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Preface

In this volume of weekly analysis you will read; the sixty years Sino-Afghan relations, its history and its future, and the challenges of the candidate ministers of the unity government to the cabinet, which is analyzed by the analytical board of CSRS;

With the inauguration of the new Afghan Government, there are hopes arisen for the role of China in Afghanistan and the peace process. Therefore, President Ashraf Ghani, in the ceremony of sixtieth year of Afghan-China relations and the establishment of Chinese-Pashto dictionary, told with confidence that China will very soon play an important role in the peace and security of the country.

In addition, after a long time of wait and internal conflicts of the unity government, declaration of the cabinet also bought many challenges. Some groups and circles are not happy with the decisions taken by the two leaders of electoral teams for the division of power, and there are many issues about the candidate ministers themselves.

What was the rule of China with Afghanistan in the history? What are the reasons that increased the role of China in Afghanistan? These and some others are the topics that would be discussed in the details of this weekly analysis;

Afghanistan and China: two Neighbors joint at the roof of the World!



The relations between Afghanistan and People's Republic of China have reached six decades; but historically they had a long history of economic and cultural ties. Afghans are familiar with china for a long time; Sino-Afghan relations were started in 120 BC, when the Chinese ambassador came to Afghanistan. The economic relations of Afghan-China started with the Silk Road-which started from China and by passing Afghanistan, it reached Central Asia, Europe and Africa.

In religious perspective, the Buddhism spread in China through Afghanistan and in Chinese Turkistan Islam was too, spread through Afghanistan. Therefore, this short history of these two countries clarifies the historical relations of both countries.

In the last century, Mao Tse tung was the founder of communist revolution in China, and Afghanistan without any condition recognized the Chinese communist revolution after two months of its birth, this shows how good were relations between these two countries.

Later on, in 1955 the formal diplomatic relations of both countries started with the exchange of ambassadors.

We can divide the Afghan-China relations into two parts:

Relations during Cold War (1950-1991)

And relations after Cold War (1991-2015)

Sino-Afghan Relations during Cold War (1950-1991)

In this period, Sino-Afghan relations, especially strategic relations, were influenced by international politics. In this area, China increased its cultural relationship with Afghanistan, as the relationships of China and Russia entered dark stages, so China started investment in Afghanistan and started cooperation and work in various projects in Afghanistan.

Afghanistan was not part of Soviet Security block; Kabul was reasoning that Afghanistan would never be a part of security belt, which will be against China.

Chinese were more concerned with the coup de ta of Sardar Dawood Khan that it might had been done by Soviet Union's instructions, but later on Sardar Dawood Khan sent his brother and foreign affairs minister of his country, Sardar Mohammad Naim to China, and then the Chinese concerns were removed, therefore, Chinese started more projects in Afghanistan.

During the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan, China was much closer to U.S. compared to Soviet Union. China thought that the attack of the Soviet Union was a part of a belt, which is surrounding China; so as a result, china did not only condemn Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan, but also supported Afghan Mujahidin.

Relationships after the Cold War (1991-2015)

As with the withdrawal of Soviet Union's forces, Afghanistan was dragged into civil war; as a result, China closed its embassy in Kabul, and when the Taliban controlled most of the country and they took power, some Uighur Muslims got asylum in Kabul. Therefore, China became worried; because at that time, there was an armed uprising in Xinjiang province, and most of their leaders were present in Afghanistan. Another Chinese concern was the smuggling of narcotics, which in their opinion would only benefit the mentioned armed opposition. Due to these two reasons, China and Russia established Shanghai-5 Organization, which then in 2001 was converted to Shanghai Cooperation Organization, which its aim was to struggle against terrorism and narcotics.

However, with Chinese concerns, there was still a secret relations between China and the Taliban. One of the top Taliban Officials, Mullah Abdul Salaam Zaif, has written in his book that once he joined Chinese ambassador to visit Mullah Mohammad Omar in Kandahar, and Mullah Omar had insured China that Afghanistan will never be used against any neighbouring country, maybe because of that China has chosen careful way of dealing with Afghanistan. However, China is supporter of the U.S. and NATO's war on terror. Still, China not only refused to send her forces to Afghanistan, but also had not published any newsletter against the Taliban.

Hamid Karzai: the Founder of New Relations

Though some analysts had criticized internal policies of ex-president Hamid Karzai; but his foreign policy, especially in his second round, toward some countries is appreciated. Because of some systematic conflicts with the U.S. he returned his face to some of the regional powers like China, India, and Russia¹.

The Afghan-China relations tightened during Karzai's regime compared to any other time. During his era, there were many attempts done by Afghanistan for the improvement of relations, therefore, Hamid Karzai had five trips to China; but none of the top Chinese officials has come to Afghanistan.

As the relations of Karzai and the U.S. got worse, and Karzai was criticized for the election of 2009, so Karzai attempted to improve his relations with China, so in 2010 he had his fourth trip to China for the same purpose, so in addition to his other trips, he increased the political role of China in Afghanistan.

China; the Key players of the internal and external policies of Ashraf Ghani

How important is China for Ashraf Ghani? To find answer for this question it is enough to think of Ashraf Ghani's first foreign visit to China, and asked China to play important role in the peace process of Afghanistan. Therefore, China started negotiation with the Taliban officials, until now they had two official talks with the officials of the Taliban from the Qatar's office, and they talked in China. However, the details of these meetings are not yet declared.

China think that with the exit of NATO and the U.S. there is lack of forces in Afghanistan, therefore China see it as an opportunity. As since, 2001 up to 2014 China cooperated 200 million USD with Afghanistan, but with the first trip of Ashraf Ghani to China, China promised 330 million USD for next three years. By his first trip to China, on one hand, Ashraf Ghani opened a new chapter of Afghan-China relations; on the other hand, he provided opportunities for long-term relations.

As there were ceremonies taken in ARG and the Foreign Ministry of Afghanistan for celebration of the sixth decade of Afghan-China relations, it shows massive interests of Afghanistan to the

¹ One can say that one of the unsuccessfulness of Hamid Karzai's foreign policy was the bad relations between Kabul and Islamabad. Kabul, as according to their national interests, must kept balance between two archrivals: Pakistan and India.

relationships of China. As President Ashraf Ghani pointed out in the celebration of the sixtieth annual celebration of Afghan-China relations, and the ceremony of establishment of Pashtu-Chinese Dictionary, there are hopes arisen for the increase of role of China in the peace process of Afghanistan.

If the Afghan-China relations are analysed overall; so we will see that though both the countries had historical relations with each other; but in diplomatic field China did not pay attention to Afghanistan, Afghanistan also given the chance of secondary neighbouring country compared to its other neighbouring countries. But in last few years, there is not only interest of China increased in Afghanistan, but also increased its interest, which shows positive changes in the actions of China toward Afghanistan; because the strategies of China has changed, and it is going to move toward Westernization, which one of them is the Silk Road and the second one can be called the Pakistan-China energy zone.

In addition to that, China needs the security of Afghanistan for safety of its security and economic projects; therefore, China accepted the proposal of Afghan government and started negotiation with the Taliban.

The Cabinet; So Far... Not So Good!



In democratic governmental systems, when a government transfers power to a new government, the first 100 days of the new government is considered as the period that the government shows its commitment for main duties, and the governmental officials take the first steps towards achieving what they had promised during the election.

In such systems, there is trust between the head of the government and the people, but here compared to the time of election there are not negative changes visible, because still people think that the government still needs time for fulfilment of their promises during the election, and they are still hopeful for the future.

Reduction of Public Trust on the National Unity Government:

A survey, about first hundred days of the national unity government shows that the public trust on the two leaders of the unity government has dramatically decreased, and the main reason for the decrease of public trust on the government is delaying the announcement of the cabinet.

People believe that time consumption of election process, and then delaying the cabinet are the main reasons for worsening security, economy, and unemployment rate in the country. Even within the parliament voices raised against both national unity government teams, and the civil society also threatened the unity government for protesting against it.

At the beginning, it was said that the delay was for choosing proper personalities for the ministries, but when it took more than required time, there were some rumors that there is a

conflict between the president and the CEO, which was true to some extent. There were also rumors that the unity government offered posts in the cabinet for the Taliban, and expect to hear back from them. This rumor was strongly rejected by a newsletter published by the Taliban.

Both the leaders promised that they would consider some principles for nomination of ministers:

- The principle of specialization and wise manager.
- Ethnic composition of the cabinet.
- Political affiliation.
- Not being accused of corruption.
- Not being minister in last thirteen years.

The day before the declaration of the cabinet, the advisor of the president on legal affairs explicitly said that the influence of powerful people was one of the reasons for delay in the announcing of the cabinet, but he did not mention the names of the powerful people.

After 104 days:

After 104 days, from the inaugural ceremony of the national unity government, finally the list of the cabinet unveiled and ended the pending. But ending the pending is not ending the concerns of the general public about the future of the country. But the main question was, was this delay justified to introduce such a cabinet?

The claims that delay in the announcement of cabinet was because of selecting knowledgeable and honest personalities became under question, while the nominee of the ministry of agriculture was claimed to be one of the wanted of Interpol, and he is claimed for not paying taxes in Estonia. Was not there any necessity felt to refer to the wanted list of Interpol for more understanding of the candidates for the cabinet?

The candidate for the ministry of finance Jailani Popal rejected his nomination and Aklil Hakimi, who was the ambassador of Afghanistan in the U.S., declared his candidacy instead of Popal. Mahmood Saikal, who was candidate for the ministry of energy and water, replaced by another person by the name of Abdul Rahman Salah, who was not present in the Parliament during

their introduction to the parliament for vote of confidence. This issue also shows that the delay of the cabinet was because of conflict among groups, not because of introduction of knowledgeable and honest personalities by two teams.

No doubt that when two opposing teams are obliged to make a unity government, conflict among them is natural. But now it is clear that the conflict over the cabinet was not only conflict between the two teams, but also force of power holders for nomination of their own personalities for the cabinet. The challenges of the unity government are not only the conflict between the heads of the two teams, but also conflict among groups, because during the election the heads of two teams promised their members that would be possible if one of them was the winner, but when both of the teams were declared as winners and the power was divided between them, implementation of the promises was so tough.

Problem of Proposed Cabinet with the Parliament:

ON January 20th, President Ashraf Ghani went to parliament to introduce the cabinet. The meeting that was held for the purpose of introduction of the cabinet, unlike usual President Ashraf Ghani has given hand to all the MPs, which took time, and later on he spent two hours for explanation of the plans of the government. He pointed out to the MPs that he respects their decisions regarding the trust vote for the suggested cabinet.

As promised, there is no one visible in the suggested cabinet, who has the experience of ministry; but there are old officials, and deputy ministers. As we know that ministry is a political position, and in previous regime most of the executive duties of the ministries were related to the deputy ministers.

But, earlier the MPs declared that they will not give vote of confidence to the dual citizenship holder personalities and they will not allow them even to enter the hall of the Parliament. If the MPs keep their words, so half of the cabinet will not receive trust vote.

Another objection of some of the MPs is that there is not ethnical equality considered in the cabinet, the issue which is also objected outside the parliament. The ex-minister of the ministry of energy and water and one of the famous Mujahidin commanders Mohammad Islamil, who was campaigning for Abdullah Abdullah, in an interview with a private television channel said that the positions of the previous Mujahidin in the security sector is replaced by leftists, and there is no minister elected from some of the important Western provinces. He said that it is an advisory government, and the unity government is illegitimate.

On the other hand, some MPs blame the team of the president that he has bribed to MPs to give vote of confidence to the ministers that he accept and reject the ones that he does not like, so based on this claim if the candidates elected by the team of Abdullah Abdullah do not get vote of confidence, so it will increase the conflict between the two teams, and it will play an important role in the destruction of the cooperation of both the teams in the future.

As it is said, although late but Good “der aayad durust aayad”, but the cabinet of Afghanistan is against it. It means although late but not so good.

The End

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