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Pakistan's Plan to Construct Dasu Dam and the need for Afghanistan's Reaction to it



Introduction

The Afghanistan's National Security Council (NSC) has objected to Pakistan's decision on construction of Dasu Hydropower Project on Kabul-Indus River and has said, "We will take measures against it on international level".

NSC has added that Pakistan hasn't yet shared the issue diplomatically with Afghanistan and there is no prior agreement between the two countries in this regard.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan has said in a statement that Pakistan has proposed the planned construction of Dasu Dam on Kabul-Indus River in Kohistan district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, while the World Bank has forwarded the project plan to Afghanistan for their feedback. The statement further adds that NSC has instructed ministries of Foreign Affairs and Finance to share Afghanistan's concerns with World Bank so that it restrain from funding the project until there is an official written agreement by Afghanistan government.

The dam will be constructed in two stages and four phases, which will have a capacity generating 4,320 megawatts electricity.

Kabul University Law and Political Science Faculty Professor Mr. Najib Aqa Fahim who has studied territorial waters, in response to CSRS questions analyzed the issue as following:

The Consequences of Construction of this Dam

On the basis of international common law in order to utilize shared rivers there should be agreement between adjacent countries while unilateral action by lower countries is considered violation of rights of the upper countries. Pakistan's measures to construct Dasu Dam challenges the right of Afghanistan as the upstream country and it seems that Pakistan want to have new agreements which can enable it in future to prevent Afghanistan from using the water for development purposes.

According to an Islamic jurisprudence rule: "Permission to the principle thing is permission to its accessories", so if Afghan Government agrees to the construction of Dasu Dam, they implicitly accept continued water flow in the river bed to Pakistan, which will in future be an obstacle to Afghanistan to exploit the water.

The Importance of These Waters to Afghanistan:

Afghanistan's Logar, Kabul, Parwan, Panjshir, Laghman, Nangarhar, Kunar and Nuristan provinces are under the flow of this river. In the mentioned provinces and even in the Afghan capital about 80 percent of people do not have access to potable water. Due to lack of water thousands of hectares of land remains uncultivated in this catchment region, the rehabilitation of vineyards of Kohdaman, preservation of historic orchards of Paghman, Chardehi and Chahar Asyab in surroundings of Kabul, construction of new Kabul city and rehabilitation of Nangarhar olive orchards and Laghman paddies require the use of water of this river. Furthermore, the electricity in Kabul and various major cities is imported and looking to the power economy and use of hydropower potential in the country, especially in Kabul region which covers 26% of the surface water resources of the country, is considered to enable us to export energy to neighboring countries and develop Afghanistan's economy.

Meanwhile, the need of neighbor countries for this water is other opportunity and privilege for Afghanistan in order to redefine its relation with these countries in new platform. The existence of water in Afghanistan which is more than internal need and also the need of slacking the interventions of neighboring countries in Afghanistan's internal affairs, having safe transit ways and efficient use of ports, can all be a potential opportunities for us which can be define as our water diplomacy.

Water diplomacy in circumstances that we understand its importance can rule out conflicts and enable mutual and bilateral constructive cooperation. It is worth noting that this is possible but if our neighboring countries also pay respect to our territorial rights and do not take one-sided actions.

The causes of ineffective use of waters in Afghanistan:

The fact that Afghanistan hasn't yet effectively used its waters and management them well, the following factors have major role:

1. Since water do not have value in our country and we can find in each street as free, most of the people don't understand its importance and therefore its role in economic development is weak.
2. The last few decades of wars caused project for effective use of our water to get failed.
3. The decision making process regarding water is not concentrated, and the lack of development coordination between the line ministries such as ministries of Rural Rehabilitation and Development, Urban Development and Water and Energy and also the municipalities which operates separately and according to their own plans.
4. Lack of a coordinated and comprehensive vision on the decision making level, mismanagement and a lack of master plan for management of water resources.
5. Disruption acts by neighboring countries to the design, implementation and funding of big projects for management of water resources.
6. The passivity of the water and high council as a coordination body in water related decisions.
7. Passivity of High Council for Water being main body for coordinating and decision-making regarding issues pertaining to water.

The Destructive Reactions of the Neighbors:

There was will and plans for construction of dams in Afghanistan, but according to reports faced mostly with destruct reaction from neighbor counties and they monopolized and exploit this water.

While Afghanistan lately understands the role of water in economic and humanitarian development, our neighbors who are thirstier than we are, they prioritized to exploit our water from so far. But the advisable are in the international law for the measures of one side exploitation of Afghanistan's water which is mostly considered as internal rivers the right of using the waters is reserved for Afghanistan. With all this the destructive reactions from neighboring countries is also usual but we must not stop us in having our right to that and if we have the capacity of using this right, and must understand our agreements on our international rivers with our neighboring countries.

The Necessary Reaction against Construction of Dasu Dam

Since Pakistan is not able to afford such kind of big projects and they need the support of World Bank or other international institutions and the policies of such donor institutions are to achieve the agreement of the neighboring countries, Afghan government must reject this agreement in order to stop implementation of such projects in short time steps, and for long time the Afghan government must have some steps to stop Pakistan from construction of such dam with their own financial resources.

If Pakistan as its second option choses to implement such projects without the financial support from World Bank or other international institutions and pay from their internal resources in this case Afghan Government still has the right to protest to international organizations. But the logical and wisely decision for Pakistan would be to acquire comprehensive agreement of Afghanistan.

Afghanistan can prevent the construction of this dam by filing a complaint with the international legal authorities. Also the other way to deal with Pakistan's one-sided actions is that Afghanistan use its right to prioritize designing of small and large projects on this river in order to utilize its water.

The Last Stand of the President against US



Introduction

President Hamid Karzai in a recent interview with Washington Post has said that US is waging war in Afghanistan for their and the west benefits.

In the interview President Karzai has considered Al-Qaida as myth and added that terrorism and Al-Qaida has been created by the US for their benefits and the war in the name of them has only brought violence and killings to the nation.

He added that US has betrayed Afghanistan in the past twelve years and while its US' war, but only Afghans gave their lives and those detained by the US are mostly innocent. According to him there is no reason for the ongoing war in Afghanistan and it is imposed on Afghan nation.

Mohammad Zubair Shafiqi the Editor in Chief of Wesa Daily has analyzed the issue in response to CSRS questions as follows:

A Political Game or Reality?

United States and its international allies entered Afghanistan almost a decade ago in order to bring peace and end war; but they created tragedies in all homes, and the war spread as undefined while no one knows its sides, values and consequences. Therefore as the president Karzai himself says, his current position against US is the result of his decade-long experience which shows his real dissatisfaction with US and the international community.

Hamid Karzai has expressed same kind of views few years ago in various private meetings, but the international community did not pay attention to him and now he discuss it openly; Those who consider it as a drama or political game are wrong and have their own objectives; because these sort of dramas do not give meaning in politics.

The people who say that why he didn't publicly shared these realities earlier? The following few points should be noted:

1. In first few years there was optimism no one could imagine that the international community would act this much insincerely and Karzai was misled believing that, that the US measures might be mistakes and would not be plans for occupation and destruction of Afghanistan and the region.
2. In 2004 and 2005 when Karzai became sure about the deceit of US, he raised his objections on a diplomatic way and started complaining secretly in order to bring reforms.
3. Since these objections did not had satisfactory results, he started criticizing them publicly after 2006 and 2007 and when it didn't have a positive effect his criticism increased. Therefore we can say that his position is not new but his objections have increased compared to past.

What Message the President Wants to Convey?

As the president Karzai has openly said that Al-Qaida is a myth and the US uses it for their benefits and with its help they are fighting an undefined war, this way he wants to convey a message to Afghan nation.

US names someone as Al-Qaeda, conducts operations and say that they were Al-Qaeda members; everywhere they want to bring destructions they call it Al-Qaeda and the so called terrorist hide-outs, they haven't defined friend or enemy. The aim of this undetermined war is to stay here for the long without objectives.

The suspicions of Hamid Karzai on the undetermined goals of US have reached to the level of belief and now he knows that US has betrayed Afghanistan, so he tries to fulfill his responsibility regarding Afghanistan.

Now as he in the interview with Washington Post said, he only has one way to raise his voice from media and press. Though we cannot neglect his weakness in creating a committed governmental team and his failure in not bringing together a patriot team, and his current team includes members that are opposed to his stance, but still he has fulfilled his responsibility to an extent.

The president of a country like Afghanistan, where the government has been established under the supervision of world community, and now criticizing publicly their dishonesty and says that US is waging war for their benefits in which Afghans give their lives. The nation must consider this message very important, and what he wants from the US such as defining the war, defining

the enemy, respecting our national interest and being honest in peace process, all Afghans must support him.

Besides the nation the next president should also not abandon the raised voice for peace in the country. However it seems that all the candidates except one support signing Bilateral Security Agreement with US blindly and without any condition. If the next president understands his responsibilities towards future of the nation, it would be hard to neglect the raised voice for bringing peace, stopping night rides and destruction of the Afghan homes and scarifying Afghans for the benefits of US.