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Preface

In the recent few months, the US-Taliban peace talks have augmented the hopes of Afghans apropos putting an end to the ongoing bloody war in Afghanistan. However, the conflicting stands of Taliban and Afghan government against each other in the peace process have emerged qualms on positive outcomes of the process.

In the on-going peace talks, the Taliban, alike in the past, has now also circumvented from peace talks with the government and emphasizes that they will talk with the US only. Nevertheless, the Afghan government put pressure on the Taliban in a manner that has emerged the fear of demolition of the on-going process.

The first part of the CSRS Weekly Analysis has talked over the parties involved in the on-going war in Afghanistan as well as the need and importance of talks between the parties involved in the peace process.

The second part of the Weekly Analysis is allocated for 3-month postponement of the Presidential Elections. The Independent Elections Commission (IEC) announced that the 2019 Presidential Elections, the Parliamentary Elections of Ghazni province, Provincial Council and District Council Elections would be held on July 20, 2019. Presidential Elections are postponed while, from one hand, peace talks are going on with the Taliban; and, on the other hand, there are rumors on the establishment of an interim government in the country.

Need for Talks between Taliban and Afghan Government on Afghan Peace



The United States and the Taliban make efforts to reach an understanding through talks on putting an end to the 18-year-long on-going war in Afghanistan. The Afghan war has taken the lives of tens of thousands of Afghans.

In the series, the US and Taliban representatives have had direct talks on Afghan peace since last few months. Although the talks are hopeful; however, the outcomes are yet to be demarcated. Nonetheless, the Taliban stress on having talks with the United States only and do not want the Afghan government to be involved. Still, the Afghan government asserts no talks held without the ownership of the Afghan government, and thus, it has recently begun efforts to make the Taliban, through putting pressure on them, to become ready for direct talks; however, the trend has increased the fear of demolition of the on-going process.

Various parties on the on-going war in Afghanistan, the importance of the presence of the Afghan government in the US-Taliban peace talks and the outcomes of the peace talks without the Afghan government are discussed here.

Parties involved in the Afghan War

The on-going war in Afghanistan started after the US campaign on Afghanistan in 2001 and collapse of the Taliban regime. Although there was stability in Afghanistan for few years after the breakdown of the Taliban regime and almost the entire soil of the country was controlled by the Afghan government; however, the Taliban revived their fight against the Afghan government and international forces that resulted in an expansion of its domain.

Different armed groups are mentioned in the on-going war since last 18 years in Afghanistan, whose most of them are related to the regional and international spy circle; however, the war is fought between three chief involved parties :

US and International Forces: As the starters of the on-going war in Afghanistan, the U.S. and its international allies are the major and main party of the war. The U.S. and its international allies were directly involved in Afghan war between 2001 and 2014; however, they have been responsible for training and advising the Afghan security forces in the battlefield since 2014 onwards. They have withdrawn tens of thousands of their troops from Afghanistan in the period as well.

Second major party of the on-going war in Afghanistan is Taliban. Although the Taliban regime became collapsed as a result of the US attack on Afghanistan in 2001 and the country was stable for a few years; however, the Taliban resuscitated their fight against the U.S. and Afghan government after some years. The war got intensified day by day and, after 18 years, the Taliban have, now, control over 45 percent of the Afghan soil. Moreover, the group has maintained diplomatic ties with different countries in the region and the world .

Afghan Government: The third important part of the on-going war in Afghanistan is the Afghan government. A new system became established after the Taliban regime became collapsed thanks to the assistance of America and International Community. Although the regime has several glitches and inadequacies; however, tens of thousands of Afghans, especially after 2014 onward, fight against the Taliban in this war in a framework of the system. Meanwhile, the leadership of the system has been changed through elections three times since 18 years, all

three powers of government (legislative, executive and Judiciary) are active, developments have been brought to different parts of the country, Afghan embassies are active in different countries and Afghan government has established international-level political and economic ties.

The position of Afghan Government in Peace Talks

Since last few years, the Afghan government has made efforts on commencing peace talks with the Taliban. Taliban have been put several regional and international-level pressures on during the National Unity Government (NUG) for the Taliban to be made, a kind of, to commence direct peace talks with Afghan government; however, the group has always stressed on direct talks with America .

Recently, the United States has agreed to have peace talks with the group and has met with the group three times owing to the cooperation of some regional countries. The on-going peace process has a main problem that is not giving any spot to Afghan government there.

Taking out an important and main party of the war, the Afghan government, from peace talks crafts barriers in front on the success of the process. Because 18 years have been passed from the establishment of the new system where hundreds of thousands are employed in the framework of the system, and millions other live under its sovereignty. The leaders, authorities and entire people that live under the sovereignty of the system is the aspect whose agreement and opinion is essential and effective in the putting an end to the war and reaching peace .

Furtive and evident opposition of some individuals and circles to peace in the current system is also considered as a significant obstacle towards peace, which has played a lot of role in elongation of the on-going war. To reach peace, it is needed for such individuals and circles to be either encouraged to cooperate in the peace process or be given a chance to participate in the peace process .

The denial of the Taliban to have peace talks with the Afghan government has obliged the government to take some measures to put pressure on the Taliban to make them sit to talks with the Afghan government. Both of them are known as anti-Taliban figure inside the country.

A few days ago, President Ghani appointed two former Chief Spies, Amrullah Salih as Acting-Minister of Interior Affairs and Asadullah Khalid as Acting-Minister of Defense whose very first remarks were counted to be harmful to the peace process.

Whether Peace is Possible without Government?

The latest meeting of the US-Taliban talks' series was followed by a 3-day meeting in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The Afghan government had also sent a delegation to Abu Dhabi hoping to have talks with the Taliban; however, the Taliban rejected to have peace talks with Afghan delegation.

The Afghan government intensified its position against the Taliban after the negative response. To put pressure on Taliban, the Afghan government increased its aggressive assaults in the battlefield, handed over the security leadership to anti-Taliban figures and the Afghan Defense Minister forcibly said that if Taliban do not sit on the table of peace talks, they will bring them to the peace talks under duress.

War and military pressures have been tested since the last 18 years; however, they have brought nothing except for death and misery. If the continues for decades, it will bring nothing to Afghans except for demise and wretchedness and if eventually ends, it will be ended through talks.

Regional and international efforts are continued for putting an end to the Afghan war; thus, instead of putting pressure on each other through different means, as the domestic parties of the war, Taliban and Afghan government should feel responsibility and should take prompt steps more than every other one to put an end to the on-going conflict.

The Taliban are needed to recognize the Afghan government as an important party along the US in the peace talks for the all three parties of war to have a role in the peace process. But if the process is continued among the Taliban and US, hence, the absence of Afghan government will cause in the creation of barriers toward peace which will, ultimately, result in the intensification of war. End

Elections Postponement; Technical Problems or Necessity of Peace Process



انتخابات ریاست جمهوری ۱۳۹۸

On December 30, 2018, Afghanistan Independent Elections Commission (IEC) announced that the 2019 Presidential [Elections](#) that were planned to be held on April 20, 2019, will be held on July 20, 2019. The Provincial Council, District Council and Parliamentary Elections of Ghazni province will be held simultaneously to the Presidential Elections, according to the IEC officials.

Although the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan ([UNAMA](#)) has welcomed the postponement of Afghan Presidential Elections; but it has said that inappropriate management of the upcoming elections is unacceptable. UNAMA has also said the IEC should announce the new electoral schedules as soon as possible and certain reforms are supposed to be brought in IEC and its secretariat before holding the 2019 Presidential Elections.

Continuation of work of the National Unity Government (NUG) from the aspect of the Constitution and reasons behind postponement of the 2019 Presidential Elections are discussed here.

Continuation of Government Work from the Constitution Viewpoint

As the highest legal document of Afghanistan, the constitution is considered as one of the important achievements of the current system, which was ratified by the Loya Jirga of Constitution Ratification around one and a half decade ago, and was signed by Hamid Karzai, President of Interim Government of Afghanistan.

During the past fifteen years, there have been controversial discussions on implementation and trample of the constitution. Not holding the Parliamentary Elections and District Councils Elections on given time, extension of the working period of the Parliament, continuation of the acting- positions of high governmental officials, abuse of power and tens of other are cases that can be named tell us about the suppression and lack of implementation of the constitution in last one and a half decade.

Lately, the 3-month postponement of Presidential Elections that were supposed to be held on April 20, 2018, resulting in an illegal extension of the working period of the government, and the act is explicitly against the Afghan Constitution. Article 61 of the Afghan [Constitution](#) unambiguously states that: “The Presidential Term shall expire on 1st of Jawza of the fifth year after elections. Elections for the new President shall be held within thirty to sixty days before the end of the presidential term.”

The Independent Commission for Overseeing the Implementation of Constitution (ICOIC) has also called the recent move of the IEC for postponement of 2019 Presidential Elections as an explicit [suppression](#) of the Afghan Constitution. Every kind of postponement in elections will bring the legitimacy of the system under question and that the Presidential Elections should be held on the given time, according to the Abdul Raouf Hirawi, Secretary of the ICOIC.

Why Elections got postponed?

Director of IEC, Abdul Badi Sayyad point out the following reasons for main reasons behind postponement toward holding the Presidential Elections; inappropriate climate for registration of voters and transferring electoral materials, especially to cold areas of the country, implementation of reforms and employment of employees, lack of adequate budget, make use of biometric, security problems and simultaneous multiplicity of Presidential, Provincial Council, District Councils Elections as well as Parliamentary Elections of Ghazni province.

Although the problems above can have a role in the postponement of the 2019 Presidential Elections; however, despite security and technical problems, some other factors have a role in the postponement of the 2019 Presidential Elections:

Peace with Taliban: On-going peace talks between US and Taliban can be an important factor behind postponement in holding Presidential Elections. Because, Zalmay Khalilzad, special envoy of US Department of State for leading peace talks with Taliban had told reports in a press conference in Kabul a while before direct talks with Taliban representatives that “he hopes to reach a peace agreement with Taliban before holding Presidential Elections.”

The basic problem in recent peace talks with the Taliban is that the Taliban emphasize on talks with America only and do not want to have talks with the Afghan government; but America and a number of other countries that have an important role in the process make an effort to bring the Taliban into the negotiation table with the Afghan government, and this issue requires times. Therefore, the 3-month postponement of the 2019 Presidential Elections will be for the hope to bring the Taliban into peace talks with government till that time.

Electoral Tickets: Based on the schedule, the process of registration of Presidential candidates will start from December 22, 2018, and will continue till 12 days. Although 50 persons have received information packages till now; however, no one could get registered yet, except for Abdul Latif Pedram, leader of the Afghan Congress Party, due to lack of formation of their electoral tickets.

Thus, it is not far from the truth that the President is getting used of the present situation and making deals with his political opponents would have liked to stay in office through postponement of Presidential Elections, as done in the Parliament.

Elections or Interim Government?

The possibility of lack of holding of Presidential Elections was being discussed since many months among political movements and politicians where, eventually, the IEC postponed the elections for three months.

Among them, peace talks with the Taliban are counted as an important reason behind the delay in elections. Regarding the US-Taliban peace talks, there are rumors that the two parties might reach an agreement before the Presidential Elections. Hence, the establishment of an interim government instead of holding Presidential Elections is an important and controversial factor in the framework of the peace process.

On the other hand, the National [Security Council](#) of Afghanistan has said in a statement that no country or person is in possession of the right and authority to discuss over the new governmental structures for Afghanistan and that it stresses on holding of Presidential Elections. Nevertheless, the question is that whether the IEC will be able to manage the upcoming Presidential Elections well or not, considering the management and working style of IEC, manifold scheduling of the commission and performs of it in holding the Parliamentary Elections.

Last but not least, if the on-going process with Taliban was fruitless, the timetable of IEC announced for the upcoming Presidential, Provincial Council and District Council Elections, as well as the Parliamentary Elections, would not be, then, final due to current security and political situation in the country and there is a vast possibility that the National Unity Government (NUG) will continue its work after that three months as well. End

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