



Center for Strategic & Regional Studies
Kabul

Weekly Analysis- Issue Number 99 (January 3 -10, 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).

In this issue:

- Preface 2

The Taliban in China!

- Background:..... 3
- Rule of China in Afghan Peace: 4
- Using the Past Experience:..... 4

The First Hundred Days of Afghan Unity Government

- Internal Policy 6
- Security Condition 7
- Kabul Bank Case and Corruption..... 8
- Foreign Policy..... 8
- Peace and Regional Countries.. 9
- Result..... 10

Preface

In this volume of the weekly analysis you will read about; Afghan Taliban visit to China, and analysis of the first hundred days of the Afghan National Unity Government, which is analyzed by the analytical board of CSRS.

The first hundred days of the Afghan National Unity Government have been completed; it was not only able to have some important achievements, but also couldn't appoint the cabinet because of internal conflicts.

Meanwhile, after the inauguration of the new government and President Ashraf Ghani's trips to China and Pakistan there are many rumors about the mediation of China in Afghan Peace Process. At the same time, last week, there was news that a delegation of the Taliban had visited China. Though the news was published in the media, but there were not clear details provided about the trip and the negotiation.

What were the messages of the Taliban delegation, and what will be the rule of China in Afghan Peace Process? What were the achievements and failures of Afghan Government in the last hundred days? These are the questions that would be answered in details of this analysis:

The Taliban in China!



Last Thursday a Pakistani News Agency, The News International, revealed that a delegation of Taliban consist two-members led by Qari Din Mohammad Hanif had a trip from Qatar's office to China, and they have negotiated with the Chinese Officials.

There are not details of the trip provided, but the news caused rumors to spread away; some, even, believe that the trip was facilitated by ISI, and some claimed that during the negotiation the Taliban demanded taking control of one province.

Background:

2014 was an important and crucial year for Afghanistan. From the beginning of 2014 it was obvious that presidential election will be held in Afghanistan, and at the end of the year NATO will change their combat mission to training and advisory mission in Afghanistan.

The neighboring and regional countries were concerned about the situation in Afghanistan, and while the fraudulent election reached the second round, it was clear that political crisis will happen. On the other hand, the thirteen-year war of the U.S. in Afghanistan also failed to achieve its goals. And since the U.S. faced military and political failure in making a stable government in Afghanistan, the neighboring countries, which were directly afraid of crisis in Afghanistan, were concerned about the situation in the country, so they decided to negotiate with the Taliban and ask their ideas about the future of Afghanistan.

Another concern of the regional countries is the issue of Middle East, which by the withdrawal of the U.S. forces from Iraq another fundamentalist group, the ISIL, which is even more dangerous than Al Qaida, arose there. The regional countries believe that if the war of

Afghanistan continues, though the Taliban are weakened, another much more fundamentalist group, like the ISIL, may arise in Afghanistan, because most of the regional insecurity is, to some extent, related to Afghanistan.

It is not the first trip of the Taliban delegation to China, and even before sending delegation from the office of Qatar, the Taliban were in contact with China. While Afghanistan and China signed contract of the Ainak Copper Mine, the Taliban sent delegation to China.

Rule of China in Afghan Peace:

President Ashraf Ghani's second trip after the inauguration ceremony was to China after the trip of Saudi Arabia. While visiting Chinese officials he was hopeful that China has close relations with Pakistan and it can force Pakistan to play positive role in the peace process of Afghanistan, and the Chinese officials also promised that they are ready for that.

The Taliban delegation trip to China was based on an informal invitation of Chinese officials, and the aim of the Chinese officials from the negotiation with Taliban delegation was to know the ideas of the Taliban about Afghanistan after the complete withdrawal of foreign forces from Afghanistan in 2016. Though there are rumors published by Afghan media, but we cannot trust them, and all we can say is that it is nothing except guessing. Because, while even the members of the delegation, except Din Mohammad Hanif, are not yet known, so how the media can speak of the agenda of the negotiation?!

But we can see changes in the position in the stances of the various parties that are involved in the case of Afghanistan. The Taliban ensure other countries that those countries will not face any threat from Afghan territory in the future. Their insurance is consistent to the statement of the U.S. that said that the Taliban and their leaders like Mullah Mohammad Omar are not the U.S. enemies after 2014, to the extent that the Taliban are direct threats to the interest of the U.S.

Using the Past Experience:

The Taliban should think of the failed experiences of the Mujahidin after the withdrawal of the Russian Forces from Afghanistan in 1989, which caused the below challenges for Mujahidin:

1. The Mujahidin separated to small groups among them, and lost unity among them.
2. The Mujahidin, with any cost, were not agreed to the government of Dr. Najibullah.

3. The Mujahidin counted the army of the country as their enemies and wanted to dissolve it.
4. The Mujahidin were excluded from the Soviet Union, the U.S., and Afghan negotiation, and instead of them, Pakistan participated in the Geneva negotiation.
5. The Mujahidin did not have a clear imagination after the fall of Dr. Najibullah's regime, and though they had enough time, they were surprised.
6. The Mujahidin made the mistake that they thought that they have done a great job for the West, so the West and the U.S. will stand with them, and they will not face any challenge, which was wrong.
7. The Cold War was ended, but yet the Mujahidin leaders were thinking as they were in the situation of the Cold War.

The regional and global events of the time were also not in accordance with the interests of the Afghan Nation. For example, one of the main promising parties in the Geneva- the Soviet Union- accidentally destroyed.

On the other hand, the regional and global countries were not interested in solving the problem of Afghanistan, but each one of them was trying to continue proxy war in Afghanistan.

Therefore, the Mujahidin were not able to sign an agreement after the overthrow of Dr. Najibullah's regime, so Afghanistan became the spot of war among them.

That is why the Taliban want to have direct negotiation with the U.S., and they declared that they do not want to monopolize power. They expressed their readiness for negotiation about the issue of Afghanistan, and they want other countries to act as mediators.

The Taliban have the preference of staying under united leadership up to date compared to the Mujahidin. They do not ignore the rule of the government in the future of the country, but they are interested to share power with them. And most importantly, they have gained experiences from the mistakes of the Mujahidin. Those are the positive signs of reaching peace in this war-affected country.

The First Hundred Days of Afghan Unity Government



Everywhere in the world the first hundred days of a government are the most important days. In which, every government nominates their cabinet and announces their policies about the future; it does not only shows the action towards the promises that have been kept, but one can also evaluate the future of the government from it.

It is not that much important that the Afghan Unity Government came into being as a result of the ever longest electoral process in the history of the country; but it is important to evaluate the activities of the first hundred days of the government, so it will be identified that the government has been failed in various fields.

The Unity Government was inaugurated on Sept 29th 2014 and on Jan 6th 2015 the first hundred days of the government were completed; but the question is that what were the achievements of the government and what did it lose?

Internal Policy:

With the inauguration of the new government, the country faced many internal challenges, day by day the country is getting instable and insecure, and the cabinet which is known as the main pillar of governments, is not yet announced.

A website by the name of “Hundred Days” analysed the promises of the two leading presidential candidates, which they have done during their electoral campaign in their electoral teams through television debates, and other media, during the first hundred days of the unity government. Based on its research method the website has taken out the 110 promises of the

two candidates that they would do during the first hundred days of the government, or at least start working on those.

Based on the research of the website, the unity government was able to complete only four of its promises and start working on 23 others; and they have even did not start working on the other 83 promises that they have done¹.

The promises were; emergence of the welfare office to the presidential office, signing security agreements with the U.S. and NATO, removing working restriction of the journalist of the New York Times in Afghanistan, and approval of the law of access to information².

Security Condition:

During the electoral campaign, both the candidates promised that their first activity will be signing security agreements with the U.S., and NATO, which they signed both the agreements within 24 hours of the inauguration ceremony of the government. According to some analysts, signing the agreements caused insecurity and instability all over the country, which within two weeks, only in Kabul; there were more than ten bloody explosions after the inauguration of the new government.

The process of insecurity is not yet stopped, and during these hundred days there are hundreds of civilians killed by NATO bombings, drone attacks, the explosions of the armed opponents, and the Afghan National Army operations, from which we can mention some of those incidents:

On December 27th 2014 there were five civilians were killed and six more were injured in a NATO operations in Logar Province³. Similarly, on December 11th 2014, there were five school students killed by the foreign forces bombardment in Parwan Province, Siya Gird District⁴.

After the inauguration of the new government, 12 huge blasts happened within ten days, which caused a huge number of casualties to the civilians.

While in Afghan National Army's operations, there were more than 30 civilians killed and more than 70 injured in Sangeen District of Helmand Province⁵.

¹ 100-Day Performance Report National Unity Gov't, a report by sadroz.af. see it online: <http://sadroz.af/docs/report-en.pdf>

² The previous resource

³ NATO Airstrike Kills 5 in logar, Tolo News, 27 Dec 2014, see it online: <http://www.tolonews.com/pa/afghanistan/17617-nato-airstrike-kills-5-in-logar>

⁴ see it online: <http://www.1tvnews.af/ps/news/afghanistan/14034-2014-12-11-07-35-19>

Kabul Bank Case and Corruption:

Another case, which Ashraf Ghani opened immediately, was the case of Kabul Bank. Because of the opening of the Kabul Bank case and struggle against corruption, according to the annual report of international transparency organization, Afghanistan declined from the first position to the fourth corrupted country⁶. Though the Supreme Court declared its final decision about it⁷; but still not only 800 million dollars were lost, but the people involved in the case are also not yet arrested.

According to analysts, in the last three months time there is not only internal differences in the new unity government and there is the fear of increasing in these differences, but the weak management had also caused the fear of disloyalty among them.

Foreign Policy:

There were important conferences and decisions taken in the first hundred days about the future of Afghanistan. The most important parts were the softness of Ashraf Ghani towards the West compared to Hamid Karzai, and signing the security agreements with US and NATO.

In addition, President Ghani's visits and negotiation with the leaders of the regional countries for building friendly relations with them and some other activities are also important. Attending the fourth conference of the Asian Heart Countries, which was from the series of "the Istanbul Process", the eighteenth conference of SAARC in the capital of Nepal, Kathmandu City, the Conference of the foreign ministers of NATO, and the conference of London are some of the examples, but the result of those conferences were not as useful as it was expected.

⁵ see it online: <http://www.tolonews.com/fa/afghanistan/17695-ana-soldiers-held-on-helmand-wedding-party-attack>

⁶ For further studies, read all reports by transparency international in their website:

<http://www.transparency.org/country#AFG>

⁷ ستره محکمه، فیصله نهایی اش را در رابطه به قضیه کابل بانک ابلاغ کرد، آزادی رادیو، ۱۳۹۳-۹-۱۳، پر لیکه یې ولولئ:

<http://da.azadiradio.org/content/article/26724552.html>

Peace and Regional Countries:

If we see the trips of Ashraf Ghani, it would be clarified that he kept his promises regarding neighbouring and Muslim countries and he has given special importance to these neighbouring and Muslim countries, and he want to bring peace to the country through these countries; but it is not possible to answer the question “whether President Ashraf Ghani has been able to achieve peace through these visits?” It can’t be answered within hundred days. If we see the foreign policy of President Ashraf Ghani, it is clear that the only aspect, in which he is successful, is this aspect-Foreign Policy.

As President Ashraf Ghani says that peace is the priority of his duty, so immediately after the inauguration of the new government he tried to build friendly relationships with the regional actors (Turkey, Saudi, China, and Pakistan).

As President Ashraf Ghani had promised, his first visit was to Saudi, though he went there to perform an Umra, in addition to that he met with the Prince of Saudi and the Minister, Prince Salman ben Abdul Aziz Aal e Saud, and have talked about peace; because Saudi can play an important role in Afghanistan, especially in the peace talk process between Afghan Government and the Taliban.

Later Turkish President, President Erdogan, came to Kabul. Turkey has a special role in Afghanistan; because, though the Turkish forces had came to Afghanistan with NATO forces, on the other hand, they did not have done any military operations against the Taliban, so the Taliban respect Turkey, and they have a special role in the case of Afghanistan as well.

In addition to Saudi and China, Turkey has close strategic relationship with Pakistan, so overall these countries can play an important role as the mediations of the peace talk between the Taliban and the Afghan Government; so the new government want to build friendly relationship with the mentioned countries for the improvement of peace.

Looking to the economic development of China, President Ashraf Ghani had his first official trip to China. On one hand, President Ashraf Ghani opened a new chapter of Afghan-Chinese relations; on the other hand, he tried to build foundation for long term relationships with China.

This trip was also counted as a positive step towards the peace process. During this trip China seemed to be hopeful for opening a conference between the Afghan, Pakistani, and the Taliban delegations, regarding this trip, just a few weeks after President Ashraf Ghani’s visit to China, a Taliban delegation that was led by Qari Din Mohammad Hanif reached China, but there aren’t enough details provided about the trip.

In addition to participating in the fourth Asian Heart (Istanbul Process) Conference in Beijing, in which representatives of 14 countries including Iran, Pakistan, and India participated, President Ashraf Ghani said to the participants of the conference, “Peace is our first priority, we ask the political opponents, especially the Taliban to participate inter-Afghan compromise, and also ask the international society to support the Afghan peace process.”

After visiting the two important strategic partners of Pakistan (Saudi and China), President Ashraf Ghani went on official visit to Pakistan, which built foundation for the new Afghan-Pak relations and removed trust deficits between Islamabad and Kabul, which existed during Hamid Karzai’s regime. For building trust between Afghanistan and Pakistan, President Ashraf Ghani has given some privileges to Pakistan, for example, cancelation of the agreement of purchasing heavy weapons from India, training Afghan Security Forces by Pakistan, and decreasing fees of electricity from 2.50 cents to 1.25 cents in the “CASA 1000” project. In the meanwhile, Pakistan also promised that the transit issues, which Afghan tradesmen faced, could be removed, in this regards some of the positive steps had also been taken place.

Result:

Though it is not possible to completely evaluate the success and failure of the new government within its first hundred days; but, at least, it is easy to identify the range of the new government’s activities and management. There is not any sign of reforms and strong policies visible from the president and the CEO’s side in the first hundred days of the unity government; so we can say that the unity government does not have any achievement in its internal policies, and the future seems to be bleak.

On the other hand, President Ashraf Ghani had tried to build relationships with China, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and the Western World within the first hundred days of his government; because those are the countries that can play an important role in the economic development and peace process of the country.

Though the unity government had some successful moments in their foreign policy; but there is some part, which were not paid attention, and that is the Indian concerns, which is increasing day by day. India had close relationship with Hamid Karzai’s regime, and invested heavily (in billions of dollars) in Afghanistan; now Delhi is not only concerned about her investment in Afghanistan, but she is also concerned that if Kabul and Islamabad gets to some closer, Kabul may not pay any attention to Delhi any more. So, Kabul has to keep diplomatic balance between Islamabad and Delhi; because, according to Amir Sher Ali Khan “Afghanistan is like a

scale indicator, if she moves towards one direction, it will [not only] lose the second direction”, but it will also be the beginning of a proxy war in the country.

The End

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