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## Preface

In this volume of the weekly analysis, you will read about the existence of the groups of Islamic State in Afghanistan, and the necessity of a constructive strategic plan in the foreign policy of Afghanistan, analyzed by the analytical board of CSRS.

Since sometimes, there were reports about the existence of the fighters of Islamic States in various parts of the country, and there are concerns that there is a big conspiracy for the regional countries abroad the boundary of Afghanistan behind it. However, there are questions like: to what extent is the existence of Islamic State fighters true and to what extent is it exaggeration? Moreover, what will be the result of the entrance and activities of the group to Afghanistan?

In the meanwhile, a new candidate for foreign ministry was introduced in the Lower House of Parliament, and after getting the vote of confidence, he officially started his duty as the new foreign minister of the country. In the last decade, Afghanistan's foreign policy faced many challenges, and there are still concerns about the future, so there is a necessity felt for fundamental reforms in the foreign affairs of the country.

What were the challenges that the Afghan Foreign Policy faced in last more-than-one-decade period? What are the steps to be taken for the removal of those challenges, and which type of strategic plan is needed for the foreign affairs of the country? These are the topics, which would be discussed in details of this weekly analysis:

## Islamic State in Khorasan Battlefield



While in Iraq and Syria Daesh changed its name to “Islamic State”, there is a concern that this group may have higher desires beyond the territories of Iraq and Syria; because Daesh is the abbreviation for Islamic State of Iraq and Levant in Arabic language, and the name means that the activities of the group will be limited only to the two countries, Iraq and Levant, but by the declaration of its new policy, the group clarified the territory of its future activities much huger compared to the two countries, which is the entire Muslim World.

In the leading policy of the group, Abu Baker al Baghdadi introduced himself as the caliph of all the Muslims, and asked the entire Muslims *Ummah* to declare their allegiance to him as the Muslim Caliph. Asking for the allegiance means that the activities of the group may spread all over the Muslim World, from Morocco to Mindanao Islands in Philippine.

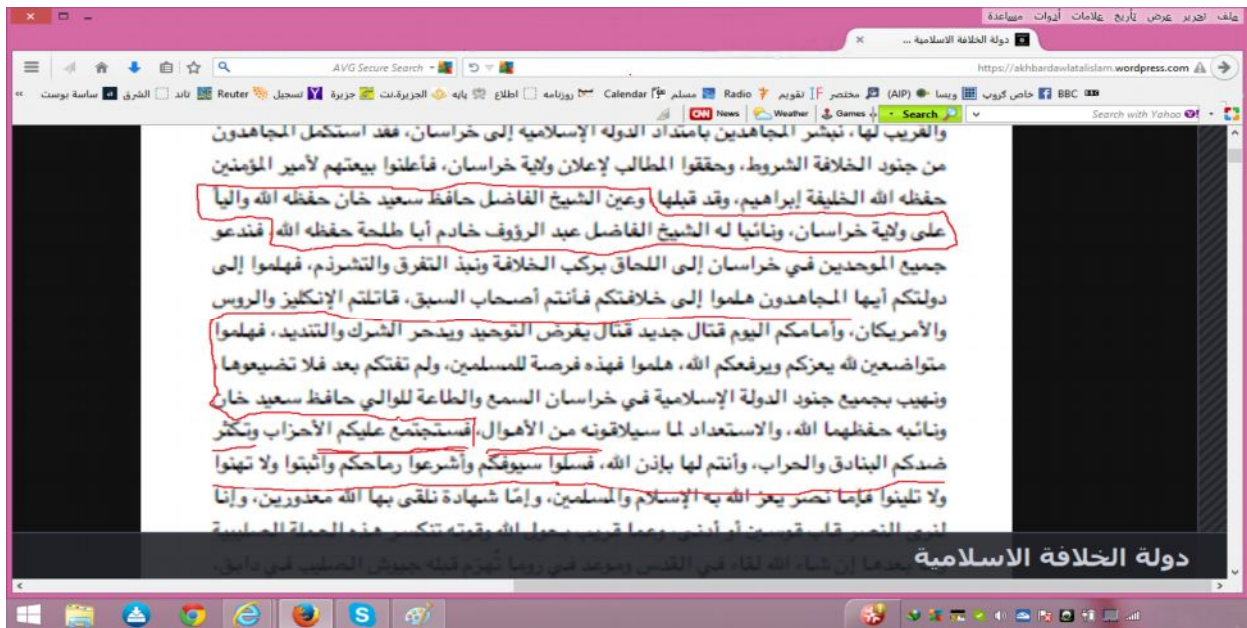
### Islamic State:

The second most important region after the Western World, even more than some of the Western countries, that attracted the leaders of the mentioned group is Khorasan. The reason may be due to the old desire to revive the Caliphate of Muslims in the Subcontinent of India that raised after the failure of the Ottoman Empire. Therefore, while Al Baghdadi declared himself as the Caliph and asked the Muslims around the world to declare their allegiance to him, after the Arab World the first Muslims that accepted him as the Muslim Caliph were from Pakistan and Afghanistan. Many of them went to Syria, and a few months ago they started working on the establishment of the frontier of Khorasan.

After that some Central Asian militants also joined them, and now it is said that Khorasan frontier is one of the powerful frontiers in Syria, and even the U.S. officials also called it as a dangerous frontier.

## Khorasan:

The ancient Khorasan territory, during the first years of arises of Islam, was a territory that included all the territories of today's Afghanistan and Tajikistan, some parts of Iran, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and the territories next to Durand Line. Currently the group has appointed a governor and deputy governor for the mentioned large area consisting of several countries, but yet they did not start military operations.



Ironically, the Khorasan plan of the group included the areas up to Atak River, which was separated from Afghanistan by Durand treaty. So, from the four states of Pakistan, three of them are not included in Khorasan, and the only one that is included in the Khorasan plan is the insecure state of Khyber Pashtonkhwa. In the formation of Khorasan Province, Hafiz Sayed Khan, who is from Orakzai Agency, is appointed as the governor, and Abdul Rauf Khadam, who is from Helmand Province, is appointed as the deputy of the governor of Khorasan.

Hafiz Sayed Khan is the former member of Pakistani Taliban, he and some other ones, including Shahidullah Shahid, separated from the Taliban. Abdul Rauf was earlier the member of military commission of the Taliban. The Spokesman of IS Abu Mohammad al Adnani accepted the mentioned appointments.

## **Can the Taliban be Split?**

To the extent the issue is related to the Pakistani Taliban, the group is already split into smaller groups, and while there is, something said about the Pakistani Taliban its aim is the group that is led by Mullah Fazlullah. So split among them is not something strange.

But regarding the Afghan Taliban, we can say that the rise of Daesh in the region may be challenging. But Abdul Rauf Khadam's influence among the Taliban is so weak, and even earlier he was not accepted by the Afghan Taliban and they called him as Salafi. But for showing their breadth that they have tolerance of interpretation of religion, and also for attracting the trust of Arabs that support the Taliban, so they appointed him as the member of the military committee of the Taliban. Due to the relations with Arab fighters, including Al Qaida and non-Al Qaida members, Abdul Rauf got the opportunity of relations with Islamic State, especially he is entitled as a person with Salafi ideas, who has also worked with the Afghan Taliban, so the leadership of IS chosen him as the deputy governor of Khorasan.

## **Attempts of IS for its Influence in Afghanistan:**

Recently there are rumors heard about the existence of IS members in some parts of Afghanistan. According to governmental officials there are reports published that say that IS members are increasing in some provinces like: Helmand, Farah, Ghazni, Zabul, and even Kunduz province which is one of the southern provinces of the country.

People speak of the immediate existence of IS, and their reason is that these fighters are different from the Taliban, and they bring black flags. In some cases, these reports might be true; but in some cases, especially the ones in which the governmental officials exaggerate, it might be a reflection. Isn't the aim of the publishing such news the cause of concerning the U.S. and other countries about the future of Afghanistan, so they will renew their idea about withdrawal of their forces from Afghanistan?

In some cases, the existence of foreign fighters in some parts of the country is not relevant to the IS. For example, Dai Chopan District of Ghazni Province is the place where Uzbek Fighters, who are related to Tahir Yeldash group, live there since 2006, and these fighters were there many years earlier than the establishment of IS and fighting with the Pakistani Taliban, who had agreement with the Pakistani Government.

If the IS members want to influence such groups, it would be easy for them, but influence in the Taliban group is not easy, and there is the possibility of armed conflict among them; because

the Taliban do not allow any group to have direct military activities in the territories that are under the control of the Taliban.

### **The Difference of the Taliban and the Islamic State:**

The difference between the two groups is the difference in their political plans. The Taliban declared that they do not have the plan of leaving Afghanistan and their goal is freedom of Afghanistan from the U.S. and its alliances. While the foreign forces leave Afghanistan, there is no reason of war in the country.

But the goal of the IS is expansion of the territory of the group to all the Muslim World, and they feel themselves obliged for the mentioned goal. So the goal of the foreign armed groups, who were earlier the alliance of the Taliban, is war in their own countries, the message of IS may include traction and attraction.

### **Result:**

The overall result that we can get from these revolutions is that even the weakness of the Taliban in the country does not mean the strength of the government. Even the Taliban get weaker and weaker, another group that is much more extremism may start its activities even abroad the boundaries of Afghanistan, especially in the Central Asia. Therefore, Abdul Karim Khuram the Head of Office of Former President Hamid Karzai said that it is a conspiracy of the U.S., and he predicted in his article that the war may spread to the neighboring countries of Afghanistan, especially to the borders of China, and for the implementation of the plan it is necessity to change Afghanistan to a “Big Waziristan.

## Afghanistan's Foreign Policy and Need for a Strategic Plan



Few months of the newly inaugurated national unity government had passed, and the minister of foreign affairs also got the vote of confidence from the Lower house and officially started his duty as the minister. Though the foreign policy of the country is currently more challenging compared to any other time, and recently it needs a strategic plan compared to any other time, but it is not clear that what actions will the unity government and the minister of foreign affairs take about it.

Currently Afghanistan need such a strategic policy that can safeguard the national interests of the country, moves the foreign policy towards stability, and kept away our foreign policy from reactionary responses. Afghanistan's foreign policy faced many challenges, especially in last decade, and in many aspects, it faced failure.

### The Weaknesses of Foreign Policy (2001-2014)

If we briefly identify the failure of foreign policy in last 13 years, the failures are noticeable are:

- Reactionary Responses;
- The bad relations with the neighboring countries;
- The unbalanced policies among the neighboring, regional, and international forces;
- Lack of strategic plan;

The main reason of not keeping balance between various countries was the existence of reactionary response of our foreign policy, and the second reason was the reliance on the short-term resolutions of conflicts.

We built relations with China and Russia after the destruction of relations with the U.S. in 2008 and 2009; these two countries were important in the foreign policies of the country in the last decade, and we should built good relations with them from the beginning. Though Russia and China were interested to build good relations with Afghanistan, after 2001; as they saw Afghanistan extremely influenced by the U.S. so their relations decreased with Afghanistan.

Later on, when the relations of Karzai, Obama and Holbrook was destroyed, by a single attempt Karzai turned towards Russia and sent a letter to Medvedove, then he had visits to China and Russia, and the relations moved towards construction. While in 2009, there was a special conference invited by Shanghai Organization, Russia forgiven all its former debts to Afghanistan and both the countries expressed themselves ready for investment for the completion of the former uncompleted projects and programs in Afghanistan. In 2012, the second in hierarchy of Chinese Communist Party came to Afghanistan, and at the same year, China has given chance to Afghanistan to be observer in Shanghai Organization.

On the other hand, within the last one decade instead of construction of relations with the neighboring countries, especially Pakistan, our relations moved towards destruction, and sometimes the officials of these countries were giving speech against each other; therefore there was not balance in our foreign policy regarding the neighboring and regional countries.

In addition, the lack of strategic plan for the foreign policy of the country caused many challenges for the foreign policy of the country; the CEO of the national unity government also confirmed, during the inauguration ceremony of the minister of foreign affairs, that yet Afghanistan does not have any strategic plan for its foreign policy, and he was hopeful that such a plan will be made as soon as possible.

### **What Does Strategic Plan Mean?**

Strategic plan means defining strategy, choosing tools for following the strategy, and the control and approval of strategy. Strategy and strategic plan is extremely important in the foreign policy; because, while policy is defined, as “saving national interest”, so they need to find ways for saving the same national interest, to save the national interest in reality, and these ways are called strategy. Strategy can change with the passage of time and changes in conditions; therefore, there are short term, midterm, and long-term plans in strategic plans.



The former Secretary of State of United States Dean Acheson has written about strategic plan in his memoirs as ‘to look ahead, not into distant future, but beyond the vision of the operating officers caught in the smoke and crises of current battle; far enough ahead to see the emerging form of things to come and outline what should be done to meet or anticipate them’. In addition, he emphasizes that the existing policies should also be ‘constantly reappraise’<sup>1</sup>.

### **Foreign Affairs and Strategic Plan:**

While making strategic plan, the following points should also be considered:

1. Foreign challenges;
2. Domestic challenges;
3. And Afghan culture;

The conflicts in the interests of the countries that are involved in the New Great Game, which are going on in Afghanistan and the region, are the challenges that Afghanistan faces from foreign countries. For example, Afghanistan should save its own national interests in pipelinization, the Silk Road, and giving transit way, and in these fields, the interests of other countries should not be in clashes with each other. In addition, Afghanistan should try to give weight to its words and accept it by other countries.

Similarly, the domestic challenges of the foreign affairs are instability, lack of peace and negotiation with the armed opponents, corruptions, and so on. As we counted the mentioned challenges as the domestic challenges of the foreign affairs, therefore the investment of other countries in Afghanistan is also a part of the national interest of the country. While Afghanistan is not capable of demining its natural resources and implement projects; so there is need of foreign investments, and foreign investors relate their investment to stability, peace, bright future, and lack of corruption in a country.

Moreover, while making strategic plan the Afghan values should be also be considered, especially the former ways that are built based on culture and customs and that had influence on the foreign affairs of the country; for example, we can mention Afghanistan’s neutrality. As the current world is neither mono-polar nor bipolar, but it is moving towards multipolar, so Afghanistan should not tie itself only to a single direction.

Currently Afghanistan does not only need the assistance and diplomatic support of the West, but also needs the investment of China. Afghanistan also needs the attention of Russia, which

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<sup>1</sup> Dean Acheson, *Present at the Creation* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1969), p. 214.

has gained a special place in the global politics, and needs high-tech products and economic cooperation of India, even with all these conditions, Afghanistan should not ignore its national sovereignty and neutrality.

The most important part of the foreign affairs is not signing great agreements ignorantly. For example, B.S.A. was signed ignorantly for gaining economic cooperation and bringing peace and stability to the country; but the last few months show that it will not be only unable to fulfill those goals, but it also has shown that the country will be the spot of the upcoming global game.

The national unity government has given the document for the foreign forces to stay in Afghanistan for long term; but the ideas of the candidate foreign minister of the U.S. Ashtyn Carter<sup>2</sup> destroys our ambitions, he says: if the condition in Afghanistan get worse, they will withdraw their forces. However, on one hand signing B.S.A. caused obstacle for peace, on the other hand, it concerned regional countries.<sup>3</sup>

### **Suggestions:**

- The strategic plan of Afghanistan should have; short term, midterm, and long-term strategies, so on one hand we will move our diplomacy towards stability, and on the other hand, we will be able to safeguard our national interest.
- The strategic plan should be built in the light of foreign and domestic challenges and the issues that the country is faced with.
- In the strategic plan of the foreign affairs, it should be also mentioned that the Afghan Diplomats should be chosen through a competitive exam, and the details of the exam should be mentioned in it.
- Based on the plan, the ability and knowledge of a normal diplomat should be increased compared to the earlier times.
- Afghan policy makers should not ignore the rivalry of Pakistan and India, and they should sense the values of both the countries in Afghanistan. The policy should be made

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<sup>2</sup> While answering one of the questions of the military committee of congress, Ashtyn Carter said; if the conditions in Afghanistan get worse, he will rethink about the withdrawal of its forces from Afghanistan: see the Veesa Newspaper 4<sup>th</sup> of February of 2015 first page.

<sup>3</sup>The U.S. declared that it will give its equipment to Ukraine, against the declaration Russia has shown an extreme reaction. China and Russia are concerned about the existence of the U.S., and they have doubt about it, therefore sometimes their attempts are failed against terrorism and narcotics.

in such a way that instead of proxy war both the countries will cooperate with each other in Afghanistan<sup>4</sup>.

- The economic diplomacy should be increased and strengthened with other countries, especially with the neighboring countries.

The End

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<sup>4</sup> The friendship fields of India and Pakistan can increase in Afghanistan, and to know that which fields should increase for their friendship read the article:

Sadika Hameed, Prospects for Indian-Pakistani Cooperation in Afghanistan, CSIS, 2012. See it online in the following link:  
< [http://csis.org/files/publication/120821\\_Hameed\\_ProspectsIndianPakistan\\_Web.pdf](http://csis.org/files/publication/120821_Hameed_ProspectsIndianPakistan_Web.pdf)>