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HOW PEACE CAN BE ACHIEVED

If America accepts the rightful demands of the armed resistance, renounce its unlawful demands, abstain from trampling foreign nations, and consider the increasing isolation of the American people and government, then in my opinion the following points are necessary for the establishment of peace in Afghanistan:

- 1. The release of Taliban prisoners from Guantanamo:** Peace talks with the Taliban may not bear fruit unless their imprisoned leaders are released from the Guantanamo prison, because the Taliban pursue peace in order to insure their own rights and freedoms. It is unlikely that the Taliban would put much trust in a peace process with America while the rights and freedoms of their incarcerated leaders are being violated in US prisons.
- 2. Removing names from the black lists:** Currently, almost all known Taliban leaders are listed in the so called Black Lists, Wait Lists, and Stop Lists. These Taliban leaders cannot travel or make themselves known in public. In such circumstances how is it possible for an ostracized (Talib) to engage in peace talks with a powerful and free counterpart (America) in an equal capacity? First, the legal ostracism of the Taliban should end and then they should be allowed to present their standpoint in a free and open environment.
- 3. Granting formal recognition to the Qatar office:** Unless the Taliban office in Qatar or any other place is officially recognized, it is not possible for the Taliban to travel freely or identify a fixed venue for talks.
- 4. Prioritizing diplomacy over military means:** Currently high-ranking officials of the Kabul government advise NATO and American military and intelligence officials that more military pressure and damage to the Taliban would compel them to accept the American conditions for talks. Likewise some NATO and American generals also prefer military means over diplomatic ones, which is also a major impediment for peace talks.
- 5. Initiating face to face talks between the Taliban and America:** Currently the Taliban have suspended direct talks with America because of the lack of progress on the issue of prisoners' exchange. Measures should be taken to resume direct talks.
- 6. Requiring Kabul government not to sabotage peace talks:** The United States should convince its own handiwork—Mr. Karzai and his government—not to create obstacles in the way of peace talks with the armed resistance.

7. **Convincing the high-ranking officials in the Kabul government to pursue national instead of personal interests:** Currently high-ranking officials in the Kabul government prefer forwarding their personal interests instead of national interests.
8. **Bringing about positive instead of negative changes in the Kabul government:** The reshuffling of corrupt ministers from one ministry to another is not a way to reduce corruption and embezzlement. Such ineffective changes blunts the momentum on the peace front.
9. **Employing a frank and honest approach in peace talks:** when it comes to actual negotiations, all sides to the conflict should present their demands openly and truthfully. And all sides should genuinely intend to achieve peace.
10. When America is ready to engage in genuine peace talks, abstain from blocking peace, and some progress is made, then all the Afghan parties to the conflict (the Kabul government, the Northern Alliance, Hezb e Islami in Kabul, and others) should formally become part of the process. For this to happen, the United States must first implement the provisions of its agreements with the Taliban. Such an initiative would help prepare the grounds for the Taliban to initiate intra-Afghan talks with the other political factions in the country.
11. **For the intra-Afghan talks:** requesting support and assistance from impartial, honest, uncorrupted, religious, and patriotic Afghans inside and outside the country to build confidence for the intra-Afghan talks.
12. **The America-Afghanistan strategic agreement:** This agreement would be a problem for peace. Such kinds of agreements aggravate the prospects for peace.
13. **Presence of foreign troops:** The indefinite presence of foreign troops in the country is a big obstacle for peace. If the withdrawal of foreign troops is not confirmed, peace talks would be without results.

Some of the following points would help build confidence among the Afghan parties:

- 1- Abstaining from casting incorrect and untruthful accusations. And presenting truthful information about the killing of civilians to the Afghan nation and the International Community. The media should also be allowed to find out and announce the names of those who burn schools, Madrasas and other education centers.
- 2- Ending torture and extra judicial killing. Currently the government is responsible for the killing and torturing of political prisoners which violates both Afghan and international law. The continuation of such policies would jeopardize the prospects for peace.

If America, the Kabul Administration, and the armed resistance really want peace, it is easy to remove all the obstacles. But even if one of the three is not genuinely committed to peace, then there would be more fighting, killing, assassinations, torture, and torment.

If the war continues in Afghanistan, America will lose more than other countries. And the continuation of the war will divide America and NATO affecting its economic and military capabilities. Meanwhile China will become the super power in the world.

Actually Afghans need peace, but the people of America need it more than Afghans. I hope the people of America will request their cruel and powerful officials to stop the war and be ready for genuine peace.

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