

**MOVEMENT FOR PEACEFUL TRANSFORMATION OF AFGHANISTAN****Dr. Farouq Azam's Speech to the First MPTA Congress on 4 November 2010 in Kabul, attended by over 1,000 delegates from around the country.**

Dear brothers!

Nine years ago, the West entered Afghanistan with their lofty promises, and outlined a guideline for the future of Afghanistan in the Bonn conference. This important conference, along with its success, created significant problems for Afghanistan resulting in the disgracing, looting and killing of hundreds of thousands of Afghans. Billions of dollars were wasted and, under the shadow of U.S. power, Afghanistan's neighbours were given unrestricted opportunities to increase their influence in Afghanistan. The West failed to establish a legitimate governing structure to serve the Afghans and be a viable partner of the International Community. Afghanistan never achieved a sustainable peace unless overwhelming majority of the Afghans saw them in the political system, in which the Bonn process utterly failed. Again, Afghanistan will never achieve a sustainable peace unless its neighbours stop interference. The Bonn process failed to convince or force neighbours to allow a new and peaceful Afghanistan to emerge. As a result of this failure, when President Obama was asked if the US was winning in Afghanistan, he replied: "No." The US Vice President, Joe Biden is quoted saying "if the government (of Afghanistan) is a criminal syndicate, how will our troops make a difference." British Lord, Paddy Ashdown says: "I think Afghanistan is a failed state, I don't think it's a question of it being on the edge of it." The US Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, is quoted "Afghanistan is a Narco-state that is plagued by limited capacity and widespread corruption." Former NATO Secretary-General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer said: "The basic problem in Afghanistan is not too much the Taliban; it's too little good governance." David Kilcullen, a counterinsurgency adviser to Condoleezza Rice recently warned the US Senate Foreign Relations Committee against widening the U.S. involvement in the war in Afghanistan that "If you think about what we did in Vietnam, we escalated, we overthrew that leader, we took control of the problem, we tried to fix it and we couldn't fix it, couldn't afford it." General David Petraeus says: "Afghanistan has been known over the years as the graveyard of empires. We cannot take that history lightly or take kindly to outsiders trying to conquer it." Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper says, "Taliban insurgency cannot be defeated". The UN Special envoy to Kabul, DeMistura says: No military solution to the Afghan problem. Henry Kissinger says, "Obama administration cannot sustain the strategy that has brought US to the present situation in Afghanistan. No foreign conqueror has ever succeeded in occupying Afghanistan and the US also cannot succeed as a conqueror to occupy Afghanistan, even for a limited period of time." Challenging the military plan of Gen. David Petraeus, Kissinger says "In the end, the fundamental issue is not so much how the war will be conducted but how it will be ended". "Under such a situation, will it be a wise strategy for the US to continue an unwinnable Afghan war?" Kissinger asked. Sir Roderick Braithwaite, former British ambassador to Moscow: "We went in with a limited objective to start with, but like the Russians hoping that they could build socialism in Afghanistan, we hoped we could build democracy. We haven't got enough troops there to dominate the territory and we have a government in Kabul whose authority barely runs inside the capital, let alone outside it. We have no long-term strategy." Col. Oleg Kulakov, a Russian who served twice in Afghanistan and is now a lecturer: "Doubling their forces won't lead to a solution on the ground. The conflict cannot be solved by military means, it's an illusion. No-one can reach any political goal in Afghanistan relying on military force. Frankly speaking, they (NATO) are doomed to repeat our mistakes."

Among the Afghans, the ex-Vice President of Afghanistan, Zia Masoud, claimed on 16 February 09 that the Government of Afghanistan was corrupt and a failure. Former Interior Minister Ali Jalali, claimed 4 ministers and 13 governors were involved in narcotics trade. The head of the Complaint Commission of

the President's office, Asadullah Wafa, claimed on Sunday 01 March 2009 that the government had control on only three out of its 17 districts in Kandahar province. Kandahar is the second largest city of Afghanistan. According to a recent survey conducted by Independent Human Rights Commission, more than 135,000 Afghans have lost their lives in the past nine years. They were killed by insurgents and the US bombardments.

Now, everyone says, there is no military solution to the Afghan problem. The question arises, that if war is not the solution, then what is the road map to peace? For what kind of peace is the U.S.A. prepared? If the U.S.A. withdraws from Afghanistan, how would we Afghans continue to deal with one another? On many occasions, Afghans have won wars by sacrificing their lives and paying heavy prices, but have we been able to capitalize on these victories? Due to this reason and our own doings, every few decades Afghanistan has had to go through a destructive war. We were not able to have a sincere and loyal leadership. We had little success in defining, realizing, and categorizing our national interests, the interests of our neighbours and the interests of the superpowers in the region. We have failed to align the interests of others with our own interests, and because of this weakness we are involved in continuous crises. How can we prevent the re-occurrence and repetition of such crises? What would be an acceptable and reliable political solution and a stable and independent Afghan state?

Dear friends!

In the past we have not had any structures, institutions or programs to build leadership capacities, no do we have them now. We are faced with many problems in this regard. The lack of experience developing leadership capacities on the one hand, and the thirty years of imposed war on the other, have created an environment of mistrust, depressed intellectuals, lack of ownership, lack of confidence, and many other sicknesses. A few are mentioned below:

1. For the past thirty years, foreign military interventions have subjugated this country to war conditions. This situation has weakened self-confidence among Afghans, the national sentiments of the intellectuals, and affected their capacities to think about national interests and loyalty to the country.
2. The compulsory migration and internal displacement of Afghans has addicted many of the leaders with fraud, greed, cupidity, and betrayal, which is a fatal situation for the Afghan nation.

During the time of resistance against the Soviet Union, some of our foreign supporters wanted us to fight while they managed our politics. The ruling conditions of the time had affected the leadership of the resistance and they were not able to act and operate as the nation had expected them to do. The personal weakness of resistance leadership further strengthened this situation. Consequently, the nation was able to win the war, but due to the leadership's incompetence, it was not able reap any benefits from this victory.

In addition, over the last three decades, both friends and foes have harassed the Afghans through many different means. This has resulted in an environment of mistrust among Afghans. In such conditions, it is vital to set up national objectives and create a clear vision for the future of the country. To achieve the objectives, there is need for comprehensive and clear strategies. All these can be achieved only if we work for the emergence of a national leadership. Although this is a difficult task, it is not impossible.

### **Objectives**

After two and a half years of travel and discussions with Afghans, I (Farouq Azam) have prepared a draft proposal on how to take Afghanistan out of the current situation. Thereafter, I found friends like you, and

currently I am presenting it to you for the purpose of revision and implementation. Through peaceful means, we aim to bring viable change: peace, vision for our people where to go, the rule of law, and justice to Afghanistan. This proposal presents the following peaceful picture of Afghanistan:

### **1. The presence of the United States in Afghanistan should be as a friend and partner.**

From the time of King Amanullah Khan until Daud Khan, Afghan leaders have tried to secure the United States' cooperation to maintain security and balance in the region and implement economic development in Afghanistan. The USA was not then ready to accept these requests. Many Afghans think that the US and Afghan interests are not in conflict with one another, and that cooperation between the United States and Afghanistan is useful to both. But currently most Afghans, including high level governmental officials, think that the USA is acting as an invader and occupier rather than as a friend and a partner. This image needs to be changed. This will only be possible if all Afghans believing in peace and peaceful transformation come together around a pragmatic platform with a wise, sincere and courageous leadership. They need to find a true address and language for the nation to speak with US and other foreigners in Afghanistan.

### **2. A more inclusive internal political arrangement.**

Assume that the USA and NATO have left Afghanistan. How would the Afghans deal with one another? Which group would be able to identify, define and explain the national interests of the country to the public? Who could assure the Afghans that their culture, dignity and, the future of their children is safe with it; and who could win the support of the Afghans to join in their mission? The Afghan Government can get legitimacy through the people's trust that is lost nowadays. The trust and support of the people can be gained only when the government delivers what it promises and protect Afghanistan from the threats coming from within. This can be done through the enforcement of law and fight corruption and the culture of impunity by bringing criminals to justice. We work for a government system to be established in Afghanistan that will have the support of the vast majority of Afghans and those who do not pledge their support, shall not feel excluded or so alienated that they would pick up weapons to destroy it. There is no single government in the world that has 100 % support and that everyone is satisfied with. In fact almost everywhere the majority establishes a government, and those who are not part of this majority, are not suppressed or neglected. Which group or movement would be able pull Afghans out from their current confusion, give them a clear vision and lead them to a better and bright future?

### **3. Inviting neighbours to friendly relationship.**

Afghanistan is among neighbours with conflicting interests, manifested as a proxy war in this country. They have not only harmed us in the last three decades, but have also harmed themselves. How can we change the existed non-conducive atmosphere into mutual cooperation, or at least not be confrontational? If we are not able to establish close and friendly relations with our neighbours, we should at least be able to live in peaceful coexistence. Since we have not selected them and they have not selected us to be neighbours, therefore, we have to find ways to co-exist with each other. We must realize that, as we have legitimate interests in the region, so too do our neighbours. There is need to understand, acknowledge and take into account the legitimate interests and concerns of our neighbours. But, no country is to be allowed to dominate or use Afghanistan as a strategic asset. We should let them know that we could be good friends, but that we will not allow them to carry out their greedy plans for us. We must make our neighbours aware that we also have cards, which could be used against them if needed. There is need for a change, changing interference to cooperation. Here, Afghanistan respects the sovereignty and integrity of her neighbours and the neighbours must also commit to respect the sovereignty and integrity of

Afghanistan. As we need them, they also need us. We have many things in common and of mutual benefits and, therefore, we believe that under a popular and wise leadership, we can manage the current disorder and bring about mutual cooperation and improved communication.

**4. While we do not accept being puppets of anyone, as a nation with dignity and honour, we are a house within the global village. Afghanistan, as an independent country, should be an active member and business partner of the international community.**

If we deeply analyse the history of our region, the super powers have been in our neighbourhood for the past three-hundred years. It is in our interests to identify the interests of the super powers in the region and coordinate them with our own national interests. We should tell the super powers that along with our capability, throughout the history, to defend our country vigorously, we also have the capacity to sit down, talk and find common grounds for our mutual interests. Also, we should educate our people that our national interests are not necessarily in conflict with the interests of the International Community, but a common language is missing. There is need for a leadership to have such a language.

Afghanistan is a peaceful country with no threat to any country in the region. The past history of Afghanistan with British India shows, Afghanistan was able to govern its own affairs with no threat to the safety of British India. The same, the Afghans were no threat to the Soviet Union. Afghanistan always had good relations with Iran. Similarly, Afghanistan did not harm Pakistan when the later was attacked by India in 1965 and 1971.

Afghanistan and its people are still not known to outsiders and repeatedly tried not to be understood. It is much more complex than anyone among foreigners dare to admit. As the British and the Russians were not able to succeed in Afghanistan the US military endeavour will also fail. Britain's experience in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, and later the Soviet Union, showed that the best way, perhaps the only way, to stabilize Afghanistan in the long term is to empower or at least allow the Afghans to secure and govern their own country. It would seem as ever, if history is anything to go by, it is the Afghans that will have the final say, not the outsider. To achieve this, the Afghans need political and economic support from outside. Such a support will serve the interests of the International Community more than military option.

Isn't there a need for a leadership that is capable of identifying and defining Afghan national interests, of being sincere and loyal to Afghans, that people can have trust in, give ownership and vision to the nation where to go, and able to coordinate the interests of neighbouring countries and the international players with the interests of the Afghans?

Dear fiends!

To present this picture of Afghanistan to you, I have travelled over to different provinces, districts and villages of Afghanistan, as well as to the USA, many countries in Europe, the Middle East, Africa and, Asia including neighbouring countries. In these journeys I have met with thousands of Afghans including government and armed opposition. This prescription, to rescue Afghanistan, was prepared in the light of all the information I have collected from the Afghans during past two and a half years. During this time, I have also found friends who have made their commitment to institutionalize and implement the proposal. Now, I am not alone. Many people have come around this platform. The prescription presented to you is not a written in stone, but it is always open for improvement and accommodation. This movement does not belong to one person, but it is a national movement belonging to every Afghan willing to work for its objectives.

## **Strategy**

To achieve the above aims and objectives, my friends and I have adopted the following strategy:

### **1. The need to establish the Movement for Peaceful Transformation of Afghanistan (MPTA)**

The situation in the country and the execution of the formula presented to you required us to establish a movement designed to bring forth positive change through peaceful means. Though there are “leaders” in Afghanistan, there is a lack of effective national leadership, and this afflicts every Afghan, our neighbours and the International Community. Furthermore, there is no rule of law and justice in our country. Many top government officials do not respect the law and abuse their power. There are also different mafia groups in the government that have weakened the system of justice. If these corrupt groups continue their criminal activities, it will worsen the situation and lead to a national disaster. We are promoting this peaceful movement to bring reforms, and exert pressure, through creating pressure groups, to implement the components of the proposed solution. This movement will find ways to stop the authorities from abusing the law and taking the nation hostage for their personal interests, and to make the country a reliable partner in world affairs.

Afghan foreign policy and its direction must be clear and transparent to all. For the last over 30 years Afghanistan is the victim of external meddling and interference. Today competing regional interests are being pursued in Afghanistan and the country’s tribal and ethnic groups roam freely and find refuge across its borders. The status quo in Afghanistan is no good for all. Afghanistan’s great mineral wealth, water, electricity and cheap labour should instead be of benefit to the region. Afghanistan can benefit all its neighbours and the International Community if it becomes the land bridge of Central Asia, South Asia, and the Gulf. After all, the Silk Road, crossed through Afghanistan, was the passage for trade for many centuries. This is the duty of the future Afghan Government, sought by MPTA, to convince the Afghans that this bridge and link must be restored.

The Movement for Peaceful Transformation of Afghanistan has identified the vital interests of the Afghans and has prioritized them. The movement has given the Afghan nation a clear vision where to go and put forward a sound program to transform Afghanistan for better. We try to restore the trust of the nation and drag them behind this formula. The legitimate interests of Afghanistan’s neighbours are acknowledged and the vital interests of the global powers in the region are to be taken on board. MPTA tries to prove Afghanistan as a trusted neighbour and a viable business partner of the International Community. The International Community, for both moral and political reasons, has to help the Afghans to bring change; a change to build a strong viable partner government in Afghanistan. We mobilize our nation for such a change through peaceful means and within the country’s rules. Our movement is cry of the time; it serves the legitimate interests of all parties concerned.

### **2. Mediation for a political solution in Afghanistan**

Both Afghans and the international community believe that there is no military solution to the Afghan problem, but a political compromise is required to achieve this. The government of Afghanistan has established the High Peace Council for this purpose. Despite many people being pessimistic about the council, the appointment of a body by the government is a positive step showing the need for peace talks. However, it is the government’s address and will not be able to play the role of mediator. Mediation and reconciliation are part of our mandate, we have extensive experience in this regard and we have access to all parties concerned. Chairman Farouq Azam met President Karzai recently in this regard. Our movement will put together, when opportunity arises, a well-known and impartial delegation of righteous

people to mediate between the government of Afghanistan and the armed opposition, and pave the way for direct and unconditional peace talks. We have a detailed plan for this.

### **3. Resolution of the ethnic disputes and social strives**

Major tribes, ethnic groups, and people living in different communities are suffering from internal disputes. These disagreements and disputes are harming the people and creating great obstacles for progress of our society. We would soon establish groups of scholars and experienced dispute mediators to travel to different provinces and districts and resolve these issues among different tribes, ethnicities, and communities. These groups will also find ways to reopen the already closed schools. The closure of schools not only questions the legitimacy of the present government but also damages the future of the country. This is a long, but fruitful process that our movement takes the initiative.

### **4. Assistance to the families of war victims, the disabled, martyrs, and political prisoners**

The widows, orphans, and disabled, whoever they are and whatever the cause of their hardship, need our assistance. It is our responsibility to show sympathy with them. Likewise, prisoners, especially political prisoners, are usually deprived of their legal rights. When the rule of law and justice in a country is weak, political prisoners develop a sense of revenge. This sense becomes precarious when the released prisoner is not able to find a job to provide living for his family. In contrast, he becomes a burden on the family. The situation becomes more dangerous, if government official abuse him after he is released from prison. Consequently, the prisoner develops a sense of revenge, acts violently and becomes an outcast. This is why many of such released prisoners have joined insurgency and made the Taliban leadership more radical and extremist. The consequences of this are very dire for the society.

Today, there are thousands of political prisoners in Afghanistan, and this number is increasing. Because of the ongoing war and the increased number of political prisoners, the number of people who have developed a sense of revenge is increasing. This will create serious problems, and the country will not be able to deal with them in the future. To avoid such future disasters, our movement believes that prisoners should be given opportunities to receive life-long education (literacy, language, computer), Islamic studies (non-violence in Islam) and skills for living.

Our movement intends to provide opportunities for the families of people with disabilities, killed, and prisoners both inside the prison and after they are released. This way they would be able to read, write, learn skills, and then equip themselves with necessary knowledge and tools used to obtain a livelihood. It is also part of the Movement's objectives to get the attention of the relevant authorities and interested parties to respect the human rights of prisoners. We have an explicit plan in this regard.

At the end I would like reemphasize that we have presented our objectives and strategies for serving our people. This program is free of any kind of ethnic, linguistic, and other forms of bias. Though our reform activities are intended to benefit all Afghans, it nevertheless also faces some challenges. Warlords, human rights abusers, national and international mafias, and people opposing peace and the creation of responsible government entities oppose the implementation of this program. These groups do not want to see a peaceful and an independent Afghanistan where people can enjoy the rule of law, justice, good governance, good management and leadership, transparency, and accountability. But with the Will of Almighty, our commitment and our efforts to implement this plan will slowly remove all these obstacles one by one, and we will arrive at our righteous end and achieve our objectives.

Best wishes, your brother, Farouq Azam.

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