

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

Afghanistan Voice

A Monthly Publication	Year Three	Number Seven	New Jersey USA
Annual Subscription \$10.00		Single Copy \$1.00	July 2000 Issue

**The Voice Demanding
Democracy, Freedom, and
Dignity for All,
Seeking to Enhance the Cause
Of A Free, United
Afghanistan**

In this issue:

Editorial:

Qasem Ghazanfar

**The Educated, Professional Afghan
Women Residing Abroad Increase
Efforts to Change Women's
Condition Inside Afghanistan**

Azadi Afghan Radio:

Omar Samad

**The Negar Conference: The
Dushanbe Human Rights Charter
and Interview with Commander
Ahmad Shah Massoud**

Excerpts from:

His Excellency Kofi Annan,

**Report to Security Council "Afghan
Life Deteriorates Daily Under the
Taliban"**

Afghan Demonstration in New York

Editorial:

**The Educated, Professional Afghan
Women Residing Abroad Increase Efforts
to Change Women's Condition Inside
Afghanistan**

Maybe it is out of deep desperation or maybe the increased world awareness of the plight of women in Afghanistan has opened up some new opportunities. Whatever the case, Afghan educated elite have recently mounted a strong and sustained effort to alleviate some of the pains and suffering that their sisters are forced to endure in Taliban-controlled Afghanistan.

In June, some Afghan women including Hassina Sherjan Samad and Zieba Shores-Shamley participated in a United Nations program and met with UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan.

After the program, Mrs. Samad complained of lack of participation by women from inside Afghanistan to apprise the world body of the intolerable conditions first hand. Dr. Zieba Shorish-Shamley was outraged with RAWA, an Afghan Women revolutionary organization with a base in Pakistan.

Shorish-Shamley was dismayed by RAWA's criticism of Mujahhidin, that is, the Afghans who gave their lives to free Afghanistan from the former Soviet invaders. Shorish-Shamley stated that Rawa's ideological position does not seem to make the distinction between heroic people of Afghanistan and the war criminals and invaders. Her remarks show impatience with those who provide excuses for the extremist Taliban and their Pakistani mentors who have imprisoned the Afghan women and girls in the name of their brand of "Islam" and "tradition."

In the area of publications, Nasrine Gross, among others, has recently published her second book. Her first book Qassarikh-e Malalai is followed by an Anthology of Afghan writing focusing on the role that Afghan cultural values play in advancing unity, cooperation, and in cultivating a sense of responsibility.

On another front, the Afghan women traveled recently along with representatives of the "Women on the Road for Afghanistan" Conference (organized by Paris-based Negar) to Dushanbe, Tajikistan and Panjshir, Afghanistan, reporting very desirable outcomes. (We include in this issue the Interview these women had with Ahmad Shah Massoud, courtesy Azadi Afghan Radio).

On many other fronts including direct work inside Afghanistan, the Afghan women are undertaking difficult and dangerous educational and health projects, often risking their lives. Sometimes harsh reactions from the Taliban stop them from delivering their services to the needy. A case in point is the recent expelling of Mary MacMakin, the seventy-one year old American aid worker, who was detained by the Taliban charged with espionage. The real reason was found to be her organization's employing of seven Afghan women whom the Taliban also detained. Although Mrs. MacMakin insisted on the release of all those women before her deportation, the fate of the women is not known. Amnesty International has gotten involved on their behalf. Such women face considerable risk given the Taliban harshness, but despite these harsh treatments, Afghan women with help from humanitarian groups worldwide seem to be determined to put an end to the serious gender-specific abuse and suffering going on in Afghanistan.

Several reports like the June 26 Report by Stephen Farrell speak of Afghan women who despite worries about a possible Taliban take over of the remaining grounds under Massoud risk it and go to Rustaq or other areas where their professional skills are needed. They say they do it for their country. Their jobs may be lucrative in Pakistan, but they are fed up with Pakistani attitudes and so they prefer such risky undertakings.

In Dushanbe, Tajikistan, the Afghan professional women group had a very emotional welcome. The June 29 News Release by AAR showed that the attendees were showered with genuine feelings of admiration and sympathy. The gathering according to AAR led to the drafting of a significant Charter concerning Afghan women. (See the Charter in this issue.)

Maybe such brave undertakings and the US-promised resolve to save some 4,000 professional women through a special visa provision will lead to conditions through which the perpetual degradation of Afghan women in Pakistan and of those under the yoke of the Taliban will one day (at least for some) come to an end.

If the trend continues and more women from around the world (like Feminist Majority in the U.S.) get involved, maybe enough political pressure will be generated to force the world to seriously confront this insidious result of Pakistani intervention in Afghanistan. It might even go as far as to affect policy in the region toward halting war, punishing and decommissioning warmongers and drug dealers, and investing in peace, legal institutions, and economic rehabilitation.

AAR News Release:

Women's Gathering Calls for Solidarity, Struggle and Restoration of "Rights"

Dushanbe Parley Attracts Hundreds from Inside and Outside Afghanistan

It was meant to bring together a few dozen Afghan human and women's rights activists from around the world - including from non-Taliban areas inside Afghanistan - to the dusty-hot capital of land-locked Tajikistan - not far from the

turbulent Tajik-Afghan border - to show solidarity with the millions of victims of the Taliban's "gender apartheid" regime. But, according to reports from the capital city of Dushanbe on Wednesday, the three-day gathering attracted a much larger crowd than anticipated. **More than 700 estimated Afghan participants issued a human rights charter and an international appeal for world leaders to take decisive steps to solve the Afghan conflict and end foreign - specially Pakistani - interference in Afghan affairs and restore the Afghans' right to self-determination. (our highlighting throughout)**

"This was an historic occasion," said Patricia Lalonde, a participant from France and the wife of a former French cabinet minister. Lalonde and more than 40 other women from several countries responded positively to a call by the French-based organization Negar to participate in the "Women on the Road for Afghanistan" project. "A charter outlining the basic human rights of Afghan women was signed by all the delegates," Lalonde told AAR by phone from Dushanbe. "The charter will be used as a benchmark to hold any group or regime in Afghanistan accountable for human and women's rights compliance as stipulated by international declarations and regulations," said Dr. Maliha Zulfacar, a University lecturer from California. The charter also called for the prosecution of human and women's rights violators in accordance with international law. **"For the first time, Afghan women, representing various ethnic and social groups, assembled and made decisions in regard to their rights," said Zulfacar. "This is the beginning of another phase of the struggle for Afghan women," she added.**

Another delegate, Hassina Sherjan-Samad - also contributing to AAR's report - said that several dozen educated and professional women, consisting of medical doctors, engineers, teachers, writers and others, addressed the gathering with high spirit amid a "sea of emotions." "From the moment we arrived in Dushanbe, hundreds of families gathered to greet us with flowers, embraces and tears," said Sherjan-Samad. Lalonde added that the pain and suffering endured by the Afghans, as well as the newly-found spirit of solidarity that was felt among the women, and the

remembrance of the millions still struggling inside the country under the Taliban's radical rule, drove hundreds of women to tears throughout the conference. Nasrine A. Gross, a U.S.-based activist, told the participants, "be proud of your cultural heritage and do not allow anyone to oppress you."

The parley was inaugurated by Shoukria Haider, president of Negar, presided over by Chekeba Hachemi, with welcoming remarks by Tajikistan's Women Association president. Khalida Messaoudi, an Algerian member of parliament, Constance Borde, a French-American political activist, Mary Quinn, Annie Sugier, Maria F. Lacabe, president of Spain's democratic women's movement, writer Juliette Mince and many other foreign and Afghan speakers talked about the internal and international implications of the Afghan conflict, the various issues and solutions that need to be addressed. When asked what did the Afghan women want, Sherjan-Samad said, "they want freedom for their country, but above all, they asked us to take their message to the world and raise their voice." /

AAR exclusive Interview 07/09/2000 - Interview with Commander Ahmad Shah Massoud

A group of Afghan and foreign journalists accompanied by representatives of the "Women on the Road for Afghanistan" Conference (organized by Paris-based Negar and held in Dushanbe, Tajikistan between June 27-28) traveled to Afghanistan on June 29. The group visited internal refugee camps, educational and social institutions, POW camps and local people during their four-day stay in the Panjshir Valley. This trip coincided with the latest summer Taliban offensive North of Kabul, between June 30 and July 1. On its way to visit schools in UF/ISA territories in Kapisa province, the group encountered hundreds of newly displaced refugees from the Shamali plains fleeing the war zones and documented their stories. On the morning of July 2, the group met with Ahmad Shah Massoud, commander of the Mujahedeen resistance forces in Afghanistan. The following are excerpts of the discussions and question/ answer

session between the participants, Dr. Maliha Zulfocar, Hassina Sherjan-Samad, Chekeba Hashemi, Manila Khaled, Mary Quinn, Nadjia Bouzeghrane (El Watan daily), Gerard Cardonne, Francoise Causse, Sophie Marsaudon (Radio France International) and Massoud. Recorded by AAR correspondent and Dushanbe Conference delegate Sherjan-Samad. Audio, photos and text of the interview and trip can be accessed at www.afghanradio.com under "Today's News".

Welcoming remarks:

Ahmad Shah Massoud: First of all, I would like to welcome our sisters to inside Afghanistan. I greatly value and appreciate your courage and dedication to come here and visit your people and your country close up, and to gain first-hand knowledge of issues under such chaotic and sensitive conditions. I hope this is a real beginning for the return of Afghan men and women to their country so that they could meet their compatriots and feel the pain and agony of their people. As far as the Afghan situation is concerned, I will repeat that contrary to what is being propagated and even claimed by some educated Afghans outside the country - that this is solely an internal affair, a struggle for power - the issue is much deeper than that. We have said that Pakistan, since the times of [former Pakistani military ruler] Zia ul-Haq and since the Soviet and communist aggression against the Afghans... has adopted a program and a strategy to enable it in the future to use Afghanistan as a springboard for its affairs in Central Asia... and also to become a regional axis and superpower. As a result of this long-standing Pakistani policy, even the first time around, Pakistan did not think that the fall of Kabul and the communists [in 1992] would take place from the North.

Instead Pakistanis thought that it would happen at the hands of Pakistani officers and [Afghan] subordinate factions from the South [of Kabul]... Since Pakistan realized that it wasn't able to reach those goals, and let me be frank here and say, was not able to install its favorite subordinate [Hezb-i Islami factional leader Gulbudin] Hekmatyar, Pakistan did not stop till this day stop to conspire, and every [Pakistani] regime since

then has followed the Zia ul-Haq policy and strategy.

There is no doubt that we have also had our share of internal problems, and that part of this crisis stems from internal causes. But I see the main cause in Pakistan and in foreign aggression. I repeat that as long as the international community does not exert the necessary pressure on Pakistan, and as long as it does not stop the hand of Pakistani interference in Afghan affairs, it is certain that the flames of war in this country will never be extinguished. On the other hand, we have announced on numerous occasions that the only solution to the Afghan problem is through a peaceful settlement, through negotiations and talks... And in these talks, the best way is to go toward elections, to go toward a democracy and to allow the people to determine their destiny. We told Hekmatyar on several occasions that if he really thought that he had influence and was effective, then fine, let's move toward elections and let the people legitimately, legally and formally elect you with their ballots.

Now, our proposal is the same for the Taliban. On several occasions, I told the Taliban delegations that came here for talks with us in the Panjsher, that you claim to represent the Pashtun tribes - fine, we agree. You say that the majority of Afghanistan is under our control - we agree. You say that the people accept us - we agree. Fine, if there is such level of confidence - then let's go toward elections. You [the Taliban] claim to hold the majority backed by popular acceptance; then what are you worried about? In place of so much warfare and bloodshed, move toward elections and legitimately attain power. Our position is still the same. We did not and do not consider a military option as the solution, as exemplified by yesterday's battles.

The Pakistanis made preparations for these offensives for more than a month now. Be sure that during the first rotation 1,600 Pakistani fighters, and the second time around, 1,000 fighters were sent to take part in yesterday's battles. This is separate from the Pakistani madrassa (religious school) and Taliban recruits. We all saw the results that with God's grace and the nation's resolve, they faced defeat within a few hours and were forced to retreat. But we never consider war as a solution...

Returning to my initial thesis, it is unfortunate that as a result of misunderstandings, some of our writers and scholars, instead of realizing the depth of the issue of Pakistan's interference, spend their time making accusations against this side or the other. The key to the Afghan solution lies with the international community and Afghans - wherever they reside – to unite and stand to denounce the Pakistani aggression as they did during the Soviet aggression... and eventually to pave the way for democracy and elections, so that every individual could attain his/her natural right.

Q & A Session: Aside from the AAR correspondent, other delegation members also asked some of the questions that follow:

Q: What role can Afghan women inside and outside the country play in bringing peace to the country?

A: As they did during the [anti-communist struggle] Jihad period, Afghan women today can once again play a very effective role inside and outside the country to defend against foreign aggression and help in the restoration of peace. Afghan women on the outside can establish links with their people, especially with women inside the country, in order to assist them financially and morally. There are no problems, you can visit these areas, open schools for girls, establish a college and in so many other ways establish your links and assist them.

Q: Reporter's question about Massoud's assessment of the latest offensives:

A: ... As General [Pervez] Musharraf had stated, they intended to inflict the final blow... because he thinks that in order to further his illicit aims in Afghanistan, this resistance... is an obstacle to his goals... Despite United Nations and international warnings given to the Taliban not to engage in this offensive, as you all witnessed yesterday, they launched a major attack. At the start they had some gains in some locations, as our lines were pushed back 2 kilometers and 4 km respectively. But with God's grace, as a result of popular resistance and the armed Mujahedeen

(freedom fighters) in the area, their operation failed. According to my [initial] reports, their casualty count may be about 150 killed and more than 200 injured. Yesterday's blow was heavy. They have also lost at least six tanks, 10 to 15 military vehicles of all types.... But this doesn't mean that the Taliban and the Pakistanis have given up on the idea of waging war, and I am certain that they are making preparations for the next round of fighting.

Q: Question from American panelist on what specific actions does Massoud want to see the United States take against Pakistan, to open the way for a peaceful settlement of the crisis?

A: In this case, the U.S. can exert political as well as economic pressures on Pakistan. These pressures can very easily prevent Pakistan from continuing its interference. They include World Bank loans, other bilateral aid packages from the U.S... Most of Pakistan's military equipment is made in the U.S. and putting a stop to the flow [of weapons and parts] is yet another pressure on Pakistan...

Q: Question from Afghan panelist concerning the needs of internally displaced people (IDP) and the amount and quality of aid provided by international NGOs?

A: The most acute problem with IDPs is with the provision of foodstuff. Contrary to what NGOs and even the UN claim, they have not even been able to adequately provide the minimum subsistence needs of the refugees. The people who enter the [Panjsher] Valley only carry with them food for a couple of days. If, God forbidden, the fighting escalates and prolongs, then we all face hardship. The most important aid item is foodstuff, followed by shelter and other necessities. The healthcare situation is better.

Q: Question by Afghan panelist: What do you think about the proposed Loya Jirga by [former King] Zahir Shah?

A: We are in agreement with any peaceful movement that wants to resolve the Afghan crisis.

If [Zahir Shah could call a Loya Jirga and peace could be restored in that manner, not only do we have no objections to it, but we would cooperate and assist it.

Q: Question by other panelist: Do you prefer a situation that includes a role for the Taliban in government, or must fighting continue in your view until the Taliban and its influence is completely eliminated?

A: We are not in favor of the continuation of war in our country. We also know that we cannot build a durable coalition government with the Taliban. We prefer a common [coalition] interim [temporary] government with the Taliban for six months or a year to put an end to the war and the killing of Afghans by Afghans... and then move toward elections.

Q: Question by other panelist: What message can we take back with us to other Afghans and what can we do?

A: All Afghans, our brothers and sisters who live abroad, can be of great service to the people who are inside the country by establishing their links with them. For example in various sectors, healthcare, education, economic and even handicraft to support widows, you can form small circles in France or Germany or other places. By establishing direct contacts, including such trips that are unprecedented, you can be of great help. Not long ago, a few French women came and opened a hospital and are now of great service. Don't we have two female doctors abroad? What is the obstacle? To the extent that we can, we are ready for any assistance... To defend human rights by words or by shouting slogans or writing it on paper is easy, but come and practically do something. What problem do you have to come here and open a girls' school?... conditions are ready, but unfortunately we Afghans have one habit: we talk too much and practically do little.

Q: What would you consider as some errors, political or otherwise, that were made in the past?

A: There is no doubt that those who act also make mistakes. No human is void of errors. The most significant shortcoming in the past was the lack of unity among the factions [parties during the anti-Soviet resistance period]. The large number of factions and their dispersion caused many disasters in Afghanistan.

Q: What effect will the return of Ismael Khan (former Massoud ally who escaped from Taliban custody earlier this year) or the possible involvement of Generals [Abdul Rashid] Dostum and [Abdul] Malik have on the military and political equations inside the country?

A: For each individual, given the limits that they have, standing against foreign aggression is effective. I think that the freedom of Amir Ismael Khan will have great effects. His freedom will allow us to expand the resistance in the western and southwestern zones, thus diffuse and divide up the single-prong pressure that has so far been imposed on our forces.

Q: What is your view about the possibility of future cooperation between [factional leader Pir. S. Ahmad] Gilani and the Taliban?

A: Naturally, since Pir Saheb Gilani lives and Pakistan and he is under the Pakistani authorities' and the ISI's (Pakistani military's Inter-Services Intelligence) pressure, I am sure... personally he is a good person and took part in the Jihad... but under the existing pressures that he finds himself in Pakistan, he is compelled to make accommodation.

Q: When the war is over, what role do you see for yourself in a future Afghanistan?

A: ... The most significant role that I see for myself now is to resist foreign intervention and pave the way for every Afghan to be able to freely decide his/her own destiny. From there on, I do not have any wish for a particular governmental position. I think that to prevent foreign interventions, and to be able to bring about a Constitution under which the people can exercise [the right to] self-determination, are by themselves the most significant services one can render... The

best regime in the future that can have the confidence of the people, where there would be no need for coup d'etats and armed conflicts, is one that comes about as a result of a democracy and elections... a necessity for Afghanistan. Each individual should have the right to cast a vote, and this right should belong to men and women. Both men and women would have the right to elect or be candidates for elections... It is in this regard that I think of a major role for myself... to pave the way for such a regime and such a democracy.

Q: Throughout the years you have faced and encountered many problems in the cause of freedom in Afghanistan, how do you want to be remembered in History?

A: A servant of the people and a servant of the country. /

AAR Editors' Note: Usage (full or partial) of this interview should be attributed to Azadi Afghan Radio for translation and release.

**Happy Second Anniversary, AAR
website www.afghanradio.com**

Afghan life deteriorates daily under Taliban -U.N.

By Joy Elliott

UNITED NATIONS, June 27 (Reuters)
- Four years after the Islamic fundamentalist Taliban took over the Afghan capital, Kabul resembles a "bombed-out city" after World War II in an impoverished country that squanders its resources on weapons, a U.N. report said on Tuesday.

Billions of dollars have been spent on wars since 1979, leaving Afghanistan with its assets depleted, "its intelligentsia in exile, its people disenfranchised, its traditional political structures shattered," Secretary-General Kofi Annan wrote in the report. (Our highlighting)

"Four years after the takeover of Kabul by the Taliban, visitors compare the city to a bombed-out city a few years after the end of the Second World War, except that no reconstruction is in sight and its people have little hope for improvement," he said.

Annan's critical report to the General Assembly follows the inability of U.N. teams to negotiate a peace between the Taliban, which controls most of the country, and a northern alliance led by Gen. Ahmad Shah Masood.

Afghanistan went through nine years of military conflict with the Soviet Union, ending in 1989, followed by a protracted civil war. The Taliban, mainly of Pushtun ethnicity, captured Kabul in September 1996 but is recognised only by Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

With money being spent mainly for war, "the situation of the Afghan people remains deplorable," Annan said.

He said Afghanistan was undergoing a "process of pauperisation," made worse by the country's most severe drought in 30 years.

Children are dying from easily preventable disease and women and girls continue to face serious restrictions on any participation in public life, Annan said in the report.

"The dismissal of female civil servants from government service is yet another sad example of the brazen violations of their rights," he wrote.

Annan said that the presence of volunteers, mainly from religious schools in Pakistan, among Taliban fighters "is reported to be significant."

Note: In all the above matters as well as other issues such as the Loya Jirga, Osama Bin Laden, and harassment of international aid workers by the Taliban, the UN has good intentions and desires but no proper means or resolve. The stumbling block is Pakistan as well as other selfish parties that consider their own immediate gains more important than a long range solution to the tragic chaos and perpetual regional instability.

Afghan Demonstration Against Pakistan and Its Puppets, the Taliban

Afghans from New York, New Jersey, Washington, Virginia and even far away places such as Canada demonstrated in New York City on July 19th. With shouts of “Death to Pakistan”, “Death to Taliban, Mercenary Soldiers of Pakistan”, “Osama Bin Laden, Out of Afghanistan”, and “We’re not giving an inch of our land to anybody”, the Pakistani representatives and the United Nations authorities were served notice that Afghans all over the world will not just sit idly and accept passively the malicious plans and actions of Pakistani military and ISI which are ultimately aimed at annexing, subjugating, or reducing all of Afghanistan to a client state such as under the Taliban.

The Resolution addressed to Mr. Kofi Annan (UN), Ambassador Mokhtar Lamani (OIC), Madeline K. Albright (US Secretary of State), and all Heads of Foreign Missions expressed repugnance at the well-known irresponsible statements made by Pakistani Military Junta Chief, Pervez Musharraf, and demanded that:

1. The UN take up the question of Afghanistan in its millennium session and call on Pakistan to immediately withdraw its military personnel including its plain clothes ‘religious volunteers’ from Afghanistan.
2. Require Pakistan to compensate for the annihilation of the economic infrastructure of Afghanistan by its stooges from Gulbuddin Hekmatyar to Taliban.
3. Bring to concert with the Organization of the Islamic Conference efforts to halt the Pakistani interference in Afghanistan, thus ending the Afghan conflict.
4. Undertake immediate measures to resettle the internally displaced Afghans to their homes and to restore livable conditions for the people of Afghanistan.

Editor: Prof. Qasem Ghazanfar

Editorial Consultants:

Dr. Erfan Fetrat

Dr. Sherief Fayez

Mr. Hashem Baluch

Afghanistan Voice

P.O.Box 104

Bloomington, NJ 07403

Editor's Tel/Fax (973) 838-6072

E-mail ghazanfar@nac.net

Ghazanfar@essex.edu

