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Afghanistan

Kabul falls: what next?

- IV Online magazine - 2001 - IV336 - December 2001 -

Publication date: Monday 10 December 2001

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The Northern Alliance took over Kabul on 13th November without much resistance. The much threatened so-called Jihad of the Taliban was nowhere to be seen when the Northern Alliance forces arrived. Kabul was taken over without any serious fight from the Taliban. The myth created by the Taliban and their supporters internationally that no one can defeat them will be shattered within days across the globe after this shameful surrender. It was not as some media persons have posed a tactical retreat but it shows the total collapse of morale among the Taliban.

[<http://internationalviewpoint.org/local/cache-vignettes/L277xH173/kabul2-e147b.jpg>]

The US sponsored Northern Alliance has taken over Kabul only a day after Bush made a public plea to them not to do so. Bush wanted to please the visiting Pakistan military ruler General Musharaf. The Pakistan government is now pleading for a UN peacekeeping force to help form a broad-based government. This is just to say something after its President is publicly humiliated by this take over. The US desperately wanted a win after another plane was crashed in New York on 12th November. They needed a big victory immediately. That is why the public plea of President Bush to the NA not to enter Kabul was put aside to go for this much-awaited event.

The surrender of Kabul shows the absolute dictatorial nature of the Taliban and its fast disappearing social base. The ordinary citizens of Kabul seemed quite delighted over this victory. The Northern Alliance issued the first order that women can go back to jobs. It is just to please its masters in the imperialist countries. The majority of the Northern Alliance has no different policy on women than that of the Taliban. Once the Northern Alliance strengthens its power base, the real face of these fundamentalists will come out in the open.

US imperialism has used once again the same tactic of "the enemy of my enemy is my friend". They have paid a heavy price in the past for supporting and promoting the religious fundamentalists against the former Soviet Union. They are repeating the same tactic and if they continue to support the NA, it is like bringing up another monster that could go out of their control in a very short time.

No victory

The defeat in Kabul for the Taliban is no victory for US imperialism. It had to take the support of another religious fundamentalist group. The group might make some changes in its outlook in the initial phase but it will not change its real aim of Islamic revolution in Afghanistan.

The Taliban will now lose its power at Kandahar as well. Its will to fight a guerilla war after retreating to the mountains will not have much weight and the Taliban will be rooted out of Afghanistan for the time being. Osama may lose his life alongside with many other Taliban leaders. But religious fundamentalism will not be dead with the death of its most known leaders. The strategy of the Taliban to move in the tribal areas linked to the Pakistani border will not meet with much success. The Taliban chapter of history has ended. There is not much time left before they will formally be out of power from all parts of Afghanistan. Now religious fundamentalism will have to wait a long time to take over a state power, as was the case in Afghanistan and Iran. But religious fundamentalism will not die down and the extreme face of these forces will carry on by suicidal attacks, guerrilla activities and so on.

The taking over of Kabul by the NA has brought more difficulties for the Pakistan Musharaf military regime. This action of the NA has been carried out contrary to the strategy of General Musharaf. It seems that US imperialism has

played a double game. On one side, it has been assuring the military regime that it will not do anything against its interests. On the other hand, it armed the NA to take on the Taliban. US imperialism was very worried that its own soldiers should not be killed in this war. So the strategy was to arm the NA to do the job instead of them. It gave them full air cover to move forward to Kabul. Now the reaction of Tony Blair and Bush also indicate that the taking of Kabul is no surprise for them and they had planned like this already.

Speed

The Pakistan military regime has been taken aback by the speed of the events and the way the Taliban has left without a fight. Only Pakistanis and Arab Jihadies were left behind in Kabul to be massacred by the NA forces. Their bodies lying in the streets of Kabul shows the methods and tactics that will be used in future as well by the NA. The Taliban ditched these foreign Mujahidin and left on their own, a night before Kabul fell.

General Musharaf's strategy to carry on its policy of supporting the Mujahidin in Kashmir and opposition to Taliban was accepted for the time being by US imperialism. General Musharaf will have no other choice apart from retreating from its Kashmir policy. It cannot have two policies on the same issue of terrorism. It has to choose one. But if general Musharaf does not listen to US imperialism on Kashmir, he may lose his power as well as his life. The Bush administration has been praising general Musharaf's regime for its brave and timely stand to support them. But the Kabul fall has changed many things. It will have a decisive effect on US imperialism's strategy towards Pakistan.

Now the focus of so-called world attention will be Kabul and not Islamabad. Islamabad has to tell again and again to US imperialism of the promises it has made all the time with them. Most of these promises will be forgotten. The fall of Kabul, and in few days Afghanistan, to the NA and US allied forces will change the psychology of US imperialism.

The Kabul fall was not a surprise for us here in Pakistan. Religious fundamentalism was fighting a war they ought to lose. The Pakistan regime has left them and you cannot fight a war with religious feelings alone. We said again and again that the Taliban would lose the war in a short space of time. The Taliban was the most hated regime that the Afghan masses had ever seen in their whole history. It wanted to carry on medieval policies by force. The people of Afghanistan were forced to adopt some of these policies. But they never had any mass social base in Afghanistan. The religious fundamentalist forces were a tiny very committed minority who were able to hold on together with all the support of the international religious fundamentalist forces.

No stable regime

Kabul's fall will not bring any stable regime in Afghanistan. It will further polarize the situation and a civil war like situation will remain as before. But the difference will be that now the religious divide will go in the background and the national divide will come in the forefront. Afghanistan is a mess of history in all forms. It is a jungle of different nationalities with its own tribal identity.

This mess cannot be solved on the basis of capitalism. It can only further enhance the national divide. There is not going to be a massive pumping in of US dollars to stabilise the situation. They will be given some peanuts and then left to fight on themselves.

Afghan history has once again seen the change of power in Afghanistan after five years of brutal rule of the Taliban. But this change once again will not bring any change in the poverty of the masses of Afghanistan.

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There could be a little so-called liberal time in Afghanistan if a broad-based government is established under the influence of US imperialism. The Northern Alliance is in a very powerful position. It can dictate its terms but it is unable to unite the different fighting nationalities. US Imperialism's strategy will be to establish a broad-based government loyal to the ageing Zahir Shah [the former king - ed.]. But this government can be very short lived, as it will not be able to control the situation. A new phase of civil war can be seen in Afghanistan in future. The Pakistan government has been establishing the Taliban for seven years. Suddenly it has to oppose it. Now, they have no friendly forces in Afghanistan. If a government in Afghanistan is established against the total wishes of the Pakistani military regime, it can open up a new phase of hostility with Pakistan. A war between Pakistan and Afghanistan cannot be ruled out in these circumstances.

The Labour Party Pakistan will help the tiny forces of the Left in Afghanistan to take the benefit of the limited time it can have to build itself inside Afghanistan. The Weekly Mazdoor Jeddouhd is planning to print a monthly edition of the paper in Pushtu with the close collaboration of the Afghanistan Revolutionary Labour Organization. The Left internationally should carry on to oppose the strategy of US imperialism of war and bringing a new puppet regime in Afghanistan. The war has not ended. It has entered a new phase. The anti-globalisation campaign linked to the peace movement must carry on. One fundamentalist group is gone, the other, with the help of the US, has come to power. We have no choice but to oppose this new change in Kabul for a better democratic socialist change.