

## **Unofficial Translation**

**Dr. Rangin Dadfar Spanta, National Security Advisor of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan speech text in Herat Security Dialogue**

**His Excellency...**

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**Respectable guests**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

First of all, as your fellow-citizen, let me welcome the distinguished guests to my city of birth.

I would like to thank Dr. Moradian and his colleagues for arranging this occasion. With today's gathering, the "Herat Security Dialogue" series, initiated by AISS, is being held for the third time. I sincerely wish AISS to successfully conduct such dialogues in the future as well.

As you know, our "National Unity Government" will take office on Monday. I congratulate the new government and the people of Afghanistan, and wish further success for the newly elected President and the new Chief Executive.

Today is also the 600<sup>th</sup> birthday of Moulana Nooraddin Jamee, a wise poet and Sufi of this ancient city. I congratulate this auspicious day for the enamors of literature and culture in our country, especially for the citizens of Herat.

At the outset, I sincerely would like to thank the governor of Herat, the security forces, and the decent people of this ancient city for providing a secure environment that made this gathering possible.

I am delighted to deliver my last speech as the National Security Advisor of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in a city where I was born and raised, and its noble people and beloved teachers thought me the lessons of liberality, patriotism, and loving humankind.

### **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

One year has passed from the previous security dialogue, but the region and our people's hope for enduring peace and stability has not been fulfilled yet. We have been going through the most challenging and chaotic periods since the end of the Cold War. Despite many efforts by the international community, the war and violence in Ukraine are still continuing. The crisis in Ukraine has resulted to unprecedented increase of tensions between the

Russian Federation, one of the world's greatest atomic power, the NATO members, and the European Union. In rivalry with NATO, the Russian Federation is seeking new alliances in Asian continent. Undoubtedly, the crisis in Ukraine has played an influential role in deepening the relations between the Russian Federation and China.

The recent talks in Shanghai conference on 12<sup>th</sup> September in Dushanbe and its emphasis on strengthening the security cooperation among the members were likely influenced by the situation happening in the western frontiers of Russian. Some of the countries are concerned about the repentance of what happened in Ukraine. They are worried about their countries turning to battleground between superpowers and the reemergence of the situation prior to 1990s.

The facts indicate that the "Great Middle East" policies and the so-called "Arab Spring" are the reflection of an inconsistent strategy in Islamic Middle Eastern countries. After the U.S. intervention in Iraq and the collapse of Saddam's Regime, today the situation is far more volatile there than the past. The social gaps between Iraqi Sunnis, Shiites, and Kurds has deepened than ever before. As a result, the government of Iraq is at the verge of collapsing.

The Libyan intervention of some of the NATO member countries accompanied by some Sheikh-resided states in the Gulf region

led to the collapse of Gadhafi's regime. However, the facts we are witnessing today in Libya portray a geographical area without an active state, where warlords and criminal gangs are fighting for territories.

The revolution in Egypt led to a dictatorship of fundamentals and ultimately ended up to a military coup. The realities of contemporary Egypt are not better than of the Mubarak's period. The notion of terrorism arising from radicals in Egypt has become a serious threat to the country.

The civil war in Syria does not have an optimistic prospect. Without any doubt, Syria is a dictatorial regime, which has systematically violated the humanitarian laws, as well as restraining its citizens from their liberties for several decades. However, this regime has simultaneously provided the opportunity for Syrian citizens from different religions to live in harmony. Social liberties in the context of integrating the followers of various sects and religions in social life, education, and employment portray a unique example in the Arab Middle East.

In my perspective, we must not crash countries in the absence of a moderate and acceptable alternative. We are all aware of the fact that the minority of people who probably believe in democracy in Syria are not only capable of waging a war, but also they don't have the required coordinating capacity for such a war. Hence, in Syria, the

ideological movements are waging the war with the money and support of some of the countries which have political systems basically based on undemocratic structure of power.

The recent years historical experiences indicate that systematic radicalism could emerge from the activities of such radical movements, as the events that took place in Syria and Iraq led to the establishment of ISIS. As a person who believes in democratic values, I cannot acknowledge and accept radical and terrorist groups or Sectarian fascism as an alternative to an authoritarian secular government.

### **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

In these days, the Islamic radicalism is on the top of political debates in our regional and international dialogues. Some have even embraced Samuel Huntington's theory of "the Clash of Civilization". However, President Obama implicitly rejected this theory during his speech in the United Nations' General Assembly. He pointed out the peaceful attitude of the Muslim mainstream, which needed to be mentioned at this critical situation. Hence, the violent reality of Middle East demonstrates the fact that most of this bloodshed has occurred in a particular geography, where the people are raised under on civilization.

Although, analyzing the roots of social and cultural radicalization and Islamic extremism are not at the agenda of our debate, criticizing the nature of international politics in dealing with such threats definitely holds a matter of high importance in this dialogue. Without any doubt,

the extremism spreading in the name of Islam has deep social roots. Several prominent factors such as the lack of democracy and social justice, the challenges of transition to modernity, and the destructive heritage of colonialism, which is embedded in the violent approaches of Islamist extremism from North Africa to Pakistan and Indonesia are highly influential in this regard.

How is the situation in the contemporary world order? The world order has gone out of control of the states, which are struggling to control it. The United States, super power of the world, in spite of air strikes against ISIS in Iraq and Syria and its attempts to make international allies against ISIS is currently retreating. As a teacher of politics, I learned that the every step of moving forward or retreating backward has a direction and purpose. But what is the current direction of U.S. retreatment? Is it the promotion of democracy through fighting terrorism and extremism or a policy of retreatment without vision?

How is the situation in the contemporary world order? The world order has gone out of control from the hands of various states, which are trying to control it. USA, the lone super power of the world, in spite of air strikes against ISIS in Iraq and Syria and its attempts to make international allies against ISIS is currently in retreat. As a teacher of Politics, I learned to believe that the every step of moving forward or retreating backward has a direction and purpose. But, what is the current direction of USA's retreat? Is US trying to promote democracy and struggle against Terrorism and Extremism or is there is no purpose behind their actions?

The realities of the current world's situation describes the fact that in spite of 13 years of global war on Terrorism, the terrorist networks are much more stronger than ever, which are threatening the whole world. Islamic State (IS) is active in Syria and Iraq, Al-Qaida in Mali, Saudi and Yemen, Booko Haram in Nigeria, Al-Shabab in Somalia, Abu-Sayaf in Indonesia, Caucasus Imarets in the southern parts of Russia, and several terrorist organizations including the Afghan Taliban, Haqqani Network, Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan; Islamic Movement of Eastern Turkistan, Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, Lashkari Omar, Sepah-e-Sahaba, Lashakri Jangawee are active in Pakistan.

I don't want to reiterate on mistakes and ambiguities of global war on terrorism. However, I would like to state that this strategy failing to target the main sources and bases of terrorism led to a stage that in spite of great sacrifices by Afghan and International troops, the 13 years of war on terrorism couldn't achieve victory in Afghanistan. Moreover, the global efforts against Islamic State (IS) have numerous shortcomings.

If it is right and legitimate to attack IS in Syria and Iraq even though it is against the international laws, then why is it not right and legitimate to destroy the sanctuaries and bases of Al-Qaida, Taliban, and Haqqani Network in Pakistan without the permission of UN Security Council?

Those who support and send terrorist groups into Afghanistan are indirectly involved in killing of thousands of innocent citizens of Afghanistan and hundreds of foreign soldiers.

### **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

There are several questions in the minds of the people from North Africa to Pakistan, that:

1. How To struggle against the terrorist and criminal groups inside their territories and prevent them from becoming stateless territories?
2. How to convert the non-democratic governments into the democratic law-based ones with the will of general public?
3. How to prevent fall of national governments to the minor ethnic-based groups?
4. And finally, how to prevent the fall of their national economies?

All of the aforementioned questions are serious and should be answered based on the realities of the current world.

Herferit Mankeler, rightly mentioned that presently we are encountering the terrorist groups which are very different from the classic ones and have very organized and coherent militaries.

We know the current international Jihadism is a sad reality and threat to our world. The reality of Jihadism is that they change the focal points and location of the battle grounds. Earlier they chose Africa as a battle ground and then some other places. Hence, they mostly



choose those territories which have weak governments, or those countries where the state is struggling with any sort of crisis. Global Jihadism is involved in a dangerous and long-term war aiming at global Jihadi revolution.

For instance, the main factor of IS Jihadism is firstly based on broad social injustice in the middle east and secondly, to the gradual downfall of regional states because of the global super powers' and some regional countries' power struggle.

Hence, merely military interventions and airstrikes of the territories which are already suffering from the dominance of dictatorships and have the potential to create crisis in the future is not a proper and suitable strategy against Jihadism.

We have to understand the reasons behind the joining of youth from some of the Middle Eastern states to Taliban and ISIS and have to figure out why they are turning so violent activities against the innocent people.

Instead of focusing on military solution of current issues in the Middle East, it would be better to seek a comprehensive strategy for such issues. Such strategy needs to incorporate the views of the people and seek a soft and reformative polices which should be acceptable for the people of those countries.

It is impossible to defeat ISIS by just promoting and supporting another Islamic extremist group and/or supporting the regional conservative governments that ideologically similar thoughts to those

of IS or other extremist groups and/or use terrorist groups for their self interests in the region.

Richness of the conservative Middle Eastern states with their extremist ideologies paves the way for dissemination and widening of radicalism and extremism. Unable to directly participate with Jihadist groups is the only difference here.

Everyone knows that the main supporters of ISIS are those countries which have close relation with the democratic states of NATO members. Financial help from these countries led to the strengthening of IS's Jihadists and these same states financially help Afghan Taliban, Haqqani network and Al-Qaida in Afghanistan with the Help of Pakistani ISI. Not only in Afghanistan, but they have also funded terrorist groups in different parts of the world.

Additionally, arming terrorist and extremist organizations, national separatists like PKK in the Middle East and use of them as ground forces is not the solution but it rather leads to the division and collapse of national government of the region and creates space for a new battle field.

Struggle against terrorism should not be limited to military efforts and taking help for the wrong states. Pakistan is one of the supporters of Terrorism, but is considered an important partner by the international community in its struggle against terrorism. The Persian Gulf states are also the supporters of terrorism but again are considered as an anti-terror campaign partner. With such policies it is impossible to succeed in the fight against terrorism. Avoiding the causes of

terrorism and only focusing on its effects is not the appropriate policy to combat terrorism.

In 2008, the Foreign Minister of one of the great countries said to me , “Look Dr. Spanta, Pakistan is our ally in anti-terror struggle, it would be better not to discuss about Pakistan”. Then, I said, no doubt it is your ally, but at the same time it is the supporter of Terrorism, and until and unless we do not destroy the bases of terrorism inside Pakistan, it is impossible to succeed against various terror groups. We Afghans know better than any other nation, the history is a witness that who is right and who is wrong.

Do not take my views wrong, I acknowledge the honest help of international community and the fact that they helped Afghans to be almost independent of Pakistan. Hence, it is worth to mention the sacrifices of thousands of Afghans and international community in Afghanistan. I especially thank USA in its struggle against terrorism.

I am very honest with my critics and at the same time I strongly believe in strategic Partnership with USA. I always supported the Bilateral Security Sgreement (BSA) with USA.

During my ten years of work as one of the Afghan government officials, I always criticized the vague strategies, and now I want to go to my ordinary and academic life, with more rights to speak frankly.

As you know, I have criticized such ambiguous strategies and will continue till such strategies exist and have been widened to the Middle Eastern countries.

I know that the countries who are present in Afghanistan want to struggle against terrorism, but they have chosen the wrong battle ground.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Before knowing that which political parties will come into power in the North Africa and Middle East who are at the verge destruction and collapse, I want to reiterate that destroying the current political setup of some of these countries and letting the non-state actors rule will surely led to the emergence of extremism and terrorism. In such cases, there is no doubt that the alternatives will be like Islamic state (IS) or similar to IS.

With respect to US invasion on Iraq in 2003, Jurgen Habermas, a well-known German philosopher said: “Normative Authority of USA is spoiled by its illegal invasion in Iraq. I believe that history should not be repeated”.

The people of Middle Eastern states need reformative movements which emerge out of their own communities. Starting a war at the wrong places will not have any positive results. People in the Middle Eastern states want democracy, justice and freedom not Islamic Caliphate of ISIS or stateless territories.

**Thanks for your attention.**