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Website: www.csrskabul.com - www.csrskabul.af

Email: info@csrskabul.com - csrskabul@gmail.com

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[**Analysis no.1**](#)

[**Analysis no.2**](#)

LATEST DEVELOPMENTS AND PROSPECTS OF THE AFGHAN PEACE PROCESS



According to the peace agreement between the US and the Taliban on 29th February, 2020, Intra-Afghan dialogue is a key step towards peace in Afghanistan. However, as agreed by the US in the peace deal, the Taliban emphasize on the release of their 5000 prisoners from the afghan government's prisons before the commencement of intra-Afghan negotiations. The Taliban consider the release a key condition for the talks. As the Afghan government was not a part of the peace deal since the beginning and in order to be included in the process, it is signified as an obligation for the Afghan government to release the prisoners. In opposition, the Afghan president Mohammad Ashraf Ghani declined the prisoners release call and denoted that it is only within the authority of the Afghan government to make decisions about the release. Correspondingly, hostility between Mohammad Ashraf Ghani and Abdullah Abdullah increased, which consequently, delayed the establishment of an all-inclusive delegation for the Intra-Afghan dialogue.

In addition to the prisoner's release issue and complex political conditions, the Coronavirus pandemic further compounded the circumstances for peace. The US got engaged with Coronavirus-related internal matters, which decelerated the peace

process. For the time being, political pressures on the Afghan government regarding the prisoners release issue and establishment of peace talks delegate by the international community have also been reduced due to the Covid-19 outbreak. Subsequently, the Afghan government got an opportunity to calmly deal with the peace process.

In short, we can say that considering the US-Taliban peace deal, there are three main obstacles towards intra-Afghan dialogue and bringing peace to Afghanistan: Prisoner release issue and increase in violence, hostility over the presidential elections and inability to establish a comprehensive delegation for peace talks, and the Coronavirus pandemic. All the obstacles are interconnected and are discussed in this analysis.

Prisoners Release Issue and Increase in Violence

Ever since the Afghan government started creating obstacles regarding the prisoners release issue, the Taliban expanded and hasten their attacks. Hence, the reduction in violence period came to an end and violence level amplified in the country. The Taliban attacked governmental establishments in different provinces, which killed dozens of soldiers and civilians. To back the Afghan government, the foreign forces commenced counterattacks, due to which, both sides of the peace deal accused each other for violating the peace agreement. The Taliban argue that their current stand is due to the US's inability to release the 5000 thousand prisoners, as promised. Referring to the peace deal, they further argue that they have not promised to reduce violence.

On the other hand, to maintain balance and hold their side the peace deal, the US was forced to participate in Ashraf Ghani' oath ceremony, which bolstered Ghani's position for the presidency. However, during the swearing-in ceremony, Ghani agreed only to release 1500 prisoners of the Taliban and stipulated the release of

the rest of prisoners to the instigation of intra-Afghan dialogue. The Taliban rejected Ghani's proposal and stated that putting conditions to any article of the peace deal contradicts the agreement. Subsequently, both sides released a number of prisoners due to political pressures from the international community. However, agreement on the release of the rest of the prisoners seems complex.

It can be said that there is no explicit and detailed strategy to resolve the prisoners release issue. The main cause of this intricacy is the peace deal, which oblige the sidelined Afghan government to release the prisoners. If the issue remains unclear, the intra-Afghan negotiations will be delayed further and the war will intensify.

There are concerns that the delays in prisoner's release process and increase in violence may utterly violate and nullify the peace deal between the US and the Taliban. Still, both sides strive to remain watchful in order to avoid nullification of the deal. When Mulla Beradar blamed the US through a proclamation for breaking the deal and increasing airstrikes on civilians, the US representatives met with the Taliban in Qatar in order to save the deal. Both sides reemphasized upon the complete implementation of the peace deal, prisoners release and reduction in violence.

Altercations Over the Presidential Elections and Formation of an All-Inclusive Negotiation Team

Inability to form a comprehensive delegation for intra-Afghan talks and disagreements over the presidential elections are other obstacles that challenging the peace process. Dissension over the Formation of a negotiation team seems a lasting dilemma, as the Afghan government is unwilling to let a delegation to negotiate peace with the Taliban which is not controlled by the government. The government deemed any opposing stands by politicians invalid and blamed them for their intention of weakening government's approach. The negotiating team's issue became more complicated after the announcement of the results of

presidential elections. Consequently, the US postponed the payment of 1 billion dollars in order to pressure Ghani and Abdullah to resolve disagreements and form a unity government. The US and the European Union have accused the government for not being serious about the peace progress, which is why a negotiating team has not been formed yet.

Due to the pressures of international community, the Afghan government announced a list of negotiating team. Although others appreciated the decision, but politicians and civilians within the country were still opposing the formation of negotiating team. Locals believed that most of the team members are submissive, incompetent and have been selected based on personal relations. The Taliban also criticized the list and said they will not negotiate with the delegation. They further emphasized on formation of an all-inclusive negotiating team.

In short, we can say that the Afghan government prefers to upkeep the current situation instead of peace. The opportunity might miss out due to government's self-serving measures and the war might continue in the country. Apparently, the US and the Taliban want to prevent the deal from tearing apart. However, the Afghan government and some other political figures are not feeling responsible towards the peace process and seemingly have no concerns about its failure.

The Coronavirus Pandemic and Its Effects on the Peace Process

Since the time when the coronavirus spread in the most populated cities of the United States, the US government put all of its efforts to combat the virus. International politics and media are mainly focused on Covid-19 and its probable effects on the politics and economy of the world. Internal priorities also changed within Afghanistan and everyone's attention was towards the outbreak. Consequently, the peace process lost first rank at priorities list. Because of the concerns regarding the Pandemic, political pressures on the Afghan government

reduced, the altercations over presidential elections remained unresolved, prisoners release issue became less important and the intra-Afghan talk got postponed indefinitely. Seemingly, the Covid-19 Pandemic may not end soon and it is still unknown that when will the US, the Afghan nation and government return to its previous state. Hence, considering the obstacles, the future of Afghan peace does not seem bright and there is strong possibility that Afghans will be deprived from peace for a long time and the country will continue to burn in the flames of war.

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HOW TO PROTECT OUR FAMILIES FROM THE NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF HOME QUARANTINE?



Due to the coronavirus outbreak, families have attained extra time to stay home and spend time together. The word “Quarantine” is not used for normal conditions, but indicator of unusual and unconceivable circumstances. As the lockdown has affected the political, economic and social orders, it also had remarkable impact on family lives.

The intensity of the effects of lockdown differ as families manage their living conditions in their own ways. They choose whether to consider it an opportunity and take advantage of it, or let it become an obstacle. In order to ward off the negative effects of the lockdown, families need a peaceful environment with no place for fear and worries. Here, we explore ways to prevent the lockdown from having unfavorable effects on family lives.

Negative Effects of Home Quarantine

Quarantine means spending more time than usual with family members. It has negative effects on families, along with positives.

In some societies, hostility between husband and wife has increased due to the lockdown. According to the report shared by the general manager of advisory administration of Iran, Hostility among couples has tripled during the lockdown. In addition, some civil right protection agencies in France have reported increase

in violence in the country. Christophe Castaner, Minister of the interiors of France has stated that Paris itself was evident to 36% increase in domestic violence. China received numerous divorce requests after slackening the lockdown restrictions. Such reports indicate that due to isolation for a long time without managing family matters and taking advantage of opportunities, family members witness different and unusual experiences.

Moreover, children who used to spend their energy playing outside have brought their playgrounds to inside the house. This issue has also challenged the patience and tolerance of parents and have caused domestic violence. Afghanistan is among countries where family sizes are big and their members are living together. Therefore, violence and hostility mostly occur due to relative matters.

In addition to their previous shortcomings and problems, Afghans are experiencing interruption to work and manage businesses. Similarly, Inability to work and financially support have caused anguish and anxiety among the heads of families.

Most of the families who had wedding plans before have postponed the ceremonies indefinitely. This has triggered additional pressures on the families of boy and girl, which may ruin their interfamily relations.

As the responsibilities of mothers to protect their children have increased due to the outbreak, their struggles have also doubled. Being concerned regarding the protection of family members, especially those who go outside the house has become a mental illness for mothers. Although awareness programs are mostly for youngsters, but such instructions are rarely followed.

From economic perspective, all families have been negatively affected by the pandemic. However, families with financial problems and pessimistic view about their future are greatly affected.

Positive Effects of Coronavirus Pandemic on Families

With technological development and origination of social networking, family relationships have weakened compared to the past. This has led to loss of affection and inclination among family members. Hence, the first positive effect of the pandemic might be consolidation of family relations and restoration of affection among members. The lockdown brought family members together again and restored love and affection among them by creating an opportunity to resolve

family matters through discussions. Previously, many societies were dominated by the idea of individualism and getting together with family members was not among the priorities of people. However, the coronavirus crisis made closure with family, a priority of humans once again.

During the lockdown, family members can spend long hours together by performing various activities such as cleaning the house, repairing equipment, refurbishing home decoration, helping in kitchen and others. In addition, lockdown can divulge creativity and facilitate learning opportunity by spending time on those activities that were unperformed before due to occupancy in outdoor work. According to psychologists, closure of men with their family members and their participation in house work is a positive effect of the lockdown, since men will be able to know about their home and comprehensibly understand the life of their wives.

Mothers, who were unable to spend time with their children due to financial problems and had to work, are now able to spend adequate amount of time with their kids and know about their living condition. In addition, fathers have got more time to participate in activities of their children. Other than spending time with their kids, parents can elevate each other's spirits, which can strengthen family relationships and increase self-confidence.

Although the outbreak has worsened the economic condition of many families, but has also improved financial management skills among families. Now, families strive to avoid unnecessary spending and extravagancies. Also, lockdown during the holy month of Ramadan has provided additional time for families to perform sufficient congregational worships such as prayer, recitation of the Holy Qur'an, supplications and benedictions together. Whereas, such activities were never experienced by families before.

Rather than spending time on social media, family members; especially children, together with other family members, can perform certain activities such as sporting, reading books and magazines, storytelling, revoking memories, gardening, learning, and cooking. Most of the youths and youngsters will notice that disorganized sleeping schedule and absence of daily plans are extremely mind-numbing and pointless. Therefore, they should strive to spend their days and hours on learning and productive housework.

The coronavirus and its quarantine have caused unforeseen circumstances for individuals and families. Yet, it can be productively utilized with effective management.

Effective Family Management During Lockdown

Humans have five main incentives which include need for staying alive, need for affection, power, freedom and recreation. The coronavirus has restricted all these incentives. Humans do not have freedom and security like before. Opportunities for entertainment and recreation that were previously found outdoor are now unavailable. Therefore, these incentives should be created within families so that we can make each other feel important and loved. By being together, we can show that these incentives can be created and satisfied within a family.

Although the coronavirus has forcibly brought families together, the question is however, how can we convert the challenging atmosphere into an opportunity to build up family relationships? As we are facing unforeseen and unescapable circumstances, therefore we need to establish an environment of confidence and harmony, rather than pressuring family members. We need to avoid wasting time and energy on conflicts and disagreements. Instead, we need to be more enduring and tolerant.

One of the problems in our society is that family members do not cooperate to accomplish tasks, which results in exhaustion of a single member due to work and another member gets bored of leisure. Therefore, we need to create an environment of teamwork, so that those members who were not involved with housekeeping before can make efforts to accomplish tasks at home.

Family members should preserve rational behavior during lockdown. In anger, blaming other for one's mistakes not only averts reduction in problems, but raises new ones. If energetic children are annoying you, you should provide them something that they can have fun with. Meanwhile, it is an opportunity to control and teach children to be productive, in preference to TV addiction, street plays and involvement with individuals that are not to be trusted. It is time to learn new skills for success in life.

It is beneficial for families to learn online, read books, learn new skills, get involved in new activities and eliminate problems with knowledge and wisdom.

Attempts to learn new skills should be inclined towards resolving upcoming obstacles, as the world will be different place after the coronavirus pandemic.

Successful families enjoy spending time together, elevate each other's spirits and self-confidence during difficulties. As members of each family has different traits and tempers, therefore heads of families should transform the lockdown into an opportunity for their families with effective management.

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