

Ground realities in Afghanistan

Afghanistan the war torn country finds itself trapped between the compulsions of modern democracy and binding of traditional culture. The country is faced with terrorist attacks, worst law and order situation, poverty, political and social disorder, drug trafficking under the armed militias owned by the warlords who emerged as the power sharing political partners to US led forces to oust the Taliban in 2001. After defeating Taliban US promised to the world to reconstruct Afghanistan and bring peace in that God forsaken country.

Unfortunately political mindset making decisions for US military could not keep sight of their objectives in Afghanistan and shifted their total attention and resources to Iraq. The policy makers could not visualize the magnitude of the challenge in Afghanistan and after easy victory over Taliban they dismissed Afghanistan as the military mission where US tactical command could well handle the situation while allowing the decision makers to divert major resources towards Iraq.

The absurd intransigence

and arrogance of power dictated the US political leaders to neglect Afghanistan leaving the task to be accomplished by the tactical level of military command. The situation in Afghanistan was not as simple as perceived by US politico-military leadership and it presented extraordinary challenge to the US led coalition forces after the Taliban were ousted. The Soviets had learned that Afghans do not accept intimidation and coercion and culturally feel free in their own land but US had forgotten that Afghans resistance would continue inflicting damage to the US forces and killing their supporters.

US resolve against Taliban was sturdy but unfortunately they have not been able to crush all Taliban as people sympathetic to them are in abandon in the mountains to kill Afghan and US soldiers. The writ of the Karzai government is non-existent beyond the capital city of Kabul. Taliban have already declared that they would kill men and finish the families taking part in the October elections in Afghanistan. US security to President Karzai could not deter Taliban in their attempt to assassinate

him during his single endeavour to start election campaign. Similarly US promise to help Afghanistan to hold elections does not appear to be reassuring as no sooner US forces leave an area after doing their duty the Taliban fighters

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violence in the country. Once again the people of Afghanistan are going to suffer through their lives and belonging.

Taliban threat to Afghan government and US forces is well recognized and acknowl-

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return and kill the innocent people. The political analysts say that there will be elections in Afghanistan but there will also be worst bloodshed and

edged by all and sundry. The real peril in Afghanistan comes from the warlords especially those belonging to Northern Alliance. They have

their own armed militias/armies and have established fiefdoms loyal to them. They have their own rules to be followed and frequently engage in human rights violations under the nose of US forces. They openly resort to looting, murder, kidnapping for ransom, rape and abuse of power without any fear as they have the backing of US policy makers.

Recently these warlords started making money through drugs and opium. Robert Andrew, a retired CIA and Department of Defence official for Pentagon's Afghan group in his article titled "The Threat from within Afghanistan" published online at jiaa.janes.com commented that Afghanistan now supplies 75 % of the world's opium.

The trade is now moving from opium to heroin, which connects it to international cartels and crime. Since the business is in the hands of warlords preferred by US administration over Taliban therefore the trade is flourishing in the country making the warlords extremely rich and strong.

The aspect has been reported to the US decision makers who have openly condemned

the growth of drug trade but no punitive measures so far have been undertaken against the known warlords involved in this business.

One reason is that Karzai government cannot afford to annoy these warlords at this point of time when elections are about to be held with the optimism that President Karzai would win the elections. Karzai's recent initiatives to fire Qanooni and remove Ismail Khan the Herat governor appear to be bold and intelligent moves indicating that he does not desire to share power. Most of the Pushtuns and Masoods are backing Karzai making it possible for Karzai to hold his power.

This may be the only hope for the people of Afghanistan to see peace in their country but peace in Afghanistan is also awaiting the reconstruction effort of the US without which the miseries of the people will not end. US must seriously allocate priority to the rebuilding effort of Afghanistan and release the necessary funds for the purpose. Things would get settled with just policies and sincere commitment to bring peace in Afghanistan.