then he becomes a part of the black market. Many people genuinely want to take immigration but we do not give them and we go around the world asking for loans saying that we have overseas immigrants and we need to give them rent. Imran Khan made a great announcement at the start of his government. He said we will relax our laws for Afghan citizens after having a proper inquiry but it did not work out later because of many reasons. I want to thank PIPS for conducting this conference about Afghan policy and Pakistan policy by inviting many honoured and senior speakers. Our problem is that the policy we have for Afghanistan, our political parties are not serious about it and so is our parliament and they are not serious about it because they think our Afghan policy will not be made in parliament or foreign office rather it will be made in Rawalpindi. This consultation that we are doing under this roof is great but it could be greater if led by the parliament of

Pakistan in which we invite our diplomats, and senior army officers. So, I think this initiative is great, this is what we can do immediately. We cannot make Afghanistan understand as we saw in the OIC meeting that was held and it was decided that religious scholars from different Muslim countries will be sent to Afghanistan to make them understand the issues of women and their education but Afghanistan has not given any green signal for this yet. What we have in our hands is that we strengthen our parliament. We had a national security committee made back in time and this committee worked greatly. We should reactivate this committee again or we need to make a special committee for Afghanistan in which senior people present in this hall should be invited. And the last thing, there is a great tragedy that we have a big gap between our people and the people of Afghanistan. We hold big conferences every year sitting in Pakistan and many of our people from the government take steps for the peace in Afghanistan but till now we could not open a PTV bureau or APP bureau in Kabul, the capital of Afghanistan where media offices are present from all over the world. You should ask and encourage your media personnel both from the public and private sectors to bring forward things besides the official statements we get from the government. Interactions should be made with the local people to hear their voices so ultimately Pakistan can make better policies for Afghanistan. We cannot make the people of Afghanistan happy until we stop involvement in the name of engagement. We should end our involvement, the government should make a policy, people interactions should be made, and the issue of immigration should be solved.

Moderator: *What is your take on the points raised today and the topic under discussion?*

Inam-ul-Haque, former foreign secretary of Pakistan and former minister of state for foreign affairs

Leaving of America and allies from Afghanistan was celebrated in Pakistan very happily but we forgot what our circumstances are and that we cannot take care of our own 240 million people and cannot provide them with food. In a way, we [readily] took the burden of 40 million Afghans who were having American and other

financial assistances before. This resulted in our bringing together two insolvent economies. Pakistan is already close to bankruptcy. Afghanistan does not have an economy to speak of and we have sought to integrate the two economies. The result can lead to more difficult circumstances. We have become from an agricultural economy into an economy that is now importing wheat, sugar, edible oil, and practically everything so we are not an agricultural economy anymore and we are not an industrial economy, in fact we have really no economy to speak of.

One thing I want to say is about recognition. We say that we have not recognized Afghanistan. It is correct; it is de jure that we have not recognized it, but we de facto recognized Afghanistan. Our embassy works in Kabul and their embassy works in Islamabad. Delegations are exchanged. People cross the border very easily. And the tradition in Pakistan has been that we recognize the state in revolutionary changes but do not recognize the government. And historically every politician who has stayed in Kabul has been recognized. So, saying that Pakistan does not recognize Afghanistan is not a factful/real discussion. A discussion was done about the Taliban and if there is any difference between the old Taliban and the Taliban of today. In my opinion, there is no major difference between both. Eventually, there are also two groups among the Taliban: one that is somehow moderate, they want to interact with the world, receive assistance from the world; and then there are others who are strong built and do not want to change their beliefs and want to run the country according to their own strict beliefs. Whether those beliefs are Islamic or not I do not know. For example, about women's rights, we are all very proud of the fact that 1400 years ago or more the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon Him) gave rights to the women that included the right to the education, right to business, and right to participate in battles was also there. Today we tell women to stay prisoned at home, to always stay covered, their face should be covered before appearing on TV, and that they cannot go to school. I do not consider this as Islamic. Maybe it is an Afghan tradition but certainly, it is not an Islamic tradition. So, let us not confuse Afghan traditions with Islamic traditions. Islam does not teach that you should look upon women as a commodity, or give them a subhuman status. So, there should be no hesitation to talk about or to discuss these matters with the Taliban that Islam teaches us to respect women [and their rights/choices], and not to keep them locked or restrained.

I want to discuss the talks that we have started with TTP nowadays. Firstly, this was kept in many wraps, nobody knew negotiations with TTP had started, then some news came on social media, some articles came in newspapers and finally, recently the government of Pakistan said that we are holding negotiations with the TTP. It was said here that TTP and the Taliban are the same and if not same, the TTP owes allegiance to the Taliban, so the TTP is a part of the Taliban and the Taliban will not take them out of Afghanistan. Now they have held the role of mediators. Mediation is done by mister Siraj Haqqani for whom Americans thought that he is an arm of the ISI in Pakistan. And if we have made them mediators which is normally a role between two sides, a higher role between two sides, now we have become clients of Siraj Haqqani or the Taliban, Pakistan government has become the client of Siraj Haqqani or the Taliban. And for what? The conditions that are shown on social media, some we have agreed and some we are on the



way to agree. The committee (jirga) of 57 members which had gone said that it needs 3 months to consult the people of FATA whether they want to stay as a part of KP or not. Are we going to allow the TTP to discuss the future dispensation of the geographical rights of Pakistan or the constituent parts of Pakistan? If we want to do such negotiations then what are we doing? We are capitulating to the TTP and we are giving away part of our sovereignty to them because they say they want Nizam-e-Adl of Sufi Muhammad. They want to control the division of 9 districts of KP, one-third of KP. We have no clarity on what we are negotiating and how we negotiate with TTP as an equal. Have they given any assurances that they want to live peacefully in Pakistan? The answer is no. They want to maintain their arms, they want to maintain their structures, they want to take away the authority of the government of Pakistan from KP or part of KP at least and we are negotiating that. Afghan Taliban are not against the TTP let us be quite clear about it. They gave assurance to Americans that they will not allow any terrorist organizations to operate from the soil of Afghanistan but recently a report came from the security council, in which it is written that TTP, Daish, and other terrorist organizations have become much stronger in Afghanistan today than they were a year ago. So, if we had this thought that the Taliban will take care of terrorists, then this did not happen and is not going to happen. So, we must understand that the Taliban have limited powers in Afghanistan and that these terrorist organizations are thriving under

them rather than being controlled by them. The relation of Taliban with Hindustan, we just had this discussion about the statement made by Mullah Yaqoob that he said Afghanistan has no issues if the Afghanistan army is trained in Hindustan, and said that we would appreciate that if we are formally recognized by India before starting defence corporation and we want cordial relations with India and Afghanistan will never allow its territory to be used by Pakistan against India. So, this concept which got much fame which was a stupid concept to begin with that we need strategic depth in Afghanistan. I could never understand what we meant by strategic depths. Strategic depth means that your army will withdraw from your own country into strategic depth so we intended to leave Pakistan at the tender mercy of India and move into Afghanistan to fight from there. It was a non-starter, to begin with, but now the Taliban has formally exploded that myth if any existed that they would have allowed us to do that. So, we should be clear about the limits we have with Afghanistan and what should be our future policy with Afghanistan. Firstly, we should recognize that Afghanistan is a separate country, it is an independent country and we should behave towards it as we behave towards other independent countries. It is not or cannot or will not be subservient to Pakistan. Back in time, from 1996 to 2001, the Taliban never listened to us. We told them to shift Usama bin Ladin to some third Muslim country, but they disagreed and asked for proof. We told them we can open schools for girls. They disagreed saying they do not need it. We told them not to destroy Bamiyan Buddhas, they said who are we to stop them. Let us be quite clear Mullah Omer was always suspicious of Pakistan. Recently, a Dutch woman wrote a book 'Looking for the enemy' in which she said that Mullah Omer never trusted Pakistan, and maybe that is why he never came to Pakistan after 2001. His son also does not trust Pakistan. And many Taliban leaders give statements against Pakistan whenever needed. So, we should assume that Afghanistan is not necessarily a country very friendly towards us and we should behave with Afghanistan as we behave with other independent and not-so-friendly countries. Our relations are also bad with Hindustan, it is not necessary that we just sit to solve our issues with Afghanistan. They do not want to be treated as subservient to Pakistan and we should not look at them like that. Let them stay independent, they will make their decisions themselves, they will not listen to us, let us be quite clear about this. And we should not try to force our views on them. We have to protect our national interest as they will protect their national interest. We need to protect our national interest, and our economy. We have to see what is

good for Pakistan and then we will see if it is good for Afghanistan or not. I wonder why it is discussed that people of Afghanistan hate Pakistan, maybe because they think Pakistan is very overbearing about them. We have to think about what kind of relationship we should have with Afghanistan. I think that we ourselves are facing economic disaster and we should not try to bail out Afghanistan. We ourselves need help; how can we help them? We need wheat ourselves to feed our people. About 37% of children in Pakistan are malnourished today. They will grow up to be a burden on Pakistan. If we cannot provide food to them then we should not think about Afghanistan before them. Let us look after Pakistan before we begin to look after other countries. We do not care about our issues, but consultations are held on Afghanistan. Why do not we discuss on this forum or similar forums like these the economic crises that we are facing? If we go bankrupt, what will be our status in the world? Where will we stand? Do you think that Afghanistan will come to support you? They cannot support themselves. Then we say Afghans broke slavery shackles. It is an insult to both Afghans and the rest of the world. What kind of statements do we make? Diplomacy is a very fine art that is unknown to our politicians. So at least the people who know the subject handle these areas.

Lt. General (Retd) Naseer Janjua

Afghanistan is a divided nation that has been fighting for over 40 years. It has not been more than 10 months since the Taliban took control of Kabul. Given the current economic and political situation of Afghanistan and considering the limited capability of the Taliban, on a personal level, I feel envious and impressed that they never rushed to others as beggars. They are not going abroad to beg for food or for monetary aid. Probably they are eating less (surviving on lesser resources). Their love for their country is so much that the refugee crisis we were anticipating never happened. The stringent visa policy we had devised was reflective of our paranoia that all Afghans would start migrating to Pakistan after Taliban's takeover, but it never happened, (else we would have witnessed it) – human migration produces strong optics; it cannot be kept hidden.

Regarding the question of governance, how are you accessing the governance in Afghanistan and what is your standard for it? If they do not want to send their daughters to schools, why are you forcing them to open schools? It is none of

your business. While the coach before the boxing ring can make suggestions, it is the boxer inside the ring that actually fights. Please do not view and undermine the situation in Afghanistan through a Pakistani lens. Try being in their shoes and understand what they have been through. We have set the bar too high for them right away. They have just assumed power and we want them to act against terrorist groups like BLA and hand us over the terrorists hiding in their territory. All the mistakes we have committed in the past and the way we have created a disarray, it would take time to wind this up. You should keep your demands mindful of the current situation. Afghanistan is currently back to square one after 40 years. And we must be appreciative of the fact that India-US relations could not solidify in Afghanistan and have now left the country (due to the Taliban). And yet we are not happy with them. I suggest having a long-term vision. Be appreciative of the Afghan nation (as through their efforts), a huge opposition of Pakistan's interests has left this region. We should establish ties with Afghanistan in a way to correct the mistakes we have made in the past. Help the Taliban as much as possible in your limited capacity because they have not asked for as much financial support from us as we had expected. Do this, keeping in view the changing dynamics; At least for the sake of national interest, keep your neighbourhood safe, if not friendly.

Lt. General (Retd) Naeem Khalid Lodhi

First of all, I thank Mr. Amir Rana and PIPS team for organising this gathering of people from diverse background and providing each person with ample time to express their views openly. I appreciate the speakers for having courage to speak their truths and hold that the search for truth requires another courage: courage to listen to others' views, absorb them and modify one's views accordingly. The main conclusion that can be drawn from the consultation is that we should not talk to the TTP from the position of weakness. If we are in a weak position, we can delay talks till we are in a (militarily) strong position. While there is a consensus among most of the speakers that there is not much difference between the Afghan Taliban and the Pakistani Taliban, I agree with Tahir Khan's view that they are different entities. Another consensus that was developed during the consultation was to have a Jirga formulated along the cultural norms of Pashtun society. I strongly endorse the view that diplomatic engagements should be through diplomatic channels as they are professionally trained to do this job and would never use the term "absolute-

ly not” for refusing any demand. Similarly, the ones responsible for policymaking should be devising Afghan policy. When the policymakers fail in doing their job, the void is filled by others in a powerful position. I would also like to add that some of the views expressed in the consultation were surprising for me. For instance, some speakers believed that the Afghan Taliban represents a minority group in Afghanistan while up to 97-98 percent of Afghans are against them. I reject this view on the ground that no insurgent movement can succeed without support of the majority and that such a small minority cannot rule over a majority with peace for such a long time. Talking about inclusivity, I feel Taliban membership has now extended to non-Pashtuns. However, I believe that it is inappropriate to expect the Taliban to form an inclusive government with their political opponents as this is not practised elsewhere in the world. Moreover, there is much of a shift in the views and behaviour of the Taliban as in the 1990s they hanged all their political opponents but now their political opponents are living under the Taliban’s de-facto government [without any threat to their life]. I would also like to clarify that there is a misperception that Pakistan provided sanctuaries to the Taliban; Pakistan provided space to all Afghans. In conclusion, let me clarify the concept of strategic depth. The concept simply means that our western border could be secured against any military threat. This concept is not very popular even in the armed forces.

The views expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of Pak Institute for Peace Studies.

About this report

This report is outcome of the 4th PIPS-led structured consultation out of a series of eight such events that have been designed to discuss and critically evaluate evolving aspects of Afghan conflict and political reconciliation and suggest policy options and strategies to the governments of Pakistan and Afghanistan. To that end, PIPS has established a network of credible resource persons including former diplomats, academicians, government officials, and representatives of political and religious parties, security and law enforcement agencies, civil society, and media, as well as those living at the border including Afghan refugees. The underlying goal is to support Afghan peace and reconciliation and tackle its trickle-down effect for Pakistan including in terms of militancy and insecurity, among other things.

About PIPS

Established in 2005, Pak Institute for Peace Studies (PIPS) is an Islamabad-based research and advocacy organisation. It offers a range of services through a combination of independent research and analysis, innovative academic programmes, and hands-on training and support that serve the following basic themes: Conflict analysis and peacebuilding; dialogue; prevent/counter violent extremism (P/CVE); internal and regional security; and media for peace and democracy. It also conducts frequent structured dialogues, focus group discussions, and national and international seminars to understand the issues listed earlier and strengthen partnerships. The outcomes of PIPS research and planned events have frequently and extensively been reported on media that adds to its credibility as an active, effective and well networked civil society organizations. Many of PIPS policy reports and recommendations have been credited and included in the state policy documents and discourses mainly those on security and CVE.



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