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Secret Negotiations with Taliban

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Only about two decades earlier, there was no group by the name of Taliban that could threaten the security of a country, let alone the region. But Taliban were created, supported to take over the government in Afghanistan and rule the country for six long years. Even after they have been ousted from the government, they are giving a tough time to the world. Now, in addition to Afghan Taliban, there are Pakistani Taliban. Taliban's categorization does not stop there as there are good and bad Taliban; Taliban who favor peace negotiations and Taliban who oppose it.

Since 2010, there has been much effort from the Karzai administration backed by its Western allies to engage Taliban into negotiation through the so-called peace process. However, it has had no significant achievement in following this objective and the peace process now seems more like drama to the people than a real process. People watch the episodes of this drama quite frequently.

Here is its latest episode. Spokesman to Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) said on Sunday that a number of Taliban leaders are in secret negotiations with the government to arrive at a common strategy to end the conflict. According to him those in contact with the government were in favor of a negotiated settlement. He said there were divisions among insurgents on the issue.

It seems as if the Afghan authorities are now more experienced in distinguishing Taliban who come for negotiations from Taliban who come with a bomb in their turban and rectum. Taliban representatives, who killed Burhanuddin Rabbani, ex-chairman of High Peace Council and seriously injured Assadullah Khaled, ex-head of National Directorate of Security (NDS), had come for negotiation as well.

MoFA spokesman has further said, “The exclusive objective of some elements is terrorism and harassment, intent upon undermining the gains the government has achieved over past decade.” The government has had much achievement since the US invasion of Afghanistan, no doubt, but there are some areas where the government has failed to a certain extent. For instance, it has failed to provide the people with their basic rights one of which is security. Problems like corruption and poppy cultivation have increased manifold when compared to Taliban government. If the government had been strong, there would have been no chance for Taliban to undermine its achievements.

There is no hope that such secret talks would have any impact in nudging the main Taliban leadership into meaningful and serious peace talks. Also, the Afghan government is not exposing the names of Taliban who are taking part in this secret negotiations. They might be killed by their fellows.