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Preface

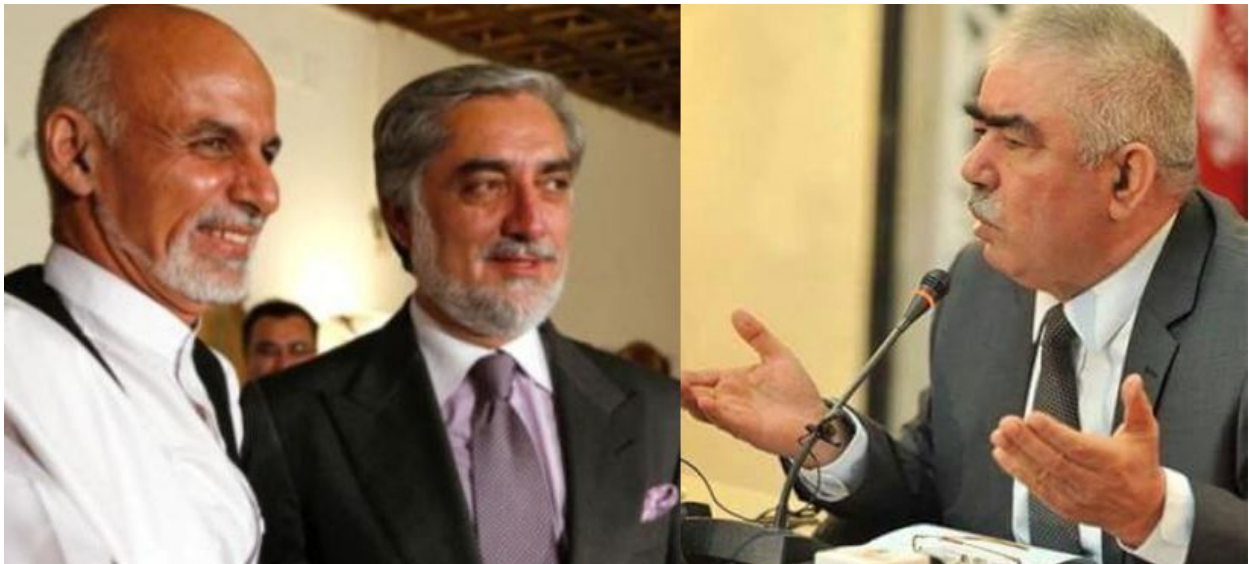
The Afghan National Unity Government (NUG) is dealing with internal differences since its formation in 2014; but now these differences have changed its shape. The Afghan Vice President accused the NUG's leaders of nepotism and also criticized some other government officials.

Although, previously, Dostum's criticisms were not taken seriously, but this time the Presidential Palace has harshly responded to his expressions and in a statement warned that the government is obligated to probe brutality-related complaints during the war. Thus the statement, somehow, indicates the crimes that Dostum's militias have committed. Such accusations by the Afghan Vice President or the President's special representative on reforms and good governance are not simple. But what are the main factors behind these accusations? And what is the nature of such accusations? In the first part of the analysis you would read about it.

In the second part of the analysis you would read about the increase in cultivation and production of poppy in Afghanistan in 2016. Last year (2015), the production and cultivation of poppy had notably decreased. Although unsuitable weather have been said to be the reason behind the reduction of poppy cultivation and production in 2015 but still it was deemed as an achievement for the Afghan government in fight against narcotics; but the joint report of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crimes and the Afghan government in 2016 show that the cultivation and production of poppy had landmark increase in 2016. But, despite the large sum of money spent by international community to fight against narcotics, why is this struggle/fight became a failure? And in this regard what was/is the role of international mafia?

In this issue of weekly analysis of the Center for Strategic and Regional Studies you would read about the above two issues.

Dostum's accusations and the NUG's internal differences



The Afghan Vice President General Abdul Rashid Dostum fiercely criticized President Ashraf Ghani, Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah and some other senior government officials last week. Previously, Dostum had made such criticisms due to power sharing issues, but this time he has accused the Afghan President and Chief Executive of favoring the ethnic groups they are identified with.

This is not the first time that the President and the National Unity Government (NUG) had been the subject of criticism by Abdullah or even President's camps; but, before this, there were differences between the two electoral teams and then between the two camps of the NUG which was resolved with foreign mediations. General Dostum have also had differences with the Afghan President on issues such as his powers, share in the government and whether who will act, as his placeholder, in the absence of the President.

What are the main reasons behind the internal differences of the NUG? Do Dostum's expressions add fuel to ethnic divisions? And what is the nature of the senior government officials' criticism from the government? These are the questions that are analyzed here.

Increasing internal differences in the NUG

Right after the formation of the NUG, it became the subject of vast criticisms by circles outside and inside the government, criticism by the later means internal differences, and now after two years of its formation not only these differences are not resolved but it is increasing on a monthly basis.

At the beginning, these differences were evident between the two teams of the NUG but later differences appeared inside each team as well. In the first days of the NUG, the differences were due to division of powers but later these differences also became apparent during the appointment of the cabinet members, senior officials and even the Afghan Ambassadors in other countries. Therefore, a number of the senior government officials either fiercely criticized the government or resigned. For instance, the head of the Local Organs Independent Administration Jailani Popal, head of the National Directorate of Security Rahmattullah Nabil, Minister of Interior Affairs Norulhaq Olomi, the chairman of the Independent Election Commission Yusuf Nuristani, Minister of Mines and Petroleum Dauod Shah Saba, the governor of Helmand Mirza Khan Rahimi, the governor of Kunduz Mohammad Omar Safi and some other officials resigned.¹

Out of the government, the NUG also criticized by the Afghanistan Protection and Stability Council, in which Jihadi figures and officials of the former government are gathered; the Supreme Council of Jihadi and National Parties Sebghatullah Mujadadi, the New National Front of Anwarul Haq, head of the Green Trend Amrullah Saleh and some other politicians.

The main factors behind internal differences

The following are the reasons behind the reescalation of internal difference within the NUG:

- **First; the NUG itself:** Generally, national unity governments are formed after a prolonged war and usually their main objective is to bring parties of

¹ For further information, Weekly Analysis Issue number: 159, >Senior Officials Resignations: Is NUG heading towards political breakdown?<, see it online:

<http://csrskabul.com/en/blog/weekly-analysis-issue-number-159-april-2-9-2016/>

various opposing political views under an inclusive government; but experience shows that these governments were often a failure. Although in Afghanistan the NUG was not formed after a war but it was formed due to disputes over election results in the middle of a continuing war. Generally internal differences in the governments are normal, but these differences are not as successive as in the Afghan NUG.

- **Unusual composition of the two electoral teams, disputes over interests and leadership:** given their relations in the past, the composition of the two stakeholder camps of the NUG, “Reforms and Partnership” and “Evolution and Continuity”, were not very natural. For instance, one could not even imagine that Ashraf Ghani, who had constantly criticized Abdul Rashid Dostum since 2001 and called him the killer of Afghans, would pick him as his first Vice President. Hezb-e-Islami (Arghandiwal) and Jamiat-e-Islami also formed a coalition but, compared to the “Reforms and Partnership” team, disputes in the “Evolution and Continuity” team were more apparent. Some significant figures left the team and Abdul Rashid Dostum repeatedly criticized the Afghan president.

Although, unusual composition and gathering around a circle for their interests were the major reasons of the subsequent internal differences, but in the “Reforms and Partnership” team, besides these factors, dispute over the leadership was also a factor in internal disputes in this team. For instance, disputes between Dr. Abdullah, Yunis Qanoni and Ata Mohammad Noor.

- **Failing to deliver promises;** another reason behind the internal differences in the NUG is failure in delivering promises. The two electoral teams failed in fulfilling both the promises they made to the members of their teams during their electoral champagnes and the promises made in the NUG agreement to each other. Thus the atmosphere of mistrust became dominant inside both teams and also in the relations between the two teams. Therefore, in some occasions, these mistrusts resulted in fierce criticisms.

From internal differences to ethnic differences

Differences within the NUG and criticism of the government officials from each other were, to a great extent, due to power sharing issues and political interests. But last week, it was the first time that a senior government official accused the President and Chief Executive of favoring particular ethnicities. In his speech, the Afghan Vice President General Abdul Rashid Dostum said: “for Mr. Abdullah no matter if one is incapable or does not have a good name among the people he must be Tajik. If you speak Pashto with President [Ashraf Ghani], you will be a good person, and if you speak Pashto and you are from Logar [province], then you are very good”².

General Dostum reserved his sharpest words for President Ghani’s inner circle and said that Ghani is encircled by the National Security Advisor Hanif Atmar, head of National Directorate of Security Masoom Stanekzai and the President’s Chief of Staff Abdul Salam Rahimi. He said: “he has appointed someone as Minister of Defense who cannot even walk, Stanekzai is known as a Taliban, and it is not clear whether from who he receives orders, he did not gain the vote of confidence from the Afghan Parliament, he is accused of being responsible for the assassination of Rabbani, I do not know, for which capability and trust is he appointed to such a key post?”³

In the meanwhile, the Afghan President’s special representative on reforms and good governance Ahmad Zia Masood also accused the leaders of the NUG of nepotism in a gathering in Panjshir⁴.

Recently, reburial of Habibullah Kalakani and building the “Nejat- rescue” memorial in its response are the indications of the beginning of the ethnic disputes in the country; but still these actions and the recent expressions of Dostum are mostly efforts of government officials to gather people around themselves and to gain their support. Adding fuel to ethnic divisions are mostly due to political reasons and efforts for more political gains. But there are also concerns of foreigners’ hands being behind intensification of ethnic divisions.

² Read more here: <https://soundcloud.com/sputnik-iran-afghanistan/1-36>

³ For more details click the following link: <https://pashto.sputniknews.com/afghanistan/20161025811994/>

⁴ Read more here: <http://www.etalatroz.com/42509>

The nature of the government officials' criticism of the government

In general it is a democratic tradition that whenever a government official has differences with the President within the government, he/she tries to resolve it behind closed doors and through negotiations; and if differences were not resolved then that government official simply resigns. But the case of a person, being in the government and in the meanwhile criticizing it, has never happened.

Although, releasing a statement, the Afghan Presidential Palace harshly responded to these expressions of Dostum⁵; but previously, tensions between the President and the Vice President are usually resolved after a meeting between them. Therefore, probably a meeting would resolve tensions between them.

In addition, such expressions by the government officials and particularly by the Vice President cannot be that simple, therefore, the Afghan Wolesi Jirga demanded the formation of a commission to clarify Dostum's recent allegations; because the continuation of such expressions would question the Afghan government's prestige in domestic and international levels.

⁵ Read the presidential palace's response here: <http://president.gov.af/ps/news/168178>

Afghanistan: failure in fight against narcotics



A joint report of the Afghan government and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) shows that in 2016, poppy cultivation has increased 10% and opium production has increased 43% and once again Afghanistan is one of the major opium producers in the world.

After the publication of this report, Wolesi Jirga (the Lower House of the Afghan Parliament) summoned Ministers of Counter Narcotics, Public Health and Interior Affairs and the parliament members asked questions about reasons behind the increase in poppy cultivation and the number of addicted people in the country.⁶

Although, in some occasions, the Afghan government talks about achievements in fight against narcotics such as arresting some drug smugglers and destroying lands under poppy cultivation. But since the cultivation, production and

⁶ Read this report of BBC for details: <http://www.bbc.com/persian/afghanistan-37753541>

smuggling of opium have increased; the Afghan government accepts that it has failed in its struggle against narcotics in this year.

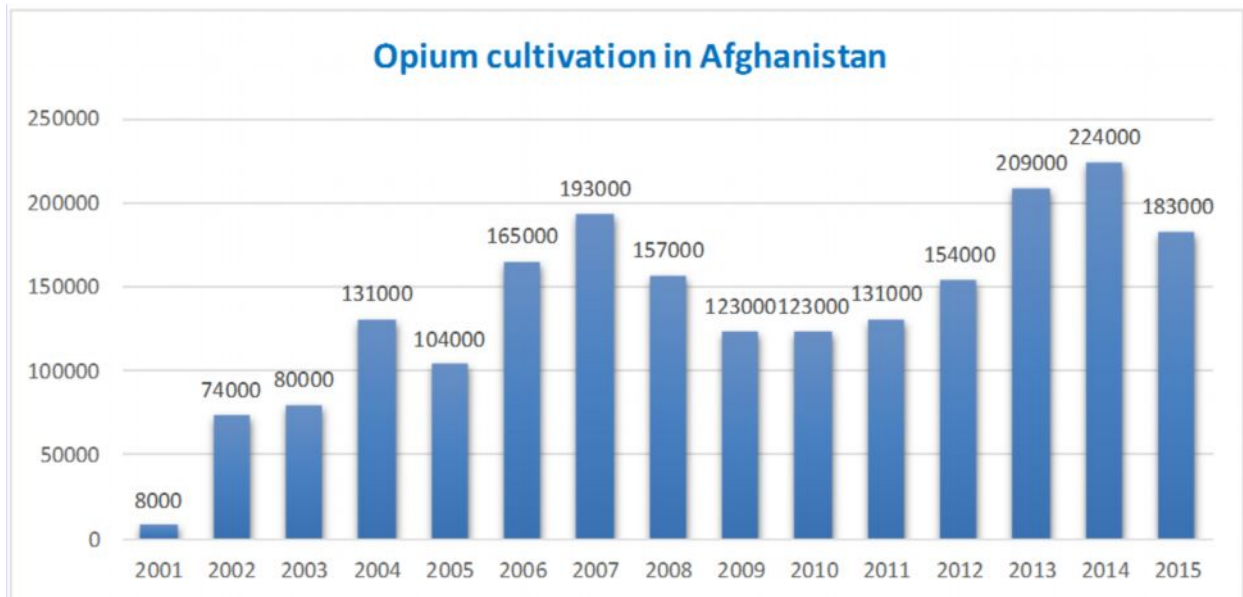
Although, the drug issue is a global challenge and all the countries in the world are affected by the negative aspects of this phenomenon. Statistics show that the number of addicts is over 250 million worldwide. But Afghanistan is one of the countries that have severely suffered by this phenomenon. On the one hand, opium cultivation and production undermines Afghanistan's prestige and on the other hand, around 3.5 million Afghans, somehow, use opium, 1.5 million of which are in critical condition.

The increasing statistics of drugs in 2001

The official statistics of official institutions, particularly UNODC, show that there were 8000 hectares of lands under poppy cultivation in 2001 (the last year of the Taliban regime) in Afghanistan; but after overthrow of the Taliban regime poppy cultivation increased annually.

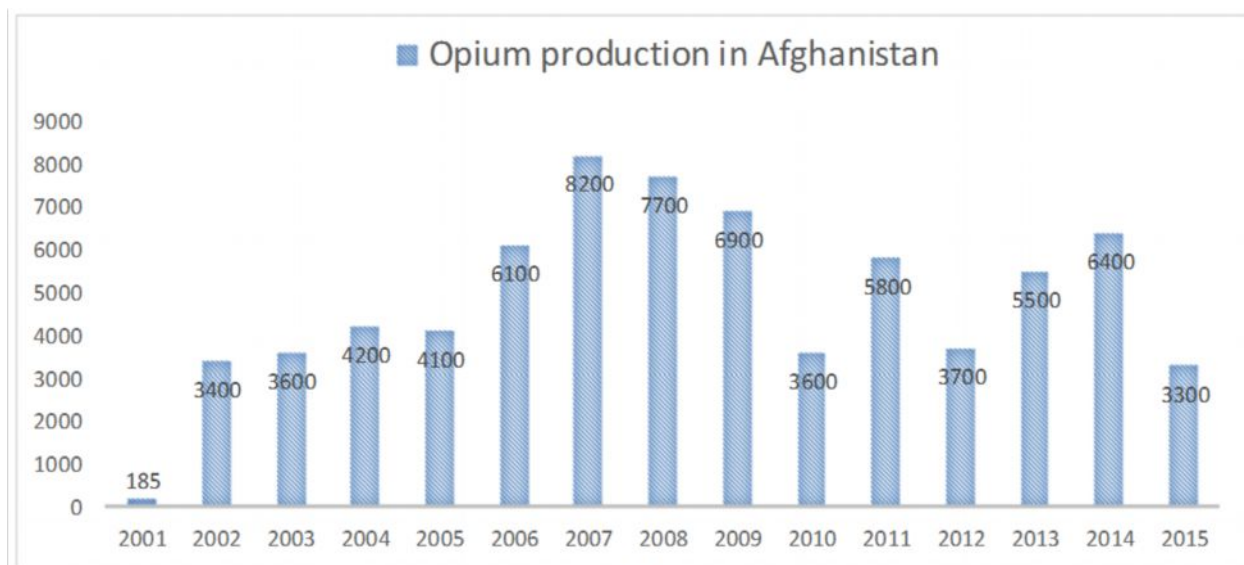
In 2007, 193000 hectares of lands in Afghanistan was under poppy cultivation. Although in 2008 and 2010 poppy cultivation decreased in the country but later it increased again and reached its highest level in 2014 (224000 hectares) thus poppy cultivation in 2013 and 2014 reached new heights (Chart-1). A 19% decrease in poppy cultivation in 2015, compared to 2014, was due to bad weather and not the policies of the Afghan government⁷ (Chart-1).

⁷ UNODC, Afghanistan Opium Survey 2015, see it online: https://www.unodc.org/documents/crop-monitoring/Afghanistan/Afg_Executive_summary_2015_final.pdf

Chart-1: opium cultivation in Afghanistan (2001-2015) (hectares)

Source: UNODC/MCN

Opium production also increased in post-2001 years. In 2001, opium production was 185 tons; but in 2007, 8200 tons of opium was produced in Afghanistan. After 2010, lands under poppy cultivation increased but foreign troops amplified eradication of poppy fields by pouring anti-poppy materials from air and, as a result, in 2012, the opium production decreased to 3700 tons. Inclined production of opium in 2012 urged farmers to bring more lands under poppy cultivation; thus, opium production in 2013 and 2014 reached respectively to 5500 tons and 6400 tons (chart-2).

Chart-2: Opium production in Afghanistan (2001-2015) (tons)

Source: UNODC/MCN

Increase in the narcotics in 2016

Compared to 2015, opium poppy cultivation considerably increased in 2016. In 2016, there was 201000 hectares of lands under poppy cultivation in Afghanistan while in 2015 this number was 183000 hectares, therefore, in 2016, poppy cultivation marks a 43% increase.

According to the joint annual report of the Afghan Ministry of Counter Narcotics (MCN) and UNODC, opium production in 2015 was 3300 tons in Afghanistan; but the recent report of UNODC and MCN shows that 4800 tons of opium was produced in 2016 which marks a 10% increase⁸.

The main reason behind increase in poppy cultivation in 2016 was insecurity in the country. 80273 hectares of land (which is 40% of lands under poppy cultivation in all over the country) was under opium cultivation in Helmand- one of the most insecure provinces of the country. In Northern provinces including Jawzjan province, which were poppy-free, insecurity has led these provinces to once again start cultivation of opium. On the other hand, good yields and weather was also one of the reasons behind increase in opium production in this year.

⁸ UNODC, Afghan opium production up 43 per cent: Survey, 23 October 2016, see it online: <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/frontpage/2016/October/afghan-opium-production-up-43-percent-survey.html?ref=fs1>

International mafia and Afghan drug

Drug trade, after oil and arms trade, constitutes the largest figure in international trade.

When the United States and its allies entered in Afghanistan in 2001, they said that "terrorism" and drug trafficking are linked to each other and in order to eliminate "terrorism"; drug production must be stopped. But the question is why opium production in Afghanistan has been increasing since 2001 so far?

Although, increase in opium cultivation and smuggling, in the past one decade, do not have one sole reason; but a collection of internal and foreign factors are behind it; but the most important factor is lack of a firm internal and international willingness in struggle against narcotics. Another factor behind it is the role of people who have connections with drug mafias.

On the other hand, hundreds of metric tons of heroin is being exported to other regions like Europe by land transit, which is impossible without assistance of the officials with the mafia in the countries from which the heroin are being smuggled.

According to the statistics of UNODC, from the \$70bn incomes of drugs in Afghanistan, only \$2bn went to farmers and \$66bn remaining money went to drug smugglers and mafia inside and outside Afghanistan.⁹

The Afghan government and its struggle against narcotics

When forming a new government after the fall of the Taliban regime in Bonn Conference, a Ministry was formed to counter narcotics. In 1393, former Afghan President Hamid Karzai announced that the fight against drugs is a priority for the Afghan government and its cultivation, production and trafficking is banned.

During the past decade, several institutions were involved in the fight against narcotics in Afghanistan, but still about 90 percent of the world's opium is

⁹ For further information: Weekly Analysis Issue number 74, >Afghanistan: problems in struggling against narcotics<, see it online:

<http://csrskabul.com/en/blog/weekly-analysis-issue-number-74-june-7-14-2014/>

produced in Afghanistan. UNODC, the counter narcotics department of Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Public Health and Ministry of Agriculture are institutions that are involved in fight against narcotics in Afghanistan and Ministry of Counter Narcotics is responsible to lead and coordinate the relevant activities.

Despite the high costs in all aspects of the fight against drugs (to prevent poppy cultivation and opium production, to combat drug trafficking, to prevent drug addiction and to treat drug addicts), in this regard, the Afghan government has not been successful. According to the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan's Reconstruction (SIGAR), in the past fourteen years, the United States have spent \$7,6bn in its counter narcotics struggle in Afghanistan.¹⁰ But in countries such as Afghanistan, which are being governed by "failed states", spending money in the fight against narcotics can only help corrupt government officials and farmers never benefit from it.

After the formation of the national unity government, it did not focus on the fight against narcotics and has been rather involved in internal disputes and other challenges such as insecurity in the country. The international community and the Afghan government have claimed that the increase in drug cultivation and trafficking is directly related with insecurity and war in the country. Undoubtedly, this is effective in expanding and increasing drug cultivation and trafficking in the country, but unfortunately, it is used as a cover for the failures in the fight against narcotics.

Expansion of opium cultivation in Afghanistan is related to many factors, but the chief factors among them can be as such:

1. Prolonged war and insecurity in the country;
2. The absence of a strong and people backed central government;
3. Existence of drug mafia, including domestic, regional and international mafia;
4. Drug demands, especially in Western countries;
5. Suitable soil and climate for growing poppy.

¹⁰ SIGAR, Special Report: Poppy Cultivation in Afghanistan, see it online: <https://www.sigar.mil/pdf/Special%20Projects/SIGAR-15-10-SP.pdf>

Many analysts believe that the Afghan government lacks serious willingness in the fight against narcotics, but besides that, the war and insecurity in the country, lack of law enforcement, the armed oppositions' involvement in the cultivation and production of drugs in insecure provinces and corruption are other factors that have challenged the fight against drugs. Therefore, a competent government with complete dominance in all over the country could be the solution to this problem.

The end

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Note: Please let us know your feedback and suggestions for the improvement of Weekly analysis.

