



**INSTITUTE OF
STRATEGIC STUDIES**

web: www.issi.org.pk
phone: +92-51-9204423, 24
fax: +92-51-9204658

Report – Public Talk
by
**“Ustad Karim Khalili, Leader of
Hezb-e-Wahadat-e Islami,
Afghanistan”**

January 13, 2021



Rapporteur: Areeba Arif Khan

Edited by: Amina Khan

The Institute of Strategic Studies, Islamabad (ISSI) hosted a Public Talk by Ustad Karim Khalili, Leader of Hezb-e-Wahadat-e Islami, Afghanistan under its Distinguished Lecture Series on January 13, 2021.

The Afghan delegation included senators and members of parliament namely; Mr. Khodadad Erfani, Ms. Nafisa Azimi, Mr. Ali Akbar Jamshidi, Mr. Qais Wakeli, Mr. Mohammad Rahim Hassanyar, Mr. Mohammad Alem Khalili and Mr. Madar Ali Karimi. Pakistan's Special Representative for Afghanistan, Ambassador Mohammad Sadiq was also in attendance. Members of the diplomatic corps in Islamabad, academics, civil society, and former and current diplomats were also present.

Ms. Amina Khan, Director Centre for Afghanistan, Middle East & Africa (CAMEA) gave welcome remarks.

During his address, Ustad Khalili said that peace is a multidimensional phenomenon which has multifaceted effects in different dimensions of human social life and societies. He stated that, when we talk about peace, in addition to the political dimension, we must also consider its cultural, economic and social dimensions. He said that we were living in an interconnected world with a vast network of global issues, where war and peace are no exception.

He also discussed issues related to the Afghan Peace Dialogue. He stressed that peace is a multi-dimensional phenomenon which is not only important in the world of politics but also has effects on other dimensions of human social life and societies. Cultural, economic and social dimensions of peace must also be considered. This is why peace and peaceful coexistence are so important for the development of human beings and societies.

He underlined that peace in Afghanistan, like all other phenomena, is closely connected to a vast network of global issues. If an event occurs in one corner of the world it is connected to the other parts of the world, Covid-19 is one such example. So, war and peace are no exception to this rule if war breaks out in one part of the world, its negative consequences will affect people in other parts of the world as well. Similarly, if peace is established in one country, its positive consequences will also benefit other countries.

He stressed that peace is a global phenomenon and it must be handled in accordance with the standards and values that the world admits. However, peace in Afghanistan is a serious issue. This country has some global concerns therefore peace should be achieved in such a manner that no citizen of Afghanistan and no country in the world worry about it and defend it with great motivation.

He informed the audience that during his two-day visit, he held meetings with various government officials of Pakistan and agenda of all these meetings revolved around peace. He highlighted that his goal is to win Pakistani government's support for a peace that can address regional issues and benefit all international stakeholders.

He underlined that the second round of talks has begun in Doha and the involved parties are aware of these various difficulties surrounding this peace process. They know that they are working to create a historic event and the outcome of their work will not only be beneficial for Afghanistan but for the entire world.

Ustad Khalili also appreciated Pakistan's positive and constructive role in the peace process, and termed Islamabad as a staunch supporter of peace, as peace in Afghanistan will amount to peace in Pakistan.

The talk was followed by a question and answer session which was moderated by Ambassador Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry, Director General ISSI.

Answering a question about the role of regional countries and especially that of Pakistan in the peace process, Ustad Khalili appreciated Pakistan's positive role and termed Islamabad as a staunch supporter of peace in Afghanistan and stressed that peace in Afghanistan is equally important for peace in Pakistan. He acknowledged that Pakistan has played a pivotal role in helping to achieve peace in Afghanistan and appreciated Pakistan's efforts in the first round of the peace process as well as the ongoing talks in Doha and hoped that with this current momentum, the relationship would reach new horizons.

Responding to a question about the success of peace process in Afghanistan, he recalled his service as Chairman of high peace council and how he was able to reach out to people in districts, villages and cities of Afghanistan. Majority of people in Afghanistan including men and

women are demanding peace. This is something which is very optimistic but unfortunately major challenges still exist and should be tackled with the will and cooperation of the national and international community.

Commenting on the role of Pakistan and regional countries in peace process, he stated that the cooperation of regional countries is very important for peace in Afghanistan and in this regard role of Pakistan is also very significant. Pakistan is one of the key players behind the success of first round of peace talks and he also stated that we are looking forward for continuation of cooperation in the second term as well.

There was another question about prospects of economic cooperation between Pakistan and Afghanistan while answering this Ustad Khalili, opined that a number of developments are taking place and that he is very optimistic about the future of trade between the two countries and peace in Afghanistan will bring a great change for the trade between two countries.

One of the participants asked a question about spoilers of peace process and how Pakistan and Afghanistan can address this issue. Ustad Khalili highlighted that there are several challenges against the peace process and regional countries and other countries can help overcome these challenges. He said that extremism is a dangerous phenomenon for entire world and in this region it exists in different forms. But in order to achieve peace we have to join hands and stand against such factors. Chairman BOG, ISSI Ambassador Khalid Mahmood concluded the talk by stating that Ustad Khalili's visit was indeed a special occasion for the Institute, as goodwill exists between both countries.