



## Center for Strategic & Regional Studies

Kabul

# Weekly Analysis - Issue Number 89 (October 18-25, 2014)

Weekly Analysis is one of the CSRS' publications analyzing significant weekly political and economic events of Afghanistan and region to provide strategic insights and policy solutions to help decision-maker institutions and individuals design better policies. Weekly Analysis is published in local languages Pashto and Dari, English and Arabic languages.

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### **In this issue:**

- Introduction ..... 2

### **The History of Afghan Turkey Relationship and its New Stage**

- Historical of Afghan-Turk Relationship ..... 3
- History of the modern relationships ..... 4
- Since 2001 to 2014 ..... 5
- The Future of Afghan-Turk Relationship ..... 6

### **The first trip of a Turkish President to Afghanistan after 56 years**

- The Value of Erdogan's Trip to Kabul ..... 7
- Peace and Economy ..... 8

### **Sartaj Aziz's Trip to Afghanistan, and Attempts for Improvement of Relationships**

- Concerns of Pakistan ..... 10
- The Ongoing Game of India and Pakistan in Afghanistan ..... 11

## Preface

In this volume CSRS weekly analysis: read about the value of the first trip of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan to Afghanistan, the future relationship of Afghanistan and Turkey in the light of the historical relationship between these two countries, and the trip of national security and foreign policy advisor of Pakistan Sartaj Aziz's trip, which took place the next day of Erdogan's trip to Afghanistan.

In current situation, the first trip of Turkish president after 56 years seems extremely valuable. On one hand, there are hopes rose about the peace, stability and economic development of the country with the establishment of the new government; on the other hand, Turkey, which has historical relationship with Afghanistan, is the strongest Islamic state around the world.

In this trip, Afghans are hopeful for signing strategic agreement with Turkey and its rule in the various aspects of the country. Turkey, which has good relationship with the armed Taliban, can play a significant role in the peace and security of the country. The strategic relationship of Turkey with Pakistan may also be significant for ending the ongoing disputes and issues between Afghanistan and Pakistan.

In addition to Erdogan's trip to Afghanistan, the next day, the national security advisor of Pakistan Sartaj Aziz also reached Kabul, and in addition to inviting President Ashraf Ghani to Pakistan, they spoke about improvement of the relationship of both the countries. It seems that the relationship of Afghanistan and Pakistan is being improved with the mediation of Turkey. Here you will read the details of the mentioned issues;

## The History of Afghan Turkey Relationship and its New Stage



Turkey is one of the developed countries of the world, and it is among the top twenty economies of the world. Due to its strategic value, history, and culture, this country has its own strategic depth in the region.

On the other hand, Afghanistan is located in the heart of Asia, and it has a long history, it is also called to be the centre of civilization. It is also the origin of Aryan Race, which moved to other regions. And currently Afghanistan is so valuable due to its strategic location, its neighbourhood with China, which is the second economic power of the world, and other Central Asian countries, and good relationship with other countries.

Both the countries had great relationship with each other; but President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's trip, after the inauguration of new Afghan Government, to Kabul, carried out the relationship to two countries into a new stage.

### Historical of Afghan-Turk Relationship

Afghanistan had historical relationship with Turkey; Turkish Tribe has gone to Turkey from Aryana (the banks of the Oxus-Amu River), they stayed there and built the Turkey today. If we go to the depth of Ottoman Empire, we will find that the founder of the empire, Fundamentalist Ottoman, has also gone to Turkey from the Central Asia, and originated Ottoman Empire there.

The first king of Ghaznavid era, which was based in Ghazni Province of Afghanistan, Sultan Mahmood Ghaznavi's father was Turk, and also another famous Afghan personality Maulana Jalal Uddin Balkhi, who was born in Balkh, has gone to the capital of currently Turkey (that time known as Rome) Istanbul, and he was enlightened with both last names (Rumi and Balkhi). Said Jamaluddin Afghan also attempted to save the caliphate of the Second Caliph Abdul Hamid, and once asked for the permission to arise waves in Central Asia for his support. Similarly, some other Afghan elites like Mahmood Tarzi has also spent time in Ottoman Empire and was influenced there.

For clarification of the cultural relationship of the two countries, only memories of Maulana Rumi is also enough; but collectively both the countries had deep relationship with each other during the course of history. From Shah Ashraf to Ahmad Shah Abdali, and then to Amir Sher Ali Khan, Afghanistan and Turkey had good relationship with each other.

### **History of the modern relationships**

In the modern history, Turkey sent its military commanders to Afghanistan for training Afghan Army; and Turkey, after the Soviet Union, was the second country to recognise the independence of Afghanistan, and Afghanistan was also the second country to accept the country of Ata Turk as an independent country. King Amanullah Khan was the first Afghan Leader to visit Turkey, at that time the first embassy of Afghanistan was opened in Turkey. The Turkish Defence Minister Ismet Yilmaz pointed to the idea of opposition in the parliament, and said: "Afghanistan was one of the first few countries that recognized the independence of Turkey, and it was the first country to open its diplomatic representation here. During Ata Turk, we had a defence alliance with it, therefore Turkey will cooperate Afghanistan in its harshest times, and our existence in Afghanistan is not related to the existence of NATO in Afghanistan."

Therefore, Erdogan, in his trip to Islamabad in 2012, said: "Turkey will stay in Afghanistan even after the exit of other foreign forces. We will be there in Afghanistan till Afghans thank us, and let us exit from Afghanistan."

While Ottoman Empire faced with the Arabian rebellion; the Afghan Newspaper Saraj ul Akhbar, under the control of Mahmood Tarzi, was publicizing for the support of Ottoman Empire. But Afghans did not end their support only by that, and stood next to Turks in their historical war.

At the beginning of Afghan Jihad, Turkey supported Afghanistan, and later on, Turkey and China stated themselves as neutral, as the result of which there were hopes in Afghanistan related to these countries.

## Since 2001 to 2014

Turkey sent its armed forces to Afghanistan in the frame of NATO, but from the beginning they declared that their forces will not participate in military operations. At the beginning Turkey sent approximately 300 soldiers to Afghanistan, which is now approximately 1000; but till now even a single Afghan is not killed by Turkish forces.

Up to date, Turkey trained approximately 12500 Afghan armed forces in Afghanistan, and approximately 3300 more in Turkey, and up to the upcoming one decade it will train approximately 15000 more Afghan Armed Forces.

There was an agreement signed, on March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2011, between Afghanistan, Turkey, Japan, and NATO, according to which Afghan Armed Forces would be trained in one of the military academy of Turkey. Based on the agreement, firstly there were 500 Afghans sent to Turkey in July of 2011, and after the completion of the training they came back to the country in February of 2012, and the same process is still ongoing.

Meanwhile, based on the annual statistics of Afghanistan, up to 2012 both the countries collectively had approximately 290 million U.S. Dollars commerce with each other. According to a report, up to 2010, Turkish Construction Companies have gained up to 3 billion dollars projects in the country. Similarly Turkish Government itself also implemented tens of projects in Afghanistan with the worth of approximately 400 million dollars.

The most significant role that Turkey played in last decade, during Karzai's government, was the trilateral conferences between Afghanistan, Pakistan and Turkey. Those trilateral conferences started in 2007, which Afghanistan started claiming Pakistan that it was providing shelters for Afghan Taliban, and then they were attacking on Afghanistan. Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Turkey, up to 2012, had seven trilateral conferences, (in 2007, 2008, 2009, twice in 2010, once in 2011, and once in 2012).

Though those conferences did not resolve the disputes between Afghanistan and Pakistan, but to some extent, they decreased those disputes. For example, in the conference of 2009 the military and intelligence heads of both the countries met with each other. In the conference in December of 2010 all the three countries agreed that they will perform shared military exercises, which were implemented in Turkey in 2011.

In November of 2011, Turkey started the program of Asia about Afghanistan, or (Istanbul for Afghanistan). All the Afghan neighbours participate in those conferences, which its aim is peace and stability of Afghanistan. In those conferences, presidents of Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Turkey, the vice president of Iran, representative of Chinese President, the Chinese Defence Minister, and some other officials participate.

It is remarkable that the upcoming conference of this series, which will be held on October 20, 2014, will be held in China. There are rumours that the upcoming conference will be very beneficial for the future of Afghanistan. Afghanistan has its preparation for the conference, and Pakistan also pay a special attention to the conference. For the mentioned reason, Pakistani senator, who is also the head of Pakistan-China Institute, created a two days conference under the title of China-Pakistan-Afghanistan on October 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> of the current year.

## **The Future of Afghan-Turk Relationship**

Up to the largest extent the relationship of Afghanistan and Turkey are based on culture. Even while Turkish analysts speak of the relationship, they start with the topic that both the countries are so close to each other based on their culture, and Turkey has a historical responsibility to cooperate Afghanistan in its harsh time. According to him, in addition to that the existence of Uzbeks and Turkmens in Afghanistan is another reason for strengthening the relationships.

According to analysts, Turkey will try in the future to strengthen the cultural and economic relationship of the two countries in the future, therefore Turkey want to build a university in Afghanistan by the name of Maulana Jalaluddin Balkhi.

Though Turkey is involved in the issues of the Middle East and most of its attention is toward those issues, still it is clear from its diplomatic attempts that it can play an important role in the peace, security, and stability of Afghanistan.

From the attempts of Turkey it seems that Turkey express its concerns about the peace and stability of Afghanistan and count it valuable; because, the peace and stability of Afghanistan will not only bring peace and stability in the region, but will also influence the peace and stability of Turkey as well, and collectively it will bring new economic advantages for the region, especially for Turkey.

## The first trip of a Turkish President to Afghanistan after 56 years



On October 18, 2014, Recep Tayyip Erdogan reached Kabul on his one-day trip. In last five decades it is the first trip of a Turkish president to Afghanistan, which never happened after 1958 up to this trip. Due to the mentioned reason and the reason of special preparation program for his trip, have granted value to Erdogan's trip. And after the inauguration of the new government, Erdogan was the first foreign high-ranking official that had trip to Kabul.

The reason for the loss of strong relationship between Afghanistan and Turkey, during the Cold War, may be that Turkey joined Pakistan and the West in the Cold War, but Afghanistan remained neutral. But during the Afghan Jihad, Turkey supported Afghans and did not intervene in the Afghan Civil War, and in last few years Former President Hamid Karzai, to some extent, rebuilt the relationship of Afghanistan and Turkey.

### The Value of Erdogan's Trip to Kabul

In this trip, Erdogan signed strategic agreement between the two countries with President Ashraf Ghani Ahmadzai, which will strengthen mutual relationship.

Since 2007 Turkey held 7 trilateral conferences among the high-ranking officials of Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Turkey for resolving the crisis between Afghanistan and Pakistan, and due to its good relationship with the neighboring countries of Afghanistan, Turkey had an active role in those trilateral conferences. The conference of China, which will be held on October 28 of the current year, is also counted as one of the attempts of Turkey for improvement of Afghan-Pakistani relationship.

On the other hand, Turkey is also counted as one of the strategic alliances of Pakistan in the region and one of the countries that has significant influence on Pakistan, so there is a hope that Turkey will play a significant role in solving the issues between Afghanistan and Pakistan, and will also have influential role in the peace and stability of the country. President Erdogan, in his trip to Afghanistan, mentioned that he will try to improve the relationship of Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Some analysts believe that the national security advisor of Pakistan Sartaj Aziz's trip to Afghanistan was also one of the diplomatic attempts of Turkey for the peace and stability of the region and improvement of the relationship of the two countries.

Overall we can say that Recep Tayyip Erdogan's trip to Afghanistan was valuable due to various aspects. As Afghanistan and Turkey has political, economic, and cultural mutual relationships in history, so it causes the relationship of the two countries to be strengthened. Due to the mentioned historical, and cultural relationship of these two countries, Turkey can play a significant role in the peace, security, stability of Afghanistan.

## **Peace and Economy**

Turkey is the first Islamic state that has the membership of NATO. Though their armed forces were there in Afghanistan in last ten years, but their view toward Afghanistan is completely different from that of other members of NATO, and their army did not participate in battle fields. Due to the mentioned reason, Turkish forces did not face military loss in Afghanistan.

The Taliban also had a different view toward Turkish forces, and many times they released Turkish forces for goodwill. On one hand, though Turkey has deeply economic, commercial, and cultural relationship with Afghanistan; on the other hand, to some extent they have good relationship with the armed Taliban, and count their group separate from the Al Qaida network. Therefore, Former President Hamid Karzai counted Turkey as a reasonable place for peace negotiation with the Taliban, but due to some other reasons, they have chosen Qatar as the center for peace negotiation. Overall, three countries in the region can play the role of mediation between the Afghan Government and its armed forces, those are namely Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and Pakistan.

Afghans looks toward two countries (Turkey and China) as respectful countries, though during Cold War China supported Maoists in Afghanistan, and the liberal generals of Turkey were also supporting General Dostum in the Afghan Civil War. But those supports were in a lower level, and now those countries felt those sensitiveness. Therefore Afghans are hopeful for the



positive aspects of those countries, and they expect the role of the two countries in the fields of economic development, investment, and commercial relationship.

Though the new Afghan Government is greedy for the economic development in the country, but related to Turkey, it is much hopeful for the diplomatic plans for peace and stability in the country. Because Turkey is the Islamic state that is interested to peace in Afghanistan. Though on one hand, it has historical relationship with Afghanistan; on the other hand, it has good strategic relationship with Pakistan since last few decades. In last years, Turkey also attempted to play the role of mediate among the two countries, with the usage of its relationship with the two countries.

## **Sartaj Aziz's Trip to Afghanistan, and Attempts for Improvement of Relationships**



During Hamid Karzai's government, the relationship of Kabul and Islamabad was so complicated, and most of the times Afghanistan was blaming Pakistan that it was seeking its strategic depth in Afghanistan to control the foreign policy of Afghanistan with its own hands. And the blames of Afghanistan on Pakistan, which was support of Afghan Taliban by Pakistan, were so much.

Based on the last one decade relations, in addition to other foundational issues, one of them was support of the Taliban by Pakistan, and the active role of India in Afghanistan. Afghan side clarified that Pakistan provided shelter for the Afghan Taliban, and they are busy with proxy war against India in Afghanistan, some of the examples are the claims that Pakistan had hands in the attacks on Indian councils.

On the other hand, Afghan side also claims Pakistan for creating obstacle in the peace process between Afghan Government and the Afghan Government Enemies. Arresting and killing of the Afghan Taliban leaders like Mulla Beradar, in Pakistan, is one of the main reasons that shows the negative role of Pakistan in the peace process.

### **Concerns of Pakistan**

Pakistan is concerned about the significant role of India in Afghanistan, and it is clear from the ideas of Pakistani Officials. Pakistan has doubt about various aspects of Indian role in Afghanistan:

First, India want to intervene in the internal affairs of Pakistan through Afghanistan, which most of the time Pakistani media point to the crisis in Baluchistan and Waziristan and blame Afghanistan and India for those crisis.

Second, Pakistan think that India expects that there should be an Indian supporter government in Afghanistan, so it will reach its strategic depth against Pakistan. But these claims of Pakistan are inappropriate; because, though India played more significant economic role, compared to Pakistan, in Afghanistan, still there is not such activity of India visible in Afghanistan about what Pakistan has to be concerned. Hamid Karzai, in his interview with Pakistani analyst in 2011, said that if India attacks Pakistan, we will stand with the Pakistani Nation. Even without that it is believable that Afghanistan will never play a negative role in the conflict between the two countries.

Third, India want to be an obstacle for Pakistan in the Middle East, and even cause Pakistan economic and commercial crisis in Afghanistan. If we analyze the Afghanistan-Pakistan bilateral commercial relations, it is clear that they are for the interest of Pakistan. Based on commerce between both the countries since 2001 to 2008, the overall commerce between two countries in 2000 and 2001 was 170 million dollars, but in 2007 and 2008 it reached 1236 million dollars, and in that stage (2007 and 2008) overall commerce between the two countries was 5 billion and 212 million dollars among which 4 billion and 828 million dollars were only the exports of Pakistan to Afghanistan.

Based on another statistics, only in 2012 Afghanistan imported goods with the value of 2 billion dollars from Pakistan; but there are only goods with the value of 212 million dollars imported from India.

## **The Ongoing Game of India and Pakistan in Afghanistan**

Though during Karzai's government the relationship of both the countries was so dark; but with the inauguration of the new government and presidency of Ashraf Ghani Ahmadzai, there was a newsletter published by "ARG" which says, "It is a great chance for the relationships of both the countries to improve."

On the other hand, Pakistan tried to take advantages of the new government, and with sending trip invitation to President Ashraf Ghani, Pakistan sent Sartaj Aziz to Afghanistan. Though the details of the visit are not declared; but it is said that both the parties agreed that the ongoing visits between the high-ranking officials of both the countries will continue. In addition, President Ahmadzai told Sartaj Aziz that they will stop blaming each other, and instead of telling by words, they will enter the stage of action. Meanwhile, Sartaj Aziz said that the

inauguration of the new government in Afghanistan is a great chance for peace and security in Afghanistan, and they want to have good relationships with Afghanistan.

Though the trip had a ceremonial aspect, still it was a chance for the improvement of relationship between both the countries, which will be useful for both the countries. Currently it is neither useful for Islamabad, to be concerned about its unwarranted optimism (strategic depth), nor for Kabul, if the concerns of Pakistan are real that Afghan Government will give a chance of proxy war for India in Jalalabad and Kandahar.

As India is currently respected in Afghanistan, this respect is not won by only advertisements; but it is won by investments, projects, and other economic activities in Afghanistan, therefore its soft power increased in the country. But it is important for the Afghan Government to keep the balance of development and successful diplomacy between both the countries (India and Pakistan).

It is a public idea in Afghanistan that still Islamabad has an ironic attitude toward Afghanistan. If, on one hand, it speak of peace, security and stability in Afghanistan; on the other hand, their role in the ongoing insecurity activities is also clear. So Pakistan should know that India and Afghanistan had thousands of years of historical relationship with each other, even before the birth of Pakistan, and its game toward the mentioned relationship is not useful. Meanwhile, India should also think that the armed Taliban are part of the Afghan Nation, and without negotiation with them, the development and real peace in Afghanistan is impossible.

The End

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