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Preface

Besides unemployment and worsen economic situation, concerns over deteriorated security situation were also the reasons behind the migration of thousands of Afghans to Europe. Unlike other winters, in the last winter, war was intensified all over the country which has left 600 civilians dead and 1343 others injured, according to the statistics of UNAMA.

A huge explosion killed dozens and injured hundreds of Afghans last Tuesday in Kabul. On the other hand due to various reasons, the peace efforts of the Afghan government have also failed; here you will read about the future of security and peace in the country.

In the second part of the analysis, you will read about the health sector in Afghanistan. Although, health sector has developed in the past several years, but the country is still in a worsened condition in this regard. Recently UNAMA and UNICEF have jointly released a report on children's access to the health and education services in Afghanistan which shows that in this regard the country is facing many problems.

In this issue of the Weekly Analysis you will read the analysis of the Center for Strategic and Regional Studies about the abovementioned issues.

Recent Insecurity and Lusterless Future of the Peace Process



Last week, Kabul witnessed a deadly attack which left more than 400 casualties. The Taliban claimed responsibility for the attack which means that the government has to be prepared for an intensified war in this year.

The attack was condemned by the Afghan President, Chief Executive Officer, United Nations and a number of countries including Pakistan¹; but the question is, why does the war intensify day by day? To what direction is the security situation in the country headed? And why do peace efforts successively fail?

¹ For further information see this news: <http://1tvnews.af/fa/news/afghanistan/21836-2016-04-19-05-37-16>

Bloody explosion/complex attack of Kabul

On the morning of 19 April 2016, Taliban fighters attacked on the tenth Department of National Directorate of Security located in Pol-e-Mahmood Khan area of Kabul. The department protects Afghan VIP and senior Afghan officials and operates directly under the supervision of the Presidential Palace. First an explosive laden vehicle went off and opened the way for a number of insurgents, and then fire exchange between the Afghan security forces and insurgents began which continued for several hours. The explosion has claimed 64 lives and injured more than 347, according to the spokesman of the Interior Ministry.²

The explosion was so powerful that has caused heavy financial losses even several kilometers away from the place of the incident. It has shattered glasses and also has caused heavy financial losses to the nearby shops as well as to Eidgah Mosque.

In an official statement, the Taliban claimed responsibility for the attack. It states, in this attack, 92 employees of this department including some senior officials are killed and one of their attackers survived and was able to return safely to them.³

It is difficult to specify the exact number of civilian casualties in this attack because on the one hand, the attack has occurred on a security organ and on the other hand, both sides, the Afghan government and the Taliban, use it for their propaganda, however, higher civilian casualties in explosions and attacks in populated areas is natural.

On August 9 2015, similar explosion occurred in Shah Shaheed locality of Kabul city which caused hundreds of civilian casualties and millions of financial losses. But nobody claimed responsibility for that attack.

² Tolo News, Kabul blast death toll rises to 64, see it online: <http://www.tolonews.com/fa/afghanistan/24875-kabul-blast-death-toll-rises-to-64>

³ For Taliban's perspective on Kabul's deadly attack please see: <http://alemara1.org/?p=47853>

The Direction of Security Situation

Recently, the Taliban has announced⁴ their spring offensive “Operation Omari”, and had warned that their fighters will launch “aggressive” offensives on foreign and internal military bases, conduct infiltration operations, attack sensual and safe areas and “pernicious officials” throughout the country. Besides that, they would also attack prisons to free the Taliban members.

On the other hand, the Afghan government has also announced “Operation *Shafaq* (Twilight)”⁵ against the Taliban and that in this operation; it will conduct aggressive offensives against the armed Taliban.

The Afghan government now seems to be disappointed with Quadrilateral Peace Talks and so it has focused on war against the Taliban. Thus, the spokesmen of the Presidential Palace, CEO and National Security Council, during a press conference, said that war is considered as the top priority of the Afghan government at the present time.

On the other hand, from a military point of view, last winter was so different compared to previous winters; and thus the level of war did not get lower at this winter. According to the report of UNAMA on civilian casualties, in the first three months of 2016, civilian casualties have reached to 1943 people which show an increase compared to the same period in 2015. The report has attributed the responsibility of 60% of civilian casualties to Anti-government forces and 19% of them to Pro-government forces.⁶

Considering the last winter and the announcement of operations and positions of the Afghan government and the Taliban, it seems that current year would be a bloody year. Intensification of war in the Northern region and the recent attack in Kabul are preliminary examples. Last week, Kunduz was once again surrounded by the Taliban, and Parliament members from this province expressed concern over fall of Kunduz for a second time⁷.

⁴ For further information click on this link: <http://alemara1.org/?p=46625>

⁵ Azadi Radio (RFEL), *Amalyaat-e-Shafaq alayehe Shorashyan dar 10 walayat idama darad*, see it online: <http://da.azadiradio.com/a/27655759.html>

⁶ UNAMA releases civilian casualty data for the first quarter of 2016: <https://unama.unmissions.org/un-chief-afghanistan-do-more-now-protect-civilians-unama-releases-civilian-casualty-data-first>

⁷ Azadi Radio (RFEL), *Wolesi Jirga: Hokomat dar qesmate Amnyat Kunduz bayad tawaja jade kunad*, see it online: <http://da.azadiradio.com/a/27678699.html>

Imprecise future of the Peace Process

The National Unity Government (NUG) Peace strategy relies on countries in the region. Hence, the series of Quadrilateral Peace Talks was begun in January 2016 and lasted till March; however, this process failed after the Afghan Taliban refused to participate in these talks.

Despite the refusal of the Taliban regarding their participation in these talks, the Afghan government was still hoping that Pakistan would bring the Taliban to the negotiation table. After the fourth meeting of quadrilateral talks and boycott of the Taliban, Pakistani officials were saying that the fifth meeting of this series would be held soon; but since February, Pakistan has broken its promises about facilitating face to face talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban for four times. Firstly, Pakistan had promised that face to face talks will be held at the end of February, and then it promised that these talks would be held in the first week of March, later in mid-March, and then the end of March; but these talks are yet to occur.

Breaking of the promises and failure of face to face talks has now led the Afghan National Security Advisor, Hanif Atmar to visit China on April 17, 2016. In this trip, he aimed to expand military ties with China (providing China with the list of Afghan military demands) and to make China to cooperate in the peace process⁸.

A day before the bloody explosion in Kabul, during a meeting with Parliament members, Ashraf Ghani said that he has boycotted⁹ the Quadrilateral Peace Talks and also added that in the upcoming six months, peace will be maintained and that he is working on a new peace policy.¹⁰

The Recent bloody explosion in Kabul, Afghan government and the Taliban's announced operations and the deadlock in NUG's peace strategy present a dark scenario for a peace process.

⁸ Tolo News, Hanif Atmar ba hadafe Jalab hamkaree ha ba Cheen safar kard, see it online:

<http://www.tolonews.com/fa/afghanistan/24841-atmar-heads-for-beijing-in-push-for-peace>

⁹ Jamhour News, Raees Jamhour Nashast haye Char Janaba-e Sulah ra tahreem karda ast, see it online:

<http://jomhornews.com/doc/news/fa/79044/>

¹⁰ See online: <http://www.salamwatandar.com/Article.aspx?a=20070>

Reasons behind the failure of Peace talks with the Taliban

The main factors behind the failure of the Afghan government's peace strategy are as following:

- **Reliance on other countries:** The Afghan issue has regional and international aspects and involving these countries in the peace process is advantageous; however, entire reliance on these countries is not in the advantage of Afghanistan. The failure of the former Afghan president Karzai was also due to his reliance on US and Pakistan and now Ashraf Ghani also vastly relies on Pakistan; but after one and a half year it has not yet had any outcomes. Therefore, the government is being criticized that it does not have intention for peace and it keeps the public opinion busy with its present fruitless struggles.¹¹
- **Lack of a neutral mediator group:** it is also a main factor in the failure of the Afghan peace process. Both the Afghan government and the Taliban do not trust each other; therefore, a third-impartial-party acceptable for both sides is needed in order to bring the two sides closer and work on building trust between them.
- **Ignoring the Qatar Office:** in the past few years, the Taliban have tried to prove that they are not under Pakistan's influence and therefore, they established their political office in Qatar and are still emphasizing on Qatar's political office as their official address; but the Afghan government is yet to recognize this office.
- **Contradiction between private interests and the Peace Process:** the peace process, to a large extent, is considered as a commercial deal. Since the very beginning of the peace process, whenever the peace process has put the interests of some individuals at risk, they have tried to create obstacle on its way.
- **Failure of the High Peace Council:** the failure of the HPC is also another factor that has delayed maintenance of peace in Afghanistan.

¹¹ See Abdul Karim Khuram's Article:

http://www.afghan-german.net/upload/Tahlilha_PDF/khurat_k_faqat_hushmani_ma_ra_nejat_medehad.pdf

Conclusion

Considering the current situation, Quadrilateral Peace Talks seems to be failed and the Afghan government has boycotted it and meanwhile, the Afghan government has prioritized war over peace; therefore, early initiation of the peace process seems problematic in such conditions.

Given the experiences of Karzai's and current governments, in order to initiate face to face talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban, it is essential to instigate these talks from Taliban's Political Office in Qatar and to create a third-part neutral Afghan mediator group to pave the way for these talks.

Health sector: the background and current condition



Alike other sectors, health was also hit by civil war in Afghanistan; but after 2001, efforts has been made to improve this sector in the country; many governmental and private hospitals were built and measures were held to graduate cadres in this section. In this regard the International Community has also financially supported Afghanistan for instance financial aids of World Bank, United Nations, European Union and countries such as Turkey, Japan, and Italy.

Despite all these efforts, Afghanistan is still facing lots of problem in the health sector. Last week, UNAMA and UNICEF jointly released a report about children's access to essential health and education services. According to the report, the health sector is in a very bad condition and health report covers worsened health situation and the problems that health personnel are faced with many problems.

The background of Health sector in Afghanistan

Before the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan the condition of the Afghan health sector was somehow good and was among the countries where measles was first eradicated. After the Sour coup d'état, the government was providing all services including health services and in 1357 there were 885 doctors and 997 nurses in the country, and there was one doctor for every 17000 people and one nurse for every 15000 people.

On the other hand, in Mujahedeen front health services were being provided through mobile service centers and for the afghan refugees in Pakistan, some regional and international organizations provided health services.

After the Civil War and in the Taliban regime, beside some governmental hospitals most of health services were being provided by NGOs. In 1369 there were 2504 doctors, 557 pharmacists, 4366 health personal, 143 basic health centers, 29 health sub-centers and 5667 beds throughout the country. After 2001, health condition in the country relatively improved. The former Afghan Health Minister Dr. Fatami said during an interview with BBC in 2006 that there was an overall 7100 doctors in the country which means that there was one doctor for every 3100 people.

The status of health sector 1390-1394

In 1390, there were two doctors for every 10000 in the country, and in 1391, 1392 and 1393 this number increased to three doctors for every 10000 people. In the meanwhile there were 5 hospital beds for every 10000 people. But the numbers of health sub-centers increased in these four years. (For further information see the chart below)

Chart-1: health indicators (1390-1393)

Indicators	1393	1392	1391	1390
Doctors per 10000 people	3	3	3	2
Beds per 10000 people	5	5	5	5
The number of basic health centers	932	943	920	930
the number of health sub-centers	854	765	698	679
The number of complete health centers	411	398	391	383
Tuberculosis incidents per 100000 people	340	358	189	270
Malaria incidents per 100000 people	238	827	807	1018
Registered positive HIV	1644	1529	1367	1250

Compared to other countries, the health sector in Afghanistan is in a very bad condition. In Cuba, which has the best health services in the world, there are 672 physicians for every 100 thousand people. In Europe there are around 300 physicians for every 100 thousand people, while coming to Pakistan and India the number decreases to 83 and 70 physicians for every 100 thousand of population which does not indicate a better health condition but in Afghanistan we only have 30 physicians per 100 thousand people which is really not sufficient¹².

According to the joint report of UNAMA and UNICEF, they have documented 125 conflicts related incidents in the country which have reduced the availability of healthcare, while in 2013 and 2014 this number was 59 and 23¹³.

According to the report, the two institutions have documented 15 incidents of threats and intimidations in 2013, 23 in 2014 and 64 in 2015 which have directly limited children's access to health due to forced closures, looting of clinics, military use of clinics, intimidation of healthcare workers and the suspension of vaccination campaigns.

¹² Central Intelligence Agency, Country Comparison to the World, See online: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/fields/2226.html>

¹³ UNAMA and UNICEF, Children in Afghanistan struggle to access education and healthcare, see it online: www.unicef.org/media/media_90885.html

UNAMA and UNICEF have also documented killing 20 health workers and injuring 43 in 2015, 49 of which were killed or injured as a result of airstrike by United States forces on a MSF hospital in Kunduz.

In 2015, 66 incident of health workers abduction which shows an increase compared to 31 incidents in 2014 and 10 in 2013. In these three years 90000 children missed immunization due to the deteriorated security situation.

The Challenges

Substandard Medicines: despite improvements in the health sector in the past one and a half decade the substandard medicines are still being imported to the country.

Lack of qualified physicians: Afghanistan has a low level of education and medical education is no exception. Due to the substandard medicine and lack of qualified physicians in the country, Afghan patients go for treatment in Pakistan, India and some other countries.

Corruption: vast corruption in the country, on the one hand has resulted in importations of substandard medicines in the country and on the other hand it has led the medicines to be distributed by disqualified pharmacists who have fake documents. This option is very much in remote areas. The corruption has also influenced the standardization and oversight of pharmacies and private hospitals.

High death tolls from diseases: some diseases have high rates of death, but neither preventive measures nor medical treatments were considered to deal with them. For example, according to the World Health Organization (WHO), only tuberculosis kills 14000 Afghans every year¹⁴ and also the rate of deaths by cancer

¹⁴ Azadi Radio (RFEL), Salana 14000 tan dar asar tuberclouse dar Afghanistan az bayn me rawand, see it online:<http://da.azadiradio.com/a/27632961.html>

reaches to 20000 Afghans every year¹⁵, Afghanistan also has a high maternal mortality during childbirth.

The end

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

¹⁵ 1TVNews, Cancer kills 15000 to 20000 each year in Afghanistan, see it online:
<http://1tvnews.af/en/news/health/20710-cancer-kills-15000-to-20000-each-year-in-afghanistan>