



Thirteenth Note

Dear readers SALAAM.

Afghanistan Watch is delighted to release the first issue of second round of Haqiqat. The newsletter will retain its 2009 focus on the following themes in the Afghan media: transitional justice, negotiation and talks with the insurgent groups, elections transparency and corruption. In addition to these four categories, two new sections are added: a section for expert's opinions on negotiations with the insurgent groups and another section for references to articles published by other organizations on the mentioned issues.

In the 13th volume of the Truth, about 70 news articles are selected from different print media publications in Afghanistan. In the first two weeks of June, as the focus of the media was mainly on peace talks with the Taliban as the top political issues, there is less attention paid to Transitional Justice. Therefore, in this print here are only 5 news articles on Transitional Justice. 40 news articles on negotiations with the insurgent groups are indicating that the print media have sufficiently covered the efforts, publishing dozens of news articles

and analysis on the subject.

The analytical article of this issue is an article by Dr. Sima Samar, the Chairperson of the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission. Mrs. Samar has expressed her opinions regarding the talks with insurgent groups, focusing in particular glance on justice in connection with the attempts for reconciliation.

Transitional Justice: This section contains the most important media debates on the National Consultative Peace Jirga and consequences of amnesty for war criminals and the Taliban. In the meantime, the likely presence of criminals and violators of human rights in the next parliament of the country also remains a cause of concern for many writing in the Afghan media.

Peace Negotiations with insurgent groups: The Kabul Peace Jirga and its recommendations have faced diverse reactions and different sorts of analysis published on the assembly, highlighting the huge importance of peace efforts. The government's determination to implement decisions made by the Peace Jirga delegations and Taliban's opposition to the Jirga has been echoed differently by the pro-

government media and the ones belonging to the oppositions. The controversies of releasing Taliban prisoners and the removal of the top militants' names from the UN blacklist are believed to be facing many challenges, the analysts say.

Elections Transparency: Excluding names of some candidates from the parliamentary election list, ambiguities of the election process, security situation and the prevention of likely frauds and irregularities during the process are seen as the main challenges against the parliamentary election.

More obviously in the news and analyses of this section, there are accusations of corruption by relevant agencies of the government against some individuals, mostly being vanished without any prosecution. Accusing Ahmad Wali Karzai, provincial governors and many other high-ranking officials are the cases which have ended without any legal prosecution by the judicial system.

Note: Truth biweekly magazine welcomes your articles and opinions and your suggestions on the magazine in general and specially on talks with the insurgent groups.



Peace not Attainable without Justice

In my view Afghanistan presently looks like a patient whose real illness is not diagnosed but is forced to take pain-killers to alleviate its pain temporarily. There here are no efforts made to identify the causes of the disease and to heal it permanently.

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Transitional Justice

Talks Only with Those Who Respect the Past Nine-year Achievements

Rah-e-Najat daily, issue No 1430, May 18, 2010, page 3

In recent days, many agencies active on human rights issues and women rights as well as some civil society organizations have launched protest rallies, demonstrating their concerns about the ongoing negotiations with insurgent groups whom they say are responsible of human and women rights violation. They ask the government not to negotiate with those who are responsible for crimes against the humanity, but to bring them to justice.

Siamak Herawi, a spokesman for the president's office said that if there is submission of complaints against past or current insurgents who are accused of human rights violations, the government would bring them to trial.

Peace process is a general and wide-range program in which we cannot talk about specific persons. When the peace process is succeeded, the government will decide about bringing the violators of human rights to trial and judicial agencies will start working to trial them, Herawi said. Human rights organizations have always stressed that there should be no talks with Taliban, stating that the Taliban regime has committed various atrocities such as murder, genocide, torture etc. This group had been the foremost violator of human and women rights during its dominance in Afghanistan.

“Public Interests”, a Platform for Exempting the Criminals

8 Subh daily, Saturday May 29, 2010, Issue No 881, Page 2, Editorial

The prevalence of culture of impunity for the murderers and those responsible for past war crimes, unlawful negligence towards them and more importantly legal support by a parliamentary law approved by the president, has paved the way for spreading crimes and irregularities.

The justification is rising as a legal reference that while the criminals and violators of human rights are being forgiven and their trials are avoided by vague terms of national and public interest and they even are praised in the highest levels, the Taliban also should be exempted and even be allowed to participate in politics and power sharing. Here, it is the law which is the utmost devastated value which no one is thinking about.

Afghan authorities yet do not understand that the only effective antidote against crimes, corruption and decadence in the society is justice and dominance of law. They virtually believe

that by ignoring law and silencing order and regulation they can better pursue their goals.

Warlords' Dominance in Parliamentary Election

Bakhtar daily, issue No 246, Monday May 31, 2010, Page 3
By Bahram Azari

Election commission officials say that the warlords, who are linked to illegal armed groups, have kept their presence dominant in the parliamentary election as in the past. What is being suggested by the commission also existed in the past parliamentary election and the issue was raised by some groups at the time. It is obvious to all that now the warlords control the parliament. Some representatives from the lower house of the parliament are repeatedly accused of violation of human rights by international human rights agencies while many of the MPs who have obtained Parliamentary impunity by votes of the people, had been involved in the past three-decades of civil war. Passage of the so-called National Reconciliation Charter by the parliament is aimed to secure the warlords from any judicial prosecutions. In the new political era in Afghanistan, most of the warlords were isolated and their unlimited vicious power weakened, but the sorrowful fact is that some of them have revived their presence in recent years.

During past nine years, the government did not support the Transitional Justice Program initiated by Afghanistan's Human Rights Commission and subsequently the opportunity has been provided for the warlords to reemerge in the political scene. The government's non-commitment approach towards the justice process impeded restoring justice and as its result the warlords rebounded to power.

Peace without Justice Not Achievable

8 Subh daily, issue No 349, Monday May 31, 2010, Page 5
By Zafar Shah Rooyi

Transitional Justice Coordination Group consisted of 25 national and international organizations urged president Karzai and the National Consultative Peace Jirga to revoke the National Reconciliation Charter and strengthen the judicial system in order to pursue crimes against humanity.

Weeda Ahmad, a member of the group, says that since most of the human rights violators hold high positions in the government, no one is listening to the voices of the victims. Transitional Justice Coordination Group in their open letter to the president has urged him and the participants of Peace Jirga to end the culture of impunity and stop ambiguous talks with the insurgent groups. Emphasizing on implementation of Transitional Justice, the group has asked the president to bar

those who are accused of human rights violation from government posts and also expel those who currently hold positions in the government.

Transitional Justice Coordination Group which held the meeting "Victims' Jirga for Justice" on May 9th in Kabul said there was no response yet from the president to their call.



List of Candidates Accused of Links with Armed Groups Compromised

Bakhtar daily, volume No 247, June 1, 2010, Page 1

Based on information from a high ranking official of the European Commission, the Electoral Commission had to exclude 350 names from the parliamentary candidates list due to their connections with illegal armed groups, but as result of pressures from the candidates or their supporters, the Independent Election Commission has reduced the list of debarments to 85 names.

According to the source, the list is reviewed under the surveillance of ministry of interior affairs. As the warlords have their ultimate influence in the election, it is obvious that they will secure their presence in the parliament. Those who are able to influence the ministry of interior and the relevant commission's officials to unblock their names definitely will be able to steal the people's votes. It is possible that powerful candidates have also had their influence in the commission designated to examine competency of the parliamentary election candidates. Most people believe that information about the content of the list has been leaking outside to the candidates, helping them to find a way out before the list is finalize

Negotiation with armed Opposition Groups

A powerful Taliban Commander Join Afghan government

Rahe-Najat daily, Sunday May 16, 2010, issue No 1428, page 2

Afghan army officials said that Mullah Mustafa, a senior Taliban commander in western Ghor province accompanied by one of his armed men has joined the government. According to the reports, in past years Mullah Mustafa have repeatedly carried out attacks on government institutions as well as on the Salma dam project.

Najibullah Najibi, spokesman for Zafar 207 army corps in the west of the country said the army authorities intended to hand security responsibility of Ghor-Herat highway to Mullah Mustafa and his men.

Surrender of the commander comes after two other commanders of Taliban named Sayed Mirza and Sayed Saleem handed over their arms and joined the government but shortly after rearmed against the government.

According to another report, Abdul Manan, a Taliban designated commander in Kuhistan district of Faryab province surrendered to government. Ahmad Jawid Bidar, spokesman of Faryab governor, said Amir Abdul Manan had surrendered himself fully in his own will and they welcomed him.

Maldives' Meeting at the Eve of Peace Consultative Jirga

Sorosh-e- Mellat Daily, Sunday May 23, 2010, Issue No 368, Page 2

Representatives from Taliban, Hezb-e-Islami Hekmatyar and Afghan government lately had a meeting in Maldives, the reports said.

According to the reports, 45 representatives from the mentioned parties and Hekmatyar's son Ferooz had participated in the meeting which had been called by Homayon Harir, Hekmatyar's son-in-law.

There are also unverified reports about presence of a UN representative in the meeting. It is said that a high-profile delegation was representing Taliban in Maldives Meeting. The sources say there were potentially risk of arrest of Taliban delegates, if the meeting was held in Kabul.

A spokesman from Maldives government confirmed the report and added that the Maldives state is not involved in the meeting and the only aim for Maldives government is restoring peace and stability in Afghanistan.

While there are reports on Karzai's government representative participating in the meeting, his spokesman denied the



participation of any representative from the Afghan government in Maldives meeting and termed the gathering as weird. The Taliban have also denied the group's involvement in the meeting, declaring that those who participated in the gathering as Taliban's representatives, have long ago separated from the group and are under dominance of Kabul Government.

22 Insurgents Join Peace Process

Sorosh-e- Mellat daily, volume No 369, May 24 2010, Page 7

Hazrat Mohammad Sharif Mojaddadi, head of Peace Consolidation commission in the western zone of the country, said that Mullah Nabi and Mullah Qayoum, two Taliban commanders, with their 18 armed men joined the government. They have been involved in insurgency activities against the government in Khak-e Safid district of Farah province, Mojaddadi said. He added that now the two commanders are committed to support the government and work for peace and security in the region. They are granted amnesty and they can live a peaceful life now, he said.

Meanwhile, Abdul Rauf Ahmadi, spokesman of the West Zone Police, told reporters that Ziauddin and Abdul Momin, two other Taliban insurgents, joined Peace Consolidation Program. He added that they were involved in insurgency in the outskirts of Qala-e Naw, the capital city of Badghis province.

According to Mujaddai, the head of Peace Consolidation Commission in the West, 1750 insurgents in Farah, Ghor, Herat

and Badghis provinces have quitted insurgency and joined peace process since the beginning of the peace process in the western zone in 2007.,.

Will the Consultative Peace Jirga Follow the Government's Agenda?

Nokhost Weekly, Wednesday May 26, 2010, issue No 15, Page 1
By Sahar

Dr. Farooq Wardak, head of the commission responsible for organizing Kabul Peace Jirga, mentioned technical problems as the reason for delay of the Jirga, but apparently the challenges for this is far beyond what Wardak has talked about. While the government is trying its best to arrange the assembly to find a progress for the reconciliation initiative, members of the parliament have continued their protest against the government on some issues such as repeated delays in submitting names of the remaining cabinet members to the parliament and Karim Khalili's refusal to come to the house. The MPs warned if the government does not comply with their demands; they will boycott the Consultative Peace Jirga.

Karzai and his team are working hard to prepare the ground for a successful Peace Jirga, for it is the only way for Karzai to assure his Western allies of improvements in Afghanistan, though the peace efforts may not lead into any sort of agreement between the two sides of the conflict.

In London conference Karzai put his focus on the negotiation with the Taliban and tried to convince the international community to fund millions of dollars for implementations of the initiative. If the reconciliation efforts of the president fail, he loses much of his credibility in the eyes of western countries.

Peace Jirga and the Huge Challenges It is Facing

Nokhost daily, Wednesday May 26 2010, issue No 15, Page 2, Editorial

Although after the president's visit to Washington the Afghan officials have not commented on whether the Taliban leaders are invited to the Consultative Peace Jirga or not, lately there were some reports quoting Taliban spokesmen that the group had notified Afghan officials over their conditional presence in the Jirga.

According to the reports, the main conditions of the Taliban for participating in the National Consultative Peace Jirga are releasing their prisoners and removing their leaders' names from the so-called UN blacklist. .

National Alliance Front Objects the Composition of Peace Jirga

Sorosh-e Mellat daily, issue No. 371, Wednesday May 26, 2010, Page

National Alliance Front criticized the structure of Consultative Peace Jirga and called the process with all its qualities and quantities as ineffective. Sayed Fazel Sancharaki, the spokesman of the Front, speaking at a press conference labeled the Jirga as

a governmental assembly rather than a national gathering.

"Peace Jirga has no legal ground and value and it does not follow a transparent and specific agenda," Sancharaki said.

Sancharaki claims that the representatives invited to the Jirga do not have a significant role in current conflicts in the country. He added that the role and capability of some of the prominent political groups such as the National Alliance were completely ignored.

Consultative Peace Jirga Rejected in Televised Program 'Kabul Discussion'

Mandegar daily, Thursday May 27, 2010, Issue No 332, Page 1

In a televised program on National Consultative Peace Jirga, Abdul Hafiz Mansoor, a prominent political analyst, said the gathering paves the way for more crises in the country, putting the authority of Afghan government under question and creating propitious groundwork for offending law and regulations. According to Mansoor, the Jirga itself will become groundwork for more crises in the country. He insisted that instead of the Consultative Peace Jirga has no ground in the Afghanistan's constitution and there should be held a Loya Jirga, supreme assembly, for discussing on how to negotiate with the Taliban insurgents.

Muhmmad Akbari, a member of parliament, also called the assembly ineffective and said that presence of MPs in the gathering would put the credibility of Afghan Parliament under question. He rejected the idea that the outcome of the Consultative Jirga would be a national consensus.

But representatives from the government insisted on the effectiveness of the gathering. They said the Jirga will set a ground for bringing peace in the country. Some participants in the televised program, mostly university students, confronted the commentators with questions and expressed the belief that the assembly will be unable in bringing peace to the country. The participants labeled the mechanism of the Consultative Peace Jirga as faulty and unlawful.

Wahid Omar:

Representatives from All Social Groups and Spectrums across Afghanistan attend the Jirga

Sorosh-e Mellat Daily, Thursday May 27, 2010, Issue No 372, Page 8

Wahid Omar, spokesman of the president said that the president himself oversees the process of preparation for the National Consultative Peace Jirga. The Jirga's commission was directed by him to choose and invite representatives from all across Afghanistan, Omar said. Speaking at a press conference, Omar added that in regard of the structure and composition of the Jirga the president has consulted all parties in the country as well as speakers of both parliament houses..

Wahid Omar pointed that the president assures the people of Afghanistan that the Peace Jirga will be a gathering of Afghans

and the peace process and negotiation with the insurgent groups will be implemented as the people's will and agreement requires.

In response to a question about Dr. Abdullah's comments on not being invited to the Jirga, the President's spokesman said afghan's representatives will be invited to the Peace Jirga selected from 13 or 14 specific categories and no one is invited to the assembly yet. And so, representatives from all groups and spectrums in the country, including women who will account for 20 percent of the Jirga, will gather in the assembly, which is unprecedented in Afghanistan's history of such traditional gatherings, Omar said.

What will be the Achievement of Peace Jirga?

Erada daily, volume No 789, May 29, 2010, Page 4

By Abdul Shakor Ali Zada

In Afghanistan's political and security Affairs, Pakistan has undeniably a crucial role and the neighbor country will have the same role in any peace negotiations in the future. After the London conference, Islamabad officials suggested to play a unique role in negotiations with Taliban insurgents.

Lately, there have been a wave of distrusters and suspicions between the two neighbor countries which in some cases escalated tensions between Kabul and Islamabad. If the distrusters are to be continued, peace negotiations with the insurgents would be affected the most and in that case the possibility of success in future negotiations will diminish.

If Pakistan is not considered as a major player in any future peace dialogue by the Consultative Peace Jirga, Islamabad may continue its harmful games and negative role towards Afghan peace efforts.

Ambiguities of the 'Consultative Peace Jirga'

Afghanistan Daily, Saturday May 29, 2010, Issue No 1106, Page 7

While the commission that is responsible for launching the National Consultative Peace Jirga, *or assembly*, has been preparing for the gathering for a long time, some political analysts cast doubts on the possible results of the Jirga and express their worries on the decisions that will be made in the assembly. After rising tensions on some bilateral issues between parliament and the government and Wolesi Jirga, there are hearsays that some of the MPs are not going to participate in the Jirga. But Gul Agha, the Jirga's official spokesman, said that no one from the insurgent groups is invited to the Jirga and all MPs from both parliament houses will attend the assembly.

A Jirga, Which is not National; Unorganized Initiation and Fruitless Conclusion

Mandegar daily, volume No 334, May 30 2010, Page 6,

Ignoring Afghan government's peace negotiations with the insurgent groups and in the eve of Peace Jirga, US Senate

rejected unanimously troops withdrawal and passed another war budget for the war in Afghanistan.

Having no legal and constitutional ground, the Jirga had no appeal to the people and now almost half of Afghans are denying its legitimacy. The result of the Jirga will obviously be a failure. Most of the people feel that the Jirga as other gatherings will be unproductive and just is a waste of the capital belonging to the people.

War Intensifies at the Eve of 'Peace Jirga'

Rahe-Najat daily, volume No 1440, May 30 2010, Editorial

The main opposition group, Hope and Change Coalition, led by former foreign minister Dr. Abdullah, announced that it is going to boycott the Consultative Peace Jirga. Regarding the remaining cabinet members, the coalition's influence in parliament proved to be effective as the lower house is continuing its protest against the president by holding parliament sessions in silence. The insurgent groups, disappointed by the US and Afghan government ignoring their interest of conditional participation in the Jirga, have recently escalated their bloody attacks and begun a new wave of campaign in Faryab, Nuristan and some other provinces of east and north of the country.

As officials are preparing for the Jirga, the opposition groups weigh to show that without their participation, achieving peace would remain an unachievable desire. On the other hand, the armed insurgent groups, waging a bloody war, are trying to affect the atmosphere of the Jirga by their demands and to compel the participants of the Jirga to advise the president and US government to accept insurgents' demands for restoring peace.

Ghazni People Complain on Selection Process of Participants of Peace Jirga

8 Subh daily, Issue No 348, Sunday May 30, 2010, Page 2

The people in Ghazni province express their dissatisfaction over the selection of representatives of the province for participating in Peace Jirga. They claim that those who are participating in the gathering do not represent the people of Ghazni province and have their own ties with the officials.

Abdul Ali Khan Zada, a member of Ghazni provincial council, says that the Peace Jirga enjoys a good reputation, but the participants of the Jirga, including Ghazni representatives, do not really represent the people of Afghanistan. Most of the participants of the Jirga are government officials such as governors and other officials.

Afghan Senators to Participate in Peace Jirga

Afghanistan Daily, volume No 1108, Monday, May 31, 2010, Page 8

Afghan Senate members agreed to participate in the National Consultative Peace Jirga in support of efforts seeking peace and stability in the country. The Upper House of the parliament yesterday also called on the House of Representatives to attend

<http://www.watchafghanistan.org>

the Jirga, despite of their protests.

Fazl Hadi Muslimyar, an official of the Upper House of the parliament, said he would ask officially the representatives to participate in Peace Jirga.

Hizb-e-Islami Faction Supports Peace Jirga

Rahe-Najat daily, volume No 1441, May 31, 2010, Page 1

Hadi Arghandiwal, leader of a disjoined branch of the Hezb-e-Islami Hekmatyar insurgent faction, announced his party's support to the National Consultative Peace Jirga. Arghandiwal asked his supporters to participate in the Peace Jirga and share their views and suggestions for bringing peace in the country.

Political Analyst: Reconciliation Initiative Not Possible Presently

Rahe-Najat daily, volume No 1441, May 31, 2010, Page 2

A political analyst Wahid Mojhd, said the aim of the Peace Consultative Jirga to bring about a mechanism for talks with the insurgents might not be achievable. The insurgent's demands are clear and if their demands are accepted they would join the peace talks. He added that the outcome of the Jirga would be a mechanism for talks with preconditions being set such as continuance of foreign troops' presence in the country and that the constitution will not change at any circumstances.

The government's efforts to offer a mechanism for talks with well-known insurgents such as granting amnesty to the Taliban leaders and the obligation of the insurgents to give up insurgency and hand down their arms, would not be seen as a national political consensus by the Taliban, Mojhd said.

Bilateral Cooperation between Afghanistan and Pakistan Vital for peace

Rahe-Najat daily, volume No 1441, May 31, 2010, Page 3

US forces' commander in Afghanistan, General Stanley McChrystal, speaking at a press conference said the political efforts to bring insurgents back to the society and offering welfare services by the government needed a coherent and transparent mechanism. In order to be successful, it must be carried out as a national program all over the country, McChrystal said.

The US and NATO forces commander told the reporters that the Peace Jirga would be an Afghan assembly and the US fully support the initiative.

outline for talks with the insurgent groups, then the Peace Jirga initiative proves to be meaningless. Moreover, the structure of the Jirga is designed in a way that the participants will barely have the chance to express their own opinions. According to certified reports, the administrative panel of the Jirga is already selected and the participants will be divided in categories, every group containing 50 representatives.

Some experts say, in order to prevent any expression against the pre-designed peace initiative, the government has intentionally planned to not provide the opportunity for the representatives to talk personally on the issues.

There would also be severe restrictions on the media. It appears that by quarantining Peace Jirga representatives and blocking information from the media, the government is going to keep the people away from ongoing affairs.

Mark Sedwell: Jirga an Opportunity to End War

Sorosh-e Mellat daily, volume No 376, June 1, 2010, Page 1

NATO civilian representative in Afghanistan, Mark Sedwell, said the Peace Jirga was a good opportunity to end war and restore security in Afghanistan. The event has support from the international community, NATO and ISAF, he said.

Afghan president Hamid Karzai has repeatedly emphasized that he does not intend to talk with Al-Qaeda terrorist organization. The Taliban have rejected their participation in the Peace Jirga, which is going to be held in Kabul in July. Afghan officials say Taliban leaders are not invited to the Peace Jirga but the Afghan government would not prevent them to participate in the assembly, if they want to.

Ahmad Motawakil: Confidence-building Crucial for Reconciliation

Mandegar daily, volume No 336, June 1, 2010, Page 7

Wakil Ahamad Motawakil, former Taliban's foreign minister, says confidence-building between the Afghan government and the Taliban is the only way for bringing peace in the country. Motawakil affirmed that in order to start reconciliation with the Taliban, the government needs to show a resolute will and purge the suspicions.

The Taliban-era foreign minister said that such gathering without presence of the Taliban does not result to bring peace in Afghanistan. Afghan government has not done enough to court the Taliban to come to peace and reconciliation negotiations, Motawakil said. Motawakil also demanded that the Taliban should be given impunity to open a "political office". He did not detail the suggestion but insisted it was inevitable for peace talks.

Exchange of a Taliban Commander Rejected

Rahe-Najat daily, volume No 1442, June 1, 2010, Page 1

Officials in Baghlan province rejected an offer of the Taliban to

Peace Jirga: An Assembly with Enormous Cost

8 Subh daily, volume No 349, May 31, 2010, page 1

It is said that the government has arranged a 36-pages initiative for negotiation with the insurgent groups. Therefore, if the report comes true and the government has a pre-planned

exchange a commander of the group named Shah Wali. But also some reports, quoting a Taliban official, say that the commander has been already freed in exchange with some Afghan Army soldiers.

Experts: Removal of Taliban Leaders from the UN Blacklist, a Unilateral Suggestion

Afghanistan daily, volume No 1112, June 5, 2010, Page 1

Helaluddin Helal, an Afghan MP from Baghlan province, says that the UN would not remove Taliban leaders' names from the so-called blacklist until it is assured that the insurgents will abandon the violence. "Even if the Taliban leaders' names are removed from the list, I don't think it would have any productive result," Helal said.

Helal insisted that it is not enough to have the names removed from the UN blacklist, because at first there have to be a green light from the Taliban side. Eng. Younos Fakoor termed the removal of Taliban leaders' names from the UN list a fruitless effort and an unilateral concession to the Taliban. "The concessions and confidence-building measures must not be unilateral," Fakoor said. Fakoor says that it must be told to the Taliban that 'we do free your prisoners and remove your names from the blacklist, but you also have to *stop*? attacking schools and accept the constitution.'

Motawakil and Zaeef not Participated in Peace Jirga

Afghanistan daily, volume No 1112, June 5, 2010, Page 4

Mawlawi Wakil Ahmad Motawkil, former Taliban's foreign minister and Abdul Salam Zaeef the regime's ambassador to Pakistan have not accepted the government's invitation to participate in the Peace Jirga.

Mr. Zareef said that he has been invited to the Jirga but due to some other reasons he did not going to participate in the Peace Jirga. He stressed that participants of the Jirga should offer new and effective initiatives, end the names of Taliban leaders being blacklisted and the talks must immediately be started vigorously and without preconditions.

Peace Jirga Organized with Abstract and Outdated Plans

Mandegar daily, volume No 337, June 5, 2010, Page 4

Some of the prominent political figures such as Dr. Abdullah Abdullah, General Abdul Rashid Dustum, Hajji Muhammad Muhaqqiq, Atta Mohammad Noor, Ahmad Zia Massoud and some parliament members who have important roles in politics of the country did not participate in the governmental Peace Jirga.

General Abdul Rashid Dustum, the leader of National Movement of Afghanistan, in a statement rebuked Karzai and his government's failure on the boycott of the Jirga by some

prominent political parties. Hajji Mohammad Mohaqiq, leader of the Islamic Unity Party of Afghan People, said that the Jirga had no balance of ethnic representatives. Insisting that it is not suitable for such a Peace Jirga, Mohaqiq added that more than 1000 of the participants were representing a specific ethnic group. More importantly, the 'Hope and Change' Front led by Dr. Abdullah Abdullah, did not participate in the Peace Jirga, calling it a governmental assembly.

Absence of Baluchs in Peace Consultative Jirga

Mandegar daily, volume No 337, June 5, 2010, Page 8

Baluch's representatives claim that there had been no delegates representing the ethnic group in the National Consultative Peace Jirga. They complained that they had called on the government officials to invite representatives from Baluchs to the gathering, but the officials did not consider their request and ignored to invite Baluch delegates. Complaining in their letter, the parliament members said that the Jirga was a governmental program with personal motives rather than an all-inclusive assembly.

Peace Consultative Jirga and the Expectations

Rahe-e Najat daily, volume No 1443, June 5, 2010, Page 2

Stressing on US support for Karzai's peace efforts, US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said many of the conflicts could not be solved by military means and alongside military operations there should be political efforts. Only those insurgent groups which sever their ties with Al Qaeda, quit violence and respect Afghanistan's Constitution should be included in the reconciliation process.

There seems to be no change neither in Clinton's tone nor in other Western leaders' announcements, who commented on Afghanistan in recent days. The final declaration of the Peace Jirga contains much positive recommendations. Most of the recommendations somehow are related to foreigners or can not be followed without their consent.

One of the positive points is that there is a broad understanding among the participants of the Jirga that the foreigners are playing a vital role in any future negotiations for bringing peace in the country. Considering this fact, the declaration asks Afghan government to follow the peace efforts in cooperation with the international community.

Ban Ki Moon Expresses Support to Kabul Peace Jirga

Sorosh-e Mellat daily, volume No 378, June 5, 2010, Page 1

United Nations General Secretary Ban Ki Moon expressed his support to the Afghan Peace Jirga, which was held on June 2 in Kabul. Speaking on the phone with President Karzai, the UN chief expressed the United Nation's support to the peace assembly and hoped the gathering would bring lasting peace and security to the country.

Consultative Peace Jirga Ends, issuing its Final Declaration

Sorosh-e Mellat daily, volume No 378, June 5, 2010, Page 1

The National Consultative Peace Jirga announced a declaration and presented its peace recommendations to the government of Afghanistan on its final day of sessions. The declaration contains more than a hundred articles but a summarized version consisting of 16 articles was read in the last session of the Jirga.

The declaration of the Peace Jirga called on the government and the foreign countries to set a good gesture with the release of the prisoners who are in detention based on false reports. It also asked the Afghan government to delist Taliban leaders from the so-called UN blacklist in a cooperation effort with the international community. It also emphasizes on applying the law equally to all citizens in order to develop social justice in the country.

The Afghan government as well as the international community is requested by the declaration to guarantee for the security of those who join the peace process and provide them impunity in order to return them to civilian life. The assembly's declaration also called the government to pursue the peace process as a longstanding strategy and to launch a supreme peace council to implement it.

The Government Expands Taliban Army

Mandegar daily, volume No 338, June 6, 2010, Page 1

Experts believe that recommendations offered to the government by the Peace Jirga to free Taliban prisoners would not help negotiations with the insurgents but make them even more determined to fight the government. Mohammad Aasem, a member of the parliament, says that the case had occurred in the past.

According to Aasem, some important figures of the Taliban who were in detention of the government or foreign troops joined back to the Taliban insurgents and staged new wave of attacks after being freed from the detention centers.

Wahid Mojhdha, a political expert, believes that there has been some arrangements between the US forces and the Afghan government to free some suspected detainees from the detention centers.

He says that top US commander general McCrystal asked the governors two weeks ago to provide him a list of the prisoners they think are innocent in order to release them from US-controlled detention centers.

Peace Jirga Has No Legal Ground

8 Subh daily, volume No 352, June 6, 2010, Page 5

The UN secretary general Ban Ki Moon, the US embassy in Kabul and the German foreign ministry announced yesterday their support for the final declaration of the Kabul Peace Jirga. Attaullah Ludin, a former commander of Hizb Islami faction and a member of the parliament who was a participant in the Jirga,

said the parties of the conflict were requested to avoid putting forward preconditions which impedes the talks. According to Ludin, one of the main demands the participants of the Jirga asked from the international community, was to respect the decisions of the Jirga and accept the recommendations.

Eng. Mohammad Aasem, a member of Afghan parliament who is critical of the Jirga, believes that the National Advisory Peace Jirga has no legal ground in Afghanistan's constitution and the decisions made in the assembly would not be functional in peace talks. "Afghan constitution has certified three sources as legal decision makers for the national affairs: the parliament, supreme assembly or Loya Jirga, and referendum," Aasem said. He added that, except these three none other source has the legal authority to make decisions on national and political affairs in the country.

Karl Eikenberry: U.S. Helps Afghanistan to Implement Peace Jirga Decisions

Afghanistan daily, volume No 1113, June 6, 2010, Page 1

US ambassador to Afghanistan Karl Eikenberry, speaking at a press conference, said that now after the end of the Peace Jirga it was the Afghan government's responsibility to follow the recommendations of the Jirga.

Eikenberry added that the US would help the Afghan government in this course. "We are waiting to receive the non-obligatory decisions made in the three-day Peace Jirga from the Afghan government and we hope to jointly work on the peace process, in a cooperation between Kabul and the international community..

Abdullah Terms Peace Jirga 'a Drama'

Afghanistan daily, volume No 1113, June 6, 2010, Page 1

Abdullah Abdullah, Karzai's main challenger in the last presidential election, labeled the Consultative Peace Jirga a drama and said its recommendations offers nothing new for the peace process.

Abdullah claimed that the agenda handed over to the committees was set in advance and most of the participants were unaware of the issues surrounding the peace initiative. But Gul Afgha Ahmadi, spokesman of the National Consultative Peace Jirga, rejected the allegations and said that the participants discussed in the committees and presented their recommendations to the final declaration, which was announced on the final day of the assembly.

Hezb-e-Islami Faction Rejects Peace Jirga Decisions

Afghanistan daily, volume No 1113, June 6, 2010, Page 8

Hezb-e-Islami Faction, led by Gulbuddin Hekamtyar, rejects the outcome of the Jirga saying it has no suggestion on withdrawal of foreign forces from Afghanistan.

Haroon Zarghoon, a spokesman of the insurgent group, described the outcome of the Jirga as a failure and as disappointing.

He said, it was set to legitimize the presence of foreign forces in the country. He pointed that the declaration says the prisoners should be freed from Afghan and US forces' detention centers, adding it was not clear whether the US would accept the recommendations of the Peace Jirga or not. He rebuked the participants of the Jirga because they have not set a withdrawal date for foreign forces, but instead have emphasized on continuance of their presence in Afghanistan.

The Government Determined to Follow Peace Jirga Recommendations

Bakhtar daily, volume No 250, June 7, 2010, Page 1, By Sajjad Mohammadi

Just a day after ending the three-day Peace Jirga in Kabul, President Karzai has issued a decree, appointing a commission to work on the release of the Taliban-linked prisoners who are detained based on inadequate and unaccountable evidences.

The commission is headed by the justice minister and the members of the commission are representatives from the Supreme Court, the general attorney, the Peace Consolidation Commission and the Presidential Judicial and Advisory Board. The commission is assigned to study the cases of the suspected detainees and release those who are detained by ill-proven evidences.

Furthermore, the UN special envoy for Afghanistan said that if the insurgents stop fighting against the government and accept the Afghan Constitution, the UN Security Council would embark on delisting them from the UN blacklist.

Taliban and Hezb-e Islami's Implacable Stance on Peace Jirga

Bakhtar daily, volume No 250, June 7, 2010, Page 4, Bahram Azari

A Taliban spokesman said although the Taliban were ignored to be invited to the Peace Jirga and their conditions were not considered, they respect some decisions of the Jirga. A spokesman of the Taliban told the media that the Taliban would come to negotiation table if the Afghan government implements the recommendations of the Peace Jirga.

He stressed that the only issue not dealt with by the Jirga, is the withdrawal of foreign forces. Wahid Mojhde, a political analyst, said a key condition of the Taliban is the withdrawal of the foreign forces, but in a more resilient position, Hizb-e-Islami Hekmatyar faction demands a deadline for NATO forces.

Resignation of Top Security Officials: Another Concession to Taliban and Pakistan

Cheragh daily, volume No 1567, June 7, 2010, Page 2

Accepting the resignation of two top security officials, President Karzai approaches another step towards the Taliban with his peace initiative.

In fact, by resignation of Afghan Interior minister and director

general of national security Pakistan easily and in time achieved one of its main goals –sacking heads of Afghan critical security agencies from their post. In their absence, now Pakistan can test Karzai's goodwill towards the so-called peace negotiations with the Taliban, the favorite agents for Islamabad. With their resignation, now the insurgents have the ground for 'peace talks' and gaining more concessions.

Relevance of Security Officials' Resignation and Release of Taliban Prisoners

*Mandegar daily, volume No 340, June 8, 2010, Page 2
By Misaddeq Parsa*

According to the leaked details about the resignation of two top security officials, possibly Amrullah Saleh, who is said had serious disagreements with the president on the release of Taliban prisoners, has resigned and president Karzai have used Hanif Atmar as a victim to justify sacking Saleh and avert international and domestic objections.

Karzai's Peace Talks, a Disgrace to Afghanistan

Rah-e Najat daily, volume No 341, June 9, 2010, Page 1

Amrullah Saleh, former chief of National Directorate for Security, criticized the reconciliation talks with the insurgents describing it as a disgrace to Afghanistan. Saleh specified that he resigned from his post because he saw himself an obstacle to Karzai's peace initiative. The former chief of NDS said the main reason of his resignation was President Karzai's last decree on the release of Taliban-linked prisoners.

Sima Samar: Prisoners' Cases must be Carefully reviewed

8 Subh daily, volume No 355, June 9, 2010, Page 5, By Zafar Shah rooi

Doctor Sima Samar, head of the Independent Human Rights Commission, welcomed the measures to release those prisoners who she says are being detained without any charge. But she insisted that those who are proven guilty should not be freed under the shield of goodwill.

Those who are not charged must be released, but the prisoners who are facing criminal charges should be brought to trial and remain behind bars until the time of their sentence is over.

Wahid Omar, presidential office spokesman, told in a press conference that it is not the case only with the Taliban or another group but it is about those prisoners who are detained based on false reports or not-proven charges.

Richard Holbrooke: International Community Funds Afghan Peace Talks

Bakhtar daily, volume No 252, June 9, 2010, Page 2

US special envoy to Afghanistan Richard Holbrooke says the

international community will promise more financial assists to support Afghan government's peace talks in a Conference to be convened soon in Kabul. In London Conference the international community allocated \$ 140 million for supporting the peace initiative. Japan, United States and Britain were the biggest donors of the fund.

The Afghan finance minister Omar Zakhilwal says that only few numbers of Taliban will accept the peace proposal. According to Zakhilwal, the insurgents want solid guarantees that the foreign NATO-led troops will not pursue them in the future.



Worries on Pakistan's Influence inside Afghan Government

Mandegar daily, volume No 343, June 12, 2010, Page 1
By Jamshid Yama

Pakistan is seeking to convince the US and the Afghan government to talk with the Taliban through the mediation of Islamabad officials and President Karzai intends to use Pakistan's influence on the Taliban in order to stop the bloody war in the country, Jawid Kuhistani, a security and political analyst, said. Kuhistani added that during their visits to Washington Pakistani officials have urged the US officials to turn over Taliban talks to Pakistanis.

Elections Transparency

140 Complaints Submitted to Electoral Complaints Commission within Two Days

Rahe-Najat Daily, sunday May 16, 2010, Issue No 1428, Page 1

In the first two days of receiving complaints regarding to the parliamentary election, 120 complaints were submitted in Kabul and 20 cases in provincial offices of the electoral complaints commission.

Ahmad Zia Rafaat, a member of electoral complaints commission, speaking to a gathering of parliamentarian election candidates in Herat Province stressed that just those complaints will be considered for investigation, which are documented, not the ones (relying) based on fabrications for defamation purposes.

In order to speed up the process of complaints consideration in the country, the provincial offices of the commission are authorized to work on the complaints.

Disgruntled Candidates: Removal of Some Candidates' Names by Election Commission Illegal

Rahe-Najat daily, issue No 1430, May 18, 2010, page 1

Twenty candidates from a total of 226 candidates for the next parliamentarian election race, whose names re excluded from the preliminary candidates list, asked the Independent Election Commission to quit the decision within one day.

Abdul Jabbar Sabit, one of the candidates whose names are not on the list, representing about twenty disgruntled candidates said on Monday, the decision to exclude dozens of the nominees from the preliminary election list was against the law. "The election law does not allow the IEC to omit any names from the preliminary list and this is obligatory for the IEC." He added: "The IEC did not consider some wrongdoings of the approved candidates and we are asking the IEC to include our names to the list and return our reputation," Sabit said.

Abudul Jabbar Sabit stressed that their names were excluded from the list without any reason. He warned that if their request is not answered within the next day, they will consider other measures. The Independent Election Commission of Afghanistan said that the disgruntled candidates' names are removed from the election preliminary list due to some errors in the approval vote sheets of 226 candidates.

Zakaria Barkzai, deputy chief of the IEC's secretariat labeled the objections as misplaced and said: "We have the legal and official authority to check the approval votes of a candidate and the voter's list in order to examine whether the given data and information are credible or not.

According to the article 3 of the election law, the complaint

election commission is responsible to examine the qualification of the would-be candidates.

Another Chance for the Candidates Removed from the Preliminary List of Parliamentary Election

Sorosh-e Mellat daily, Wednesday May 26, 2010, Issue No. 371, Page 7

The Electoral complaints commission said that it has examined the complaints from those candidates whose names had been excluded from the preliminary list for the parliamentary election. According to the commission's officials most of the candidates were removed from the list due to some technical reasons. Negligence of the candidates to write the numbers of vote cards of their supporters and candidates' ill-signs or fingerprints were the main reason for the removal of the candidates' names from the preliminary list.

Ahmad Zia Rafaat, spokesman of the Electoral Complaints Commission, said that for the strengthening of the country's democracy, the candidates excluded from the list by technical reasons will be given another chance of candidanship: they must correct their registration within five days, Rafaat said.

According to the reports, overall 226 parliamentary election candidates' names have been excluded from the electoral preliminary list by the Electoral Complaints Commission and most of the candidates have officially protested against the decision.

MPs' Civil Protest and Karzai's Desperation

Mandegar Daily, Thursday May 27, 2010, Issue No 332, Page 2, Editorial

By launching the so-called National Consultative Peace Jirga, or assembly, Mr. Karzai is struggling to find a way to legitimize his administration which widely faced legitimacy crisis after last year presidential election marred by widespread fraud and irregularities.

Karzai's political allies, aware of his unstable position, have increased efforts to pressurize him so that he accepts his election-time promises and allies expectations. Karzai's team also with full adroitness raises new issues in the country to pressurize his allies in order to scale down their expectations.

The Law must be Applied Equally on Candidates for Parliamentary Election

8 Subh daily, issue No 349, Monday, May 31, 2010, Page 2, Editorial

A special commission evaluating the qualification of parliamentary election candidates accused 80 of the candidates

to have connections with illegal armed groups. According to Afghanistan's constitution, those who committed crimes against humanity or deprived of civil rights are not qualified for participating in the election.

There are fears that in this year's parliamentary election just the lower members of the groups are barred from election, not the high-profile ones who are responsible for past crimes in the country.

However, no one is officially accused by the judicial agencies of the country and the commission has no authority to bar the accused candidates from the parliamentary election. In this case, it is most possible that the electoral rules are not applied and just the junior suspects will be left out of the election in favor of the senior candidates.

Excluded Parliamentary Election Candidates Seeking Innocence

Kabul Weekly, Volume No 408, June 2, 2010, Page 2

The Electoral Complaints Commission said that ill-literacy of some election candidates and in some cases negligence of Independent Election Commission's staff in guiding the candidates resulted in the candidates' failure in providing the essential documents and filling properly the relevant forms. But Mr Noor, spokesman of Independent Election Commission, rejected accusations of negligence of the commission's staff and said that they had provided each candidate a package of guidelines about the process a week before the registration started. He also added that the candidates were routinely informed by the election commission personnel. Some of the parliamentary election candidates, whose cases are revised, said that the overall process of studying the documents were faulty and mismanaged.

Ahmad Wali Karzai Trapped By Tolo

Mandegar daily, Volume No 339, June 7, 2010, Page 8, By Ahmad Omran

Ahmad Wali Karzai, President Karzai's brother and head of Kandahar provincial council, talking to Tolo TV tried to disprove the accusations against him. Talking incoherently, Karzai could not provide convincing reasons against the accusations he is facing.

With unconvincing reasoning, he argued that some media in the West have raised the allegations against him with the aim to pressurize President Karzai.

Ahmad Wali Karzai insisted he had no role in last year presidential election, but the people in Kandahar have different views and said that their votes had been stolen in favor of Hamid Karzai.

Police Force in the North Insufficient

Erada daily, Issue No 797, June 9, 2010, Page 3

General Patang, police chief in north zone of the country, says

police force is capable of providing security of the next parliamentary election. He added, since last month the police force in the north has a close partnership with the Independent Election Commission in the pre-election process. Police is prepared to take the security responsibility of 97 percent of voting centers, Patang said. According to the Police Chief in the north, some areas in Baghlan, Kunduz and Faryab provinces are facing security challenges and it may not be possible to open ballot boxes in such areas.

Karzai not to Present Ministers' List to the Parliament Soon

Kabul Weekly, Issue No 409, June 9, 2010, page 2

Ahamd Behzad, a member of Afghan parliament, said there are evidences that Karzai is playing a procrastination game until the parliament's tenure is ended. Using the government's authority and capital, Karzai and his team are going to influence the parliamentary election in order to bring about a submissive parliament for approving his favorite nominees for cabinet posts, Behzad added.

UN Envoy: Ending Current Situation an Afghans Job

Daily Afghanistan, Issue No 1118, June 12, 2010, Page 8

Staffan di Mistura, UN Secretary General's special envoy to Afghanistan, said during a visit to Herat province that security was the biggest challenge to the forthcoming parliamentary election to be held this year. He stressed on the importance of Afghanistan's parliamentary election and said the international community would work closely with the Afghan government to ensure a fair and transparent election.

Corruption

227 Corruption Cases, an Achievement by the Anti-Corruption Police

Rahe-Najat Daily, Sunday May 16, 2010, Issue No 1428, Page 3

Mr. Haidar Basir said that the Anti-Corruption Police is launched within the establishment of interior ministry nine months ago and now this unit is working as mobile teams in six zones. According to Basir, the Anti-Corruption Police is now consisting of 42 people.

Major Mohammad Wakil Akbari, head of the investigation department of the ministry of interior affairs, said the plan is to increase the number of anti corruption police officers to 540, ninety in each team. The first team can only fight corruption in the establishment of police force, he added. As Major Akbari said, from the beginning of its establishment, the anti corruption police has detected 277 corruption cases of which 50 cases were sent to the relevant agencies.



Ahmad Wali Karzai refusing a report from the defense ministry: If no Proof, the Ministry Has to Rehabilitate reputation

Rahe-Najat daily, issue No 1430, May 18, 2010, page 2

Ahmad Wali Karzai, President Karzai's brother and the head of Kandahar provincial council, protested against a report from the defense ministry which claims he has taken lands belonging to the ministry in Kandahar. Ahmad Wali Karzai said the provincial council members protesting against this report have shut down the council. Karzai said the ministry of defense accused him of occupying its large plots of lands in Kandahar and distributing it between his relatives and supporters. There is no reaction from the defense ministry's officials yet and it is said that a committee from the ministry had lately gone to Kandahar for observing the issue.

"The accusation of occupying the defense ministry's properties both occupied and still-free lands in Kandahar is thrown on me. The army's officials in Kandahar signed the report and sent it to all governmental agencies," Karzai said.

He urged, "I say this must be investigated by a commission in front of media eyes. If I occupied the property of the defense ministry, I am ready for punishment, but if it is proved to be just an accusation I must be rehabilitated by the ministry."

15 Years for Ex-official of Hajj and Devotions Ministry

Sorosh-e Mellat daily, volume No 370, Tuesday, May 25, 2010, page 1

Mohammad Noor, an ex-treasurer in the ministry of Hajj and

devotions, is sentenced to 15 years in prison by the court for embezzlement of more than 860000 dollars. The verdict was issued in an open trial session at Anti-Narcotics Judicial Center.

Mohammad Rashad, the prosecutor of the case, said that the defendant was arrested at Kabul airport when he came back from Saudi Arabia. He added that a suspicious amount of 362 000 US dollar was found in his baggage. According to the prosecutor, more than 37 million Afghans belonging to the public budget was confiscated from Noor's personal bank accounts. He added that some of the sum was the fees paid by Hajjis which Mr Noor, the ex-treasurer of the ministry, had inserted to his personal account and forged the official data, instead of settling the cash to the ministry's account. On the details of Mr Noor's case, Mohammad Rashad added that Mr Noor had been involved illegally in secret deals with the private transportation companies and received considerable amount of cash as bribe.

But Mohammad Noor, rejecting the accusations alleged that the sentence was unjust and there were foreign conspiracy against him. He claimed that he was transferring the amount of cash confiscated from him at Kabul airport from Saudi Arabia to Afghanistan by the direction of ministry of Hajj officials. About the rest of the sum he claimed that it was his personal asset and not belonging to the government's assets.

People's Outrage against the Governors

Sorosh-e Mellat daily, volume No 370, Tuesday, May 25, 2010, page 2
By Maisam Mehryar

The head of the Presidential Complaints Commission, Asadullah Wafa, said that on the basis of complaints from Nuristan's provincial council and elders of the province, police will prosecute the governor of Nuristan and police chief of the province. He added that the officials have not been on their duties for six months and moreover the governor dismissed six district officials appointed by the president and has not delivered relief assistance to the people of the province.

But Jamaluddin Badr, the governor of Nuristan province, said he is ready to answer to the accusations at any court. "I have been present at my duty and the reason I relieved the district governors from their posts is that they had connections with the insurgents and were not doing their job properly," Badr said. Pointing to the accusations on relief assistances, the governor stressed that there were no relief assistance for Nuristan and the motives of the accusations are political.

Demonstrators Call for Dissolving the Parliament

Sorosh-e Mellat, Wednesday May 26, 2010, issue No 371, Page 7

Hundreds of relieved army officers protesting at a rally asked for the dissolving of the parliament.

Najibullah Mujahid, head of a military council in the country, said, the parliament's tenure is over and its continuance is against the law.

By using their legal authorities, some of the MPs usurp public properties, Mujahid added. The demonstrators also were insisting that the MPs' strike on the issue of 11 remaining cabinet members is illegal.

Complaints against Nuristan Governor Submitted to Attorney General

Sorosh-e Mellat Daily, Thursday May 27, 2010, Issue No 372, Page 1

Asadullah Wafa, head of the presidential complaint-hearing commission, after hearing tens of complaints from the tribal leaders on absence of the governor from his provincial duty said Jamaluddin Badr, the governor of Nuristan province, has not done his job properly neither delivered the relief assistances to the people of the province. The head of presidential complaint-hearing commission insisted that the complaints will be examined thoroughly and carefully.

"I personally asked the issue from Nuristan governor," Wafa said. He added the governor's answer was that he has not been in Nuristan Province for six months.

Wafa said the prosecutor's office will investigate the issue and find out who was responsible for the wrongdoings. In absence of the governor or police chief, naturally there is a potential risk of attacks from the enemy side, even the province may fall to Taliban, Wafa said.

Peace Jirga Officials: We are Accountable

Mandegar daily, volume No 336, June 1, 2010, Page 8

The officials responsible for organizing the Consultative Peace Jirga said that some statistics of expenses for the Peace Jirga announced by the media are absolutely libels.

Gul Agha Ahmadi Wardak, responsible for the Media Center of Peace Jirga, rejecting the details of the Jirga's expenditure reported by the media said they will report about the event's expenses. There were some reports quoting the Jirga's officials that the Peace Jirga's budget calculated 160 million dollars.

Ahmad Wali Karzai: If the People Don't Want Me, I Resign

Sorosh-e Mellat daily, volume No 378, June 5, 2010, Page 8

Ahmad Wali Karzai, the head of Kandahar Provincial council and a junior brother to Afghan president Hamid Karzai, rejecting the allegations he had connections with drug trafficking, said they are baseless.

Nevertheless, the head of Kandahar's provincial council said if the people oppose him on the post, he would resign from the post. In regard to the allegations Karzai had taken lands in Kandahar, Afghan Attorney General rejected the claims and said that there is no credible evidences on the accusations.

Utilizing Peace Jirga Budget on Government's Political Agenda

Eqtedar-e-Melli Weekly, volume No 364, June 5, 2010, Page 2, Editorial

It is obvious that some of the authoritarian officials, who have control over national resources, embezzle millions of dollars from the unaccounted national programs. Beside these facts, there are reports that Karzai's team is involved in embezzling Peace Jirga's budget to support their favorite candidates in the parliamentary election.

According to this report, by using national budget the group is organizing to support governmental candidates and to weaken the candidates of other opposition political groups. Such projects need to have financial support which has to be provided by resources like the Reconciliation Peace Jirga.

Peace Jirga Outcome, a Waste of National Budget

Eqtedar-e-Melli Weekly, volume No 364, June 5, 2010, Page 3
By Hadi Tawhidi

Organizing the Peace Jirga had huge expenses. It is said that while the commission responsible for organizing the assembly had been preparing for the Jirga, daily 500 up to 800 people were served in the huge Loya Jirga tent.

This is at a time when the thousands of government and public

service personnel have minimal wages and privileges. But in such programs, even if millions of dollars are wasted, there would be no voice on the issues from the prosecutor's office and other anti-corruption agencies.

Ahmad Wali Karzai Trapped By Tolo

Mandegar daily, Volume No 339, June 7, 2010, Page 8
By Ahmad Omran

Ahmad Wali Karzai, President Karzai's brother and head of Kandahar provincial council, talking to Tolo TV tried to disprove the accusations against him. Talking incoherently, Karzai could not provide convincing reasons against the accusations he is facing.

Ahmad Wali Karzai claimed he had done the best for Kandahar, while the people of the province say that the city is facing not only security challenges but also huge social problems and reconstruction shortcomings. Millions of dollars provided by the international community for Kandahar has been wasted or embezzled, bringing no change to daily life of Kandahar people.

The international community has repeatedly accused Ahmad Wali Karzai of being involved in drug trafficking and of interference in Kandahar's regional administrative affairs, allegations which cannot be totally baseless as Karzai himself claims.

The accusations against Wali Karzai have also plagued his brother Hamid Karzai and the question risen by the people is why Karzai's government does not deal with the issue transparently. If the accusations are false as Wali Karzai claims, why do the prosecutors and the judicial officials not come forward to present their assessments?

Narcotics, a Lucrative Source for Insurgent Groups

Sorosh-e Mellat daily, volume No 381, June 8, 2010, Page 2

Taliban insurgency, corruption and incapability of government officials are the main factors which led the fighting against narcotics into a fiasco. Recently, Russian deputy prime minister urged the international community to step up fighting narcotics in Afghanistan. Moscow officials have repeatedly called the narcotics produced in Afghanistan a global threat and criticized US-led efforts during the past eight years to wipe out the phenomenon.

In order to eliminate the production of narcotics in Afghanistan, which is emerging as a regional security challenge, Afghan government and the neighbor countries must strengthen border security. If the borders remain insecure and corruption spreads unabated in government structure, the illegal drugs trade will thrive even more and causes the strengthening of the insurgents groups.

School Textbooks sold at Bazaar

Afghanistan daily, volume No 1116, June 9, 2010, Page 8

Having no access to textbooks, school students in Baghlan province said that new textbooks are openly sold at bazaars provided by some education officials of the province. School textbooks being sold at bazaars is not only claimed by the students but the booksellers also agree that school books and other school materials donated by foreign organizations are freely available at bazaars.

Would Fighting Corruption be Effective on Middle-Ranking Officials?

Afghanistan daily, volume No 1116, June 9, 2010, Page 4, By M. Amin Mirzad

In order to eliminate corruption, US officials have now shifted focus from high-ranking officials to lower circles such and middle class officials. More particularly, the US has escalated its efforts on fighting corruption in the structure of Afghan police force.

Thomas Emberg, head of NATO's Anti-corruption Mission in Afghanistan, said that in order to prevent bribery within police structure, monthly wage of police soldiers was raised to 240 dollars. To identify those who steal oils and sell them at bazaars, NATO troops add specific blue-colored substance to it, he said.

According to a survey, the amount which is given as bribe in Afghanistan equals to one fourth of Afghanistan's net revenue per year.

A study by a research organization covering ten provinces of Afghanistan shows that every Afghan family in order to have access to public services paid a sum of 100 US dollars per year to the government officials. The coordinator of the research project said that the prevalent culture of impunity and unaccountability of government officials are the main factors for the spreading of corruption and this has caused a

Farooq Wardak: Claims of Extravagance Expenses False Allegations

Bakhtar daily, volume No 251, June 8, 2010, Page 3
By Sajjad Mohammadi

Farooq Wardak, head of Peace Jirga Commission accused the critics of Peace Jirga expenses as malignant and said the adversaries have staged the campaign to sabotage the peace process. "All the expenses are transparent. I have confidence on the management and not even one Afghani is embezzled," Farooq Wardak said.

"Although the budget for the Peace Jirga was not at my disposal, I am fully responsible and confident about the transparency of the process," Wardak insisted. The head of Peace Jirga said that the sum of money budgeted for the Peace Jirga was 120 million Afghanis and due to President Karzai's visit to Washington, the Jirga was postponed for a month.

The last and final budget presented by the commission was about 3 million dollars, Wardak said. He added that the entire budget may not be spent and it is not obligatory to spend it by hundred percent.

widespread distrusts among Afghans towards the officials.

Investment Meltdown in Balkh Province

Kabul Weekly, volume No 409, June 9, 2010, Page 5

Officials of financial institutions in Balkh province said obstructions by the local government offices and security challenges are the main reasons for the decrease of investments in the province. A foreign investor said that the investors feel that the attitude of regional government offices are counterproductive and repel the investments rather than to absorb it.

Financial experts believe that until Afghanistan's legal system is not modified and corruption is not eliminated, serious challenges to international and domestic investments will unabatedly remain.

The Main Reasons US Not Yet Gained Victory in Afghanistan

Kabul Weekly, volume No 409, June 9, 2010, Page 6

If the US had followed a decisive policy towards Afghanistan, today the Afghan government would not be crippled by widespread corruption which is squandering millions of dollars donated by US and other Western countries. (Here?) the US must seriously call on the Afghan government to sack and charge corrupt officials and wipe out corruption from the country.

Corruption, Major Cause of the Plane Crash in Afghanistan

Erada daily, volume No 797, June 9, 2010, Editorial

As it is obvious, there are many corrupt and irresponsible circles inside the Afghan government which leads the system in a way that there is no care for citizen's lives and all day-to-day matters are dominated by embezzlement, forgery and corruption. If there were strict regulations on national and private airways we would not have faced such horrible disasters. The worn-out and non-standard planes of Pamir Airways had to be prevented of endangering people's lives. And now as the cause of the crash comes out, the flights of the company must be suspended. But it is a fact that any sort of violation is common in the administration and even lives of the people are at stake because of the prevalent bribery.

Attorney General: Ahmad Wali Karzai Not Seized Land in Kandahar

Afghanistan Daily, volume No 1117, June 10, 2010, Page 8

Afghan prosecutors rejected reports on Ahmad Wali Karzai seizing properties belonging to the defense ministry saying he has not taken lands belonging to 205 Attal Army Corps in Kandahar. According to Afghan prosecutor's office, probes

prove that Ahmad Wali Karzai, a brother to President Karzai, has not been involved in Army's properties seizures in Kandahar.

Sayed Jalal, head of the inspection department of public prosecution, speaking at a press conference said the allegations against chief of Kandahar provincial council have not been proved yet and the Afghan National Army officials in Kandahar have not provided evidences which prove claims about Army's properties seizure. Lack and shortages in the rule of law in Afghanistan is a major factor for disputes on properties. He assured that such violations would be prevented by the extension of the rule of law and regulation. Kabul municipality has also *set forth* complaints concerning the occupation of public lands by power lords and urged the government to prevent it decisively.

Articles & Interviews

Peace not Attainable without Justice

Dr. Sima Samar, Chairperson of the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission



In my view Afghanistan presently looks like a patient whose real illness is not diagnosed but is forced to take pain-killers to alleviate its pain temporarily. There here are no efforts made to identify the causes of the disease and to heal it permanently.

One of the main challenges in Afghanistan is lack of political commitment and responsibility. Absence of political commitment to salvage the country is a severe obstacle in Afghanistan. In order to get the country out of the current situation, the high-ranking officials must act responsibly to overcome the challenges and shortcomings in the country and must do so according to a thorough and long-term strategy. The challenges must not be dealt with in a reactionary way and haphazardly.

I believe that the challenges facing the country are the following:

1- Lack of security: The word 'security' has a wide-range meaning. Security is not established when we do not hear sounds of gunfire or explosion, but it is very far from this limited definition. The most important element of security is physical security for all of the people in a society. For instance, security for an Afghan citizen also entails the freedom to work. This would also include that he or she has access to employment opportunities and can support their families. They should also have access to basic health facilities, their children be able go to school and be assured that they would not be kidnapped in the way to school or work.

2- Distrusts among the people towards the government agencies: Lack of people's confidence in government is another serious challenge, the country is facing. Government agencies had severely suffered damages during the decades of internal conflicts; many of them were in a situation of total or partial collapse after decades of war and instability. The Bonn Agreement following the fall of the Taliban in 2001 laid out the basic framework for the political process in the country and guided the formation of the Interim and Transitional Administrations. Rebuilding the state institution was one of most formidable challenges facing the Afghans and the international community. Regretfully, our progress in this respect has been slow and often characterized with setbacks. We have missed many opportunities to strengthen the public

confidence in the institutions and bridge the gap between the government and the governed. To the contrary, the widespread corruption in government agencies has widened the fissure between people and the government.

3- Failure of the ambitious promises: the hopes raised among the Afghan people by international aid and commitments after the fall of Taliban were high. The Afghan and international officials talked of building roads, clinics, hospitals and provision of electricity and drinkable water and social services. The people who had suffered the most from many years of hunger and poverty, expected job and basic livelihoods. No doubt, the promises in their nature were not something wrong, but considering the huge challenges in the country, fulfillment of the promises in a short-term period was not an easy task. Year of war had deprived many government agencies of their basic capacity to plan and deliver the basic services. This meant that many of these institutions could only deliver on the promises after they were reformed and their basic capacities built. Therefore, unfulfilled promises resulted into frustration and a sense of pessimism among the people.

In my view Afghanistan presently looks like a patient whose real illness is not diagnosed but is forced to take pain-killers to alleviate its pain temporarily. There here are no efforts made to identify the causes of the disease and to heal it permanently.

4- Improving Governance: The people of Afghanistan have experienced presence of different individuals in public offices. Many of the individuals, who occupied the public offices since 2001, have been tested in the past. Many of them are infamous in the eyes of the people as lacking capabilities and as responsible for massive violation of their rights in the past and in the present. Unlawful actions such as seizing private and public properties, nepotism and bribery are disturbing features of the country today. This has created a culture of impunity in which most do not consider themselves responsible to the government and the people of Afghanistan.

<http://www.watchafghanistan.org>

5- Reforming the Judiciary and the Law Enforcement Agencies:

The law enforcement agencies and the courts need to be fundamentally reformed. In many situations, instead of being the enforcers of law and protectors of human rights and rights of the suppressed, they are seen as sources of insecurity and injustices. To resolve their disputes, most people resort to traditional mechanisms such as Jirgas.

After eight years and a half since collapse of Taliban regime, the country remains fragile and many of those high and legitimate hopes of the Afghan people remain unfulfilled. Efforts to address these challenges were slow, sometimes held back by lack of political commitments and have in some cases experiences disappointing setbacks. To the contrary, Taliban have been making a comeback in many parts of the country engaging in bloody warfare with both the Afghan and international forces.

Most of the efforts are dealing with the symptoms rather than the causes and are not guided by proper diagnosis of the illness of the society. One such initiative is the Consultative Peace Jirga. The quest for peace and stability is running deep in the Afghan society. But will initiatives like the Peace Jirga achieve the intended results? Is this addressing the root causes or the consequences only?

As a citizen of Afghanistan who has closely witnessed past conflicts and wars, I support any logical and transparent process which results to peace and stability in the country. But in my view, the following should not be compromised:

- Justice and human rights should be guaranteed
- The peace process must be legitimate and transparent
- The reconciliation process should go ahead with support of the people
- Women's participation in reconciliation process should be guaranteed

The Kabul Peace Jirga failed to meet the minimum standard of transparency. The delegations were chosen by specific officials responsible for organizing the assembly. Purposefully, there were efforts to invite the people to the Jirga who are in favor of the governmental peace agenda and a program designed by the government. Even members of administrative panel of the Jirga were not democratically elected and were rather announced to lead the assembly in a desired direction.

Although as the results of campaigns by women and civil organizations, presence of women were somehow appreciable in the Peace Jirga, comprising overall 20 percent of the participants of the Jirga. But their numerical strength was not matched by the opportunities available for them to exercise meaningful influence on the process and outcomes of the event.

The outcomes of the Jirga are also seen with doubts and concerns. The Jirga was an advisory assembly and its recommendations are not obligatory to the government, but now there are efforts to put them into effect as obligatory

decisions. There is no substantive information given to the public as to how the process is being moved forward. A central concern is that key values of the post-Taliban Afghanistan might be sacrificed as a way of appeasing the conservative insurgents.

An important aspect of the so-called reconciliation is its cost to our society. Will the outcomes, which so far remain obscure, match the cost it has incurred? Many of our efforts so far have come at high prices without real and tangible outcomes. Can the same amount of political and financial resources not be used to fix shortcoming in other critical areas.

The role and the approach of the international community towards reconciliation are crucial. They need to ensure that the key objective of international intervention in Afghanistan such as democracy and human rights are not overshadowed by the growing sense of urgency for an exit strategy. It must also recognize that short-sighted approaches and compromises have not and are not stabilizing Afghanistan a pre-condition of any exit strategy. It must focus its resources on areas which continue to provide the breeding ground for the rise and growth of insurgency. Ending a culture of impunity, improving the rule of law, fighting corruption and ensuring accountability must be at the centre of all national and international efforts.

Peace and end of the nine year war are noble and desirable outcomes but these can only be achieved if the causes not the symptoms of the war and violence in Afghanistan are identified and treated.

New publications

Afghanistan: Politics, Elections, and Government Performance

Congressional Research Service / By Kenneth Katzman / January 11, 2010

In the context of a review of U.S. strategy in Afghanistan during September-November 2009, the performance and legitimacy of the Afghan government figured prominently. In his December 1, 2009, speech on policy in Afghanistan going forward, President Obama stated that the Afghan government would be judged on performance, and "The days of providing a blank check are over." The policy statement was based, in part, on an August 2009 assessment of the security situation furnished by the top commander in Afghanistan, General Stanley McChrystal, which warned of potential mission failure unless a fully resourced classic counterinsurgency strategy is employed. That counterinsurgency effort is deemed to require a legitimate and effective Afghan partner.

Link: <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RS21922.pdf>

Taliban cooperation with al Qaeda 'is at the highest limits' - Siraj Haqqani

The Long War Journal / By Bill Roggio / April 15, 2010

The top leader of the dangerous Haqqani Network operating in eastern Afghanistan said that al Qaeda fighters are welcome to fight alongside the Taliban, and that his forces control 90 percent of the areas under his command.

Link: http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2010/04/taliban_cooperation.php

Mediating Peace with Proscribed Armed Groups

United State Institute of Peace (USIP) / By Véronique Dudouet / May 2010

Reforms to antiterrorism legislation are required to improve its effectiveness and fairness and make it possible to engage diplomatically with proscribed armed groups. The legal bases for proscription should be clarified and the criteria for delisting published. Listing and delisting instruments should be more nuanced and flexible. In addition, a separate legal and political component should facilitate engagement with proscribed groups in peace processes and humanitarian work.

Political engagement with proscribed armed groups is possible and desirable when, first, the conflict parties (state and nonstate alike) are interested in exploring political solutions to a conflict; second, the parties are seen as legitimate representatives of social, political, or cultural interests by their community; third, parties have the capacity to deliver a ceasefire or peace agreement; fourth, engagement could generate significant behavioral change on the part of the actors involved; and fifth, strategic national interests favor engagement, or there is a strong demand by allies or the conflict victims to engage politically.

Link: <http://www.usip.org/files/resources/SR239Dudouet.pdf>

Afghanistan: Address Victims' Demand for Justice

International Center for Transitional Justice (ICTJ) / June, 1, 2010

The Afghan government should address victims' demands for justice in its reconciliation strategy, to be released at the "Peace Jirga" on June 2-4, said the International Center for Transitional Justice (ICTJ). It should also act in accordance with its international legal obligations.

"Papering over the past will not lead to peace," said Sari Kouvo, head of ICTJ's Afghanistan Program. "Reconciliation without accountability for past human rights abuses is not sustainable. The Afghan government must take a comprehensive approach to peace, justice and reconciliation that respects the rights of victims."

Link: <http://www.ictj.org/en/news/press/release/3780.html>

Afghan Reconciliation Jirga Set to Convene amid Skepticism

EurAsianet / By Aunohita Mojumdar / June, 1, 2010

The checkpoint at the entrance to the Loya Jirga complex in Kabul highlights the challenge facing President Hamid Karzai as his administration strives to reconcile with moderate Taliban elements. Security at the Jirga is perhaps heavier than at a major Western airport, with all vehicles and equipment being swabbed and checked for evidence of bomb-making residue. The government's fear of a car bombing appears to be just as great as its desire to win insurgents back over to its side.

Link: <http://www.eurasianet.org/node/61196>

Assessing Peace Prospects in Afghanistan

Center for American Progress / By Caroline Wadhams, Colin Cookman / June 2, 2010

After multiple delays, Afghan President Hamid Karzai will host a "peace jirga" in Kabul this week in an attempt to secure domestic and international support for his government's efforts to reach out to "disaffected brothers" fighting in the Taliban-led insurgency. The peace jirga convenes approximately 1,600 Afghan leaders from around the country, including governors, tribal elders, and religious figures. These talks are meant to focus on both the reintegration of low-level Taliban foot soldiers into Afghan society as well as the more politically sensitive issue of reconciliation with the insurgency's top leaders.

Link: http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2010/06/peace_jirga.html

Amnesty could free 1,000 Taliban from notorious prison

The Globe and Mail / By Sonia Verma / June, 07, 2010

The head of Afghanistan's most notorious prison says nearly 1,000 Taliban inmates could be freed from Pul-e-Charki prison as part of an amnesty deal offered by Hamid Karzai's government.

The figure, revealed by General Abdulbakhhi Behsudi, the warden of Afghanistan's largest prison, in an interview with The Globe And Mail, suggests the potential breath of the prisoner release ordered under the terms of a controversial resolution issued by Afghanistan's peace jirga, an assembly of tribal elders convened last week to pave the path for negotiations with the Taliban.

Link: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/world/amnesty-could-free-1000-taliban/article1595562/>

Corrupting the State or State-Crafted Corruption?

Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU) / June, 7, 2010

"In the aftermath of the 2009 presidential election, widely perceived to have been fraudulent on a large scale, corruption has been one of the most pressing concerns of Afghan citizens as well as one of the major issues on the political agenda of and for Afghanistan. A recent nationwide survey by Integrity Watch Afghanistan (IWA) showed that Afghan citizens consider corruption, in its many forms and manifestations, as the third most important problem in the country. Only insecurity and unemployment ranked higher. Political dialogue and public debates frequently focus on corruption, while calls for tangible action by the Government of Afghanistan (GoA) are becoming increasingly vehement. In January 2010, parliament rejected the majority of President Hamid Karzai's cabinet nominees, based among other things on allegations of corruption and incompetence. The international community has adopted strong and unequivocal public positions on the urgent need for the GoA to crack down on corruption, in particular with regard to the political and administrative leadership. Last but not least, the Afghan media, specifically television and radio stations, continuously portray flagrant cases as well as allegations of corruption and thus nurture public debate and demand for action."

Link: http://www.areu.org.af/index.php?option=com_docman&Itemid=26&task=doc_download&gid=781

Karzai Is Said to Doubt West Can Defeat Taliban

The New York Times / By DEXTER FILKINS / June 11, 2010

Two senior Afghan officials were showing President Hamid Karzai the evidence of the spectacular rocket attack on a nationwide peace conference earlier this month when Mr. Karzai told them that he believed the Taliban were not responsible.

"The president did not show any interest in the evidence — none — he treated it like a piece of dirt," said Amrullah Saleh, then the director of the Afghan intelligence service.

Link: <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/06/12/world/asia/12karzai.html?hp>

The State of Transitional Justice in Afghanistan - Actors, Approaches and Challenges

Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU) / April 2010

The 2001 Bonn Agreement marked the beginning of what many hoped would be a transition from Taliban rule and ongoing conflict to peace. However, in an attempt to avoid upsetting faction leaders present at the Bonn Conference, some of whom were implicated in human rights abuses but whose cooperation was considered vital to secure an agreement, the UN mediating team dropped all attempts to include references to dealing with war crimes and human rights violations.¹⁵ The final agreement also left out many standard parts of UN mediated peace agreements, including commitments to disarmament or demobilisation.¹⁶ Ultimately, no attempt was made to address either the underlying causes or the consequences of the war on millions of Afghan victims.

Link: http://www.areu.org.af/index.php?option=com_docman&Itemid=26&task=doc_download&gid=760

The Importance of the Wolesi Jirga Election and Local Political Networks

Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU) /April 17, 2010

There is a renewal of interest in the lower house of Afghanistan's parliament, known as the Wolesi Jirga, taking place in both Afghan domestic politics and international discussion about governance in Afghanistan. This is particularly in the wake of the house's rejection of a significant number of ministerial nominees, its opposition to President Hamid Karzai's recent election decree and its initial refusal to ratify the national budget. With an evolving relationship with the executive branch, and elections currently scheduled for 18 September 2010, there are many questions about the role of the Wolesi Jirga in national and local politics that have not been considered carefully enough. And despite widespread concern about fraud and corruption during the 2009 presidential and provincial council elections, there is little consensus on what lessons were learned from those elections or what parliamentary elections mean for politics in Afghanistan.

Link: http://www.afghanconflictmonitor.org/AREU_ConnectingWithKabul_17May2010.pdf

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ABOUT AFGHANISTAN WATCH

The Afghanistan Watch is an independent, non-governmental and non-political organization registered with the Ministry of National Economy of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. It envisions a democratic, peaceful, tolerant and just society in which all citizens have equal opportunities to realize their human potentials.

Its mission is to undertake activities that will promote peace, justice, and a culture of mutual tolerance and respect for human rights in Afghanistan. As its core values the organization is strongly committed to democracy, justice, human rights, sustainable and balanced social and economic development of the country and impartiality, independence and professionalism as guiding principles of its activities.

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