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In this issue:

- Preface 2

Afghanistan and Nawaz Sharif’s Visit to America

- The US Foreign Policy on South Asia..... 3
- The US-Pakistan Constructive Ties..... 4
- The Motivation of Pakistan to Revive the Afghan Peace Talks..... 5
- The importance of this Visit to Afghanistan and India..... 6

Europe and the Problem of Afghan Refugees

- Huge Numbers of Asylum Seekers..... 8
- Germany: the Destination of most of the Asylum Seekers..... 9
- The Need for cheap Labor..... 10
- The Cultural Threat..... 10
- Afghan Migrants in Europe..... 11

Preface

Besides Washington-Islamabad relations, the security situation in Afghanistan and the region and the Afghan peace process was also on Nawaz Sharif's visit to USA. The Pakistani Prime minister once again said about the revival of peace talks between Afghan Taliban and Afghan government, however, it cannot kill and force Taliban to come to peace talks at the same time.

The latest remark by Nawaz Sharif has once again effected the bilateral relation between Kabul and Islamabad. In this weekly analysis, you would read about the significance of Nawaz Sharif's visit to Washington, its impacts on the region particularly its messages to Kabul and New-Delhi.

In the second part of the Analysis, you will read about the unexampled migration of a number of war-torn Asian countries including Afghanistan to Europe in last few months. From the beginning of 2015, more than 500 thousands migrants crossed into Europe in which Afghans ranks second after Syria. According to reports, about 120 thousands Afghans crossed into Europe; most of them went to Europe intending to seek asylum in Germany. Last week, German officials said that they will return Afghans to their own country and they talked the Afghan officials in this regard, however, it yet to be cleared that what would be the destiny of these Afghan migrants.

These are the issues which will be discussed in details in this issue of weekly analysis.

Afghanistan and Nawaz Sharif's Visit to America



On October 20, Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif had left on a four-day official visit to Washington for talks on security situation and the peace process in Afghanistan, the internal situation of Pakistan and the relations between India and Pakistan with his US counterpart.

Nawaz Sharif during being on his second official visit to US gave a speech in a US think-tank and said that: "We have told Afghan President Ashraf Ghani that Pakistan was prepared to help revive stalled Afghan peace talks but could not bring the Taliban to the negotiating table and be asked to kill them at the same time."

The recent visit of PM Nawaz Sharif was considerable for Afghanistan and India. The impacts of this visit on situation in region, specifically on relations of Pakistan with Afghanistan and India are discussed here.

The US Foreign Policy on South Asia

After the WWII, South Asia received more sustained attention from America and the United States followed the Truman Policy in this regard. During the Cold War, the attention of America increased towards South Asia due to Pak-India wars, India-China

war and the Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan. Even in the post cold war, America, in its foreign policy, has given importance to this region under the banner of war on “terrorism” and “extremism”. Specially, America, after 2001, has military presence in a part of this region, Afghanistan.

After Barack Obama became President in 2009, the attention of America increased in this region, in the case; it had military presence in the Middle East since 2003. In 2009, US President Barack Obama ordered 30,000 more US troops to Afghanistan. In 2001, Hillary Clinton, the head of US State Department announced a policy named (Rebalancing Asia) or (Pivot to Asia); she wrote in an article the Foreign Policy Journal: “As the war in Iraq winds down and America begins to withdraw its forces from Afghanistan, the United States stands at a pivot point. Over the last 10 years, we have allocated immense resources to those two theaters. In the next 10 years, we need to be smart and systematic about where we invest time and energy, so that we put ourselves in the best position to sustain our leadership, secure our interests, and advance our values.¹”

From 2011, the attention of America has been gradually grabbed to South and East Asia. That is why America has made close ties with Japan, India and Australia in order to control the raising economic power of China.

The US-Pakistan Constructive Ties

Before the recent visit of Nawaz Sharif to US, the concerns on Pakistani nuclear weapons was on raise; because it is told that Pakistan makes nuclear weapons more than every other country in the world. According to a report by New York Times, the Obama Administration is thinking of deal following the limitation of making nuclear weapons by Pakistan and before the Nawaz Sharif’s visit to US, discussion on this regard were going on in Washington.² Hence, Nawaz Sharif mentioned these points in his speech before heading to US and said that Pakistan is a country with nuclear weapons and its nuclear weapons are extremely secured.

America, from the last two years, criticizes Pakistan for the presence of Haqqani Network, Taliban and Lashkar-e Tayyiba group in this country and, for several times, has threatened Pakistan that it would stop its annual assistance to Pakistan. Besides that,

¹ See online: <http://foreignpolicy.com/2011/10/11/americas-pacific-century/>

² See online: <http://www.pashtovoa.com/content/pashto-nawaz-sharif-to-visit-us/3009747.html>

the ties between US and India became closer due to the international interests of the United States. On January 2015, the US President has an official visit to US, and the Indian Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, arrived in Washington as a result of an official visit in September of this year, then. Both of these visits have made the ties between USA and India closer and friendlier.

The US President Barack Obama invited Pakistani PM Nawaz Sharif in order to make the ties between Islamabad and Washington better due after the relations between Delhi and Washington became closer. Therefore, America promised Pakistan with providing F-16 military aircrafts as well as assistance in other fields.

The Motivation of Pakistan to Revive the Afghan Peace Talks

The importance of Nawaz Sharif's visit to America was in that he arrived in America a week after the new plan of staying American soldiers in Afghanistan passed. Besides that, an important part of Obama and Nawaz Sharif talks was related to security and peace process in Afghanistan and this issue reflected in the joint statement of Pakistan and America. They in the joint statement said: "Both leaders expressed their commitment to advance an Afghan-owned and -led peace and reconciliation process between the Afghan government and the Afghan Taliban, and called on Taliban leaders to enter into direct talks with Kabul and work toward a sustainable peace settlement."³

Besides that, the Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif outlined the actions that Pakistan is taking under the National Action Plan to ensure that the Taliban – including the Haqqani Network – are unable to operate from the soil of Pakistan against Afghanistan⁴.

Nawaz Sharif during his speech in the US Institute of Peace said, "Told Afghan President Ashraf Ghani that Pakistan was prepared to help revive stalled Afghan peace talks but could not bring the Taliban to the negotiating table and be asked to kill them at the same time."⁵ However, the words of Nawaz Sharif carried out reaction in Afghanistan

³ See online: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2015/10/22/2015-joint-statement-president-barack-obama-and-prime-minister-nawaz>

⁴For more information, see the joint statement of Pakistan and US:
<https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2015/10/22/2015-joint-statement-president-barack-obama-and-prime-minister-nawaz>

⁵ See online: <http://www.usip.org/publications/2015/10/23/pakistan-s-sharif-urges-renewed-peace-talks-in-afghanistan>

and a number of Afghan Senators called them “Fraud” and requested the President to stand on his latest position regarding Pakistan. Some analysts believe that Pakistan is not truthful in its words; it still neither targeted the Taliban and nor brought them to the negotiating table.

It is not the first time that Pakistan urges to revive the peace process in Pakistan; Islamabad, after the announcement of the death news of Mullah Mohammad Omar and a series of bloody attacks in Kabul, for several times, had expressed its readiness for reinitiating the peace process. However, the Kabul-Islamabad ties were unexampled after the establishment of the National Unity Government (NUG), the Afghanistan government provided a lot of privileges to Pakistan and its relations with India froze if compare to Karzai’s era. But after a series of bloody incidents in Kabul, the official position and policy of Kabul regarding Islamabad changed; and after the promises of Pakistan with NUG were not fulfilled, it was, once again, proved that Pakistan shows its role more important than it is and it cannot do what it promises in practice.

The importance of this Visit to Afghanistan and India

Afghan President Ashraf Ghani in a speech before Nawaz Sharif’s visit to America said: “the Prime Minister of Pakistan is going to head to America in the next week and he, in there, would insist on eliminating the shelters of terrorists. His clear message to the proponent of Taliban is that their only rescue way is to enter into direct talks with the legitimate government of Afghanistan and work toward a sustainable peace settlement”.⁶

Beside the recent distrust between Kabul and Islamabad, Afghan President hoped for this visit of Nawaz Sharif; however, considering the consequences of this visit and Nawaz Sharif’s statement, it looks problematic that Pakistan and its civilian political officials would take steps that the Afghan side hopes for.

From the other hand, generally, the relations between Pakistan and India are frozen after the Mumbai attacks and specifically after the last one year and they have stayed involved in attack on each other in border areas. Also, the Pakistani Army has a hostile approach toward India; after Nawaz Sharif took power, the Pakistani Army advised him not to follow the friendlier policy toward India; however, at first Nawaz Sharif went

⁶ See online:

<http://www.pashtovoa.com/content/afghanistan-ashraf-ghani-kunduz-security-taliban-us-/3009997.html>

toward India but he has changed his policy and, to a large extent, implements the military advices. Therefore, he dismissed the National Security Advisor, Sartaj Aziz and appointed the new retired Lieutenant General Nasser Khan Janjua instead.

Meanwhile, some Indian newspapers and analysts considered this visit as “important”; however, a lot of concerns of India reduced after this visit; because, from one hand, Nawaz Sharif's visit didn't have many achievements and on the other hand the Delhi-Washington relations are more strategic and is bound to the rising China.

Europe and the Problem of Afghan Refugees



Europe is faced with a wave of migration from the East, which it does not remember such a broader displacement of humankind after the Second World War. Some of the people migrate to Europe due to war, insecurity and uncertain future; however, some of them go to Europe in order to have better opportunities for pursuing a living in Europe. These people are from Africa, the Middle East and South Asia that, with accepting the risk of death, have chosen this route.

The war has brought humanitarian crisis to these countries and in a world, where globalization is one of its features, can make the world to be imagined as a “village” also.

Huge Numbers of Asylum Seekers

Watching the overflow of migrants that cross the Mediterranean at the risk of death in order to reach to Europe is really amazing. In the past, the number of migrants that were hoping to reach Western Europe illegally was too small, but in 2011, thousands of

Tunisian refugees, by crossing the Mediterranean, reached to the island of "Lampydusa" in Greece. This was followed by the uprising known as the Arabic Spring in this country; however, the new wave of immigration from Syria, Afghanistan and African countries has broken the previous records.

The IOM estimates that more than 464,000 migrants have crossed into Europe by sea for the first nine months of 2015, however, this number does not include the migrants that preferred to fill the asylum application and, considering that everyday thousands of new migrants join the previously migrated people, so, these numbers cannot be called very precise, then.⁷ From January to August 2015, Frontex reported that more than 500 thousands migrants crossed into Europe. Also, 3-4 thousands of them died due to different incidents especially due to sinking of timeworn boats.⁸

The Syrians fleeing their country's four-and-a-half-year-old civil war made up the largest group (39 percent). Afghans looking to escape the ongoing war with Taliban rebels (11 percent), and Eritreans fleeing forced labor (7 percent) made up the second and third largest groups of migrants, respectively. Deteriorating security and grinding poverty in Iraq, Nigeria, Pakistan, Somalia, and Sudan have also contributed to the migrant influx.⁹

Against the extreme overflow of migration, European countries have adopted different measures. For example, Hungary has closed its border with barbed wire, but the border police of Macedonia and Great Britain get use of force in order to prevent the entry of migrants, however, closing the borders, in practice, has not solved the problem and has not prevented the asylum seekers from crossing into Europe.

Germany: the Destination of most of the Asylum Seekers

According to immigration regulations in Europe, immigrants who entered the first country of the EU should be registered; but the immigrants who come to Europe do not intend to stay in the first country. EU member states hardest hit by the economic crisis, like Greece and Italy, have also served as the main points of entry for hundreds of thousands migrants and refugees, which most of them are come from Turkey and their final destination is Germany, due to their proximity to the Mediterranean Basin. On the

⁷ See online; Europe's Migration Crisis; by Council on Foreign Relations: <http://www.cfr.org/migration/europes-migration-crisis/p32874>

⁸ See online: <http://www.khabaronline.ir/detail/471743/World/europe>

⁹ See online; Europe's Migration Crisis; by Council on Foreign Relations: <http://www.cfr.org/migration/europes-migration-crisis/p32874>

other word, the asylum seekers have chosen their country of residence from the very beginning.

On the other side, applicants' religious background will have an impact on their refugee status applications. Religion of the refugees is one of the concerns of European countries. In the past, if right-handed extremist parties were opposing asylum seekers from Islamic countries to reside in their counties, now, the officials of these countries have similar concerns, for example, Slovakia and Cyprus announced that they accept only Syrian Christians and they will not accept Muslims.¹⁰ Poland has called the Muslim migrants as a threat to its Christian values.

The Need for cheap Labor

Overall, the European countries need the young and cheap labor force due to its decrease in population growth and rise in the average age of its citizens. According to the statistics, the population growth in Germany was close to zero in recent years.¹¹ Even poorer European countries like Greece are facing a decline in population. Therefore, a large number of migrants who do not expect too much from the government will benefit the host countries in the long run, also.

Among them, most of the Syrian migrants are educated and specialists that can be considered as a human capital for the European countries, but in the current situation in which Europe still struggles with the economic crisis and the unemployment rate is extremely high in many European countries, providing work to this number of migrants is difficult and even impossible, especially if we add the problem of alienation with the language and culture as well as the environment.

The Cultural Threat

One of the main concerns of the European countries from the wave immigration to their countries is cultural contrast with the migrants.¹² Today, a number of European Muslims are fighting in the ranks of the "Islamic State" group in Syria. For several times, Muslim youth in France and Great Britain conducted violent protests against the governments in

¹⁰ See online: <http://foreignpolicy.com/2015/08/19/slovakia-to-eu-well-take-migrants-if-theyre-christians/>

¹¹ See online: http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/european_economy/2014/pdf/ee8_en.pdf

¹² See online; Cultural Effects of Migration - The European Immigration Debate: <http://www.globalization101.org/cultural-effects-of-migration/>

2011 and 2013. This issue clears that Muslim migrants adapted the environment in Europe and they feel themselves aliens there.

Germany, which is the destination of the vast majority of the migrants, has practically no achievement in establishing a multi-cultural community of people who live in this country. The German Chancellor, Angela Merkel, explicitly stated this word in 2010. In many European countries such as Great Britain, Switzerland, Denmark, Italy, and Sweden, the issue of refugees, particularly from the Third World, is one of the important issues raised by the opposition of the governments.

Unlike the migrants in the United States of America and Canada that are absorbed in the community, the asylum seekers of the Third World in Europe retain their culture and the values of their country of origin.

Afghan Migrants in Europe

As mentioned above, Afghans rank second in the new wave of migration, however, their exact number is still unknown, but the number of Afghans that crossed into Europe during the new wave of migration to Europe are estimated about 120 to 130 thousands.¹³

The cost of travel for each migrant on average level is more than ten thousand dollars which half of this amount must be paid in order to cross into Turkey only and the other half includes the cost of crossing the Mediterranean and other expenditures. Due for this, Afghan migrants have paid between \$1200 million- \$1300 million dollars for the trip of Europe.

Almost the entire Afghans migrating to Europe claim that at least one of their family members was killed by the Taliban. The market for preparing fake documents that show that the person is threatened by the Taliban has flourished in Kabul. After the latest events in Kunduz, the pretext of the Kunduz War has been added to the grounds.

A reason to encourage the people to leave Afghanistan along with insecurity and economic problems is the experience of past 14 years. Since 2001, after the Taliban regime overthrew, a lot of Afghans who had spent many years in Europe returned to Afghanistan, despite the fact that a large number of them did not have education and knowledge; they returned just because they were familiar with foreign language, so,

¹³ See online: <https://www.tolonews.com/en/afghanistan/22048-120000-afghans-seek-asylum-in-44-countries-unhcr>

they received good working opportunities. This experience has led many youth to go toward Europe; they think that going to Europe will give them prestige and if one day they have to return to the country, they would have better living conditions in the country, then.

However, the government of Germany has announced that the priority will be given to Syrian migrants; as the situation in Afghanistan is not so bad, so, the Afghan migrants will be returned to their countries.¹⁴

A reason behind this decision of Germany would be that the Afghan migrants are not professional and trained workers. Long war in Afghanistan has brought an illiterate or at least less-educated generation that could not be easily absorbed in the labor market of Germany. Their training will need long time and costs, while there are a lot of specialists among Syrian migrants.

Due to the economic crisis and unemployment in Europe, finding job is difficult for these Afghans and their stay in the European countries can be an economic burden to these countries. On the other hand, returning more than a hundred thousand Afghans that crossed into Europe at the risk of death will not be that much easy for the European countries.

The End

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Note: Please let us know your feedback and suggestions for the improvement of Weekly analysis.

¹⁴ See online: http://www.dw.com/ps/%D8%A2%D9%84%D9%85%D8%A7%D9%86-%DA%89%DB%90%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%81%D8%BA%D8%A7%D9%86-%D9%85%D9%87%D8%A7%D8%AC%D8%B1-%D8%AF-%D9%85%D9%86%D9%84%D9%88-%D9%86%D9%87-%D8%AF%D9%8A/a-18812375?maca=pas-CB_Tolonews_Pas_migrationquest-17541-html-cb