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Preface

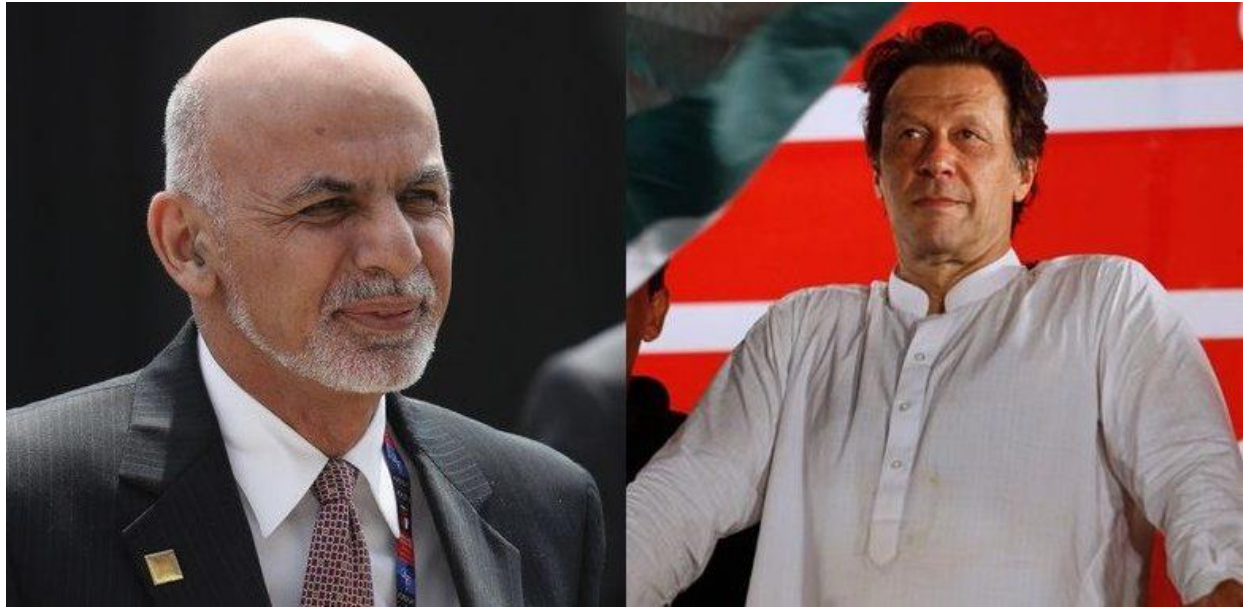
After the establishment of a new system in Afghanistan in late 2001, Kabul-Islamabad ties, to a large extent, have remained unstable and full of mistrust; however, the tensions have reached its peak during the term of the National Unity Government (NUG). A number of armed conflicts have also come to ground on the borderline between the two countries during this period.

After recently being elected as Prime Minister of Pakistan, Imran Khan has stressed on having good relations with Afghanistan. Meanwhile, the visit of Pakistani Foreign Minister, Shah Mehmood Quraishi has also sparked hopes of restoration of the ties between both countries. In his meetings with the Afghan President and the Chief Executive he promised to work towards maintaining peace and stability in Afghanistan.

The first part of the Weekly Analysis of Center for Strategic and Regional Studies (CSRS) discusses the impacts of the establishment of a new Pakistani government on Kabul-Islamabad ties and the ability of the new Prime Minister in rebuilding the rigid ties of Kabul and Islamabad.

The second part of the Weekly Analysis is allocated for the Bilateral Security Agreement between Afghanistan and the United States of America. Four years have passed since the signing of the Security Agreement between Kabul and Washington; however, the situation in Afghanistan has been deteriorating day by day during the past four years. Recently, a number of political parties and some well-known figures from the previous government have raised their voice for reviewing the Security Agreement while emphasizing that a big reason behind the ongoing Afghan crisis is the signing of the security agreement with the United States, since it has proven to be more damaging to Afghanistan than advantageous.

Kabul-Islamabad Ties after Election of Imran Khan



After Imran Khan took office as Pakistani Prime Minister (PM) and the establishment of a new government there, Pakistani Foreign Minister, Shah Mehmood Quraishi was the first high-level Pakistani official of the new administration to visit Kabul.

In his visit to Kabul, Quraishi met Afghan President as well as the Chief Executive and other high-level Afghan authorities to discuss peace and stability in the region, the Afghanistan-Pakistan Action Plan, and elimination of mistrust between the two countries.

A month later (August 18, 2018), the leader of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party (PTI), Imran Khan, was sworn in as the Prime Minister of Pakistan and, in his inauguration speech, he said that he wanted good relations with all neighbors and that he would try his best to maintain good ties.

The Analysis looks into Pakistani PM Imran Khan's strategy towards Afghanistan and his role in constructing friendly ties with Afghanistan, as well as the optimism regarding the future of Afghan-Pak ties following the election of Imran Khan.

Imran Khan's Afghanistan Strategy

Pakistan's cricketer-turned politician Imran Khan established his political party of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) in 1997 and after twenty years of political struggle was eventually able to reach to the position of Pakistan Prime Minister. For the first time in the history of Pakistan a new party and a new politician has won the elections and become Prime Minister against the Pakistan Muslim League Party and Pakistan People Party.

Since Imran Khan entered the Pakistani political ground, he has always reiterated slogans against internal fragile governance and corruption in Afghanistan and has vehemently opposed the presence of the U.S in the region and its drone attacks of the country's tribal areas.

Prior to the announcement of the result of the last elections, Imran Khan had promised that if he won the elections he would make efforts to rebuild the Kabul-Islamabad ties. Likewise, while talking about his foreign policy during a speech in Islamabad after accomplishing victory in the elections, Imran Khan said: "we want good relations with Afghanistan and hope that one day we will have open borders with Afghanistan like European Union. Afghan is the only nation who has suffered from the war more than every other nation in the world. We will make solemn efforts and do serious work for maintenance of peace and stability in Afghanistan, because peace in Afghanistan means peace and tranquility in Pakistan."

Furthermore, last week, Imran told a meeting in Karachi that he will grant Pakistani passports and ID Cards for all those Afghan children who have been born and raised in Pakistan.

Considering the previous stands of Imran Khan, Afghans are optimistic and expect good policies and positive strategies from the new Pakistani government towards Afghanistan. President Ghani has also called on him to pave the way for authentic relations between the two countries. In general, however, such hopes are baseless; because the analysts and researchers of both sides believe that Imran Khan will, to a large extent, follow the previous policies of Pakistan when it comes to the Afghan matter because on the one hand, he is considered as a close person to the Army and on the other hand, viewing the concerns and mistrusts of the

Pakistani side, it does not seem that Pakistan will easily change its Afghan strategy.

Will Imran Khan Fulfill his Promises ?

Imran Khan has always talked about corruption and poverty in Pakistan and condemned weak governance, stating his dream for building a “New Pakistan”. He had also promised to make efforts to maintain good relations with neighbors if he won elections.

While Imran Khan might be able to work for his hopes regarding “New Pakistan”, combatting corruption and developing the economy; his remarks in the foreign policy realm on normalizing ties with neighbors seems impractical as the final decision is made by the Pakistani Army in this regard.

There are, however, analysis that Imran Khan’s PTI has closer ties with the army in comparison to other parties and the Army’s hands were behind his triumph in the elections; therefore, Imran Khan would be bound in devising foreign policies especially with regards to Afghanistan, India, U.S., China and Russia while keeping the Pakistan Army satisfied.

In addition, Pakistan has been encountering extensive international pressure and has lost U.S. financial aid on the one hand, while on the other hand it faces wide-ranging security, political and economic challenges inside the country. Thus it is likely that Pakistani civilians and military bodies will work together to take the country out of these conditions and to mitigate the international isolation and regain the lost credit.

Future of Afghan-Pak Ties

Pakistan and Afghanistan are two neighboring countries that have always been skeptical and incredulous about each other’s positions. The relations between both countries has passed through a lot of ups and down in the last 17 years since 2001. A lot of efforts are however being made for upgrading of these ties and trust-building; but following any security related incidents, mistrust and suspicion resumes between the countries.

The election of a Pakistani PM who has close ties with the Army and his insistence on having good relations with Afghanistan, the visit of Pakistani Foreign Minister to Kabul, and the Pakistan promises on Afghan peace and stability given have created optimism for rebuilding the Kabul-Islamabad ties.

Furthermore, Imran Khan is someone who explicitly opposed the U.S. presence in Afghanistan and region. Based on a report by the New York Times, he was recently quoted telling the U.S. ambassador to Pakistan that the U.S should seek a political solution instead of war in Afghanistan stressing that it is necessary to bring stability in Afghanistan through political settlement.

Imran Khan believes that Pakistan has also suffered from the ongoing U.S. war in Afghanistan. Recently, he told Russian RT news channel that participating a strangers' war was harmful for Pakistan and it was a lesson to Pakistan to never get involved in other's wars.

Despite all that has been discussed, it looks as if the new government of Pakistan is trying to mitigate the U.S. and international pressure on it. For now, as the United States has initiated direct peace talks with the Taliban, there are expectations that Pakistan, for the purpose of receiving credit from the U.S., will make efforts to encourage the Taliban into direct talks with the U.S and Afghan government. It is what seems to be honest efforts of making peace with the group. Meanwhile, there remains the likelihood that Pakistan will not be forgetting its "Strategic Depth" policy regarding Afghanistan easily and despite bringing short-term changes in its policy, will not ever fully change it taking its long-lasting concerns into account.

End

Kabul-Washington Security Agreement and the Need for Reviewing



With the increasing insecurity and continued war in Afghanistan, criticism regarding Afghanistan's security agreement with the U.S has been raised. Since four years have passed from the signing of the agreement, a number of movements as well as politicians and former officials came together on September 12, 2018, and asked for the [evaluation](#) of the Bilateral Security Agreement between Afghanistan and the United States of America (BSA).

A number of Parliament Members (PMs) have also acknowledged the demand of some political parties and movements regarding the evaluation of the BSA and have concluded that there is a strong need to evaluate the BSA, taking the current security situation in the country into account. Afghan Chief Executive, Dr. Abdullah Abdullah, in response to these demands, however, said: "we should question the BSA for the sake of our personal interests, as this action will not contribute to security and improving security situation in the country."

The Analysis discusses BSA, the situation in Afghanistan after signing the BSA and the need for reviewing the BSA.

Afghanistan-U.S Security Agreement

Ex-President Hamid Karzai refused to sign the BSA as, according to him, there was no guarantee from the United States for peace and the end of war in Afghanistan after signing the BSA. Nevertheless, after the National Unity Government (NUG) was established, it signed the BSA with the United States of America on the day after it was sworn into office.

Four years ago, the Agreement was [signed](#) between Afghan National Security Advisor, Mohammad Hanif Atmar and U.S. ambassador James Cunningham in Kabul on September 30, 2014. Consequently, the agreement was approved by the Afghan Parliament (Wolesi Jirga) in a short period of time.

Overall, the BSA has a total of 26 articles and two annexes the important points of which are as follow:

- On the basis of BSA, the Afghan government provides the United States with the right to establishment of military bases in important and strategic points of Afghanistan, like, Kabul, Mazar-e Sharif, Herat, Kandahar, Helmand, Gardiz and Jalalabad.
- Desiring to continue to foster close cooperation concerning defense and security arrangements in order to strengthen security and stability in Afghanistan, contribute to regional and international peace and stability, combat terrorism and enhance the ability of Afghanistan to deter threats against its sovereignty, security, and territorial integrity.
- The Parties shall work to enhance ANDSF's ability to deter and respond to internal and external threats. Upon request, the United States shall urgently determine support it is prepared to provide ANDSF in order to respond to threats to Afghanistan's security.
- The parties acknowledge that U.S. military operations to defeat al-Qaeda and its affiliates may be appropriate in the common fight against terrorism.
- It is the duty of members of the force and of the civilian component to respect the Constitution and laws of Afghanistan and to abstain from any activity inconsistent with the spirit of this Agreement and, in particular,

from any political activity in the territory of Afghanistan.

- Afghanistan, while retaining its sovereignty, recognizes the particular importance of disciplinary control, including judicial and non-judicial measures, by United States forces authorities over members of the force and of the civilian component. Afghanistan therefore agrees that the United States shall have the exclusive right to exercise jurisdiction over such persons in respect of any criminal or civil offenses committed in the territory of Afghanistan. Members of the force and of the civilian component shall not be arrested or detained by Afghan authorities. Members of the force and of the civilian component arrested or detained by Afghan authorities for any reason, including by Afghan law enforcement authorities, shall be immediately handed over to United States forces authorities.
- The Parties shall coordinate in the development of Afghanistan's defense and security forces, equipment, material, facilities, operational doctrine, and institutions to achieve standardization and interoperability with NATO, in order to promote further the effective utilization and maintenance of defense and security assistance provided to Afghanistan, and to maximize the benefits of cooperation between ANDSF and United States forces. This coordination shall not preclude Afghanistan from procuring independently equipment and material for ANDSF from non-NATO countries with its own resources.

Consequences of Security Agreement with U.S

Mainly, the commitments made by the United States to the Afghan government through BSA, to a large extent, do not generate any obligation for U.S. The most important articles of the Agreement are as follows; financing and equipping Afghan military forces, struggle for maintaining peace and stability, cooperation on rebuttal of internal and external threats against severity, security, territorial integrity of Afghanistan and combatting all terrorism.

The situation in Afghanistan after four years since the signing of the BSA is as follows:

Security situation: After signing the BSA, the security situation in Afghanistan deteriorated day by day, the war expanded to the Northern provinces of the country and the Taliban started to carry out aggressive attacks. The Kunduz city fell to the hands of the Taliban for the first time after 2001 and following the signing of the BSA. Despite Kunduz, Farah and Ghazni were two other provinces which the Taliban were able to control for several days. The ISIS group emerged in the period and remarkably expanded in the last three years and has continuously claimed responsibility for deadly attacks/explosions in the country. The civilian casualties have also increased; based on the latest statistics of the United Nations, almost 40 thousands civilians have been killed and injured in Afghanistan in the past four years of the National Unity Government (NUG). Above all, close to half of the Afghan territory is controlled by the government's armed opposition, according to reports of various international organs.

Political Situation: After the NUG was established and BSA with the U.S was signed, the political situation has been lacking stability. The disputes between leaders of NUG at the beginning, followed by opposition of legislative against executive, confrontation of a number of senior government officials against the government and formation of coalitions by present government authorities have put the country's political stability in a condition where the government, after four years, is yet to be able to bring its cabinet out of the acting-Minister position.

Economic Situation: the security agreement not only affected the country's political and security situation, but it also could not bring any noteworthy changes in the Afghan economy either. Although a number of infrastructure projects were completed or inaugurated in public, revenue was increased (due to tax on telecommunication networks' credit cards) in the last four years; however, the overall economic situation deteriorated in comparison to the last one and a half decade. The value of Afghani (currency) has reached to its lowest level (the value of one Afghani against US Dollar was 57.76 in 2015; however it is currently 75.30), the unemployment rate is on the peak, The country is facing the outflow of capital and the country's economic growth is also on the decrease. Almost 40 per cent of Afghans live below the poverty line and, according to the statistics of the World Bank, approximately 2 million eligible Afghans are unemployed.

Need for Reviewing Security Agreement with the U.S

Currently, we can conclude that the Afghan security, political and economic situation has deteriorated after the signing of BSA in last four years.

BSA between Afghanistan and the United States was full of ambiguity from the very beginning. Not a small group of individuals, but a masses of individuals and institutions were against the signing of BSA. However, without conducting a deep discussion on it or without considering its negative consequences for Afghanistan, it was signed by the NUG as quick as possible, and approved by the Parliament, which now asks for its review, with only 5 No votes and 3 abstaining votes.

By and large, the demands for the evaluation of BSA arose much later. There are views that these demands are brought to the table by a number of politicians to put pressure on the government and to achieve their political aims, and by some others who have been directed by regional countries that are against the U.S presence in Afghanistan. Yet, for the purpose of preventing of deterioration of the country's situation and for it not to be turned into a second Syria, it is an essential necessity for the Afghan society to focus on peace talks instead of war and misery and to put an end to the several-decade old tragedy of Afghanistan through negotiations for stability and peace in the country.

End

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