



Action for Democracy in Iran (NGO, Not-for-profit)

Democracy for Iran & Advocacy for Human Rights
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Proposal on Pakistan and Afghanistan

Where are the main terrorist groups based?

Terrorist groups have set up their main headquarters in the two countries of Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Why is that so?

Terrorist groups benefit from three factors in their struggle to achieve their objectives. These are:

- 1-Widespread corruption and inefficiency in military and government bureaucracies;
- 2-Antiquated and inept political parties that are largely formed along tribal, ethnic and racial lines with an eye to private financial and power resources;
- 3-Tribal and ethnic power centers that dominate vast slats of land in underdeveloped regions. Also known as “warlords,” these power centers recruit and arm the unemployed to use at their discretion.

A comprehensive study of the social conditions of Pakistan and Afghanistan illustrate the premodern cultural conditions and preindustrial economic circumstances of these two countries. As a result of the inadequacy of the state infrastructure, each warlord tends to have his own independent judicial system in place that functions as the sole arbiter in the society. These independent judicial bodies on the surface rule according to the Koranic law while upholding the values and interests of their patron.

The overall impact of such a lack of uniform government in these countries has been the degradation of women to the extent that they are attributed half the value of a man. Tribal and religious leaders can sentence them to death by stoning and other punishments as they see fit in order to extract compliance and keep order within the ranks. Conditions are not much better in the cities.



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Many influential individuals in commercial centers and metropolitan cities form political groups and organizations by copying the charters of European parties, complete with mandated conventions and other such gatherings, in order to maintain their ancestral influence. Under close scrutiny these parties reveal the adopting of the same clan structures and tribal relations as the warlords in rural areas, with a modern veneer such as democratic vernacular. In other words, party bosses maintain and expand their influence in urban areas using the same age-old financial and political levers.

Therefore, there are no “political parties” in the western sense of the concept, in either countries. This finding leads to the conclusion that political leaders and party officials in these countries are for the most part corrupt and opportunist individuals who either ride on the sentimental waves of the public or attach themselves to foreign powers to acquire the legitimate currency they need to maintain their political power.

The military and state beauracracies of the central government are by and large products of the same fraudulent structure. Government employees, their supervisors and the heads of various departments and military units are not accountable to any law, and do not behave as if they are. What binds them is not the requirement of the state infrastructure, but the ability to use their family name, private funds, or invoke religious ties to gain access and effect policy. Anything goes, provided that there is enough cash to buy access.

Tribal leaders and warlords have created armed tribal militias that serve a dual purpose: on the one hand they are instrumental in creating terror in their respective areas, which is helpful in activities that generate funds such as drug trafficking, and on the other hand, are used to pressure central government to gain political and financial favors.

In most regions of Pakistan and Afghanistan warlords and tribal leaders have found a useful ally in the existing religious infrastructure, which allows them to utilise political Islam in order to benefit from cooperating with radical Islamists such as the Taliban and the Al-Qaeda. This while the central governments of both countries are too weak to put an end to these activities.

The inability of the central governments of these countries is most troublesome in light of the billions of dollars that they receive from the international community. While they have not been able to take any significant steps in the fight against terrorism, the question remains:
What is to be done?

In a country where modern political parties and strong civil society organizations are non-existent; where the majority of politicians, the military and bureaucratic infrastructure are plagued with corruption; where armed militias with ties to drug traffickers openly roam the countryside, what can be done?

In these countries, it is essential to reach the following objectives:

1-Formation of a coalition government that represents all social, ethnic, racial, and cultural groups, big or small. This will ensure that all groups participate in overseeing the state function properly, and that all corruption and wrong doing is exposed.



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2-In order to succeed in the fight against terrorism, the youth may be recruited from a cross section of social groups. The young generation, frustrated with the antiquated and ineffective traditions, may form militias independent of the traditional military and government beauracracy. These militias can then create clandestine operations, with the help of the secular sections of society, with the objective of penetrating terrorist circles and power centers to identify their resources.

3-Military and militia forces should sieze and conquer regions that are under the insurgency control piece by piece and position them under the control of the central government. Results of each tribal disarmament should be put on display so that other tribes can be persuaded to give up arms and agree to work with the government.

The goal of clearing the troubled areas in these countries and preparing them for reconstruction and development can be achieved only through ending the tribal power centers as the first step, followed by a serious undertaking to eradicate underdevelopment by implementing a modernization program that touches all aspects of the government, from the military to civilian sectors and the economy.

