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Preface

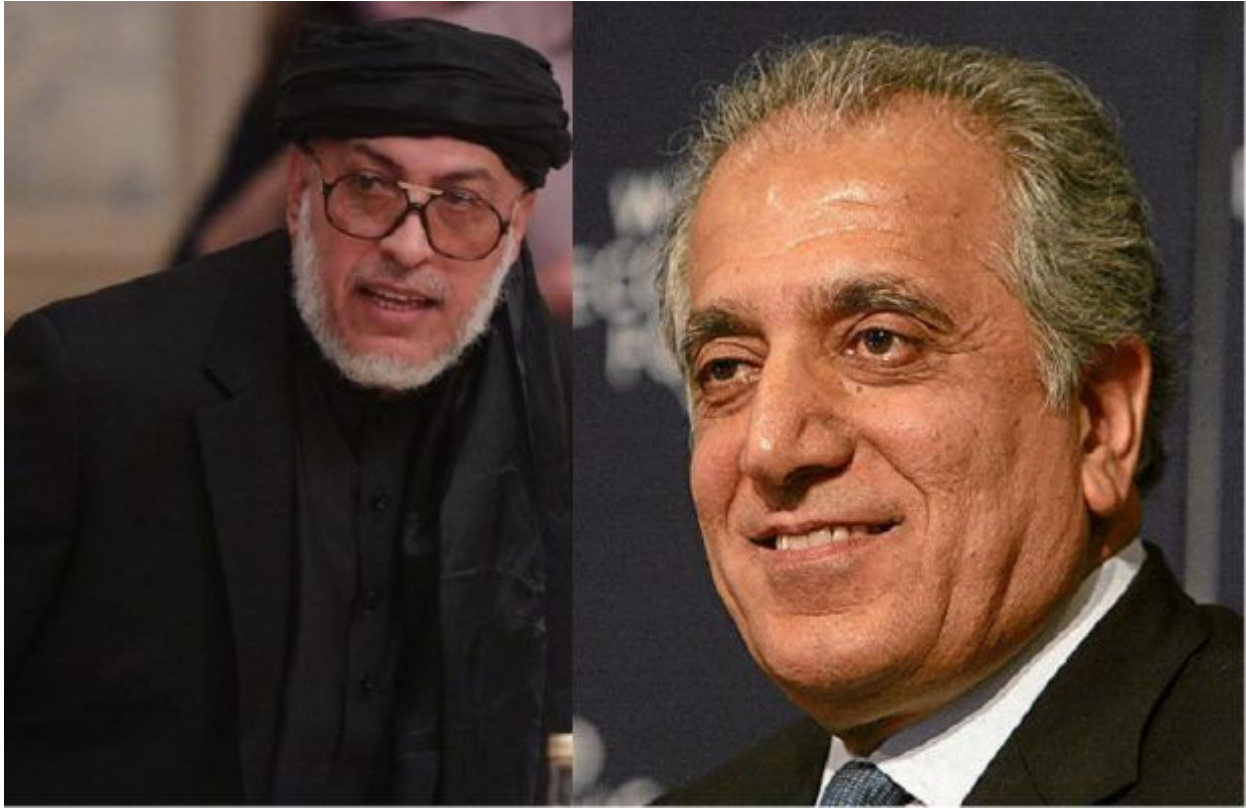
One more 3-day direct talks meeting between Taliban and the United States became convened at the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The meeting was set up following the commencement of the US special envoy for Afghan peace, Zalmay Khalilzad's third visit to the region.

Although the details of talks are yet to be released; however, the prominence of meeting was down to the partaking of Saudi Arabian, UAE and Pakistani representative in it. Besides that, the peace negotiation team of Afghan government had also attended UAE; but the meeting between the team and the Taliban did not become realized, as such feat was anticipated. First part of the CSRS Weekly Analysis has discussed the course of US-Taliban face-to-face talks, the locus of Afghan government in these talks and the outcomes of the recent meeting.

You will read about the pathetic situation of drug-addicted Afghans in Afghanistan in second part of the Analysis. Despite the anti-drug struggles of various national and international bodies in last 17 years, Afghanistan is still the paramount producer of drugs in the world. Nevertheless, the country has a population of three million addicts where the cultivation and production of opium has put significant impacts regarding the increase in number of addicted persons.

Besides the cultivation and production of opium, the frail efforts of government on treating addicts and controlling and presenting the phenomenon is, however, resulted in proliferation in the number of addicts day by day. Tens of addicts have been died due to cold winter weather every month; nevertheless, the government is yet to take any imposing interventions. This part of the Analysis has discussed over the condition of addicted persons in the country.

Khalilzad's Third Visit; Peace Talks with Taliban



As the special envoy of US Department of State for peace talks with Taliban, Zalmay Khalilzad had a 3-day meeting with Taliban representatives during the third visit of his mission in United Arab Emirates (UAE) last week. Representatives of Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and UAE were also presented in the talks.

Although some Western media stations, quoting the Taliban sources, have said that: "at the UAE meeting, the US party proposed a 6-month ceasefire and, in return, the Taliban put the condition in order for an interim government to be established and its head to be someone suggested by Taliban, and Saudi Arabia, UAE and Pakistan to be the guaranters of the entire process." However, the Taliban group has denied the talks on ceasefire and interim government.

In spite of that, it is said that the 12-member delegation of Afghan government for peace talks with Taliban had also attended UAE and were prepared to have peace negotiations with the Taliban; but the Taliban avoided to have talks with government through publishing a statement.

The US-Taliban peace talks and the Afghan government's position, the third visit of Zalmay Khalilzad and the impacts of recent meeting between US and Taliban are discussed here.

Khalilzad's Mission; Afghanistan's Position

Despite countless efforts of Afghan government to initiate talks with Taliban; the group denied the request of government. Therefore, the US concluded that Taliban never wants to talk to the government and America, in person, cannot defeat the Taliban in war either; hence, it decided to initiate direct talks with government and for this purpose, it appointed a powerful American diplomat, Zalmay Khalilzad to advance the process and, thus, from the very beginning, it has generated hopes for achieving peace and stability.

From the very beginning of his new mission, Zalmay Khalilzad started his visit from five regional countries (Afghanistan, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, UAE and Qatar). During his first visit, he talked to the authorities of these countries regarding solutions to peace and maintaining security and asked for their cooperation on Afghan peace.

During Zalmay's visit, Taliban and US representatives met and talked in Qatar and, then, the meeting paved the road for further meetings and talks. Moreover, Mullah Baradar and two other important members of Taliban became released from prisons as a result of the first visit of Zalmay Khalilzad. Meanwhile, five other Taliban authorities that were recently freed from Guantanamo Prison became authorized to join the Taliban political office in Qatar and take part in the peace talks process.

Following the US efforts on making peace with Taliban, Khalilzad realized his second visit to the aforementioned five countries shortly after his first visit. During the visit, Taliban and US representatives held talks in Qatar for second time. Some rumors were also effused that the Taliban and US representatives have talked regarding the ceasefire, establishment of interim government, withdrawal of foreign forces as well as freeing the Taliban prisoners.

During the Khalilzad mission and peace talks, the stand and role of Afghan government is the point which has put the fate of the peace talks in an ambiguity. The Afghan government has always stressed on that no foreign party, except for the government itself, has the authority to decide on condition of making peace with Taliban; but on the other hand, the Taliban has denied every form of peace talks with Afghan government.

Although the Afghan government has claimed that the entire efforts of US on recent peace talks with Taliban are in coordination of the Afghan government; but apparently, it seems that Afghan government views itself as isolated and thinks that it has got no role in the process. For that reason, it has established a 12-person delegation for advancing peace talks with the Taliban; and, then, it declared an advisory board on peace where almost the entire Jihadi parties and political movements are involved in.

Third Visit of Khalilzad's Mission

Khalilzad's third visit which became commenced on 2nd December of current year was more comprehensive regarding peace efforts in Afghanistan in compare to his past two visits. First two visits of Khalilzad were included Afghanistan, Pakistan, UAE, Saudi Arabia and Qatar; however, eight countries are scheduled in his third visit that are Afghanistan, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Russia, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Belgium).

Collateral to Khalilzad's visit to Pakistan during his third visit to the region, BBC published a report quoting the Taliban sources where it had said that a few member of Taliban political office in Qatar has also attended Pakistan for the purpose of having talks with their leadership regarding the peace negotiations with America.

During his visit to Pakistan, Zalmay Khalilzad met Prime Minister, Imran Khan and Foreign Minister, Shah Mehmood Quraishi and had talks with Taliban on achieving peace. Khalilzad flew to Kabul after Islamabad and left for Moscow after meeting the leaders of the National Unity Government (NUG). In his meeting with Russian authorities, he discussed on expansion of cooperation between Russia

and America for the sake of facilitating the ground for direct talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban and had called the visit "good" while talking to the media. Following the trend, Khalilzad visited Uzbekistan and, then, had a 3-day consecutive talks with Taliban in presence of representatives of Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates in UAE.

Generally, the third visit of Zalmay Khalilzad to regional countries regarding peace talks with Taliban have risen hopes on concluding an agreement resulting in putting an end to the Taliban war in Afghanistan. And, the important point is the talks will be continuing and they will have a positive result at the end of the day.

US-Taliban Meeting in United Arab Emirates

The recent 3-day US-Taliban meeting in UAE which was held in presence of representatives of Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and UAE is considered as an important step towards achieving peace. The reliable and further details of the meeting are yet to be known; however, the Reuters news agency has said that for the request of America to hold a 6-month ceasefire, the Taliban put two conditions on the table; first, to establish an interim government and second, Pakistan, UAE and Saudi Arabia to be guarantee of the entire process. Nonetheless, the Taliban has rejected these issues being discussed in Abu Dhabi talks and has emphasized that these talks were solely focused on putting an end to the presence of US in Afghanistan, freeing the Taliban prisoners as well as civilian casualties in airstrike of Afghan and foreign armed forces; and discussion around ceasefire, election or interim government is yet to be realized. Presence of America in Afghanistan is the issue that the Taliban has always stated it as the greatest reason behind their fighting in Afghanistan.

Need to mention that the Afghan peace-related efforts and struggles are folded more than any other time and the hopes on finding a political solution to the ongoing war in Afghanistan are increased; thus, the recent talks were hopeful due to following reason:

First: Understanding the fact that the war and military pressures are not the solution to the Afghan issue, initiation if direct peace talks between US and Taliban and continuation of these talks is a positive point regarding the successfulness of the process as well as attaining a positive income; because the parties involved in the war, especially the US were focusing on war and military options in order to win the battlefield, but it has not got any other outcome except for escalation of war.

Second: Sincere cooperation of regional countries, especially Pakistan, is crucial to achieve peace in Afghanistan. Although, the efforts on grabbing regional cooperation are going on since many years; however, these efforts became folded after the start of Khalilzad's new mission and decision of US government to make negotiations with the Taliban. The United States tried to put pressure on Pakistan to cooperate sincerely in bringing the Taliban into negotiation table and the latest efforts of Pakistan are hopeful in this field (freeing the Taliban prisoners and optimism of Imran Khan on strengthening peace in Afghanistan) .

Russia is one of important regional countries and, thus, the United States is seeking to attain its cooperation in the Afghan peace process. Khalilzad's visit to Russia and the latest meeting on Afghan peace in Russia, where representatives of 12 countries had participated in it, was hopeful. Meanwhile, Saudi Arabia is also among the countries that have impact on Pakistan and Taliban. (Recently, Saudi Arabia has provided Pakistan with billions of dollars, Pakistan has a mediator role in the Yemen-Saudi Arabia issue and also Saudi was one of the countries who had recognized the Taliban regime). UAE, Qatar, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Belgium are among the countries whose cooperation is needed to be attained in the peace process, based on Khalilzad's mission. Moreover, sincere cooperation of these countries will undoubtedly play important role in achieving peace in Afghanistan.

Last but not least, the Taliban inclination to keep the Afghan government far from the peace talks is the issue which has encountered the peace talks with a form of ambiguity. Although the Taliban had told media at the sidelines of the Moscow meeting that withdrawal of foreign forces from Afghanistan is one of their conditions for peace and when the issue is resolved, they will, then, conclude an

agreement with Afghan parties inside the country; however, the denial of Taliban to meet the Afghan delegation at recent US-Taliban talks is a controversial issue.

The on-going war in Afghanistan has three dimensions: US, Taliban and Afghan government, hence, there is a need to have all three parties involved in the peace talks in order to attain a single solution for reaching an understanding on putting an end to the Afghan war. End

Situation of Addicts in Afghanistan



Most of addicts spend their nights and days at roads and streets of cities where tens of them die as the winter comes in. Every week, the Kabul Municipality personnel discover around ten dead bodies mostly related to addicts and bury them, according the recent remarks made by the relevant authorities. Meanwhile, they are concerned that there will be a rise in number as weather gets colder.

In addition to the on-going war and other countless calamities in Afghanistan, cultivation, smuggle and use of drugs is the trend that Afghan people are irritated from. Following the upturn in production of drugs, the number of addicts has also on rise day by day and, according to the data of various domestic and international institutions, the total of addicts in Afghanistan has been reached to hundreds of thousands.

Number of addicts in Afghanistan and world, situation of addicts in Afghanistan, reasons behind their addiction and impacts of existence of addicts in society are discussed here.

Drug-Addicts

Using drugs is counted as a big problem in the entire globe where millions of people are addicted with drugs. Approximately, there are 255 million people in the world who use drugs, [according](#) to United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). If we presume the human-being population to be 6 billion people; so we can consider that 4.25 per cent of the entire global population is addicted with using drugs.

Afghanistan had a total population of 29.7 million people in 2017, according to Central Statistics Organization (CSO) of Afghanistan. Hence, the information of anti-drug institutions in Afghanistan indicates that more than three million Afghans are addicted with drugs which make almost ten per cent of the total Afghan population. Among them, 800 thousand are women, 100 thousands are children and 500 thousand are those who lost their social personality and desperately walking at the streets and roads of Kabul. The rest of the addicts are less exposed and, thus, spent their times with their families far from the streets and roads.

Condition of Addicts

From one hand, the cultivation and use of drugs in Afghanistan have defamed the name and prestige of Afghanistan; and from other hand, having a 3-million population of addicts have encountered the country and the people with a great human crisis.

In the meantime, Kabul is turned into a huge center of addicts where its parks, roads, streets and markets are full of such people. Most of the mentioned stratum is croaked in cold winter weather. Moreover, they are get-together at every spot and use drugs in public places.

The Afghan government, however, makes efforts to treat these people and have built treatment centers for the purpose: but the capacity of these centers is very low in compare to the number of addicted people and thus, cannot achieve the aimed objective.

The Afghan Ministry of Public health says that, besides existence of tens of relevant private hospitals, the government has established 170 treatment centers where hundreds of addicts are being treated every year; however, 70 per cent of those treated in the centers restart using drugs.

Reasons behind Addiction

Main reasons behind high addiction in Afghanistan are as follow:

War and Contention of War: Protraction of decades-long war in Afghanistan has facilitated the ground for cultivation and production of opium which has made the country to turn into a grand point of opium cultivation and production. Thus, the number of addicts has increased besides upsurge in opium cultivation and production.

Poverty and Unemployment: They are another factor behind rise in number of drug addicts in Afghanistan. Forty per cent of Afghan population live under the poverty line and more than two million workforce is unemployed in the country, according to the World Bank. Hence, the trend has obligated a remarkable number of youth to use drugs.

Migration: Migration to other countries, specifically the neighboring countries, is one more important factor behind rise in number of those who use drugs. For example, Iran is a country where most Afghan migrants have become addicted with drugs in.

Easy Access to Drugs: Access to drugs is a very easy affair in Afghanistan thanks to the corruption and weak governance. People can have very easy access to drugs everywhere in Afghanistan. The easy access and lack of strict restrictions and monitoring on purchase and sell of drugs have intentionally paved the way for use of drugs.

Negative impacts of Addicts on Community

Drug addicts have had the following negative impacts on Afghan society:

First: Rise in number of drug addicts has resulted in rise of thefts and other criminal incidents. Addicts need money to buy drugs and, for doing so, they focus on thefts and crimes. For instance, people have been irritated with thefts conducted by addicts in cities, according to media reports. The Kabul police chief says that, despite establishing a special unit to fight against thieves (mainly addicted) in Kabul, addicts still take out the windows and doors of parks or enter the houses and conduct thefts. Furthermore, they loot people at nights and take their money and goods in order to sell them and be able to purchase drugs.

Second: Upsurge in number of drug addicts have also caused in the added dirtiness of city as well. Kabul city has a handful off entertainments parks that are dominated by addicts as well as the roadsides.

Third: Free movement of drug addicts in cities and streets have played a role in fascinating others to the vicious deed. Youth are mainly get addicted with drugs due to companionship with these kind of people.

End

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