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## Preface

The republican Donald Trump will be sworn in as the 45<sup>th</sup> President of the United States on on Jan 20, 2017 and will replace Barack Obama in the White House. The war in Afghanistan would be one of the significant foreign policy issues and challenge for Trump.

Currently, situation in Afghanistan is worse in terms of security, politics and economy and the US Secretary of States John Kerry, who has mediated to form the NUG, backed the formation of this government last week and also news about deploying 300 US marine troops to Helmand were also released through media.

Trump is a new player in politics and his experience is mostly related to economy, but during his Presidential election campaign he had harsh opinions about various issues and therefore, Afghans expect a different US policy towards Afghanistan from him. What is the US new Presidents' probable policy towards Afghanistan? And what should Donald Trump do? These are the questions that you would read in the first part of the Weekly Analysis of the Center for Strategic and Regional Studies (CSRS).

In the last part of the Analysis you would read the announcement about the releasing ceremony of the CSRS' analytical report "Afghanistan in the past one and a half-decade".

## The Donald Trump's policy towards Afghanistan



The US Deputy Secretary of State Thomas Shannon paid an official visit to Afghanistan in the last week and met the Afghan President Ashraf Ghani, Afghan Chief Executive Dr. Abdullah Abdullah, the Afghan Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Hekmatullah Khalil and some other Afghan officials. This was the last visit of the Democrat party to Afghanistan because the republican Donald Trump will swear in as the new US President on Jan 20, 2017.

The US delegation came with a message to ensure the Afghan side that the new US administration's cooperation and good relations with the Afghan government will continue. Shannon said: "Our commitments to Afghanistan will not end on Jan 20<sup>th</sup>, but our relations with Afghanistan would further strengthen and deepen; everyone knows the strategic significance of these relations and the major opportunities and facilities in Afghanistan shows our involvement in Afghanistan."

What were the previous US governments' policies towards Afghanistan? What is Trump's probable policy towards Afghanistan? How is the current situation in Afghanistan? And what the US President elect should do in the Islamic world and particularly in Afghanistan? These are the questions that are answered here.

## **The US policies under previous governments**

Since 2001, the US strategy in Afghanistan is divided into two periods: the first period is about Republican President Bush's policies and strategy in Afghanistan and the second period begins with the Barack Obama's first period and ends with his second term.. In the first period, under President Bush, the US and Afghanistan enjoyed close and better relations. The fundamental US policy during this period was to overthrow the Taliban regime and replace it with a new Afghan government. Thus the Taliban regime was overthrown and the new government was established under Hamid Karzai which the international community and the US vastly supported and made tremendous contributions to it. But when the Taliban reemerged and the war was intensified year after year, the US strategy was, to a great extent, focused on the ongoing war and still continues to be focused on it.

During Obama's Presidency, US relations with Karzai become tenuous and the US policy became, therefore, instable in Afghanistan, once they would decide to increase soldiers in Afghanistan and then they would announce US troops' withdrawal from the country.

When the Afghan National Unity Government (NUG) was formed, once again, the Kabul-Washington relations improved. The Bilateral Security Agreement (BSA) was signed with the US, the US troops were allowed to conduct night raids, and the Afghan government, to a greater extent, was silent in response to the US operations which targeted the Afghan civilians and security forces. Furthermore, in response to the Afghan government's demand, Obama delayed the process of US troops' withdrawal from Afghanistan.

## **Trump's probable policy towards Afghanistan**

The US foreign policy and particularly Afghanistan's issue was not seriously discussed during the 2016 US Presidential Elections, and even, to a great part, Afghanistan was not part of the debates. The reason behind it was that republicans had started this war and was remained unresolved after two terms of

the democrat President; therefore, both sides were not interested in raising Afghanistan's issue.

In addition, Trump is not much experienced in politics particularly in foreign policy. He has not commented much on Afghanistan and from what he has said it is apparent that his information and remarks are contradictory to each other. In 2012, Trump said that, he would withdraw all US soldiers from Afghanistan. After an insider attack in 2013 in Afghanistan, in which some foreign troops were killed, Trump said, "Let's withdraw from Afghanistan, our soldier are getting killed by those Afghan soldiers that we have trained. We wasted billions of dollars in Afghanistan, it is unacceptable." However, later-on, Trump altered his position and supported 9800 US soldiers' to remain in Afghanistan, because, now he said that US presence in Afghanistan was also important for Pakistan. In 2015, he said that the ongoing war in Afghanistan was not a mistake. In addition, Trump once said that some US cities were more insecure than Afghanistan. In a short sentence, one can say that Trump's lack of experience and contradictory remarks has made him unpredictable.

Therefore, most of Trump's policies towards Afghanistan would be cleared when he took practical control of the affairs; but still it seems that US policy about its troops' withdrawal from Afghanistan and its military bases in this country would be similar to Obama's recent year's policy. But still for the NUG, which is formed with the mediation of the democrat Secretary of State John Kerry, the major challenge would be maintaining better relations with Donald Trump and demanding his cooperation to settle disputes in case of internal differences between the NUG's leaders.

### **Afghanistan, a worrisome for Trump**

Although, at international level, the situation in the Middle East and Unites States relations with Russia will mainly influence the US foreign policy; but the current situation in Afghanistan would also be important for Trump, particularly when security situation is worsening more than ever, security incidents, explosions, casualties and collapsing of districts are increased, the peace process has faced a

stalemate, economic situation is deteriorating (although based on the economic statistics in this year, compared to 1394, the country' economy has improved), based on a survey, more money was paid in bribe in Afghanistan in 2016 than in 2014. Therefore, the new US president would prudently study the situation and his future decisions would be influenced by these situations.

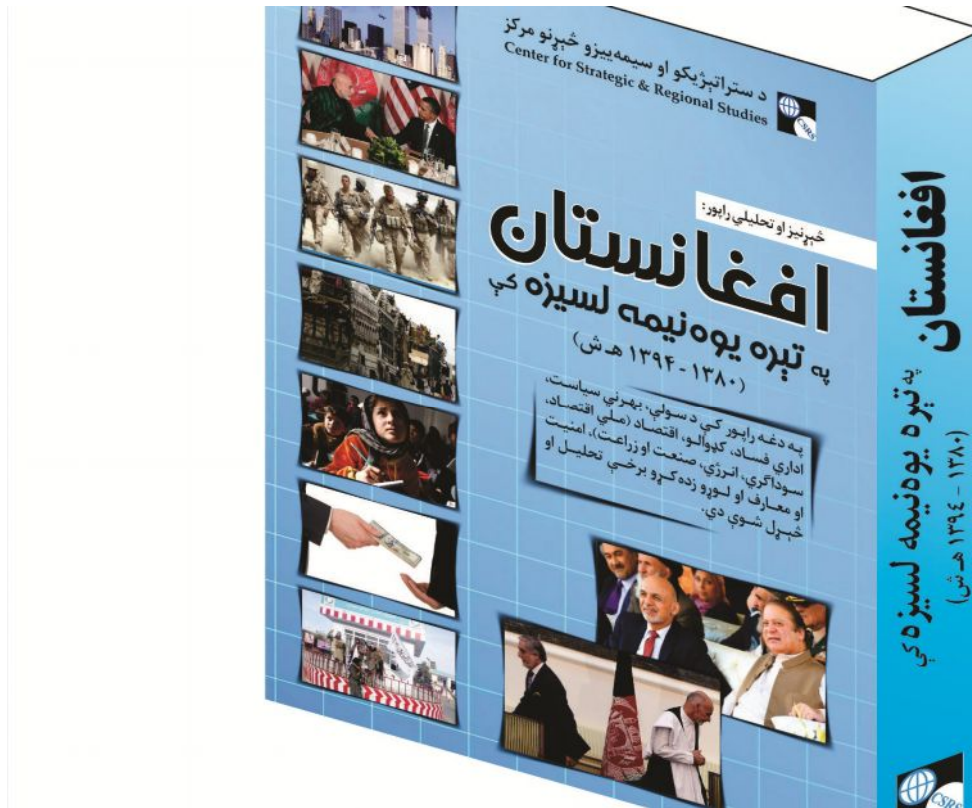
### **What should the new US President do?**

Trump is swearing in as the President of the United States while almost all the Islamic world are drowned in violence and civil wars, for which, to a greater part, the US is blamed. Situation is tenuous in Northern Africa, Gulf countries, South Asia and in the Middle East in general. Due to this situation, 2016 was the bloodiest year to Islamic world in the 21<sup>th</sup> century. Therefore, the United States must back democratic governments in Islamic world and not the despotic governments and the governments that are formed as a result of coup d'états.

In addition, there are also people in Islamic world that believe the US is behind a number of insurgent groups in Islamic world, because, they say, and that the US is seeking its interests through these groups. Furthermore, US policy in Islamic world has also paved the way for extremism. On the other hand, after 15 years, war still continues in Afghanistan and some people in this country believe that the US wants the continuance of war in Afghanistan and the region because the ongoing war would secure the US interests in the region. Therefore, now the US is also blamed for emergence of ISIL in the region and it is said that, this way, the US wants to put Russia and China to trouble. Given the abovementioned points, the US government should not only undertake the policy of responding to these accusations, but should also prepare its strategies in ways that would put an end to the responsive extremist moves in Islamic world.

In the meanwhile, the new US President should support the Afghan peace process, and since the US has started the Afghanistan war, now it should play the rule of a guarantor and terminate this war, because peace in Afghanistan is not only in the best interests of the Afghans but also of the whole world.

## The CSRS will soon release “Afghanistan in the past one and a half-decade” analytical report



The “Afghanistan in the past one and a half-decade” analytical and research report will be released on Tuesday, Jan 17, 2017 in a publication ceremony held in Inter-Continental Hotel.

The report, which is roundabout 400 pages, is a CSRS product and has comprehensively studied the main sectors of the country.

The report has realistically and impartially studied the situation of the country in the areas of peace, foreign policy, corruption, migrants and internally displaced people, economy (national economy, trade, energy, industry and agriculture), security and crimes, education and higher education. The report includes a background of the above mentioned sectors, their situation after 1380 (2000) and has put more focus on 1394 (2015-2016).

Besides the developments, failures and challenges in these sectors, CSRS's recommendation about each sector is included in this report as well.

It is noteworthy that CSRS research analysts have prepared the report using both quantitative and qualitative research methods and the findings of a survey, conducted by CSRS in major six cities of the country, are also included in the report.

Although, various institutions releases their reports and surveys on the situation of Afghanistan annually, but the characteristic of this report is that it includes several sectors and has discussed the past 15 years. It must be noted that, given the necessity of expressing facts, this report is prepared with reliance on the internal resources and facilities of CSRS and, therefore, is different from other project researches.

The end

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

