

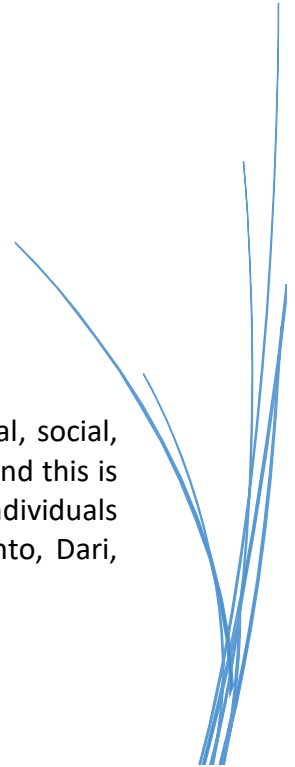
WEEKLY ANALYSIS

Issue Number – 439
(July 06 - 12, 2024)

A LOOK AT THE THIRD DOHA MEETING ON AFGHANISTAN



Weekly Analysis is one of the CSRS publications analyzing significant weekly political, social, economic, and security 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 design better policies. Weekly Analysis is published in Pashto, Dari, English and Arabic languages.



In this issue:

- A Look at the Third Doha Meeting on Afghanistan..... 3
- Objectives of the Third Doha Meeting..... 3
- Differences between the Third Doha Meeting and Previous Meetings 5
- Topics Discussed at the Third Doha Meeting..... 6
- Achievements of the Third Doha Meeting..... 6
- Achievements of the Doha Meeting for the Islamic Emirate..... 7
- Conclusion 8
- Recommendations 9
- References..... 10

Center for Strategic and Regional Studies (CSRS)



A LOOK AT THE THIRD DOHA MEETING ON AFGHANISTAN

Introduction

Following the re-establishment of the Islamic Emirate in Afghanistan and the severance of relations between Afghanistan and other countries, the international community has adopted various mechanisms to address the humanitarian and economic situation in Afghanistan and to establish interaction and relations with the Islamic Emirate. One such mechanism is the convening of conferences known as the Doha meetings in Doha, the capital of Qatar. These meetings are composed of representatives from various countries under the auspices of the United Nations.

The first round of the Doha meeting was held on May 1 and 2, 2023, with the participation of 21 representatives, including those from the United States, Russia, China, Iran, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Turkey, Japan, India, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Norway, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Indonesia, the United Arab Emirates, as well as representatives from the European Union and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. The second round of the Doha meeting, with a similar composition, was held in February 2024. The third round took place on June 30 and July 1, 2024.

The third Doha meeting is significant for Afghanistan in several ways, including its objectives, priorities, and outcomes. This article will delve into these aspects to provide an assessment.

OBJECTIVES OF THE THIRD DOHA MEETING

The series of Doha meetings are held under the directives of UN Security Council Resolutions 2679 and 2721, in light of the report by the UN Secretary-General's representative, Mr. Feridun Sinirlioğlu, titled "Independent Assessment Report on Afghanistan." The overall primary objectives of these meetings are to follow the mandates given to the UN Secretary-General by the Security Council, which include the following key points:

- Better addressing the situation in Afghanistan.
- Establishing a constructive interaction mechanism with the Taliban government to guide it back to the international community.



- Increasing international participation in a more cohesive, coordinated, and organized manner, ensuring meaningful, comprehensive, and safe participation of women.
- Achieving peace within Afghanistan and with its neighbors, fully integrating Afghanistan into the international community, and ensuring compliance with international commitments.

To achieve these goals, the UN Secretary-General was requested to appoint a special envoy, familiar with Afghanistan and experienced in human rights, after consulting with Security Council members, political actors, stakeholders related to Afghanistan, including current officials, women, civil society, and regional and global countries. It was emphasized that the special envoy's work should not undermine the mission of UNAMA.

The agenda of these meetings encompasses two fundamental topics:

1. Addressing the humanitarian and economic situation in Afghanistan.
2. Establishing effective mechanisms to interact with the Islamic Emirate and reintegrate Afghanistan into the international community.

In the first meeting, the key topics discussed included women's and girls' right to education and work, and how to establish pathways for interaction with the Islamic Emirate. The second meeting covered issues such as increasing international participation in a cohesive and structured manner, appointing a UN special envoy for Afghanistan, identifying fundamental characteristics for constructive engagement, and reflecting global concerns regarding the policies of the Islamic Emirate.

The third Doha meeting was expected to discuss the appointment of a UN special envoy for Afghanistan, the formation of an inclusive government, and human rights issues, particularly women's right to education and work. However, due to differing opinions on these topics and, most importantly, the views of the Islamic Emirate, the main agenda of the meeting, after extensive consultations and deliberations, focused on examining economic and banking sanctions, economic restrictions on the private sector, the release of Afghanistan's foreign reserves, and ways to combat drug trafficking.



DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE THIRD DOHA MEETING AND PREVIOUS MEETINGS

While the three Doha meetings shared common objectives, they had significant differences. The first difference was in the composition of participants. Although there was no international composition difference among the three meetings, the major internal difference was the presence of Afghan representatives. In the first meeting, no representative from Afghanistan was invited, and it was purely a meeting among country representatives and the United Nations. The UN Secretary-General later explained that it was too early to invite the Taliban to such a conference.

In the second meeting, representatives from the Islamic Emirate, along with two women (Shagufa Rezaie and Mahbouba Seraj) and one man (Lotfullah Najafizada) representing civil society and women, were invited. However, the Islamic Emirate did not attend because their conditions, including being recognized as the sole representative of Afghanistan and a meeting with the UN Secretary-General, were not met.

The second difference was the topics discussed. The agendas of the first and second meetings were based on the mandates given by Security Council resolutions. However, the third meeting's agenda, which was supposed to focus on appointing a UN special envoy, forming an international contact group, and understanding how to engage with the Islamic Emirate, changed due to conflicting interests of various stakeholders and the views of the Islamic Emirate. Instead, the agenda shifted to economic and banking sanctions, private sector economic restrictions, the release of Afghanistan's foreign reserves, and strategies for combating drug trafficking.

The third difference was the perspectives of the participating parties. In the first meeting, nearly all participants had a unified stance on the discussed topics. In the second meeting, some countries (Russia, China, and Iran) opposed the main topic of appointing a special UN envoy for Afghanistan. By the third meeting, most participants, including the Islamic Emirate, had a nearly unified stance on the discussed topics. This consensus was evident from the expressions of satisfaction and gratitude by the Islamic Emirate's spokesperson, who described the meeting positively on social media and thanked the representatives from Russia, China, Iran, Pakistan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, the USA, and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation.

The most significant difference of the third Doha meeting, which set it apart from the previous ones, was the acceptance of the Islamic Emirate's conditions regarding both



the composition and the agenda. The Islamic Emirate demanded to be invited as the sole representative of Afghanistan and to determine the topics of discussion. Both conditions were accepted by the UN and the international community, making the third Doha meeting align closely with the Islamic Emirate's preferences.

TOPICS DISCUSSED AT THE THIRD DOHA MEETING

The third Doha meeting was divided into two main thematic sections. One section focused on the recognition of the Islamic Emirate as a member of the global community, while the other addressed Afghanistan's economic situation.

In the first section, the international community collectively urged the Islamic Emirate to adhere to the global conventions that Afghanistan had previously joined, as a prerequisite for acceptance as a member of the United Nations. This general request encompassed various aspects, including the observance of human rights and the rights of women to education and employment. In response, the representative of the Islamic Emirate presented two conditions: first, that the Islamic Emirate would comply with the conventions only if it were officially recognized under the UN umbrella; and second, that the conventions must not contradict Islamic Sharia law.

The second section dealt with issues such as combating drug trafficking, lifting banking sanctions, releasing Afghanistan's foreign reserves, and strengthening Afghanistan's private sector. In this segment, the representative of the Islamic Emirate emphasized that if the international community wants a stable and problem-free Afghanistan, it must focus its attention and aid on Afghanistan's economic development.

ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE THIRD DOHA MEETING

The third Doha meeting is considered positive from three perspectives. First, it marked the meaningful and defined presence of the Islamic Emirate's representative. It is an undeniable reality that the Islamic Emirate, as the sole authority in Afghanistan currently wielding full governmental power, must be recognized by the international community. No meeting or session can achieve even the smallest success unless the Islamic Emirate is meaningfully present. Meaningful presence means that the Islamic Emirate should be invited to global forums and gatherings as the sole representative of Afghanistan, exercising its sovereign rights. In this regard, the third Doha meeting is positive and a significant step towards solving Afghanistan's problems due to the meaningful participation of the Islamic Emirate's representative.



The second positive aspect of the third Doha meeting was the agenda of the sessions. Unlike previous meetings over the past three years, including the first two Doha meetings, which often tackled irrelevant or misaligned agendas, the third Doha meeting addressed issues that matched Afghanistan's immediate priorities and needs. The main obstacle in past meetings was the conflicting views on Afghanistan's urgent and primary needs, which significantly lowered the effectiveness of these gatherings. This major flaw was largely addressed in the third Doha meeting, as the agenda focused on Afghanistan's immediate requirements.

The third optimistic aspect of the Doha meeting was the shift in the global perspective from imposing pressure to engaging with the Islamic Emirate. The third Doha meeting demonstrated that the international community has realized that a policy of imposition on the Islamic Emirate is ineffective and unsuccessful, as it failed to change the Emirate's behavior over nearly three years. Therefore, it is time to abandon such a policy and adopt a strategy of engagement instead.

ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE DOHA MEETING FOR THE ISLAMIC EMIRATE

The third Doha meeting yielded several achievements for the Islamic Emirate. First, the international community, led by the United Nations, fully complied with the conditions set by the Islamic Emirate for the first time. Although UN officials stressed that the Islamic Emirate's participation in the Doha meeting did not equate to its recognition by the UN and the international community, the acceptance of the Emirate's conditions indicated acknowledgment of the Emirate as the sole representative and responsible party in Afghanistan.

Second, the Islamic Emirate succeeded in getting its desired topics on the meeting's agenda, reflecting the essential priorities and needs of the Afghan people, despite objections from some countries and its opponents.

Third, the Islamic Emirate used the international platform to showcase its achievements over the past three years in ensuring security, combating drug trafficking, making economic progress, and establishing positive political and economic relations in the region.

Fourth, through strong diplomacy, the Islamic Emirate convinced the international community to align their policies towards Afghanistan with its demands. Unlike previous



meetings, the Islamic Emirate linked the outcome and continuation of such meetings to the actions of the international community, specifically concerning the lifting of sanctions, removal of banking restrictions, and release of frozen Afghan funds.

Fifth, the Doha meeting provided an excellent opportunity for the Islamic Emirate's representative to meet and hold bilateral discussions with most of the participating country representatives. Even if the Doha meeting had no other achievement, the fact that the Islamic Emirate's representative could meet with representatives from over twenty countries in a short period is a significant and valuable accomplishment.

Additionally, the third Doha meeting revolved around topics that enjoyed strong regional coordination. This showed that the Eastern Bloc prevailed over the Western Bloc, contradicting the notion that the Doha meeting was a mechanism for Western countries to pursue their goals. Instead, the discussions primarily reflected the interests of eastern countries.

CONCLUSION

While it may be too early to judge the tangible outcomes of the third Doha meeting, it is considered significant for Afghanistan due to its many differences from previous meetings. Overall, the third Doha meeting marked a substantial advancement in the positive engagement between the Islamic Emirate and the global community. The very participation of the Islamic Emirate's representative is seen as a crucial achievement. Moreover, the acceptance of the Islamic Emirate's representative as the sole legitimate authority of Afghanistan indicated the international community's acknowledgment of the Islamic Emirate's sovereignty as a government in Afghanistan.

Unlike other meetings, the third Doha meeting addressed topics that reflected the mutual interests and expectations of various parties, especially the Islamic Emirate's desires. This demonstrated progress in the positive interaction between the global community and the Islamic Emirate, showing that the international community has realized that a policy of imposition against the Islamic Emirate is ineffective. Instead, they are now inclined towards a reasonable, logical, and constructive engagement policy.



Despite some countries' representatives having negative and critical views about the third Doha meeting, it revealed that the international community has implicitly accepted that issues such as forming an inclusive government and the rights of women to education and employment are internal matters of Afghanistan. These should not be used as tools for external pressure, acknowledging that the Islamic Emirate may gradually seek appropriate solutions according to Afghanistan's customs and traditions.

A crucial takeaway from the meeting is that the Islamic Emirate placed the responsibility on the international community to create a conducive environment for future meetings by taking effective actions to lift sanctions and remove restrictions. In other words, the Islamic Emirate conveyed to the international community that unless effective measures are taken regarding sanctions and restrictions, any future meetings would be deemed futile.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Considering the findings of this review, the following recommendations are presented:

1. **Clear Communication:** The Islamic Emirate should consistently utilize all available mechanisms to clearly and transparently present its positions.
2. **Strengthen Positive Engagement:** The Islamic Emirate should leverage the supportive stances of the country representatives reflected in the third Doha meeting to strengthen its positive interactions with the international community.
3. **Review International Conventions:** The Islamic Emirate should establish an internal commission to review global conventions and clearly determine which ones it will accept or reject, along with the specific conditions for each.
4. **Human Rights and Women's Issues:** The Islamic Emirate should address issues such as women's education and employment, as well as other human rights matters, within the framework of Islamic law in a manner that leaves no room for foreign criticism.



REFERENCES

1. Mir Ahmad Mashal. "Analytical Perspective on the Doha Meeting for Afghanistan," East Strategic Studies Institute, published on 16/12/1402, available at: www.iess.ir/fa/analysis/3690
2. Nazir Shinwari. "A Look at the First and Second Doha Meetings for Afghanistan," Tolo News website, published on 11/4/1403, available at: <https://tolonews.com/fa/afghanistan-189530>
3. Analytical Look at the Third Doha Meeting on Afghanistan, Afghanistan Review website, published on 12/4/1403, available at: <https://afghreview.com>
4. The Doha Meeting Concluded with Taliban Government Representatives' Request to Lift Sanctions, BBC Persian website, published on 11/4/1403, available at: <http://www.bbc.com>

The Centre for Strategic and Regional Studies (CSRS) is an independent, non-profit, and non-governmental research organization established in July 2009 in Kabul. CSRS is committed to promoting policy-oriented research through conducting authentic and unbiased research concerning Afghanistan and the region.

Contact Us:

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

Website: www.csrskabul.com - www.csrskabul.net

Phone & WhatsApp: +93780618000



www.csrskabul.com



info@csrskabul.com