



Center for Strategic & Regional Studies
Kabul

Weekly Analysis- Issue Number 107 (Feb 28-March 7, 2015)

Weekly Analysis is one of CSRS' publications, which significantly analyses weekly economic and political events in Afghanistan and the region. The prime motive behind this is to provide strategic insights and policy solutions to decision-making institutions and individuals in order to help them to design best policies. Weekly Analysis is published in local languages (Pashto and Dari) and international languages (English and Arabic languages).

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Preface

Afghanistan witnessed several events during 1393 solar year. In this year, the government formed after bitterly disputed elections, and on the very first day of the newly formed government the long-delayed security pact (B.S.A) has been signed. Also the termination of NATO combat mission in Afghanistan increased the significance of this year's events.

In addition to the widely disputed elections and formation of National Unity Government, and signing B.S.A. with the America, seeking close relationships of the new government with Pakistan and attempts for peace were also from the major changes seen in the government's foreign policy.

So, what will be the impacts of the last year's political developments on the overall decisions during the upcoming year? Meanwhile, what are the hopes and concerns about the upcoming year?

In addition, since last few days the capital Kabul facing lack of electricity, and in addition to the lack of electricity, many factories also stopped their productions and work. While a huge amount of budget was spent on it during the last thirteen years, yet those challenges are not fundamentally solved, which is mainly caused by poor water management system in Afghanistan.

What are the challenges in the water management of the country? And what is the overall capacity of Afghanistan for production of electricity? CSRS weekly analysis board examined this in the current issue of weekly analysis.

Major events of last year and its Impacts on the New Year



The last days of 1393 Solar Hijri year gives us the chance to better evaluate the major political and military events of this year, and thus the developments of this year will have impacts on the upcoming year.

Political Challenges:

In 1393 we witnessed holding the presidential election of Afghanistan. The elections took months and there were rumors that President Karzai did not want to step down from power, so the election delayed for so long. During the election, public and private media and civil society praised it as transparent and with unprecedented participation of people, especially women. It was planned to hide the massive fraud of the election by propaganda. Similarly international observers tried to take the wide fraud easy and do not be serious about it.

The election failed to give any result at the first round, and in the second round also Abdullah's team provided proofs of massive frauds by the followers of Ashraf Ghani. International community intervened, but even with the recount of 100% of the votes the problem was not solved. So the U.S. forced the decision according to which the electoral team is neither winner, nor loser; and based on this fact a unity government was formed.

Forming the unity government by the two electoral rival teams, who were blaming each other for fraud during the election, was not an easy task; therefore, even after 150 days of the establishment of the unity government the cabinet is not appointed yet and there are still disputes between the teams.

B.S.A. with the U.S.:

Though the tasks and works of B.S.A. were finalized during Hamid Karzai's regime and Consultant Loya Jirga was also invited based on his decree to vote for signing the agreement, but later on he denied to sign it. Ashraf Ghani, during the second day of his duty as the president of the country, signed the pact, so the foreign aid to Afghanistan will keep up, and as the official duty of NATO in Afghanistan ended, in the light of the agreement foreign forces may stay in Afghanistan.

Though peace with the armed opponents was in the priority of Ashraf Ghani's duties, but by signing the agreement he caused ambiguity for succeeding peace with the Taliban, while their first demand was withdrawal of the foreign forces from Afghanistan.

Changes in the Foreign Policy:

Though Afghanistan lacked a codified foreign policy during Hamid Karzai's government, and it seemed that its foreign policy was formed based on the daily conditions, but yet Afghanistan and India had close relationships. Pakistan was concerned about the role of India as one of the main donors for Afghanistan.

Unlikely, Ashraf Ghani has changed the policy to get away from India, so Pakistan also became interested to get closer to Kabul. Pakistani media reported that such friendship between Pakistan and Afghanistan is unprecedented relations, and these countries never had such close relations during last thirteen years.

In contrast, India has seen these changes of policy as a failure. "Delhi Policy Group"¹ reported in a report titled: (What can India expect from the National Unity Government

¹ Delhi Policy Group

of Afghanistan) ² that India is concerned about the changes in the foreign policy of Afghanistan as mentioned below:³

1. "First of all, President Ghani told Indian National Security Advisor Ajit Doval that Afghanistan would no longer seek Indian military aid.
2. Second, he made a series of hugely concessional offers to Pakistan.
3. Third, Pakistan will host the next Heart of Asia Ministerial instead of India.
4. Fourth, Afghanistan, China and the U.S. now appear to accept that Pakistan will never allow transit trade to India through its territory."

Based on the mentioned concerns of India, we can say that it is in contrast with claim of both the leaders of national unity government who said that they will be just about their foreign policy and they will keep balance among countries, at least between India and Pakistan they are giving more opportunities to Pakistan compared to India.

The Peace Program:

The main aim of changing the foreign policy regarding Pakistan, which the unity government has started in 1393, was to attract the support of Pakistan regarding the peace process. It seems that changing the policy might be the result of justification that if Afghanistan does not achieve peace, it may not achieve anything.

Ashraf Ghani may thought that the result of gaining aid from India is much less compared to the loss caused by the insecurity. Corruption and many other challenges have direct relationship with war.

² Afghanistan's National Unity Government: What can India expect?

³ See online:

www.delhipolicygroup.com

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Most of the resources that Afghanistan is hopeful for it, is the resource of minerals, but losing minerals in insecure areas of Afghanistan increased to the point that the Taliban also created a commission by the name of Mineral Commission, the duty of the commission is to give contracts to people and companies. Therefore, some of the income for their war comes from minerals.

The Year 1394:

In this year Afghanistan will have parliamentary election, but before the election takes place, the mentality of people should be changed; because, based on what happened in previous elections, they do not believe in election. Changing ideology of the public is not possible without fundamental changes in IEC and ECC. If the dispute regarding the distribution of electronic Tazkira (identity card) is not solved, it will cause dangerous challenges for the election.

By signing B.S.A. the Afghan unity government was hopeful that the international community will financially support Afghan Government, but international community is concerned about the existence of corruption inside the governmental system. On the other hand, international community is not currently in the condition of 2001 and Afghanistan is no more in their priority list. Even before the recent conference of Munich, magnification of presence of Daesh in Afghanistan also did not encourage the international community to provide more financial cooperation for Afghanistan. Therefore, we should not be hopeful for the economic improvement of Afghanistan in the upcoming year.

Currently the relations of Afghan-U.S. governments are much closer compared to the regime of the ex-president of Afghanistan, but based on Ashraf Ghani's recognition of the U.S., he knows that he should not hope blank check, as we witnessed during Karzai's presidency. So he has to pay attention to internal resources, even that needs peace and security. The peace negotiation with the Taliban is counted as a media rumor, and the Taliban said that it is an intelligence attempt to cause distrust between the Taliban groups.

Overall, we can say that not only the new unity government is not able to get rid of the inheritance of Hamid Karzai, but also faced challenge that started during Karzai's regime. The Government want to show itself as united, but currently too much people

have doubt about its unity. The mechanism of this government is formed in such a way that the government itself is the cause of its failure, and the weakness of the government is clear from the suspension of declaration of the entire cabinet.

Based on the mentioned issues, we can say that success and failure of the unity government in 1394 is extremely dependent to the peace process, which will be able to hide all the weakness of the government. The process which is not yet clear that how will it start and to what extent it will be successful.

Water Management: Problems and the Capacity of Electricity



In the last thirteen years, more than 4 billion U.S. dollars were spent on electric infrastructure⁴; But, Afghanistan still faces electric load shedding and there is nothing done to solve this problem. Therefore, due to the avalanches in Salang, the electricity cables were cut in Salang valley and Kabul faced lack of electricity for many weeks.

While in many places, Afghanistan has the capacity to produce electricity more than its electric demand; but currently most of its water flows to the neighboring countries, in addition to electricity, it cannot use it even for agricultural purposes.

The River Basins of Afghanistan:

The water flow in Afghanistan is divided into five river basins:

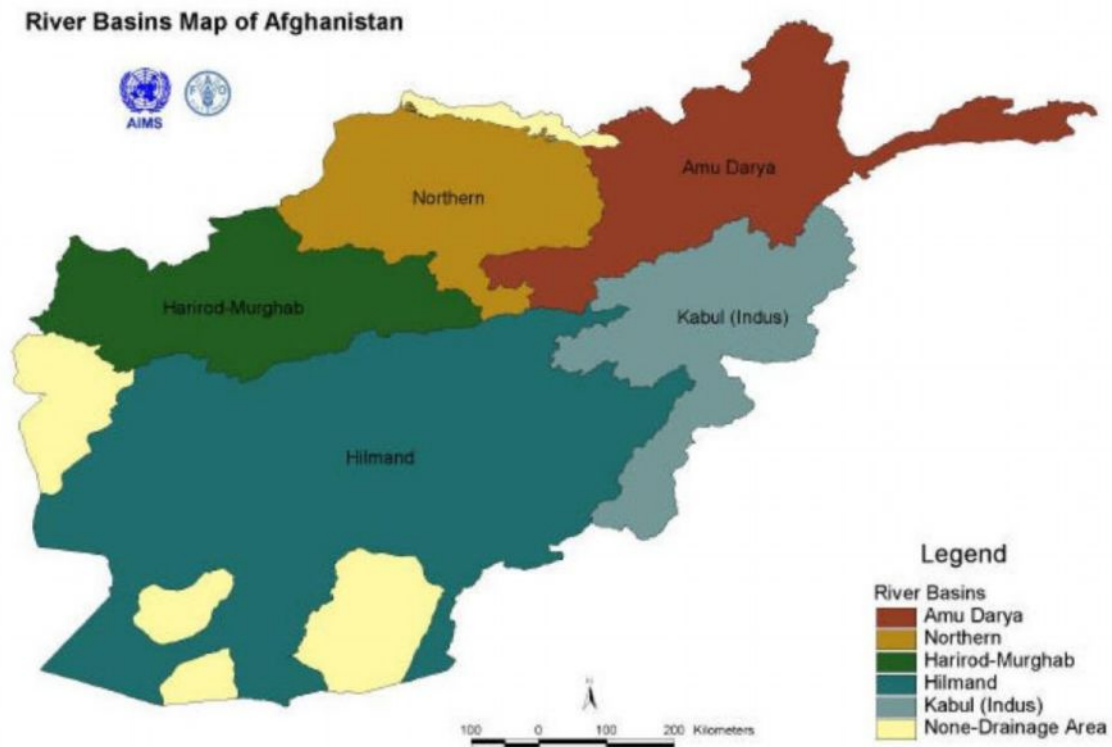
1. The Amu Darya river basin
2. The Helmand river basin
3. The Kabul river basin
4. The Harirod-Murghab river basin
5. The Northern river basin

Afghanistan is a mountainous and landlocked country; it is linked with five out of its six neighboring countries through water. It is linked to Tajikistan through Amu River basin, while these waters then flows to Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, with Turkmenistan and

⁴Mohsin Amin, *Power to the People: how to extend Afghans access to electricity?*, Afghanistan Analysts Network, See it online:
<https://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/power-to-the-people-how-to-extend-afghans-access-to-electricity/>

Iran through Harirod-Murghab basin, with Iran through Helmand River basin, and with Pakistan through Kabul River basin.

In the following map, you can see the water basins of Afghanistan and its relations with the neighboring countries:



The upcoming International Politics and Water Based Conflicts:

In the international politics, water can be a reason for cooperation and a reason for rivalry and competition. Therefore, in addition to food and energy security, water security is also an important part of foreign policy of one country.

Afghanistan is a country, which is located between South Asia and Central Asia, so there is the possibility of water-based conflicts in Afghanistan. There is the possibility of water-based conflicts in the Central Asia, Afghanistan and Central Asian countries, especially with Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, water-based conflicts with Iran and Pakistan, and water and dam based conflicts between India and Pakistan.

Water-Sharing Agreements with the Neighboring Countries:

Up to date, Afghanistan had signed only one agreement of water sharing with Iran on the waters of Helmand river basin. The Agreement was signed during Musa Shafeeq and Iranian Raza Shah Pahlavi's regime.

Yet Afghanistan does not have any other water-sharing agreements, a part from Iran, with its neighbors. This may cause many challenges ahead; because, when Afghanistan decides to make dams on these rivers, which neighbors are somewhat depended on it, may produce an extreme reactions of the neighboring countries⁵. However, if Afghanistan signs water-sharing agreements with the respective neighboring countries, water will become the source of cooperation between them instead of source of conflicts.

Water Dams; Benefits and Requirements:

It is said that Afghanistan has the capacity of production more than 22 thousands megawatts of electricity, including the Kunar River that has the capacity of 1,000-megawatt electricity. By making dams inside the country, Afghanistan will not only produce electricity for its own consumptions, but will also be in a position to sell it to the neighboring countries, like Pakistan, which is faced with electric deficiency. Therefore, Afghanistan will get financial rewards, and it will have then positive impacts on its commerce and economy.

With making dams, most of agricultural lands, which is faced with water shortage, those lands will get water for irrigation purpose, in addition to the increase of agricultural products, and the economy of the people will improve; because half of the country is directly engaged with agriculture.

Meanwhile, building dams will also play an important role in the prevention of natural disasters; for example, it will prevent floods in many areas that cause human and financial losses.

⁵Regarding this, sometimes Iran has shown reactions against Salma Dam and Pakistan has shown reactions against Kunar Dam.

Capacity of Afghanistan's electricity:

There is a great capacity of electricity in Afghanistan and it can produce more than 22 gig watt. We will here count only the capacity of Kabul River basin, and we will count that how much electricity it can produce.

A research shows that the Kabul river basin can produce a specific amount of electricity:

| Name of Dam | Capacity Megawatt | by | Budget needed by Million dollars | Timeframe for making |
|---|----------------------|----|-------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Baghdara Electricity Dam | 225 | | 800 | Six to seven years |
| Gulbahar Electricity Dam | 120 | | 500 | — |
| Second Sorobi Electricity Dam | — | | 420 | Five years |
| Kunar Electricity Dams; Kunar A (Shaal), Sagai Dam | 779 300 | | 220 | Eight to ten years |
| Kama Dam | 45 | | — | — |
| Gamberee Dam | 40 | | — | — |

For more details read Eng. Mohsen Amin's article in BBC Pashto website⁶:

The Current Condition of Electricity:

The current condition of electricity in the country is extremely hesitant; because, based on the statement of the ministry of electricity and water, currently Afghanistan

⁶ Mohsin Amin, *da Kabul sind hawzay da brekhna bandona, heelay ao lomreetobona (Dams on Kabul river basin: Hopes and Preferences*, BBC Pashto website, see it online: http://www.bbc.co.uk/pashto/interactivity/2015/01/150123_afghanistan-water-elec

needs 3,000 megawatt electricity per year, and only its 6% is produced inside the country and the rest of the electricity is imported from the neighboring countries, especially Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Iran. Most of the electricity is imported from Uzbekistan, which is 55% of total import, from Iran 22%, from Tajikistan 7%, and from Turkmenistan 16%⁷ .

As Afghanistan imports huge amount of electricity from its neighboring countries, so it has negative impacts on its overall commerce. Currently Afghanistan spend most of its expenses on importing the mentioned electricity.

There are six million people living in Kabul, which is approximately 20% of the overall population of the country. Meanwhile the number of factories and industries are also in great number at the capital.

Currently Kabul's demand of electricity is 530 megawatt, and its 260 megawatt is being import from other countries, especially, during winter it is imported from Uzbekistan through Salang tunnel to Kabul. However, these lines of electricity could be easily cut by natural disasters and other incidents.

Recommendations:

- Afghanistan should sign water-sharing agreements with the neighboring countries, especially Pakistan, because China has given green light for construction of Kunar's Dam, and the conflict of water sharing will start from this point.
- As water can be either the source of cooperation or competition and rivalry between countries, but this must become a source of cooperation.
- The annual water that flows from Afghanistan to its neighboring countries should be measured and there should be a systematic exchange of data.
- While signing the agreements with the neighboring countries, those countries should be charged for the extra water that flows into those countries.

⁷ Have a look to the website of the centre for electricity data of Afghanistan:
<http://www.afghaneic.com/Data/Afghan%20Electricity%20Imports%20by%20Source/Afghanistan%20Electricity%20import%20by%20Source--2011.pdf>

- While exchanging data with the neighboring countries the speed of water flow should be technically observed, and they should cooperate with each other in the water observation and management.
- The water management in Afghanistan should be strengthened, so not only those lands, which are faced with water shortages, will have water, but also other lands, which are un-irrigable, becomes irrigable.
- The government should pay more attention for construction of dams and production of electricity in various places of the country; so, in addition to the removal of the current challenges of electricity, it will strengthen the commerce and economy of the country.
- The Government of Afghanistan should encourage private sector to invest in the fields of water and electricity.

The End

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