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Preface

Last week, Kabul was hosting two important meetings of “RECCA” and “SOM” on economic cooperation between Afghanistan and the region in which a number of high-level officials from some of the countries in the region and the world participated. The series of RECCA conferences is started from 2005, but, it yet to achieves any significant result; however, the hopes on economic integration of Afghanistan and the region raised once again after the latest RECCA conference.

The assistance of the international community and the promises given by Afghanistan were discussed in the SOM conference which could be considered as an effort of preparedness for the next year’s Brussels Conference and attracting the assistance of the international community. We are going to discuss about the probable impacts of RECCA-6 and SOM conferences on Afghanistan and region’s economic cooperation and economic situation and that why they have not got remarkable achievements yet.

You are reading analysis on disputes emerged after the change in leadership of the Taliban in second part of the Weekly Analysis. Last week, Mansour Dadullah announced his opposition to the new leadership of the Taliban and called it the puppet of Pakistan; immediately after that, the Taliban released a voice message of Mullah Mohammad Omar about dethroning him which was probably recorded in 2007. The point is that what is the condition of disputes emerged with the change in Taliban’s leadership and if these disputes continue, what would be their impact on the peace talks between the Taliban and the Afghan government?

These are the issues which will be discussed in details in this issue of weekly analysis.

RECCA and SOM Conferences: Its impacts on Afghanistan and the Region



The important conferences of RECCA and SOM were held in Kabul on September 3, 4 & 5, 2015. The first conference was about regional economic cooperation for Afghanistan and economic integration of the region. This was the 6th conference of RECCA that is being held by the Foreign Ministry of Afghanistan in the countries of the region since 2005. High-level officials from these regional countries participated in this conference, also. The conference lasted for two days.

The second conference was SOM, which observes the fulfillment of promises given in Tokyo Conference (2012) every year. Representative of 41 countries, 11 international organizations and the ministers and high-level officials of the Afghan government participated in this conference. Its main goal was having an overview on the activities of the Afghan government in the past one year, presenting the efforts of the Afghan government on human rights and struggle against corruption to the international donors and attracting the assistance of the international community. This was the first meeting after the London Conference (2014) in which the Unity Government had

presented its plans regarding the reforms; this conference is considered as preparedness for the Brussels Conference (2016), also.

Although, a lot of conferences are held about Afghanistan, however, these two conferences germinated hopes once again. The short, mid and long-term probable impacts of these conferences on Afghanistan's economic and political situation and its future perspective are discussed below.

Efforts about Regional Economic Integration

The Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) was established in Iran in 1985, Turkey, Pakistan and Iran were its members at that time; but, after the Red Army withdraw from Afghanistan and the Soviet Union collapsed, seven newly established Central Asian countries were given membership, also. Thus, the efforts on economic integration in the region speeded up and rivalry of Unocal and Bidas started on the TAPI Project, also. Besides that, Pakistan, China, India and Iran also tried to reach to the markets and natural resources of the Central Asia.

The Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) Program is an Asian Development Bank (ADB) supported initiative which was established in 1997 to encourage economic cooperation among countries in the Central Asian region. The ADB supports it in the fields of transport, trade and energy and has a plan for 2020 in this regard. The Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA) founded in 1999, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization founded in 2001 and the Asian Cooperation Dialogue was established in 2002. However, Afghanistan was in a very bad situation at the times, its transport and infrastructures were destroyed during 10 years of war between Soviet Union and Afghans, it was hit by civil war and was in isolation in international relations. Therefore, Afghanistan could not participate in the mentioned organizations at that time.

In Hamid Karzai's interim government, Afghanistan made some efforts on becoming member and participating in regional economic cooperation organizations and became a member of SAARC in 2007 and Observer in SCO in 2012.

Regional Economic Cooperation Conferences for Afghanistan (RECCA)

The first Regional Economic Cooperation Conference for Afghanistan (RECCA) was held in Kabul on December 5, 2005 and six of these conferences are held yet. Overall, the main points of the declarations of these six conferences are as follow:

- Caring and promoting agriculture and agricultural industry;
- Benefiting jointly from water;
- Trading energy and promoting it¹;
- The TAPI Project;
- Taking serious steps on removing distrust in order for the ground to be facilitated for economic cooperation;
- The ADB should study the economic integration and share its findings in the upcoming conference;
- The regional countries should remove obstacles in front of trade and transit;
- The regional countries should cooperate with Afghanistan in order to become the regional energy center²;
- A comprehensive plan should be prepared for Afghan refugees that repatriate to their country and camps should be made for repatriated Afghan refugees;
- ECO should start open trade in the region up to 2015;
- A Railway should be built from Chaman to Kandahar³;

Also, Fourth Regional Economic Cooperation Conference on Afghanistan (RECCA IV) was held in Istanbul 2010, November 2-3. RECCA participants recommended to improve the a) Infrastructure (Regional Roads, Railways, Extractive Mine Industry, Public-private partnerships and investment to enable commercially viable), b) Trade, Transit and border management (Regional Transit and Trade Agreements, Trade Facilitation, Customs and Transport Infrastructure Harmonization and Upgrade, Enhancement of Border Cooperation), c) Education and vocational training, d) Agriculture, f) Small and medium enterprises and others. And, the fifth conference (RECCA V) that was held in Tajikistan 2012 targeted the similar projects in these fields. At all, we can say that the projects mentioned in the declarations of these conferences, to a large extent, are yet to be implemented.

¹ The declaration of RECCA I held in Kabul, 2005.

² The declaration of RECCA II held in New Delhi, 2006.

³ The declaration of RECCA III held in Islamabad, 2009

RECCA Conference and their impact on Afghanistan's Economy

If the promises given in RECCA are implemented, it would have profound impact on the country's economy; from a hand, the infrastructure of Afghanistan would be built and from another hand, Afghanistan would become the regional center in the fields of transit, trade and energy. However, Afghanistan yet to be achieved this goal due to lack of fulfillment of these promises on the way they should be.

Afghanistan could receive membership and observer position in some of organizations due to these conferences. A lot of promises regarding TAPI, CASA-1000 and other projects have been made, however, the practical work on TAPI and CASA-1000 projects is yet to be started.

Of course, the main difference of the RECCA VI Conference with the previous conferences is that, this time, Afghanistan has reviewed the economic integration and the projects in the region well. This was the reason that the Chabahar Port, the Lajward Road and the China new Silk Road was discussed in this conference and Afghanistan, due for regional economic integration, did not emphasized on Afghanistan-focused issues, but, it used the term of regional hub instead.⁴

Why the Region does not move towards Economic Reintegration?

The presence of roads, security, peace and political stability are the most important factors for integration in the regional economy; but unfortunately, Afghanistan is lack of all of them. Besides that, there are series of historical problematic cases present in the region that are considered as obstacles toward regional integration; like:

- Dispute over Kashmir between Pakistan and India;
- Historical dispute over border between Afghanistan and Paksitan;
- Disputes over water in the Central Asia;
- Lack of water-sharing treaties in the region;
- Border case of China and India;
- Interests of other countries in Central Asia;
- Balance of Power in the region (India-Japan-US Coalition and China-Russia-Pakistan Coalition)

⁴ Tolo News, RECCA Summit An Opportunity for Regional Cooperation, 3 Sep 2015, see it online:<
<http://www.tolonews.com/en/afghanistan/21223-recca-summit-an-opportunity-for-regional-cooperation>>

And there are several other reasons that do not let the region to move toward economic integration and that's why these conferences have not got any significant achievement yet.

SOM Conference and the future of Assistance with Afghanistan

The representatives of donor countries were participated in the SOM Conference, also. The Afghan government presented its performance of the past eleven months and reviewed the promises given in the London Conference (2014) and made other promises for the future, also.

This conference is a preparedness to next year's Brussels Conference and a struggle for attracting international assistance. The National Unity Government by reopening the case of Kabul Bank and introducing some of the corrupt officials of the Urban Development and Housing Ministry to the Court shows that it is serious in struggle against corruption.

Beside that, the government of Afghanistan gave promises on issues the international community is interested in including human rights and women and children rights, some of them are as following:

First: Afghanistan would prepare a trustworthy budget in the upcoming Brussels Conference;

Second: The situation of human rights would become better until the upcoming Brussels Conference and the government would present a better picture of women rights, then. A new law on children rights would be ratified and the law on preventing violence against women would be implemented well, also;

Third: The peace talks would be improved and the government would take serious steps toward eliminating war until the Brussels Conference.⁵

⁵ Tolo News, Positive Reports emerge as Ghani opens SOM, 5 Sep 2015, see it online:<
<http://www.tolonews.com/en/afghanistan/21240-positive-reports-emerge-as-ghani-opens-som>>

Recommendations

- A RECCA-related Secretariat should be established in Kabul in order to ensure these promises are fulfilled well;
- A special team should be appointed in order to work just on the implementation of promises given in the conferences.
- Building infrastructures is very important for Afghanistan before it becomes the center of economic integration and transit, trade and energy in the region and the government should take care of this field well;
- Corruption had spreaded its roots in the every sector of Afghanistan and is turned into a culture and a habit, therefore, corruption would not be eliminated with solving the Kabul Bank case only. It needs a comprehensive policy which would contain reforms, implement the law and eliminate the Mafia of corruption.
- The government should bring reforms in the field of customs and increase the revenue of government through taking series steps;
- The government should take care of agriculture, mines and water in the country in order to decrease the trade deficit and increase the revenues of government through this mean.

The Internal disputes of Taliban: The Current Scenario and the Future Perspective



After the death news of Mullah Mohammad Omar, the former leader of the Taliban, was revealed, some of the important figures in the Taliban's movement opposed the appointment of new leader, Mullah Akhtar Mohammad Mansour. These figures were arguing that the successor's appointment method was incorrect.

Creation of disputes after the death of the leader is not that much unusual in every group, however, keeping the secret of the death of Taliban's leader hidden for more than two years could be one of the reasons behind these disputes, although, other issues came out that increased these disputes, then.

Said Tayyib Agha, the general director of the Qatar Office and one of the close friends of Mullah Mohammad Omar did not become dissatisfied just for the death of Mullah Mohammad Omar that was kept hidden from him but he also raised some questions on the appointment of new leader inside the soil of Pakistan. The family of former leader of the Taliban announced that it is impartial in the disputes on the leadership in the Taliban's movement.

At the beginning, these disputes had political approach and due to this a number of religious scholars held meetings with opposite sides in order to solve the problems. On the other hand, the opponents of Mullah Akhtar Mohammad Mansour did not have a complete understanding among each other and so the objection was not considered seriously, because these disputes were not permeated to the rank of the Taliban at the battle-ground, however, these disputes became broader gradually.

Disputes in the Lines of War

At the beginning, it was looked like that perhaps Mullah Abdul Qayoum Zakir, that the rumors about his opposition with Mullah Akhtar Mohammad Mansour were heard years before, would stand against him. Abdul Qayoum Zakir is considered as an influential personality in the ranks of the Taliban, his objection could be very effective, however, that did not happen. Zakir, considering the objection of his to some opponents of Mansour, preferred to pledge his allegiance to Mansour.

Releasing the video of Mullah Mansour Dadullah empowers the rumors of that these disputes would be transmitted to the rank of the Taliban in the battle ground, also. The media reported on fighting between the partisan of Mullah Akhtar Mohammad Mansour and Mullah Mansour Dadullah, however, these rumors were rejected by the Taliban and Mullah Mansour Dadullah did not hint war in his remarks.

Mansour Dadullah in his remarks that broadcasted from the media claimed that the leaders of the Taliban are elected in Pakistan and by ISI. Considering the increasing irritation of the Taliban from Pakistan, this pretension of him would be an effort for encouraging the Taliban warriors to join the group which is under his command. He also mentioned the promises of ISI with him; he claimed that ISI was providing him with one third of the facilities given to the Taliban, but he rejected this request of Paksitan.

The Influence of Mansour Dadullah's Opposition

The question is that whether Mansour Dadullah would be able to have a huge company of other Taliban with him and actuate it against the new leadership of the Taliban? Considering the personality of Dadullah, performing such a great job by him seems impossible.

Mansour Dadullah is the elder brother of Mullah Dadullah, the well-known commander of the Taliban. During the Taliban regime, he became accused with killing civilians in the North of Afghanistan, therefore, Mullah Mohammad Omar disarmed him, then.

After the collapse of the Taliban regime, Mullah Dadullah tried to have fighting with the government of Afghanistan; in the case, the leadership of the Taliban had not decided to have war on the new government in Afghanistan yet. At the time the foreign forces came to Afghanistan, Mullah Dadullah was a powerful commander of Taliban in Helmand Province with who thousands of armed warriors joined later.

In 2007, Mullah Dadullah died as a result of fighting with foreign forces in Nahr-i Saraj District of Helmand Province and Mansour became his successor, then. His fame was for the activities of his brother and he inherited the title of Dadullah from his brother, also.

In 2008, Mansour Dadullah became dethroned by Mullah Mohammad Omar and his armed men left him alone after the news on his meeting with two English officials named Mikael Sampel and Marwin from the office of European Union in Kabul revealed. After the releasing of a video message from Mansour Dadullah, the Taliban also released a voice message of Mullah Mohammad Omar about dethroning him which was probably recorded in 2007.⁶

After Mullah Masnour Dadullah along with his elder brother, Haji Lala, returned to the Baluchistan State of Pakistan, became arrested by Pakistani forces and remained in prison till 2013. When the government of Afghanistan requested Pakistan to release the leaders of Taliban imprisoned in Pakistan, Pakistanis sent a message to the tribe of Kakar resident in Baluchistan that they are going to release Masnour Dadullah, if it guarantees that he is not going to have activities against foreign forces in Afghanistan. (Mansour Dadullah is from the tribe of Kakar). The elders of the tribe should have the support of the Afghani Taliban, however, the Taliban, considering Mansour Dadullah's whim, refused giving of such guarantee; as a result, Mansour Dadullah remained in prison for some more months and Pakistanis told him that the Afghani Taliban do not consider him as one of them.

After Mansour Dadullah released from the prison, he started living in Zhob locality of Baluchistan and according to the promise he gave to the tribal elders, he did not have

⁶ See online:

http://www.bbc.com/pashto/afghanistan/2015/09/150910_hh-mulla-omar-message

military activities; however, he then went to the Khak-e Afghan locality of Zabul Province and armed men, which more of them were from his own tribe, joined him. Previously, the media was reported that Mullah Mansour Dadullah started supporting Daesh in Khak-e Afghan District, however, he, in his interview with the media, rejected these allegations and claimed that he is still loyal to Mullah Mohammad Omar.

After the news on death of Mullah Mohammad Omar revealed, he recognized that Mullah Akhtar Mohammad Mansour had not wanted him to become released from the prison and due to this, he has put rancor of Mullah Akhtar Mansour in his heart and has done activities against him.

The Future of Taliban's Internal Disputes

Objections against the new leadership of the Taliban started by a number of former leaders of the Taliban immediately after the news on death of Mullah Mohammad Omar revealed and the new leadership took these objections seriously, also. Mullah Akhtar Mohammad Mansour in his first speech after he became appointed as a new leader of the Taliban considered this issue as important and said that he will try to remove these objections through negotiations and understandings.

However, Abdulhey Mutmaeen, one of the close friends of Mullah Akhtar Mohammad, with speciosity, said that those who were busy with business instead of battle in the ground do not have right to question the new leadership of the Taliban. He was aiming those leaders of the Taliban who had participated in peace negotiation with Afghanistan which were controlled by Pakistan.

But, now, the objection is being reached to the battle field and this matter can be challenging for the Taliban and their future. If Mansour Dadullah succeeded in having a number of Taliban's military commanders, of course, the new leadership of the Taliban would face more serious challenges and perhaps it would cause the Taliban to become divided at least into two parts. Daesh can benefit this weakness of the Taliban. Daesh, which could not have significant presence in Afghanistan due to the unity among the Taliban, would be able to consider itself as a successor of the Taliban and it would spread its activities in the entire country with a full confidence, if a group of the Taliban separated from its system and joined Daesh.

The important point is that whether the weakness of the Taliban could have any positive impact on the peace process? Some analysts believe that the government of Afghanistan should get use of this opportunity and through spy agencies, speedup the process of separation and ramification in order to facilitate the ground for those Taliban who want peace to join the government of Afghanistan.

However, the reality is that the present disputes in the rank of the Taliban are not for accepting or opposing the peace negotiations. Originally, the matter of peace negotiations among the Taliban is not considered as a necessity and the armed wing of the Taliban whose ramification can badly harm the unity of the Taliban have agreed upon that they will not stop war until the foreign force withdraw the country.

If ramification really occurs in the rank of the Taliban, it would be considered as an achievement for the government of Afghanistan in short-term because it would decrease the pressure of war, however, it, in long-term, would cause the more extremist groups, which would never have an intention for peace, to come to the ground.

The End

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