



**Al-Somood Interview:
Sheikh Abdul Manan Niyazi
October 26, 2009**

**Al-Somood Magazine:
Interview of Sheikh Abdul Manan Niyazi, Governor and Military
Official for the Islamic Emirate of
Afghanistan (The Taliban) in Herat Province
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[Al-Somood]

"Herat Province (Hary in Pashtu and Farsi) is one of the 34 provinces of Afghanistan located in the west of the country near the Iranian border. The river Harirud which flows from the center of the country crosses the province, which is bounded by Baghdis province in the north, Farah in the south, Ghor to the east and Iran to the west."

"The population of the province is approximately 349,000 people, according to official estimates from 2006. The area of the province is 54,778 square kilometers."

"The province contains 15 directorates with the provincial capital located in Herat city, as well as two huge customs centers: one at Tor Ghandi near the borders of Turkmenistan and another in the Islam Oulla municipality near the Iranian border."

"The history of Herat extends back to ancient times, to the age of Alexander of Macedonia. Herat is an old city with vast historical buildings, many of which were partially or entirely destroyed during the Soviet and American invasions of Afghanistan."

"It enjoys a prosperous economy and is one of the most beautiful Afghan cities, visited by thousands of foreign and Afghan visitors each year. Herat is a city with an Islamic character with many historical mosques such as the Masjid-I Jami, Masjid Kharqa and Masjid al-Rida."

"The city airport, located 18 kilometers south of the city, is the site of a military base belonging Italian and Spanish soldiers from the NATO alliance."

"Shindand directorate, located 120 kilometers south of the province, is the location of the third largest military base in the country after Bagram and Qandahar."

"The directorates:"

"Pashtun Zarghun, Shindand, Guzara, Injil, Ghoryan, Karukh, Gulran, Kushki Kuhna, Rabat Sanki, Adraskan, Obe, Farsi, Chisti Sharif, Zinda Jan and Kohsan."

[Introduction]:

"Brother Abdul Manan 'Niyazi' was born in Herat province 40 years ago. He received his elementary education in his village madrassa as well as different madrassas in Herat province. As for his higher education he completed in Dar al-Hujra in a higher school named the Al-Alia University."

"During the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan he took a tangible share in the armed Jihad against the Soviet forces on different fronts across the western provinces of the country."

"He has belonged to the Islamic Taliban since the beginning of its establishment and he is indeed considered to have played a prominent role in the foundation of the movement."

"He has taken responsibility for many positions in the Islamic Emirate at different times including official for Kabul province during Emirate rule over the country, official for Balakh province and Security police official for Nangahar province. He has currently been appointed governor of Herat province by the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan and has therefore assumed responsibility for Jihadist and military affairs in the above-mentioned province."

"Al-Somood has seized this blessed opportunity to meet with his Excellency and speak with him about the recent Jihadist-military situation in Herat province. We therefore direct the attention of our dear readers to what he had to say:"

[Al-Somood]:

"Would you be so gracious as to cast light upon the recent military-Jihadist situation in Herat province."

[Niyazi]:

"Praise be to Allah and peace and blessings be upon His servants whom He has chosen. Through the grace of Allah Almighty, the Jihadist situation in Herat province is, as we expected, improving every day. In accordance with our wishes, it grows and develops with each passing day. For despite the broad area of Herat province and the density of its population, we have administrative and security organizations in all its regions. The Mujahideen have the capacity to resist the enemy at any point or in any corner of the province whenever they desire to do so, and to inflict enormous losses on the ranks of the enemy. In addition to the directorates of the province, we have special units inside the province capital which, from time to time, conduct successful raids on enemy centers and military bases."

[Al-Somood]:

"Can you clarify for us the number of directorates in Herat province, and which regions are under the control and governance of the Mujahideen?"

[Niyazi]:

"Herat is considered one of the largest provinces of Afghanistan with 15 directorates, most of which are densely populated and cover a wide area. A not small number of these directorates are in the hands of the Mujahideen and the government has no control or authority in them. Among those districts is Shindand district, one of the largest districts in the province. None of it is in the hands of the lackey government with the exception of the airport and the administrative building. The rest of the district is in the hands of the Mujahideen, who have military strongholds there. It is the same in the districts of Guzara and Siyuchan districts to Pashtun Zarghun. All of these broad areas are under the control of the Mujahideen. Likewise in the area between Pashtun Zarghun and Obe – there is no enemy presence or movement in there, rather it is all in the hands of the Mujahideen. Additionally, the broad Wadi Jasht Sharif and Suq Kashk Kuhna al-Qadima, and the al-Nawi region are under our jurisdiction, the jurisdiction of the Mujahideen. Relatedly, most of the region from Ribat Sanka to Rur Ghandi, large areas of it is in the hands of the Mujahideen and under their control. Most of Ghoryan district is under the control of the Mujahideen with the exception of the city centers. The suburbs connected to them are in the hands of the Mujahideen. Generally, most of Herat, like the rest of the country's provinces, is in the hands of the Mujahideen

with the exception of the urban centers. For the enemy consolidates his bases in these centers alone, while in the Mujahideen concentrate in their suburbs and adjacent areas. Percentage-wise, we are able to say the enemy does not control more than 10% of Herat. Below I previously mentioned some examples of the complete statistics. In Herat there are no areas in which the Mujahideen do not have powerful military strongholds which they control."

[Al-Somood]:

"How many foreign forces are present in Herat and in which areas are they concentrated?"

[Niyazi]:

"The largest bases for the military occupiers are located in the Herat urban center. They built their largest base at Herat airport. They also have another strong military base in Shindand district. They have also established military centers in Adraksan, as well as bases in the border regions of Islam Qulla and Tur Ghundi. They have bases in other areas, but the most important are the ones to which I alluded."

[Al-Somood]:

"In comparison with the enemy, how many Mujahideen are in Herat province? And what are the main operations the Mujahideen have conducted against the enemy in their area?"

[Niyazi]:

"As is known, the Jihad and resistance in Afghanistan currently focuses a lot on guerilla warfare – fight and flight – in which the Mujahideen participate daily according to need. It is therefore difficult to pin down the number of Mujahideen who take part in these operations. But we can say with all reassurance that the Mujahideen are concentrated in plentiful numbers in every corner of Herat province, praise be to Allah. We do not feel any scarcity of Mujahideen and have not suffered from any scarcity up to this time. They resist the enemy with different military procedures and use effective tactics such as exploding mines and improvised explosive devices, fight and flight and surprise raids."

[Al-Somood]:

"The foreign forces in Herat belong to which country?"

[Niyazi]:

"According to our information, most of the foreign forces in this district belong to Spain and Italy and they play a prominent role in operations against the Mujahideen. There are also American forces in the province, but their number is limited."

[Al-Somood]:

"What is your assessment of the economic and social situation of the people of Herat province?"

[Niyazi]:

"Herat is a border province adjacent to the countries of Iran and Turkmenistan with trade routes connecting it to those countries, and its capital Herat city is a commercial center. Despite that I say unfortunately that, in view of the policies of the failed lackey administration, this province does not play its former, leading commercial role. Perhaps you have heard through the media and newspapers that many of the merchants or their relatives have been kidnapped and later killed or released in return for ransom money. Also, the presence of police and customs points on the roads and the pressure they exert to extract money from the merchants has led to a disinclination on the part of the merchants to transport their goods by these routes."

"These crises and vicious circumstances have affected the already weak economy of the people of Herat, many of whom are suffering from poverty and unemployment. In addition to economic problems and poverty, the people of this province also suffer from mistreatment by the security forces, the police and administrative officials and are oppressed by them in a manner that is unprecedented in the history of this country. Not a day passes but government officials transgress

against innocent civilians and violate their rights. The people of this province therefore do not now rely on the lackey administration at all. On the contrary, they have opened their hearts to the Mujahadeen and they welcome them and aid them in all that they need."

[Al-Somood]:

"What are the tactics and innovations being used in training and instructing the Mujahadeen against the crusaders?"

[Niyazi]:

"We must say that we are now more concerned with training and coordinating the Mujahadeen more than was the case previously. We have appointed councils of scholars (Ulema) for the Mujahideen in each directorate and its function is to teach the Mujahideen and monitor their actions. They have had a positive effect and played a primary role in reforming, teaching and educating the Mujahideen. Besides these councils, we have been able to establish military councils at the directorate level to develop, coordinate and organize Jihadist affairs. It is the responsibility of these committees to coordinate, monitor and follow up the operations of the Mujahideen. Praise be to Allah, these measures have been very fruitful and resulted in the progress of Jihadist military and training affairs across the surface of the entire province."

[Al-Somood]:

"From your point of view, what is the secret of the success of the Jihad against the crusaders in Afghanistan?"

[Niyazi]:

"No doubt the success of the current Jihad in Afghanistan is connected to the sincerity of the Mujahideen and their blessed sacrifices. Allah Almighty alluded to this point in His Glorious Book when the Almighty says: "Do not weep or be sad you are all the higher for being believers". This Aya is considered a definitive guide for our success and for realizing our aims. For is we rely upon Allah alone, and depend on His divine assistance, adhere to His judgments and make our selves pure and loyal servants to Him, than no force in the world is capable of breaking our back. The aid of Allah Almighty is itself sufficient for us to realize our noble goals."

[Al-Somood]:

"According to your statistics, how many crusader soldiers have been killed during your resistance in Herat province? And how many of their tanks and vehicles have been destroyed during this resistance?"

[Niyazi]:

"Regarding precise statistics for the past eight years, they exceed our capabilities to calculate at this present time. However, since the beginning of the present year, according to our statistics, 50 enemy transports and armored vehicles have been destroyed by mines and IEDs, while dozens of foreign soldiers have been killed, in addition to 200 personnel from the lackey military, police and internal security forces. Three times that number have been wounded."

[Al-Somood]:

"Would you please clarify for the readers of Al-Somood magazine concerning the recent triumphs and accomplishments you have achieved?"

[Niyazi]:

"I can tell you very briefly of recent incidents in which the enemy sustained huge losses and the Mujahadeen realized great accomplishments. They are as follows:"

"1. A few days ago, the tyrannical Italian forces conducted military operations against the Mujahideen in the Adraskan directorate but, praise be to Allah, the Mujahadeen with their high morale and zeal inflicted a shameful defeat on them. Their tanks were destroyed by mines planted by the Mujahideen and many of their infantry soldiers were killed. It was considered the worst

losses suffered by the Italian forces since they came to Afghanistan. This has caused the issue of withdrawing Italian troops to swell during these days and there have been violent debates on this topic."

"2. In Shindand directorate, not a day passes but the American forces sustain great losses in men and material as a result of landmines. For example, a few days ago, American forces twice conducted military operations in the Siyuchan region with the intention of taking control of the area and expelling the Mujahideen. But, praise be to Allah, they suffered a shameful defeat in each case and left much military equipment on the field of battle when they fled to save themselves."

"3. A few days ago, crusader forces in large numbers came out to Wadi Takht to conduct combat operations against the Mujahideen. At the end of the operations, however, the Mujahideen were able to kill 25 crusader soldiers and destroy their armored vehicles."

"4. In recent operations against the enemy in the Rabat Sanka region, the Mujahideen were able to capture 15 enemy soldiers and 5 armored vehicles."

"There have been many operations like this but to detail them all would take a long time and fill many pages."

[Al-Somood]:

"Would you please shed some light on the mutual cooperation between the people of the region and the Mujahideen and the extent of support the local people give to the Mujahideen?"

[Niyazi]:

"It has become well known to all that the people of Herat are distinguished by their excellent Jihadist reputation and noble sacrifices across the face of the country. The history of the Mujahideen of the province of Herat is filled with Jihadist and Fedayeen operations and Islamic sacrifices against the Russian invaders. Likewise they have stood by the side of the Mujahideen in accordance with the blessed Jihadist creed against the crusaders. As you know, the first alarm against the communists in 1980 at the start of the last Jihad happened in Herat. The people of this province sounded the first alarm against the communists and 24,000 of these people were martyred. Similarly, the people of Herat are playing a leading role in our blessed Jihad against the crusaders and, with strong resolve and firm conviction race each other to the battlefield trenches."

"The successful operations being conducted by the Mujahideen presently are in reality due to the aid of Allah Almighty and, secondly, as a result of the sacrifices of this people and their support for the Mujahideen."

"Praise be to Allah, the people of Herat spare no effort in their sacrifices and support for the Jihad and resistance. They supply most of our Mujahideen and help us in all that we require, because the people of this province are a Mujahid people who view support to the Mujahideen as a religious obligation and legal duty."

[Al-Somood]:

"How do you view the morale of the Mujahideen of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan in Herat province?"

[Niyazi]:

"Through the grace and aid of Allah, the Mujahideen carry out all of their duties with high morale. They conduct all matters in accordance with their ambitions and desires while the enemy is blindly striking out, not knowing where to go or what to do. For the past seven or eight years, the situation of the Mujahideen has evolved and improved and their morale has risen. Correspondingly, the morale of the enemy has fallen. It is not doubtful that the moment of his flight and shame is coming."

[Al-Somood]:

"What is your analysis of Al-Somood magazine?"

[Niyazi]:

"Al-Somood magazine is the sole magazine which plays a leading role in delivering news of the Jihad and resistance with complete reliability to the ears of the people. If you look at the media and newspapers, you would know that they serve the interests of colonialism and spread its empty propaganda. Everything that the colonialists want, the newspapers exaggerate it, broadcast it and deliver it to the ears of the world. For the past eight years, the people of Afghanistan have suffered from the afflictions of the westerners and their numerous iniquities. To this day, the newspapers have not heard their complaints nor listened to their weeping. They do not convey their sorrow anywhere. But we see that al-Somood magazine plays its positive role in spreading news of the heroics of the Mujahideen and disseminating word of the crisis of the oppressed people of Afghanistan and their numerous problems and successive difficulties. This is in addition to its interest in affairs of the Islamic world. If it made even greater efforts to delivering news of the Jihad and Mujahideen to the ears of the world, its benefit would continue to increase."

[Al-Somood]:

"Finally, what is your advice to the Mujahideen?"

[Niyazi]:

"I tell the Mujahideen and advise them to prepare to meet and confront them by relying on the aid of Allah alone. They must stand by this divine assistance alone and rely on it only. They must understand that it is our responsibility to carry out this divine obligation, and for its sake to bear all difficulties and afflictions. We must therefore not think about other things. Pure intention, courage and following our Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) are the important requirements upon which the victory of Jihad hinges."

[Al-Somood]:

"Sayyid Niyazi, we thank you for giving us this valuable opportunity and accepting our invitation to speak with you. We thank you and wish you the best of success."