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Preface

The selling and purchasing of government positions is that aspect of corruption in the country which has not been focused in the past years. Such cases of corruption have kept Afghanistan among the most corrupt countries in the world despite anti-corruption struggles in the past years.

From time to time, some senior officials have raised their voices about corruption at high levels, but the government has not held any measures in this regard or does not have the capacity to undertake such measures. Recently, the former Minister of Culture and Information revealed one of such cases of corruption in one of his articles. The Center for Strategic and Regional Studies (CSRS) also has information in hand that suggests the selling of government positions at high levels. In this regard, you would read in the first part of the Weekly Analysis of the CSRS.

In the second part of the analysis, you would read about water management in the country and Iranian President's remarks in this regard. Several days ago, speaking at a conference on environmental pollution, the Iranian President Hassan Rohani said that he could not tolerate the construction of dams in Afghanistan. The Afghan government and people reacted against Rouhani's comments. Afghanistan's common waters with its neighbors, the undertaken activities by NUG regarding water management and, in this regard, the recent remarks of Iranian President are the issues that are analyzed here.

In the last part of the analysis, you would read the report about the Academic debate "The Current Political Crisis in Afghanistan: Causes and the Way Forward" held on Thursday in the CSRS's central office in Kabul.

Selling Government Posts; the untold stories of corruption



The Center for Strategic and Regional Studies (CSRS) has received information that suggests the selling of the high-ranking government positions.

CSRS's received this information at a time that, in one of his pieces, the former Minister of Information and Culture Abdul Bari Jahani shared one of his bitter memories from the time of his nomination for the post of the Ministry of Information and Culture and gaining confidence vote from Wolesi Jirga. In this piece, Jahani has accused the members of Wolesi Jirga for taking money from the nominated ministers. He has said that the deputy speaker of Wolsi Jirga Abdul Zaher Qadir had invited the nominated ministers and had told them to give \$5000 to \$10000 (\$50000 in total) to the Parliament members to win their votes of confidence.¹

¹ TOLO News, «متهم شدن اعضای مجلس نماینده گان به گرفتن پول از نامزد وزیران» [Members of the parliament were accuse of taking money from the nominated candidates for the ministries], 13 Saratan 1396, read it here:

<http://www.tolonews.com/fa/afghanistan/%D9%85%D8%AA%D9%87%D9%85-%D8%B4%D8%AF%D9%86-%D8%A7%D8%B9%D8%B6%D8%A7%DB%8C-%D9%85%D8%AC%D9%84%D8%B3-%D9%86%D9%85%D8%A7%DB%8C%D9%86%D8%AF%D9%87%E2%80%8C%DA%AF%D8%A7%D9%86-%D8%A8%D9%87->

Jahani's piece raised vast reactions in the social media; therefore, the Afghan Parliament reacted as well. Nader Khan Katawazai, a member of the Parliament from the Paktika province has criticized Jahani and has said, "If, according to what Jahani claims, he has not given money to the Parliament members, how has he won the confidence vote in the Parliament?" The former deputy speaker and current member of Wolesi Jirga Abdul Zaher Qadir has also rejected Jahani's accusations and has said, "Jahani's allegations are baseless. Jahani should have resigned at that time and must have shared the issue with the Nation, but he is raising voices from the US after two years, and one year after his dismissal from the ministry."²

Are government positions being sold? What are the impacts of such deeds in the fight against corruption? What is the role of Wolesi Jirga in corruption? How can we overcome these challenges? These are the questions that are analyzed here.

Selling the government positions; the heinous cycle of corruption

If one studies the reports and surveys of the International Transparency, Asia Foundation, Integrity Watch Afghanistan and some other organizations, one will find out that corruption is a major challenge in the country. On the one hand, corruption is annually increasing and, on the other hand, it is a major obstacle in the way of governance and development. Corruption wastes money, affects services and affects the lower class of the society the most. There are many factors behind the corruption in the country including the low salaries of government employees, greed, lack of accountability, etc.

<http://www.ariananews.af/%D8%B1%D9%81%D8%AA%D9%86-%D9%BE%D9%88%D9%84-%D8%A7%D8%B2-%D9%86%D8%A7%D9%85%D8%B2%D8%AF-%D9%88%D8%B2%DB%8C%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%86>

² Ariana News, «ظاهر قدیر اتهام عبدالباری جہانی را رد کرد» [Zaher Qadir rejected the accusations of Abdul Bari Jahani], 13 Saratan 1396, read it here:

<http://ariananews.af/%D8%B8%D8%A7%D9%87%D8%B1-%D9%82%D8%AF%DB%8C%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D8%AA%D9%87%D8%A7%D9%85-%D8%B9%D8%A8%D8%AF%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%B1%DB%8C-%D8%AC%D9%87%D8%A7%D9%86%DB%8C-%D8%B1%D8%A7-%D8%B1%D8%AF-%DA%A9/?lang=fa>

In the meanwhile, another factor behind corruption in the Afghan organizations is the heinous cycle of corruption or the selling of government posts in low, medium, and high levels. It is due to the selling and purchasing of government positions that those who buy government positions get involved in corruption to get the money that he had spent to purchase the position in the first place.

In its report in 2007, IWA has also mentioned selling and purchasing of the government positions as one of the primary reasons behind corruption in the country. Also, the Afghan media, have broadcasted many programs that suggest the selling of government positions in the country. For instance, in order to become a teacher, one needs to pay Af 80000.³

Government officials: the sellers of jobs

The primary factor behind the corruption in the country lies with the government officials because they are the pioneers of fights against corruption and if there is a lack of sincerity in this struggle, it will be unlikely to have a corruption-free administration in the country.

Government's failure in implementing the law, political exploitation of corruption in the judicial sectors, non-implementation of accountability, interfering in signing the contracts, and some others are factors behind corruption in the country. In addition to these factors, another factor is the sales of government positions by government officials.

In this regard, some findings of CSRS show that the government officials are involved in selling and purchasing government jobs. Here are some of the examples that CSRS has taken from credible sources:

³ Ariana News, « ولسي جرگه: دولتي ټاکنې په اړیکو او پیسو کېږي » [Wolesi Jirga: government appointments are by money and relationships], 1 Oct 2016, read it here:

<http://ariananews.af/%D9%88%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%8A-%D8%AC%D8%B1%DA%AB%D9%87-%D8%AF%D9%88%D9%84%D8%AA%D9%8A-%D9%BC%D8%A7%DA%A9%D9%86%DB%90-%D9%BE%D9%87-%D8%A7%DA%93%D9%8A%DA%A9%D9%88-%D8%A7%D9%88-%D9%BE%D9%8A%D8%B3%D9%88/?lang=ps>

Salam Watandar, « په غزني کې دولتي بستونه پلورل کېږي » [Government posts in Ghazni are being sold], 2 Assad 1395:

<http://salamwatandar.com/pashto/article.aspx?a=23988>

- One of the advisors of the Chief Executive in condition of anonymity has said to CSRS that he was nominated for the post of governor in one of the provinces, and an official from the Office of Affairs of the Presidential Palace had approached him and demanded \$150 thousand and had told him, “do not pay the money unless you become the governor.”
- Asking for not revealing their name, some heads of the provincial departments of the Ministry of Education has said to CSRS that the Minister of Education has demanded \$50 thousand to remain in their positions. It occurs at a time that the exams of the CBR process were being held in the country.
- According to another credible source, the posts of head of the provincial departments of the Ministry of Public works are being sold for 30-50 thousand dollars. According to the source, one of the current chairmen of the provincial department of the Ministry of Public Works took this position paying \$35 thousand after he failed to take the post through legal channels. Head of another provincial department of this ministry is appointed after paying \$40 thousand.
- A minister of the former government also, under the condition of not revealing his/her name, said that some female members of the parliament raised the issue of summoning him/her. At that time a member of the Parliament Abdul Zaher Qadeer had invited him/her into his house and, after passing through three rooms, had told him/her that each of the ten female representatives wanted \$20 thousand to allow him to continue with his job. He added that after some times, he invited these female members of the parliament in his office and shared the issue with them, but that they denied all of these allegations and said that they were unaware of the issue.

The role of Wolesi Jirga in corruption

Abdul Bari Jahani’s article is not the first incident of raising Wolesi Jirga’s involvement in corruption; before this, the media have repeatedly broadcasted similar reports. In addition, members of the parliament were also accused of

interfering in the government's affairs and promoting nepotism and corruption in the administrations in the past. In this regard, we can mention the remarks of the former Minister of Interior Affairs Mujtaba Patang in the Security Council of the country.⁴

In the meanwhile, in a summon meeting of Wolesi Jirga, the former Minister of Finance Omar Zakhilwal accused some members of the Parliament of smuggling flour, narcotics and alcohol. According to Zakhilwal, these members of the parliament included Haji Zaher Qadir, Lalai Hamidzai, Arif Rahmani, Mahmood Khan Slimankhail, Mohammad Azim Mohseni and Samiullah Samim. Zakhilwal also said that the representatives of the people also had some other illegal demands from him as well; he stated that Arif Rahmani had told him, "I have suffered a \$1m loss in trade. Help me take the contract from the Supreme Company." He also said that Arif Rahmani had warned him that he would be summoned to the parliament if he did not cooperate with him.⁵

Jahani's piece is only another example of the involvement of the members of Wolesi Jirga in corruption, and that is why, in some of its reports and press conferences, IWA indicates the involvement of Wolesi Jirga in corruption in the country. For instance, in 1394, IWA released a report on corruption, in which it stated that "Some members of the Parliament and the Cabinet are involved in corruption in the mining sector."⁶

⁴ BBC Dari, زاخلوال: شماری از نمایندگان پارلمان در قاچاق آرد دست دارند, [Zakhilwal: some members of the parliament are involved in smuggling flour], 11 May 2013, read it online:

http://www.bbc.com/persian/afghanistan/2013/05/130511_mar_zakhilwal_smuggler_mps

⁵ DW, «نام نمایندگان متهم به دست داشتن در قاچاق افشا شد» [The names of the parliament members accused of being involved in smuggling is revealed], 13 May 2013, read it here:

<http://www.dw.com/fa-af/a-16808934>

⁶ VOA, «افضلی: برخی اعضای کابینه و پارلمان در فساد معادن دست دارند» [Afzali: some members of the parliament and the cabinet are involved in corruption in mines], 14 Sawr 1394, read it online:

<https://www.darivoa.com/a/corruption-charges-on-some-cabinet-members-and-mps-in-illegal-mining-/3837354.html>

Breaking the heinous cycle of corruption

Why Jahani made such remarks after two years is a question we do not want to focus upon. However, at a time that Wolesi Jirga's tenure is finished and elections to elect new representatives are going to be held shortly, Jahani's these remarks must be seriously taken into consideration.

We must remember that all the ministers and all the people who have accused members of the parliament of corruption cannot be lying nor had the accused people proved themselves innocent from these allegations. Therefore, this cycle of corruption must break. The upcoming election is a perfect opportunity to replace these representatives with the new ones, and thus eliminate the corruption resources of the former members of the parliament.

The Afghan waters and Iran's concerns



In the inauguration ceremony of the “International Conference of confrontation with dusty environment; the challenges and solutions”, which was held in Tehran on 4 and 5 July 2017, the Iranian President Hassan Rouhani criticized the construction of water dams in Afghanistan and said that Iran could not, any longer, be silent against the construction of dams such as Kajaki, Kamal Khan, Salma, etc.

The Afghan government, in response to these remarks of Rouhani, has said that in the past several years, Afghanistan had not been able to utilize its waters and that now it had undertaken serious steps in this regard and that no-one had the right to create obstacles in the way of these programs of the Afghan government. It is mention-worthy that currently, 80% of the waters of Afghanistan are flowing to the neighboring countries.

Here you would read about the common waters of Afghanistan, the recent criticisms of the Iranian President from the construction of water dams in Afghanistan and the water management and the National Unity Government's programs in this regard.

The common waters and Afghanistan

Waters that flow between the two countries on their border line or waters that flow through two or more than two countries are called common waters, and all the parties utilize it in accordance with the international principals and law of sharing waters.

International law says that waters must be justly and fairly managed. Therefore, one of the solutions that the countries use to share common waters among themselves is signing agreements in this regard and, thus, the countries share the common waters between themselves.

Afghanistan is a mountainous and landlocked country which has common waters with five of its six neighboring countries. Afghanistan's water is flowing in five basins (Amu River, Helmand River, Kabul River, Harirod-Marghab River and Northern basin). Afghanistan has common waters with Tajikistan in the Amu River basin which then flows into Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, with Turkmenistan and Iran in the Harirod-Marghab basin, with Iran in Helmand basin and with Pakistan in Kabul River basin.

Lack of agreements on sharing common waters between Afghanistan and its neighbors has encountered Afghanistan with many problems, and it will create challenges for this country in the future as well because whenever Afghanistan begin to construct waters dams, faces the opposition of its neighboring countries.

Tehran's criticism from Kabul's "water diplomacy"

Cooperation and negotiations on water management, environmental issues and the role of water in the economic development are the essential part of foreign policy and countries' engagement with each other, which we know as "water diplomacy." However, in the international politics, water is both the source of partnership and enmity among the countries and besides energy and food security, waters security is one of the important issues in the foreign policy of the countries. Iran is the only country that Afghanistan has a water-sharing

agreement with.⁷ At that time five million Km³ water was flowing in the Kajaki dam, and the two sides had agreed on 20% water to flow to Iran. However, now despite the reduction of the level of water, 80% of water flows into Iran. Still, Iran emphasizes on the prevention of the construction of water dams in Afghanistan and the Iranian President recently criticized the water management and the construction of water dams (especially on Helmand River) in Afghanistan and said, "We cannot remain indifferent about the construction of water dams such as Kajaki, Kamal Khan, Salma and other water dams in Afghanistan, which affect our Sistan and Baluchistan provinces." He also added, "If the Hamun river stops flowing, not only Sistan and Baluchistan but also Afghanistan will suffer from dust and dusty clouds."⁸

The Afghan government, Parliament, civil society, parties and people has fiercely criticized these remarks of the Iranian President. The Presidential Palace has said, "We have the right to utilize the waters of our country and whoever delivers such remarks are wrong. The Afghan government has every right to utilize its resources in the interests of its nation, and it is from our priorities. Regarding such remarks, we can only say that they have to first think about what they say."⁹ In the Afghan capital and some provinces, people demonstrated and accused Iran of interfering in Afghanistan.

Due to the continued war in the past several decades, Afghanistan was unable to implement infrastructural projects. While Afghanistan spends large sums of money importing electricity to the country, besides agricultural usages, constructing of water dams can provide enough electricity to enlighten Afghan houses.

⁷ This agreement was signed between the Afghan Prime Minister Musa Shafiq and the Iranian Pahlawi King about waters in Helmand.

⁸ BBC Persian, «افغانستان: سدسازی در افغانستان نباید موجب نگرانی حسن روحانی باشد», [Afghanistan: building dams in Afghanistan should not concern Ruhani], 14 Saratan 1396:

<http://www.bbc.com/persian/afghanistan-40507469>

⁹ Radio Azadi, «واکنش ارگ به اظهارات روحانی: از منابع طبیعی بهره‌گیری خواهیم کرد», [the reaction of Presidential Palace against the remarks of Ruhani: We will use our natural resources], 14 Saratan 1396:

<https://da.azadiradio.com/a/28597376.html>

The National Unity Government (NUG) and water management

Afghanistan has vast natural resources which can be used for the construction and development of the country. One of these resources is water which is a vital and valuable resource.

After the formation of the NUG, the Afghan President has always emphasized the importance of water and its vital role and has always reiterated that this aspect required serious attention. Although the Afghan Ministries of Energy and Water, Rural Rehabilitation and Development and Agriculture are involved in the management of waters and other related issues, in 1394 (solar year), the “High Council for Land and Water” was established under the leadership of President Ghani. Furthermore, the program of the development of water resources, the national program of construction and reformation of water facilities, and the program of coastal consolidating of the country’s rivers were programs that were carried out in the areas of water management.

Some of the activities undertaken by the NUG are as the following:

- Completing the Salma dam: the Salma dam is a project that has been started 40 years ago, and its first technical studies were conducted in 1339 solar year, but due to the insecurity and war in the country, this project was stopped. After the Taliban regime and with the formation of the new government, works on this dam resumed in 1388 (solar year). The Salma dam was to be completed in 1388. However, since it was to be built on Harirod River, which is one of the common waters between Afghanistan and its western neighbors Iran and Turkmenistan, during the previous Afghan government, this project was not implemented as a result of foreign interference, and internal conservatism and because mostly political issues were held above national interests. This dam was finally completed during the NUG.
- Beginning the procurement affairs of 32 water dams worth \$2.33m including technical studies, and construction design.

- Construction and repairment of dozens of canals, projects of coastal consolidation for the purposes of preventing the water wastes and effective use of water.
- The rehabilitation of 1953 km irrigation infrastructures in five water basins of the country which remarkably increased water for irrigation of 5200 thousand hectares of land.
- Completion of the Gambiri Project in Nangarhar Province, in order to irrigate 35,000 hectares of agricultural land.
- Finalizing the document of the basics of water diplomacy, designing and organizing trans-boundary water policy, organizing a policy for groundwater, organizing policy and strategy for capacity building in water sectors, organizing water resources management policy, establishing an Amu River Coast Conservation Management Agency, and planning for rehabilitation and reconstruction canals are among the other things that the National Unity Government mentions as its accomplished activities.¹⁰

It seems that most of the activities of the NUG in this regard were making plans and policies, and little practical work has been done, one of the main factors behind which is the negative interference of the neighboring countries in funding, designing and construction of major projects in this regard.

¹⁰ Read this article about the government and water management:

<http://aop.gov.af/dari/4134>

Academic debate: the current political crisis in the country; Reasons and the Way Forward



Since a while, especially after Hekmatyar's coming to Kabul and after the bloody explosion in Kabul followed by demonstrations, the country's political situation is moving toward crisis day by day. Although the NUG was confronted with internal disputes since ever the beginning, these disputes have recently resulted in the formation of the High Council of Coalition for the Salvation of Afghanistan between Junbish-e-Mili, Wahdat-e-Islami, and Jamiat-e-Islami.

Therefore, currently, the government is confronted with increasing waves of political differences and, in this regard, concerns are increasing on a daily basis. Hence, to follow up its previous academic debates, the Center for Strategic and Regional Studies (CSRS) had organized a seminar to discuss the issue. In this seminar, held on 13 July 2017 in the central office of CSRS, **writer and politician Mohammad Zaman Mozammel, and writer and journalist Mohammad Zubair Shafiqi had participated and delivered their speeches regarding the various aspects of the issue.**

The first speaker in the meeting, Mr. Muzammel talked about the Afghan government's peace efforts with the Taliban and Hezb-e-Islami's coming to Kabul. He said that the current situation in the country was a real and dangerous crisis. He pointed out the positive and negative aspects of Hezb-e-Islami's coming to Kabul and said that it was the second time that Hezb-e-Islami has come to Kabul. He added that Hezb-e-Islami's presence in Kabul had to be evaluated carefully because, he said, the formation of the new coalition in Turkey showed that Hezb-e-Islami's coming to Kabul had its impacts and its complicated aspects.

Mr. Muzammel added that the peace deal between the Afghan government and Hezb-e-Islami would probably have several positive consequences for the country and particularly for Hezb-e-Islami. First, since political negotiations were unsuccessful in Afghanistan, Hezb-e-Islami proved that the Mujahedin have political tolerance as well. Second, some senior members of Hezb-e-Islami were already in Kabul, and after Hekmatyar's coming to Kabul, the party's political presence was strengthened. Third, this party easily found new followers, and it seems that 40 percent of the people other than the members of the party are supporting the party. Fourth, Hezb-e-Islami was engaged with both the Taliban and the government, and now it has made peace with the government and is ready for mediation in the peace talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban. Fifth, making peace with the Afghan government, Hezb-e-Islami proved that peace with the government is possible. Sixth, the nation was disappointed about peace and Hezb-e-Islami broke this disappointment.

He added that the peace agreement between the government and Hezb-e-Islami had negative aspects as well. First, the war-centered logic of Hezb-e-Islami altered and the war that was holy until yesterday now became unholy. Second, Hezb stood beside the government and against the Taliban whether it wants or not. Third, Hezb-e-Islami's peace will be proved illogical if the war continues and the situation gets deteriorated. Fourth, if the US continued to remain in Afghanistan, this peace deal will be harmed. Fifth, if Hezb-e-Islami engaged in a practical and propaganda war with the Taliban, it will have huge negative consequences.

But since Hezb-e-Islami made peace, and the peace process with the Taliban has been a failure to this moment, one can ask whether who has a problem Hezb-e-

Islami or the Taliban? Mr. Muzammel said that, in Islam, peace and negotiations were legitimate and when the other side accepts you as a party that is a dignified peace. He said that if it was certain that the continuation of war would bring further disaster and destruction, the parties of war are obliged to make peace. On the other hand, currently the other party of war is the Afghan government and it is said that peace should not be made with the slave (or puppets); peace with the lord will be even harder; therefore, currently, the Taliban do not have convincing reasons to reject peace with the government. The Taliban are raised with a fighting morale and play politics emotionally.

The second speaker of the meeting **Mohammad Zubair Shafiqi** talked about the current political crisis and the anti-government coalitions and said that currently, the country is in a crisis that is so complicated that even those who have caused this crisis do not know all of its aspects.

He said that some reports and research in the past two months indicate that the situation is more deteriorated than ever in the past and casualties have increased very much. According to Pentagon's reports, 49% of the countries' soil is under the control of the Taliban, which he said to be true. He also stated that the security situation in the country was very fragile and that the balance of recruiting and casualties of the Afghan army force was no longer in place because he said, according to a report, 3000 soldiers are either get killed or escape the ranks of the army and instead 1300 new soldiers are recruited. In addition, various factors have come together and have paved the way for corruption in these ranks.

About the new anti-government coalition, Mr. Shafiqi said that internal disputes had brought the country in the current situation. He said that General Dostum, who is involved in the Ishchi's case, is one of the parties of this coalition. He said that in the past, in the absence of the President, General Dostum was not introduced as his placeholder and that General has committed large-scale harassment and assault in Faryab, Jawzjan, and Sar-e-Pul and even it is said that he is involved in the emergence of ISIL in the Northern Afghanistan. On the other hand, Mohammad Mohaqiq is in a situation that his previous privileges are decreased.

Shafiqi added that the only difference between the formerly collapsed governments and the current government was that the current government was being supported by the US; otherwise, the situation was even more deteriorated than the situation during those governments, and the government officials are only able to protect themselves.

He said that the recent coalition had scared both the government and the Americans; that is why a senior government official went to Turkey to make peace with General Dostum, and when that scheme failed, the US embassy in Kabul emphasized on the investigation about Ishchi's case which means that the US is backing the Afghan government.

According to Mr. Shafiqi, it seems that the government will continue until the end of its term, but the country will be destroyed very much. On the other hand, in order to achieve its goals in the region, the US wants the continuation of the war in Afghanistan that is why now the US has decided to increase the number of its troops in the country.

Shafiqi said that despite the entire unfavorable situation, it is needed for Afghans to get prepared for intra-Afghan understanding/talks, end the war, and make efforts to pave the way for the foreigners to pull out of the country because, he said, it was Afghans who paid the price for the current war. He stated that although the US is seeking its objectives, the Afghans overall are in a terrible situation.

The General Director of the Center for Strategic and Regional Studies (CSRS) **Dr. Abdul Baqi Amin** also made his brief remarks regarding the issue and said that although public awareness was important, every Afghan must understand his/her obligation in ending the ongoing tragedy. He stated that various parties have various opinions regarding the Taliban and they consider their interests during the negotiations with the Taliban and, overall, they do not think about national interests and the interests of the nation.

Mr. Amin said that still there was the lack of an impartial mediator in the peace process and sincere Afghans must undertake measures in this regard and then two circles must be formed from a number of political figures within and outside the country to work to bring the opinions of the parties closer.

The end

Contact Us:

Email: info@csrskabul.com - csrskabul@gmail.com

Website: www.csrskabul.com - www.csrskabul.net

Office: (+93) 784089590

Contact with Officials:

Dr. AbdulBaqi Amin, General Director of CSRS: (+93) 789316120 abdulbaqi123@hotmail.com

Hekmatullah Zaland, Senior Manager: (+93) 775454048 hekmat.zaland@gmail.com

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