

INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF HUMANITARIAN COOPERATION WITH THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF AFGHANISTAN

Enduring Freedom - Resolute Support - Enduring Peace

President of the Islamic Republic
of Afghanistan Dr. Ashraf GHANI

Supreme Leader of the Taliban
Mawlawi Haibatullah AKHUNDZADA

November 21, 2017

War in Afghanistan is the largest in the modern history and the longest international conflict in the American history involving unprecedented human victims (millions of refugees, killed and injured Afghans, deaths of thousands of soldiers of International Security Assistance Force) and tremendous financial expenses – the whole war cost almost \$1 trillion. In the coming years, additional gigantic resources will be required to maintain the American forces in Afghanistan, provide healthcare, rehabilitation, pensions and disability allowances to the veterans.

As reported by Mr. John F. Sopko, Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, US appropriations for the reconstruction of Afghanistan exceed the funds committed to the Marshall Plan, the US aid program that delivered billions of dollars between 1948 and 1952 to help 16 European countries recover in the aftermath of World War II. However, all reconstruction effort turned out to be inefficient, as the assumed programs were limited to donor support only, and did not involve recreation of the country's political and economic independence and sustainable social and cultural development.

In the Human Development Index, Afghanistan takes the 171st place out of 188 states. According to the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), Afghanistan is the worst place to be born on Earth. According to WHO, over 60% of Afghanistan population suffer from mental disorders.

16 years after the launch of Operation Enduring Freedom, it is now absolutely evident that the goals of the mission have not been achieved – today, Afghanistan is missing its own development strategy; the attempt to create a stable state government system failed; Afghan law-enforcement agencies are not able to ensure security in the country; corruption undermines the legitimacy of the Afghan Government; a large share of the population is involved in production and distribution of narcotic substances – Afghanistan produces 90% of the world's opium, gradually turning into the biggest drug consumer. A part of the Afghan population has been killed in combat actions, and the other part fall victim to drugs.

After 13 years, on December 28, 2014, President Barack Obama announced the end of Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan.

On January 1, 2015, NATO announced its new mission in the country, called Resolute Support.

Nevertheless, regardless of the effort and actions of numerous governments, the situation keeps deteriorating, turning Afghanistan into the “chaos zone” and a source of increased terrorist

danger and drug threat for the entire world. Additionally, the destructed healthcare and uncontrolled refugee flow due to increased civil unrest may lead to distribution of extremely dangerous infectious diseases.

Therefore, the “Splendid Little War” initiated by President Bush, turned into the longest and dragged-out positional warfare with no victory for the U.S. and NATO, and all the countries participating in the Afghan war are already tired.

In this regard, the search for alternative approaches to achieving peace and stability in Afghanistan is becoming critically important.

The key professional duties of doctors include early recognition of threats to the health and life of people and timely notice to the governments and all the citizens for them to take all the required precautions. Thus, on May 21, 2016, at X (XXVI) Pirogov’s Medical Congress in Moscow, at the higher professional doctors’ forum in Russia, the representatives of the civil society and of Russia and Central Asia established an independent International Committee of Humanitarian Cooperation with the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. This Committee appealed to the international community – doctors, educators, scientists, cultural workers, artists, as well as social, political and religious organizations of diverse confessions, as well as NATO representatives with a proposal to hold an International Humanitarian Conference to discuss humanitarian issues and possibilities to ensure peace in Afghanistan.

August 21, 2017, President Donald Trump presented a new strategy on Afghanistan and South Asia, which was supported by NATO member countries. Analyzing the new Afghanistan strategy, we must acknowledge that the major focus is still on the war component – increasing military expenditures and military contingent, extending its authorities, cancelling the time limits for the operations, but not on the humanitarian issues, which is, in our opinion, a mistake.

The international community keeps investing immense funds for Afghanistan to recover. But since the NATO major forces were withdrawn, a half of Afghanistan territory have gotten under intermediate or full control of the Taliban.

Does this mean that a half of the Afghanistan population, many millions of citizens are not falling under the attention of the international community and are not receiving the international aid?

Is this one of the reasons why such territories deprived of the international aid are increasing opium production?

As before, the US-led Western Coalition continues cooperating with the central government in Kabul only, ignoring meaningful cooperation with the people of Afghanistan, which surely makes the military mission impossible.

Perhaps, this can be explained by the lack of knowledge of the history of the country, its religious and cultural traditions, lack of understanding of the current reality of Afghanistan with its ethnic and tribal fragmentation.

But it is abundantly clear that this war cannot be won without understanding and supporting the cultural, social and economic spheres of Afghanistan, and supporting of United States and NATO actions by the local population.

During preparation for the International Humanitarian Conference, at numerous meetings, regional conferences and discussions with representatives of the civil community and religious organizations of numerous countries, we made a decision to appeal to the leaders of the NATO member countries with a call to discuss and immediately launch creation of a new coalition – **International Humanitarian Coalition “Enduring Peace”** investing funds not in the military actions, but into restoration of the destroyed country and working out the unified position to prevent global drug threat.

In case of a positive decision, this would serve the interests of all the parties to the conflict, and surely be welcomed by the population of Afghanistan and the whole international community. Other countries interested in ending the war in Afghanistan could also join this new humanitarian coalition.

My professional activities are closely connected to Afghanistan for the last 30 years – both as a surgeon providing medical assistance to the country’s civil population and as a direct participant in the establishment of Afghanistan’s state health care system.

I have devoted all my life to a beloved cause. I am a doctor, a surgeon, I have gone through wars. I know firsthand what wars bring to warring countries and peoples.

Effective 2002, at the Transitional Islamic State of Afghanistan’s request, we have initiated activities to restore the country’s totally ruined health care system.

Critical situation in Afghanistan, my sincere respect for the wise and freedom-loving Afghan nation, and my professional medical duty force me to directly address Dr. Ashraf Ghani, President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, and Mawlawi Haibatullah Akhunzada, Supreme Leader of the Taliban:

The future of Afghanistan which must become a common home for all Afghans, depends only on you and on your actions. You are absolutely right confessing your love for your people and that you are ready to give your life for peace in Afghanistan, which, of course, corresponds to reality.

You are fully aware that the achievement of peace and stability in Afghanistan is possible only if an inter-Afghan dialogue on national reconciliation is established between the government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the Taliban.

Only combining our efforts to jointly solve national problems, only agreeing with one another and abandoning the forceful solution of the inter-Afghan conflict - and we are confident that this will be achieved, since both of you want peace and justice on the Afghan land - you will be able to achieve the unity of the Afghan people, which will have to be considered by neighboring countries, as well as world powers.

The people of Afghanistan, tired of the endless war, having discarded ethnic and tribal differences, will support your joint actions and the beginning of active negotiation process.

Generations of people were born during the war and do not know what peace is. Today it is time for everyone to realize that there is no military solution to the Afghan problem, and we need to end this senseless and hopeless war in Afghanistan – it is quite obvious that one half of the people will not be able to defeat the other half.

All parties to the conflict must demonstrate the wisdom and prudence peculiar for the Afghan people, and those will be an indisputable proof of love and devotion to their Homeland. Otherwise, this fratricidal war will last forever, exhausting and destroying the people and the country.

Tragically, in the near future, if adequate and balanced actions are not taken, Afghanistan can become the biggest flashpoint on the planet. Coping with this threat and helping millions of people can only be achieved by uniting efforts of the entire world community.

The time has come for a serious and comprehensive discussion of Afghanistan problems involving the broad international community.

International Committee of Humanitarian Cooperation with the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan appeals to Dr. Ashraf Ghani, President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, and Mawlawi Haibatullah Akhundzada, Supreme Leader of the Taliban, the leader of the NATO member countries, the leaders of states interested in the end of the war in Afghanistan, to support our immediate formation of the international humanitarian Coalition "[Enduring Peace](#)" and invites you to take part in the preparation and conduct of International Humanitarian Conference on Afghanistan.

Formation of the international humanitarian Coalition "[Enduring Peace](#)" and the joint conduct of International Humanitarian Conference with the broad participation of representatives of the opposing sides in Afghanistan and representatives of the world community - the United States and NATO member countries, Pakistan, India, Russia, China, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Iran, - can help processes of inter-Afghan dialogue, will allow to determine urgent measures to address the primary humanitarian problems in the divided Afghanistan and to develop a realistic strategy to end the war in Afghanistan.

The joint voice of the broad international community - doctors, educators, scientists, people of culture, art, military, as well as public, political and religious organizations, with the support from the leaders of the world most powerful states and international organizations will be heard, will help the governments participating in the war to find a way out of the critical situation, will allow to initiate a long and difficult path to the reconstruction of Afghanistan.

Only the people of Afghanistan must determine and decide their own destiny on the basis of the broad nation-wide dialogue on peace. We have taken the most direct and active part in such processes – in developing and implementing the policy of National Reconciliation in Afghanistan (1987-1992).

President Donald Trump in his Appeal on August 21, 2017, rightfully stated: "Ultimately, it is up to the people of Afghanistan to take ownership of their future, to govern their society, and to achieve an everlasting peace. We are a partner and a friend, but we will not dictate to the Afghan

people how to live, or how to govern their own complex society". We hope that this is a sincere opinion of President Donald Trump, and he will also understand and support us.

The international community has a sincere desire and readiness to cooperate with representatives of the authorities and opposition, various ethnic groups inhabiting Afghanistan, to contribute to the establishment of the long-awaited peace in the war-torn beautiful country - Afghanistan, and to contribute to the successful resolution of humanitarian problems throughout Afghanistan.

With the support and consent of Dr. Ashraf Ghani, President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, and Mawlawi Haibatullah Akhundzada, Supreme Leader of the Taliban, the International Committee of Humanitarian Cooperation with the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan can become a valuable tool and an active facilitator in the inter-Afghan peace process and the early achievement of peace and stability in Afghanistan.

For the entire international community, the transformation of Afghanistan into a stable and peaceful state should become a strategic goal. There is no alternative to a peaceful settlement in Afghanistan.

We are ready to personally present the main provisions of the International Humanitarian Conference on Afghanistan to President Ashraf Ghani and Mawlawi Haibatullah Akhundzada and their representatives at their convenience to familiarize and agree on further possible joint actions.

All wars must end in peace.

With sincere and deep respect for the people of Afghanistan and with readiness for constructive cooperation,



Dr. Ashot G. Sarkisian,
Professor of Surgery
Chairman of the International Committee of Humanitarian
Cooperation with the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan,
President of the Russian Medical Association,
Former Member of the Russian Parliament

P.S. The transformation of NATO's military missions - "Enduring Freedom" and "Resolute Support" into the international humanitarian coalition "**Enduring Peace**" - could demonstrate the desire and willingness of the Western Coalition countries to contribute to the processes of national reconciliation and the end of the war in Afghanistan.

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