



**Center for Strategic & Regional Studies**  
**Kabul**

## **Weekly Analysis- Issue Number 104 (Feb 7-14, 2015)**

Weekly Analysis is one of CSRS' publications, which significantly analyses weekly economic and political 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 to design best policies. Weekly Analysis is published in local languages (Pashto and Dari) and international languages (English and Arabic languages).

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## Preface

On February 9, 2015 there was a trilateral meeting held between Afghanistan, China, and Pakistan in Kabul, which mainly focused on the peace process between Afghan Government and Taliban. Though it is said that the meeting was held with the absence of media, and it is said that there were some serious agreements done for peace process with the Taliban, but the details of the meeting are not provided.

The hope for the empowerment of Sino-Af-Pak conferences series have increased because of the delegation of the Taliban that have gone to China, and the Taliban also accepted that their delegation has gone to Beijing for negotiation with the Chinese officials. Why China paid attention to Afghanistan? Will China be able to bring the Taliban to negotiation table with the Kabul?

You will read the analysis of the analytical board of CSRS about these issues and in the second part of the analysis; you will read about the withdrawal of the Soviet Forces from Afghanistan and its 26<sup>th</sup> anniversary:

## Geopolitical Friendship of Afghanistan, China and Pakistan



In the trilateral meeting of the deputy foreign ministers of Afghanistan, China and Pakistan, which was held on 9<sup>th</sup> February 2015, there is an optimism felt about the increase of influential role of China in Afghanistan. Most of analysts believe that in addition to other reasons, China has influence over Pakistan, and it can play a positive role in the case of Afghanistan.

Immediately after the meeting of the diplomats of the three countries, on Thursday February 12<sup>th</sup> 2015 the Foreign Minister of China Wing Lee and a Chinese official delegation went to the capital of Pakistan Islamabad, and in a bilateral meeting they met about the regional issues.

China has friendly relations with all regional countries, and it is seen as a country that is looking for security in the region; therefore, it increased its rule in the important regional issues.

### Background:

Afghanistan and China has historical relations and the history of the relations is even related to BC. It is said that the first Chinese ambassador that China sent to Afghanistan was during Kushan era, and the two countries has cultural and economic influence on each other. Buddhism in China was transferred through Afghanistan, Afghanistan was

economically connected to China through Chinese Silk Road, which empowered Afghanistan economically, and it was the centre of transit and commerce of three continents.

On the other hand, in the history, most of the area of Pakistan, in some cases some of the area of Pakistan was related to the territory of Afghanistan. Finally, in 19<sup>th</sup> century most of the territory of Baluchistan and Khyber Pakhtoonkhwa, which were part of Afghanistan and due to Gandumak Pact and Durand Line, these lands were given to British India.

After the independence of Pakistan, those areas were questionable to be part of Pakistan; therefore, Afghanistan was the only country that has given non-confidence vote against the admission of Pakistan at the UN. Though Kabul took its negative vote back, and sent its ambassador to Pakistan, but since this day, Pak-Afghan relations were passed through complex periods. In this period, with the establishment of new government in Afghanistan and the attempts for the empowerment of relations with China, there were also steps taken to improve Pak-Afghan relations too.

### **Pak-Afghan Relations and the Latest Changes:**

In the last six decades, Pak-Afghan relations faced many challenges, in a very few occasions they had come closer to each other. The main reason behind this was the conflict in the foreign affairs of both countries; from Afghan Perspective, it was the issue of Pashtonistan, and from Pakistan's side it was the philosophy of Strategic Depth, which was hindrance in the path of Pak-Afghan relations.

As in his last visit to Pakistan, Ashraf Ghani has given some privileges to Pakistan<sup>1</sup>, and then a military school was attacked in Peshawar, by closed door meetings and trips of some Pakistan officials to Afghanistan, it seems that Pakistan also changed its policies towards Afghanistan. However, with the relations improving between Pakistan and Afghanistan, concern in Afghanistan had once again raised that Afghanistan might become a victim of trusting Pakistan.

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<sup>1</sup> Ashraf Ghani has given some privileges to Pakistan like: training Afghan army by Pakistan; cancelation of contract of purchasing heavy weapons from India.

There are some analyses that Afghanistan did not get any privileges from Pakistan, but Pakistan gets the below privileges by the name of cooperation in the peace process;

- Delaying the contract of Afghanistan purchasing weapons from India;
- Sending six Afghan Army officials to Pakistan for getting military trainings.
- Submitting Lutfullah Mehsud to Pakistan;
- Decreasing tax for Pakistani goods, but yet Afghan tradespersons face challenges in transit;
- Forcing Afghan migrants to exit from Pakistan, which is against the Pakistani and UN agreement;

With all these issues there are still hopes that changes may appear in the policies of Pakistan. These hopes are based not only the involvement of Chinese relations with both the countries, but also some other aspects; but security and peace in Afghanistan has positive impacts on the economy of Pakistan; because a big project<sup>2</sup>, in which is Pakistan-China energy zone, will also pass from the regions that are close to Afghan border, or they have to pass it from the areas where there is no security in those areas, like Tribal areas, Gilgit and Baltistan.

### **Strategic Relations of China and Pakistan:**

While in 1962, India was in conflict with China based on (Aksichen) area, so the incident increased the value of Pakistan to China. Since that time, China entered with Pakistan in an undeclared security agreement. Because of the strategy of the U.S., through which it want to support India to stop the improvement of China and struggle against keeping the balance of China in the region, the China and Pakistan relations get more tied to each other.

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<sup>2</sup> It is said that 45 billion dollar may be invested on the Pakistan-China energy zone.

## **Sino-Afghan Relations:**

In the last six decades, Afghanistan had relations with the People's Republic of China; these relations were so tied up to 1978; but because of international evolutions China was not paying that, much attention to Afghanistan compared to its other neighbouring countries.

China had good relations with Afghanistan in (1955-1978) compared to (1978-2001). In the period of (1955-1978), China was going to decrease the role of her two enemies, India and Russia, in Afghanistan, while earlier China had friendly relations with those two countries, but later on started rivalry with those two countries<sup>3</sup>. However, in the second period of time (1978-2001) because of Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan and the Afghan civil war, China did not have relations with Afghanistan.

In the second presidential era of Karzai, the relationship of Kabul got closer to Beijing; these closing relations appeared in the forms of taking the contract of Amu-zone, Ainak Copper contract and became the most investing foreign country<sup>4</sup> in Afghanistan.

While Xi Jinping gained power in China, there were changes visible in the foreign policy of China. Jinping increased its attention towards the West and he started working on the new Chinese Silk Road, and built economic zones with India, Bangladesh and Pakistan. As security and stability in Afghanistan is necessity for the mentioned projects of China, therefore after 46 years in 2012 China sent the member of Chinese Communist Party (Politburo) on a trip to Kabul.

Currently Ashraf Ghani wants to bring China closer and economically in to Afghanistan, and on the other hand, considering its influences over Pakistan, it plays an important role in the peace process of Afghanistan.

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<sup>3</sup> At the beginning of 1950 decade China had friendly relations with Russia and India; but its relations with Russia destroyed since 1960 and in 1969 they had a small conflict with each other because of border issues, its relations with India destroyed since 1959, it is because of Chinese operations in Tibet, and in 1962 both the countries entered a fight because of Oxygen Area.

<sup>4</sup> Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)

## **Chinese Foreign Policy Regarding Afghanistan:**

In 2012, China started the series of meetings between Afghanistan-Pakistan-China think tanks from Beijing, while the second conference was held in Islamabad in 2014, and in the future, the third one will be held in Kabul.

Overall, in its foreign policy, China increased its attention towards Afghanistan, and it has done the following activities up to date:

First: China had relations with the Taliban, even during their Emirate; it is said that in last one year, China met the Taliban delegation twice, regarding that the Taliban mentioned in their newsletter that the aim of the trip was to inform China about their plans; but the details of the meetings are not clarified.

Second: China has friendly relations with Afghan Government and it is the country that has done more investment in Afghanistan compared to any other country. In the last trilateral conference, China promised to construct a dam and an electricity factory in the insecure province, Kunar, which is on the border with Pakistan, and want Afghanistan and Pakistan to be connected by railway track. So one of the advantages of it would be that Afghanistan will be also part of Pakistan-China energy corridor, and commerce between the countries will increase.

Third: in last few months, China had secret meetings with the U.S. and Afghan officials about the challenges of Afghanistan, which shows that China really want to play an important role in the Central Asia, especially in Afghanistan.

These secret meetings and negotiations with the Taliban take place in such a condition that there are concerns about the rise of Islamic State in the region, and some Chinese citizens are killed by this group.

As China will rise as the super power of the world in the future, so it is afraid of other powers, especially the U.S. In addition to its foreign concern, China is also concerned about its internal issue, which is Xinjiang, and its concern is about that its competitors will take advantage of the issue.

In addition, the crisis in Badakhshan, the Al Qaida's declaration of war against China, the Pakistan-China energy corridor, and the new Chinese Silk Road are other reasons that has given optimism to China about Kabul, so China may play an important role in the economic empowerment, negotiation with the Taliban, and Afghan-Pak relationships.

## Crossing the Bridge: Soviet Withdrawal from Afghanistan



Fifteenth of February, 2015 is the 26<sup>th</sup> withdrawal anniversary of the Soviet Union Forces from Afghanistan. In the cold winter of 1979, the Red Army entered into Afghanistan, and by assassinating the communist dictator Hafeezullah Amin, who was the member of People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA), they had given the authority of the country to another member of the same party, Babrak Karmal. Since the start of the coup d'état in 1978, up to soviet Invasion of Afghanistan in the winter of 1979, more than 30,000 people of the country, from various areas and various tribes, were killed by the regime.

Finally uprisings challenged the stability of the regime, on the other hand, the conflict between the two parts of the communist party that were related to Moscow also caused internal challenges to the regime. Therefore, the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan for the stability of its own puppet government in Afghanistan.

### Casualties of War:

There were approximately one and a half million Afghans killed and millions others migrated to other countries during the war. The Soviet Union invasion of Afghanistan took approximately ten years, and the war caused the Soviet Union to pay a huge cost.



Between 1979 and 1989, in Afghanistan there were 14453 Soviet Union Armed members killed, from which 9,511 of them were killed in the battles, 2,386 were death because of injuries, suicides, or illnesses. During the war, 417 militants of Soviet Union were missing or arrested. 19 soldiers were released from venture, and 22 resided in other countries.

War is a tragic phenomenon, but for Afghans, ending the war was more tragic compared to the war itself, because of the mistake of Mujahidin leaders, there was not result given for the blood shed of the Afghan nation, who were sacrificed in the battle field. The Mujahidin leaders failed to establish a stable, secure, peaceful and prosperous regime, and they started an internal war among themselves, in which blood of a massive number of people was shed.

For the achievements of the Afghan nation, we may point to the loss of the war by the Soviet Union Army. Most of Afghans believe that collapse of the Soviet Union was the result of their sacrifice, but the existence of the armed forces of more than 50 countries after the event Of 9/11/2001, arise the question either Afghanistan was not sacrificed for the freedom war of other countries to be independent?

### **Mistakes of Mujahidin Leaders:**

If we look at the background of the war of Afghan Mujahidin, which was for the freedom of the motherland and for establishing an Islamic regime. However, in the regard, Mujahedeen committed big mistakes, in which instead of reaching a peaceful, secure, and stable regime, they faced civil war, and instead of achieving the desires that Afghans sacrificed, those desires were destroyed, from which we can mention some of those mistakes as below:

1. Mujahidin were divided into small groups, in which they had great military and political competitions. Competition on the control of the areas that were gained from the Red Army, and competitions on gaining foreign aids, in some cases, caused war among the groups, in which blood of many people was shed. The rivalry and lack of trust of this area caused them to fight in a cruel manner against each other for getting control of the capital after the exit of the Red Army from Afghanistan.

2. Mujahidin did not participate in the Conference of Geneva, which paved the way for the exit of the Red Army from Afghanistan, because of the participation of the government of Kabul, instead of Mujahidin representatives of Pakistan participated in the conference to represent Mujahidin and decide about the future of Afghanistan. It provided the opportunity for Pakistan to openly intervene in Afghanistan, and the U.S. also accepted the position of Pakistan.
3. The Cold War ended, but the Mujahidin leaders were analyzing the conditions, as it was Cold War They believed that competition between the East and the West is yet going on, and they thought that yet the West needs the cooperation of Mujahidin to struggle against the Soviet Union.
4. Every group of the Mujahidin was telling about the necessity of establishment of Islamic regime in Afghanistan, but during the 14 years of Jihad, none of those groups had serious discussion about it, and there was not compromise at all. Even about the election their ideas were not similar. Hekmatyar was emphasizing for the necessity of election, but other leaders either did not accept it, or stayed silent. For example, Mawlawi Mohammad Yunus Khales would say that election is against Islam and Sharia. There was a conflict among them about the study of girls and women.
5. Mujahidin did not have any clue about the evolution that would happen after the overthrow of Dr. Najeebullah's Regime, though they had enough time, but yet they were surprised. The U.S. also did not support "Benin Sivan" of the U.N., which was for the peaceful transition of power in Afghanistan, as the result the program faced failure.
6. Mujahidin were not ready to give any rule to Dr. Najeebullah in the future of the country. In other words, Mujahidin did not take on time advantages of the opportunity. The leaders who would say that compromising with Dr. Najeebullah is dishonesty with the ambitions of Jihad, later on these leaders joined the militias of Dr. Najeebullah.
7. The armed forces of the country was counted as the enemy and murderers of the nation that should be dissolved, while the body of the forces was built of the nation, and it was possible that by conversion of the leadership those forces would be used for elimination of insecurity around the country. These military forces were not established by the Red Army to be dissolved, but it was the result of many years of efforts of various regimes that created the military forces.

8. Mujahidin made a mistake that they have done a great job for the West, so the U.S. and the West with all their great forces will stand beside their regime, which was completely wrong. Even before the overthrow of Dr. Najeebullah's regime the U.S. counted this as an ended war for its own interests.
9. By winning this war, Mujahidin were proud of themselves to the extent that they did not take care of obtaining the trust of the neighboring and regional countries, as the result, the country changed to the spot of the battle of proxy war among the neighboring and regional countries.

In addition to these mistakes, the regional and global evolutions were also not going as per well of Afghanistan. For example, one of the main involved parties of the Geneva Agreement, which was the Soviet Union, collapsed unexpectedly.

### **Achievements of War for Power:**

The aim of inflaming war among the Mujahidin groups was for achieving the below goals:

1. Preventing the establishment of an Islamic Regime in Afghanistan.
2. Removal of the value of Jihad from the minds of Muslims, or starting a bloodshed civil war in Afghanistan, and to make Jihad as the synonyms for war against terrorism and extremism.
3. Destruction of cache of arms in Afghanistan by the civil war, "based on some statistics, while its exit, the Soviet Union left more than 2500 tanks, 500 military and transportation aircrafts, Scud and Luna missiles, more than 5,000 military vehicles, and huge caches of heavy weapons and munitions, which all of these were destroyed during the civil war".
4. Changing the image of Mujahidin in the Western media from the Mujahidin who were fighting for establishment of a stable Islamic regime, to the ones who were just fighting against Soviet Union and did not have any other purpose.

The Afghan war after the overthrow of Dr. Najeebullah's regime was not only disaster for Afghan Nation, but also for the entire Muslim nation around the world. Those who came from various parts of the world for supporting Afghan Mujahidin during Jihad against the Soviet Union and they sacrificed, later on everywhere they

were prosecuted by the name of terrorists, some of them were killed and some others of them were imprisoned.

The result of the civil war teaches us that winning war is not winning only by forcing the invader enemy to exit from the country, we would call their exit as the victory, if the Afghans came together and established a secure, peaceful, and stable regime in the country and Afghan nation had a life with dignity.

The End

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