

## **The internal information gathering and dissemination mechanism used by the Taliban is, even today, a challenge to decipher for any outsider**

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The News



**The Taliban leader, Mullah Mohammed Omar has many idiosyncrasies. When he came to power, he did not live a single day in the President House in Kabul, but preferred to rule Afghanistan from his simple home in Kandahar. For the past eleven years, he has led the Taliban from an unknown place but enjoys the same degree of command. Anyone who dares challenge him cannot remain Taliban's member, or even alive, for long. His authority even transgresses from his group – Al-Qaeda's leader, Ayman-al-Zawahiri and leader of the Pakistani Taliban, Hakeemullah Mehsud, accept him as their leader (Ameer-ul-Momineen).**

The internal information gathering and dissemination mechanism used by the Taliban is, even today, a challenge to decipher for any outsider. However, the part that deals with communicating with people at large is very simple. The messages issued by Mullah Omar on Eid and national holidays of Afghanistan are more or less policy briefs; this Eidul Azha Mullah Omar's statement hinted towards important policy shifts. A copy of the statement was also sent to me and contains many important points that reveal a deliberate effort to remove international reservations about their intentions. Mullah Omar states that "we do not intend to grab power and nor, after exit of foreign forces, wish to commit a civil war. Our efforts are centered on a political system that is in hands of Afghans...free from any foreign interventions."

He further goes on to say: "After independence we will be part of a political system that is based on Shariah and national sovereignty. The system will be free from racial or any kind of discrimination....(the) law and order situation will be improved, Shariah will be promulgated, and the rights of every individual, male or female, guaranteed....Under the guidance of Islamic principles, education will be encouraged indiscriminately, and academic and cultural matters be dealt with in a proper way."

About civil war, the statement has this to offer: "...we will defeat our rivals who wish a civil war and disintegration of Afghanistan....We wish to establish ties with all those who are ready to respect Afghanistan as an Islamic and independent state, and their dealings are free from colonial, authoritarian, and interventionist tones. To my mind this is what each free Muslim Afghan wishes today.

Mullah Omar also speaks about Taliban and the political front. "About reconciliation with foreign elements, I wish to explain that to safeguard our national and Islamic interests, along with our military efforts, we are also busy at the political front. For these political efforts, we have established a specific office and a separate political panel. The said office performs its duties in regard to our Islamic and Jihadist interests. I wish to make it clear that besides that specific office, we have no other outlet for any reconciliation or political dialogue. We are not in favour of secret deals and strongly discourage any party to do so with us. ...By creating and claiming non-existent secret reconciliation deals, agencies and diplomatic circles of interventionists powers are simply...wasting their time. We hope the entire world community, international organizations...Muslim countries...will play their due role...to end foreign intervention here."

This statement shows Mullah Omar's attempt to remove international reservations about the Taliban. The first fear of the international community is that the Taliban will prefer to take control of Afghanistan, as in the past, through the bullet. Here Omar negated those fears, saying neither are the Taliban taking over Afghanistan nor starting a civil war. Another shift is the addition of 'national' along with 'Islamic' in the statement. In the same way, along with 'academic' a special mention is made of 'cultural' affairs, and along with 'Islamic principles', one can note the addition of 'national interests'. 'Ideology', 'culture' and 'historic bonds' are also stressed.