



Center for Strategic & Regional Studies

Kabul

Weekly Analysis-Issue Number 117 (May 9- 16, 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).

In this issue:

- Preface 2

The Pak-Afghan Relations: Increasing trust deficit and Plan “B”

- The starting of Peace talks?..... 3
- Increasing Insecurity.....4
- Factors of increased insurgency..... 4
- The increasing trust deficit between Kabul and Islamabad..... 5
- Afghan Government Hopes, Pakistan Plays the Game..... 6
- Can “B Plan” Change everything? 7
- Conclusion 8

Can Peace be achieved through War?

- “The Imposed War” 10
- Taliban consider it “imposed” 10
- Hiz-e-Islami, too, calls it “imposed” war..... 11
- Achieving Peace through War.....11
- Conclusion..... 12

Preface

Last week, the visit of Prime Minister of Pakistan, Nawaz Sharif and his Chief of Army Staff, Raheel Sharif was the headline of news agencies. It is the first time when both, civil-military leadership of Pakistan accompany each other to Kabul. The visit is being paid in a condition, where the hopes of Afghanistan from Pakistan in peace and stability in Afghanistan dashed to disappointment. In spite of this, Raheel's promise to Ghani regarding Taliban readiness for peace talks in March, also expired.

The questions being raised: could the visit attain Kabul's satisfaction? What Kabul wants from Islamabad? Can Islamabad give what Kabul expects?

From the other side, President Ashraf Ghani chanted the slogan of war when peace is the most-talked-about issue in the country. The President considered the ongoing war "imposed" and responded to the war with war. Historically, any political or military group in Afghanistan accused its foe of imposing the war. Is peace achievable with such a violent mentality?

The analyst's desk of Center for Strategic and Regional Studies in Kabul discussed the aforesaid topics in this week's analysis.

The Pak-Afghan Relations: Increasing trust deficit and Plan “B”



Last week, Pakistani Prime Minister Mohammad Nawaz Sharif visited Kabul for the first time since the National Unity Government has been formed. The Pakistani PM headed a high-level delegation to Kabul, made up of Pakistan’s Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Raheel Sharif, Director General of ISI General Rizwan Akhtar, Sartaj Aziz, foreign affairs and national security advisor to the PM, Finance minister Ishaq Dar, and other officials.

The visit has been paid in such period of time, where Pakistan’s COAS promise that Taliban will initiate direct talks with the Kabul in the mid of March is expired and on the other hand due to Taliban’s summer offensive – Operation “Azm”- the security of the country is being deteriorated and challenged to the large extent. The visit is too paid after the Doha Pugwash Conference, where different Afghan factions participated in unofficial discussions.

The starting of Peace talks?

Last week a Canadian institution “Pugwash” arranged a two day seminar under the “Afghan Dialogue” topic regarding peace and stability in Afghanistan. Taliban’s representatives, High Peace Council’s members, *Hizb-e-Islami* Hekmatyar’s

representatives and some independent Afghan and foreigner personalities participated in that conference.

Now, the question arises, whether the “Pugwash” conference was arranged based on General Raheel Sharif’s promise to President Ghani that Taliban will join peace talks in mid-March? First of all, no Afghan side participated officially in “Pugwash” conference except Taliban. Secondly, no Pakistani citizen participated in the conference. Despite that, keeping in view the former diplomatic efforts of Taliban’s political office in Qatar, Pakistan’s initiative seems unlikely. If Pakistan could arrange the conference, then, it might have been called in Dubai, Kabul or Islamabad, as it was promised to President Ghani in February.

Increasing Insecurity

Taliban announced their summer operations “*Azm*” on 22nd April. The *Azm* operations unprecedentedly transferred the insecurities from the traditional south to the north of the country. As a result of the operations for the first time Taliban have been able to reach to the vicinity of Kunduz city. Moreover, Taliban captured *Gorteepa*, *Jawand* district of Badghis, and the *Nawa* district of Ghazni has been in Taliban’s control for the last ten years.

Factors of increased insurgency

First: Taliban usually announce their fresh operations in spring season. From one hand, the season is fair for wars in Afghanistan and on the other; it gives morale to its fighters;

Second: the ongoing operations of Taliban are tenser compared to early year’s operations. This year, some US based media posed the presence of ISIS in Afghanistan, some others predicted that ISIS will succeed Taliban. One of the reasons behind such type of increased insurgency is that Taliban may want to practically refuse such rumors;

Third: since the last two months, especially when Pakistan Army Chief General Raheel Sharif paid several visits to Kabul and promised that Taliban will initiate peace talks with Ghani, it emerged hopes that Pakistan will sit Taliban in peace negotiations. Now, Taliban are trying to show their independence;

Fourth: Afghanistan signed the controversial “BSA” agreement with the US. Taliban now tries to prove their presence in spite of the agreement.

The increasing trust deficit between Kabul and Islamabad

In the recent months, most of the Afghan media and members of National Assembly widely criticized Ghani's foreign policy which just gives privileges to Pakistan.

Besides this, there are differences among high level members of National Unity government regarding foreign policy of the country. The disagreements appeared during Yemen crisis.

Even the President and CEO have some disagreements over relations with Pakistan. The second deputy of CEO, *Mohammad Mohaqiq* said that, they believed in peace, the "neighbors" promised them, therefore, they were heedless and the attacks of Taliban increased. It very clearly expresses the level of mistrust.

The factors of the emerged mistrusts in NUG during the last six months are as follows:

1. Kabul's Over Hopes

The Afghan government considered Taliban as puppets of Pakistan. Therefore, it gave some unprecedented privileges to Pakistan and hoped that this time Pakistan will be honest in its promises. But after six months, nothing changed. Rather, the insecurities increased in Afghanistan. The problem with the Afghan Government was that it linked all its hopes with Pakistan. Had the Afghan government used the two sided diplomacy, it may have had more chances of success. From one side it could continue talks with Taliban in Qatar and from the other side pursued gradually its relations with Pakistan.

2. Taliban Feel Independence

The participants of Pugwash conference disclosed that the new policy of President Ghani provoked Taliban. Now, Taliban show that neither they are puppets of any one nor are under influence of any side. Therefore, they initiated their spring operations with full intensity and tried to make their foreign policy away from the influence of Pakistan. For this cause, Qatar Office was inaugurated. The detainment of Taliban Qatar Office head, *Said Mohammad Taib Agha's* brothers in Pakistan and house arrest of *Mullah Beradar* are examples that Taliban tries to have independent policy. Though, Pakistan still has some sort of Influence over Taliban, but not to the extent to bring them to the table of negotiations.

3. The Promises of Pakistan

Pakistan COAS General Raheel Sharif's promises are very vital in increasing mistrusts. Pakistani officials gave strong promise; they have even specified the exact date for talks. But now it is May and they could not persuade Taliban for Peace talks with Afghan government.

4. Increase in Insecurities

The recent increase of insecurities in the country especially its expansion to the north is another factor that makes Afghans doubtful of Pakistan's actions and promises. The insecurities include blasts and deadly attacks around Afghanistan including Kabul.

5. Indian Lobby and Internal Differences in NUG

The menace in Afghanistan is that a number of officials are lobbying for Pakistan while some other are doing for India, no one keeps in mind the national interest of Afghanistan. Each of the lobbies is trying to limit the relations of the country with one side. Therefore, when the Afghan relations improved with Pakistan the Indian lobby started activities to derail them. Though the considerable reasons behind the mistrust are the above one, this one cannot be underestimated too.

Afghan Government Hopes, Pakistan Plays the Game

In December 16th of last year, when TTP (Tahreek Taliban Pakistan) conducted a deadly attack on an Army school in Peshawar and killed more than hundred students, COAS General Raheel Shareef visited Kabul the day after. The repetition of Shareef's (COAS) visits to Kabul created a sort of mentality that Pakistan will support Afghan government in the fight against Taliban. The beliefs increased when Raheel Sharif promised Kabul that Taliban will joint peace talks with Gani's government.

It has been said that Paksitan asked some Taliban leaders to talk to Kabul, but Taliban refused. Pakistan either is not ready to assist Ghani's government in peace talks with Taliban or it cannot do what Kabul expects. Based on some solid reasons, the second possibility seems more likely. Therefore, during the last March, some Pakistani media released reports that *Qari Din Mohammad Hanif*, member of Taliban Qatar office visited Pakistan. Afghan media then, in order to prove the role of Pakistan workable, they have widely quoted the reports.

Whenever Pakistani officials, especially the military leadership visited Kabul, hopes of peace emerges in Kabul. In return, Pakistan by using its powerful media, published some false reports and showing its own role. The Afghan government has not understood yet the game played by Pakistan.

From the other side, Taliban in their statement in “Pugwash” conference criticized the policy of Afghan government that instead of real sources they asks neighbors for peace. It might be the reason behind Taliban’s opposition with the presence of Pakistani delegation in “Pugwash” conference. It can easily be understood from the Taliban statement in “Pugwash” that they are trying to free themselves from Pakistan leverage.

Can “B Plan” Change everything?

During former President Hamid Karzai’s rule in Afghanistan, the relations with Pakistan faced many ups and downs. Karzai was of the opinion that Pakistan owns the key of peace and war in Afghanistan. The former president reiterated the same sentence in his Farwell event.

Since the formation of National Unity Government (NUG) in Afghanistan, President Ghani tries to make his relations in the region based on the economy. Ghani wants to put economy in top priorities in relations with neighbors. From the other side, Ghani thinks that Afghanistan will gain the role of bridge in the Asia through regional economic integration. Therefore, head of Strategic Studies center in foreign ministry of Afghanistan, Dr. Faramarz Tamana thinks: “the available economic capacity in Afghanistan can make economy the base of our relations. Moving from security phase to that of economy is the new Afghan policy towards Pakistan.”

Tamana is of the opinion: “‘A Plan’ could not reach us to our goals during the last thirteen years. We need peace and the key of peace is with Pakistan.”

Afghanistan, therefore, choose “B Plan” that it would help to get Pakistan’s cooperation. “The economization of relations is for this purpose.” Said Tamana. The Afghan government makes a repetitive mistake that it calls the “key of peace with Pakistan”. Pakistan attained a lot from this credit. Even now, the Afghan government easily becomes hopeful of Pakistan.

Till the Afghan government itself sort out the root causes of insecurity in the country and remove all of them, hopes from traditional foes may not have any positive result. The NUG from one side acts against peace and then hopes from Pakistan to cooperate in this regard. The route of peace does not pass through Islamabad, only. There are some honest routes of peace that Afghan government can easily utilize.

Conclusion

Both the Shareefs visited Afghanistan in a time that Raheel's March promise has already been expired. In last meeting, instead of discussing the reasons of not convening any peace talks in March, the NUG continued its hopes from Pakistan.

Some Considerable Points:

First: Afghanistan has always expected Pakistan things that largely out of Pakistan's capacity;

Second: Pakistan has already propagated regarding its role in peace process of Afghanistan. It has exploited such a scenario to the large extent;

Third: The role given to Pakistan by Afghan government is now a tool in the hand of Pakistan;

Fourth: Afghanistan, without keeping in view Pakistan's commitment, gives privileges;

Fifth: Keeping in view political office of the Taliban, it seems that the group is trying to make itself free from the leverage of Pakistan; and

Sixth: The Afghan government still moves the direction it has had during the last thirteen years.

Can Peace be achieved through War?



Afghan President Ashraf Ghani reacted against the recent insecurities in the country after the “Azm” operations of Taliban. The President said, Afghanistan is stuck in an imposed war and it would respond to it by war. But with it he would continue the peace process as well.

The statement of the President has nothing new. During the history of Afghanistan there has always been a pretext of peace behind any war. Every group when waged a war it does not say it would fight forever, rather, they have considered conflict a route to peace. In every conflict, the opposition is considered the wicked entity in the globe that should be suppressed and removed, and then peace will come. From civil wars to the two world wars, all of them have been fought for the hope of peace.

Only in 20th century, 220 wars were waged which claimed the lives of 200million human beings.

“The Imposed War”

Usually, the involved parties in the wars accuse their foes as they have imposed wars. Therefore, the term “Imposed Wars” is a way of escape.

We have witnessed the 36 years of war in Afghanistan where every party accused its foes for imposing the war. The story still goes on. Even the US invasion of Afghanistan was also interpreted as the imposition of war by the terrorists on the US.

President Ghani is not an exception in calling the ongoing war as imposed. The armed opposition of the government, too, considers the war as imposed upon them.

Taliban consider it “imposed”

Taliban believe that the US invasion and occupation of Afghanistan is an imposed war and they are inevitable to continue it till the full liberation of the country. Taliban said in their Qatar statement:

“Americans and their allies have militarily invaded the sovereign state of Afghanistan. They have martyred and incarcerated thousands of innocent people. They have desecrated the sanctities of the masses and have demolished their houses, lands and orchards. Therefore, prior to everything, foreign occupation which is the root cause of all adversities should be terminated so that the peace process and mutual inter-Afghan negotiations could proceed. On the other side, regional countries are also solicitous about the presence of foreign forces inside Afghanistan. So the extension of occupation means the persistence of war.

It is a fact that in the presence of foreign forces, an independent government cannot be formed in Afghanistan. Neither can the sovereignty of the country be restored nor can any policy based on Islamic and national interests be implemented. Therefore, as the war was instigated in our beloved homeland with the beginning of foreign occupation, Insha-Allah (God willing) the withdrawal of foreign troops will initiate peace process amongst the Afghans as they will find an opportunity to get together on the basis of their common grounds and establish an Afghan-inclusive Islamic system of life.”

Hiz-e-Islami, too, calls it “imposed” war

This not only Taliban's view. HI of Hekmatyar which does not have any considerable role in the war, has the same stance like Taliban. HI says in its statement regarding war and peace in Afghanistan:

“We want peace. Our nation wants the end of war. But war and reconciliation is completely in hand of US. They [US and allies] have imposed war on us and they are the reasons behind the continuation of war. US wants to have long-term presence in the region. And for this, it needs a controlled war to convince its people. It neither gives any authority to Kabul regime to make a step towards peace nor does itself withdraw its troops from the country, so that let Afghans to sit together and solve their problems. Karzai [the former president] was right when he said ‘the key of war and peace in Afghanistan is with US’.... Kabul regime is not authorized by US to make any peace deal with the opposition.

Ashraf Ghani made efforts to broker peace deal and he has sent some letters to the Amir of Hizb-e-Islami [Gulbaddin Hekmatyar], but the Americans opposed him.”

Achieving Peace through War

During election campaigns, Ashraf Ghani used to insist on that making efforts for peace would be in his priorities. During the campaigns some rumors circulated that Taliban, not only opposed casting votes, but also they have participated in Ghani's favor.

Afghan people who bear the burden of war on their shoulders had hopes that the newly formed government will make efforts for peace. President Ghani has reiterated many times, that without peace, developmental project will not bear fruit.

When the President believed this much on peace, than why he signed BSA (Bilateral Security Agreement) with the US?

The response for this question may be that the President believes in war for peace. As we said earlier, during the history, the pretext of any war was peace. The current

government also signed BSA with the hope that US will support Afghan troops in the war against Taliban. The US supporters insisted that it should be understood to the Taliban that they would not achieve anything through war and they should give up their armed opposition. President Ghani says, he would continue war, but will not neglect peace. It means that first Taliban should be weakened by military operations and then peace talks should be initiated with them.

Conclusion

The wars are first imposed on mentalities, before any bullet is being fired. Human beings can prevent wars and violence and do not consider bullet the only way to reach to their goals.

Therefore, if any nation wants peace, it should think about the repercussions of war before thinking about war and violence. Especially for us Afghans, who have spent 36 years in war, the experience is enough. The past 36 years of war teaches as that during this period even the super powers could not bring peace to the country. During the period, no group has been removed through war, rather, as a result of continuation of war, new and more violent groups emerged.

The End

Contact Us:

Email: info@csrskabul.com - csrskabul@gmail.com

Website: www.csrskabul.com - www.csrskabul.net

Contact: (+93) 784089590

