

In the Name of God, the Most Merciful, the Most Kind

Daily Outlook  
AFGHANISTAN  
The Leading Independent Newspaper

June 01, 2019

**'Taliban in Moscow and Kabul' Different?**

A photo from the Taliban's latest meeting in Moscow circulated on social media has been changed into a bitter political satire for Afghans. The photo shows that a shapely-figured lady, apparently journalist - with coils of leaf-brown hair plunged over her shoulders and pencil-thin eyebrows inclined slightly - drooped to take a picture of a Taliban's leader, who was sitting on a couch with long beard and black turban along with other long-bearded high-profile Taliban. The lady is rebelliously dressed in white western tights as her nude, thin legs sprouting up in attractive way.

Posting the photo widely, Afghan social media users satirized the scene in different ways. Meanwhile, some called the Taliban the "pawns" of non-Islamic countries holding their meetings in Moscow "under the flag/picture of Lenin".

Beside that picture, a number of social media users posted some other pictures showing the Taliban militants lashing or shooting Afghan women, dressed in a head-to-toe covering called "burqa", during their regime. They titled the first picture "The Taliban in Moscow" and the violent pictures "The Taliban in Kabul".

In the meantime, some political analysts also lambasted the Taliban on talk shows and in their interviews with national media outlets. According to them, the Taliban and Afghan jihadi leaders, who attended the Moscow meeting, were those who fought bloody battles against the Soviet Union and called them their sworn enemies, however, then sat for eating around the same table in Ramadan, holy month of Muslims, in Moscow. They concluded that the Taliban in general and other jihadi leaders in particular sought their political interests. They further criticized jihadi leaders for receiving the Taliban with warm hugs despite the fact that they are widely engaged in the killings of Afghan soldiers and civilians.

Based on the public belief, the Taliban leaders are traveling around the world, eating in five-star hotels, and living luxury life abroad regardless of the pain and sufferings of war victims and those of their rank-and-file in the battlefields.

The Taliban's indiscriminate killings is self-evident. Recently, they have been targeting the moderate Afghan clerics, which is highly outrageous to Afghan people. Shedding the blood of noncombatants, mainly in Ramadan, has no religious justification. The Taliban have been capitalizing on religion to pursue their political objectives. Now the question is that what was the outcome of the Moscow meeting?

In a joint statement, the negotiating parties described the meeting "productive and constructive" adding that both sides had had "tremendous progress".

However, such statements have been changed into cliché for Afghan people, who fall victim to the Taliban's attacks and suicide bombings. A meeting will not be productive unless it has a direct effect on security situation in Afghanistan. The two sides called the meeting "productive" so as to simply justify their trips for the public. That is, they are seeking to show that their trip was not symbolic or useless.

At the start of Ramadan, President Ghani called on the Taliban to hold a nationwide ceasefire, but the Taliban turned down the offer and intensified their attacks in this month. The Taliban leaders, who are enjoying their luxury life outside the country, seek to magnify religious ideology for their rank-and-file so as to boost their morale for bloodshed.

Besides targeting noncombatants, the Taliban militants are collecting taxes illegally under religious term from people living under their control and from truck drivers and farmers.

Generally speaking, Afghan people are highly frustrated with the conflict and Taliban's brutality and acts of violence. As a result, Afghan representatives in Loya Jirga called the Taliban to stop war and violence and resolve their issues through negotiation. But the Taliban turned a deaf ear to their demand.

To pose a question from public perspective, how does Russia, who killed and wounded thousands of Afghan people, turned to a close friend overnight? Suppose Afghan government is "a puppet-regime" supported by the US, isn't the Taliban a puppet group supported or befriended by Russia? How it came the Taliban became so close with Moscow? These are the questions that Taliban need to answer. Their acts and words are highly paradoxical and baffling.

The true face of the Taliban is a mystery neither for Afghan people nor for the world. They are a militant group widely involved in killings and terrorizing.

Overall, the Taliban had better stop violence and murder under the mask of sacred ideology and religion. They should no more pretend to show they are fighting for national interests. Meanwhile, the heads of Afghan political parties have to side with the government, which is the public demand, and stop holding individual meetings with the Taliban leaders. Finally, if Moscow is genuinely supporting Afghan peace process through hosting such meetings, it has to push the Taliban to hold direct talks with the Afghan government.

**The Government and Parliament of Afghanistan: Under Effect of Two Inauspicious Triangles**

Written by: Sayed Ali Motahhari

Translated by Mohammad Zahir Akbari

Undoubtedly, Afghanistan and its people are different from other people and countries of the world. The differences can be in terms of views, behavior and opinion regarding their political fate which reflected through Afghan political figures, activists and representatives. In order to better explain, it is necessary to study and analyze the two existing triangles considered as serious challenge in the realm of political power in the country. Therefore, it seems necessary to add the word inauspicious as a prefix to the mentioned triangles, and term it as "two inauspicious triangles" which destructively affected the two main pillars of the state including government and parliament of the country.

**The first triangle: money, power and trickery**

Now it is more than two weeks that the Afghan parliament has been taken hostage by owners of money, power and intelligence, and each of them are trying to propel the parliament according to their personal interests. They have deviated the parliament to a wrong way which is against the national interest and national unity. The parliament as a highest law making institution of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan are suppose to represent the will of nation, but now become a place for maneuvering money, power and trickiness. With Using their votes, each member of the parliament were to judge and decide about public interest but shrunk into personal and ethnic interests.

However, the detailed typology of these categories requires more opportunity but now will briefly try to provide a basic picture: The first category is powerbrokers that always use logic of power to gain political position must be through channels of force, violence, arrogance, rage and threatening others. Therefore, they refuse any kinds peaceful mechanism may lead to loss of their power and advantage. They reject every kind of peaceful method even though within framework of national constitution and other ruling laws. According to their opinion, the presidency of parliament belongs to those who have strong foothold and power. Other criteria such as merit, expertise, knowledge and commitment neither have value nor would be accepted. Therefore, the parliament is the battleground for the powerful individuals.

The second category is the money owners; according to this category, the only way to reach power and seize chair is gold, jewelry and money. They believe that money is everything; with money one can easily buy people, votes and position and obtain legitimacy and acceptability through cash deal. They arrange majestic and colorful parties for the member of groups. During the parties valuable envelopes with content of foreign currencies such as dollars, Euros and pounds are distributed in proportion to the position and status of people. Other delights are also promised. According to this kind of people, parliament is the best center for advanced trade and commercial activities. That's why parlia-

ment is likened to the Soray Shahzada of Kabul (a large money exchanging market in Kabul).

The third category consist of deception group; though they do not have ability to take fiscal and non-fiscal risks, they have particular mental and intellectual abilities to design clever plan in order to propel others towards their black traps. Apparently, they look very benevolent but in practice they play effective role in making the issues become more complicated. As much the speaker issue becomes more competitive they can gain more interests from both competitive rivals.

As a result, now the triangle of gold, force and deception turned the house of the nation, which is the symbol of national will, into ground of violent rivalry and shameful trade and left negative impact on the people's social life. But the account of a small number of delegates is separate from these three groups. Overall, the triangles of power, money and trickiness have disabled the parliament to play its role and unfortunately became a market of exchanging money and violent club. However, there are few committed representative who are not included in these categories.

**The second triangle**

The second triangle is the opposing group to the government; this group consists of some political leaders, the Presidential Candidate Council and Taliban. Undoubtedly, the second triangle is also a part of current reality of Afghanistan. This is more than 18 years that Taliban have been fighting against people and government and proudly kill women and children in mosques, schools, and sport clubs. Still, they insist on war, hatred, explosion and suicide. Nevertheless, the two other categories have also joined Taliban directly and indirectly raise the level of opposition to the government as if the removal of current government would resolve the entire Afghan problem.

The last group is known as the presidential candidate council who proposed interim government to replace current government in order to resolve the political problem in Afghanistan. They have ignored that such a mechanism neither have legal basis and nor is a right political solution as causes chaos and disorder in the country. On the other hand, such a disproportionate and illegal position would strengthen the Taliban Front and the enemies of the Afghan people. In addition, some political figures and political parties are trying to undermine the government in many ways and even make the current political system ineffective and unable. They met with Taliban and ate with Taliban and promoted the legitimacy of Taliban. In the end, the emphasis is that the weakening of government without giving practical and national solutions would not benefit anyone; instead, the only way out of the crisis is holding transparent elections in due course, and joint struggle against Taliban and terrorist groups.

**Mohammad Zahir Akbari is the permanent writer of the Daily Outlook Afghanistan. He can be reached at mohammadzahirakbari@gmail.com**

**Has a No-Deal Brexit Become More Likely?**

By: Anatole Kaletsky

After British Prime Minister Theresa May's resignation announcement, several of the candidates to succeed her have proclaimed their desire for a "no-deal Brexit." In response, European leaders are ramping up preparations for a total rupture with the United Kingdom, financial analysts are revising their forecasts accordingly, and sterling is collapsing.

The fears about a no-deal Brexit are understandable. Such an outcome would eliminate the 18-month transition period that both sides considered essential for an orderly realignment of Britain's relationship with the European Union. This would mean a sudden stop in Britain's commerce with its largest trading partner, and the EU's with its second largest (after the United States). As the world learned in the aftermath of Lehman Brothers' collapse in 2008, a sudden stop in trade and finance, even if it lasts only a few weeks, can cause years of pain.

To emphasize the dangers, the head of Britain's civil service presented a 14-page dossier to the cabinet (which was promptly leaked), describing not just potential economic and financial damage, but also the risks to national security and health care. Even more significantly, the cabinet secretary insisted on including this dossier in the cabinet minutes, to demonstrate that ministers, rather than their civil or military advisers, would bear full responsibility for taking such risks.

While the damage would be greatest in Britain, a no-deal scenario could also be devastating to the EU. Owing to its dysfunctional macroeconomic policies, Europe ended up as the biggest victim of the American-made 2008 financial crisis. With Germany, France, and Italy again now teetering on the brink of recession, the same pattern could be repeated in the event of a sudden and disorderly breakdown in cross-Channel supply chains and trade.

Luckily for both Europe and Britain, the most likely scenario is that the next Tory leader, after pandering to the Conservative party's 120,000 members to get elected, will refocus on the 60 million UK citizens he or she will need to satisfy to survive in office. Regardless of any promises made to the Europhobic Tory membership, the next prime minister will ask to reopen the Brexit negotiations and seek a further extension. In the end, May's successor will probably come back with some variant of her deal, which will either be approved by Parliament or provide a pretext for a second referendum to decide whether Britain still wants to leave the EU.

To see why a no-deal Brexit remains highly improbable, consider how exactly it could happen. There are three possibilities. Britain could leave the EU on October 31 with no agreement, because Parliament votes neither for May's withdrawal agreement nor to extend the deadline. Or Britain asks for an extension, but the EU refuses to grant it. Lastly, Parliament could seek an extension, but May's successor refuses to submit this request to the EU.

The first possibility - the UK simply crashing out of Europe - was the main concern ahead of the original March 29 Brexit deadline. It turned out to be a false alarm, because a clear majority of MPs showed they were

prepared to outlaw a no-deal Brexit, and May bowed to their will. Because the composition of Parliament will be unchanged on October 31 (apart from four Tory MPs' defection to opposition parties), it is inconceivable that it would deliberately allow a no-deal Brexit to happen. John Bercow, the Speaker, has confirmed that parliamentary conventions normally giving prime ministers sole power to introduce new legislation would be suspended again, as they were in March and April, if that proved necessary for a parliamentary majority to outlaw leaving the EU with no deal.

The second scenario, in which the EU denies an extension, is equally implausible. Although French President Emmanuel Macron may denounce any further extension, his European partners will have even less reason than they did in April to indulge him and risk the economic devastation of a no-deal divorce. With the European Parliament elections over, the new European Commission appointed, the German and Italian economies struggling, and UK budget contributions more important than ever, the cost-benefit analysis of another extension would be more favorable than it was last time.

This leaves the third risk - and the one that is genuinely worrying. With May gone and Boris Johnson or another fervent Europhobe almost certain to succeed her, could the prime minister find a way to bypass Parliament and unilaterally impose a no-deal Brexit?

A truly determined Brexiteer could have two ways of achieving this. He or she could trigger a general election and win an outright parliamentary majority, or else try to block parliamentary efforts to force an extension of the Brexit deadline.

On closer inspection, however, these options are also highly implausible. The idea that a new Tory leader - especially one as ambitious as Johnson - would jeopardize his lifetime goal and risk becoming the shortest-serving prime minister in history by calling an election before October 31 is a non-starter. The next British election probably will be held well before the constitutional deadline of summer 2022, but any new prime minister will want to show some achievement (especially on Brexit) and restore the Tory's abysmal poll ratings before taking this risk.

A similar precautionary principle will block the last possible route to a no-deal outcome: a new prime minister deciding somehow to bypass or overrule parliament. Even without any change in parliamentary procedures, there is a clear mechanism to prevent a prime minister from defying a majority of MPs: the opposition can call a vote of no confidence anytime. After recent Tory defections, only five or six additional rebels would be needed to bring down the government and force the general election that the new prime minister would be desperate to avoid.

Fanatical Brexiteers argue, however, that a prime minister genuinely determined to deliver a no-deal Brexit could, and should, go nuclear: suspend parliament and refuse to call MPs back until after the October 31 deadline, when Brexit will happen automatically under current law. If you believe that the UK is turning into Zimbabwe or Venezuela, you should expect a no-deal Brexit. Otherwise, forget about it.

**Anatole Kaletsky is Chief Economist and Co-Chairman of Gavekal Dragonomics and the author of Capitalism 4.0: The Birth of a New Economy in the Aftermath of Crisis.**

Daily Outlook  
AFGHANISTAN  
The Leading Independent Newspaper

Chairman / Editor-in-Chief: Moh. Reza Huwaida  
Vice Chairman / Exec. Editor: Moh. Sakhi Rezaie  
Email: outlookafghanistan@gmail.com  
Phone: 0093 (799) 005019/777-005019  
www.outlookafghanistan.net

افغانستان  
The Daily Afghanistan Ma

The views and opinions expressed in the articles are those of the authors and do not reflect the views or opinions of the Daily Outlook Afghanistan.