



## Center for Strategic & Regional Studies

### Kabul

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## Preface

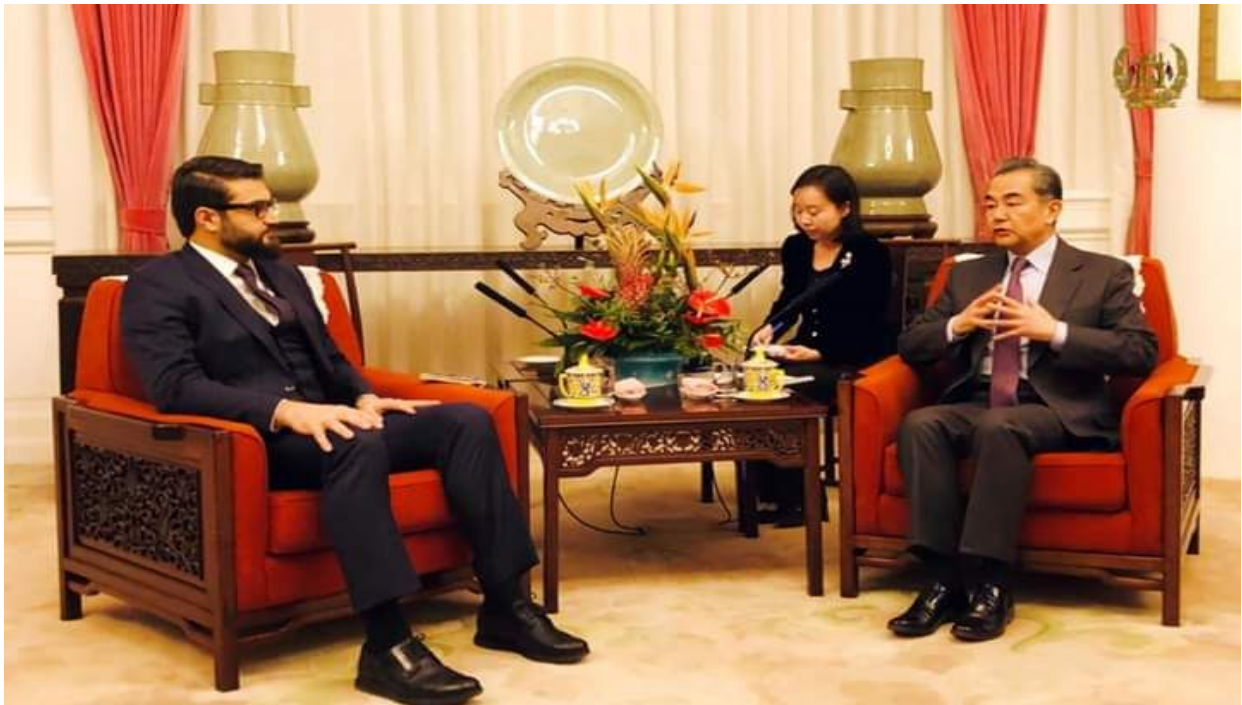
The Taliban have always refused to talk with the Afghan government, and emphasized on negotiating with the United States of America, in order to reach an agreement to end the current war in Afghanistan. The Taliban and the US Representatives have met three times in Qatar and United Arab Emirates during last few months. The series of meetings seemed to reach a conclusion through negotiations to end the Afghan war. However, the talks have appeared to have reached a dead end recently.

In order to force the Taliban towards the negotiating table with the Afghan government, the Afghan government and the US strive to pressurize the Taliban through different ways. However, their approaches seem to cause obstacles and delays, because the Taliban, through a proclamation threatened to postpone any type of negotiation with United States, if they do not alter their behavior toward the peace in Afghanistan.

The US especial envoy to Afghanistan, Zalmay Khalilzad during his recent visit to Kabul said, if Taliban choose war instead of peace, United States will fight them and stand to support the Afghan government. This issue is discussed in the first part of CSRS weekly analysis.

The rise of traffic accidents and the reasons of casualties through Traffic accidents are discussed in the second part of the weekly analysis. Besides war and natural disasters, thousands of people dies and get injured due to Traffic accidents in Afghanistan. Thus, it is important to recognize the reasons behind the accidents and discover ways to prevent them.

## Dead end of Afghan peace negotiations and pressures on Taliban



The efforts to end the current war in Afghanistan initiated under the leadership of the United States a few months ago. Since then, United States and the Taliban negotiated face to face three times. However after the meeting in Abu Dhabi, the negotiations have [delayed](#) and encountered obstacles.

Following the talks in Abu Dhabi, it was declared that they would perhaps meet again at Saudi Arabia. Later, Qatar was picked for next gathering which was seemingly postponed due to dissension over the agenda of the meeting

The Qatar meeting is suspected to be cancelled due to hostilities and disagreements among some countries. The visits of Afghanistan national security advisor Hamdullah [Muhib](#) and Special representative of the United States for Afghan peace [Zalmay](#) Khalilzad recently to different countries were conducted to resolve such obstacles and disagreements.

In order to discover, why the US – Taliban peace talks have delayed and what will be the result and impact of pressure on the Taliban to resume the peace talks? Some questions may arise:

## Why the Afghan peace negotiations have delayed?

The hopes for peace have increased for peace in Afghanistan after the start of face to face negotiation between the Taliban and the US. The continuation and three times face to face discussion among the Taliban and the US representatives, the release of Taliban leaders from Pakistan prisons and the participation of Taliban military officials, especially the Haqqani group in peace talks are reasons, which made people optimistic about peace and the end of war in Afghanistan.

After three discussion on peace between the Taliban and the United States, the fourth meeting in Qatar apparently delayed due to conflict over the agenda. However, there are other motives, which seems to be the reasons of the postponement:

**First:** withdrawal of US forces was the main condition of Taliban to begin the peace talks. Lately, Taliban have once again emphasized on the US to pull their forces out of Afghanistan. However, it is suspected that the United States is not willing to leave Afghanistan completely and wants to remain in the region with a smaller number of soldiers. Therefore, they are planning to force Taliban to agree with the presence of the US a military base in Afghanistan.

**Second:** The refusal of the Taliban to negotiate with the Afghan government can be considered another reason for the delay in peace talks. The Afghan government tries to negotiate face to face with the Taliban, but Taliban have always rejected to talk with the Afghan officials. The Afghan government pressures Taliban through other countries for face to face negotiations.

**Third:** Another reason for the delay are the Taliban themselves and their limitations. The hostility between Saudi Arabia and Qatar For instance, are one of the limitations for Taliban and can be considered an obstacle for decision regarding peace talks. This is because the Taliban are compelled to consider the demands and opinions of all the sides who they have relations with and had their assistance in the past.

### **Regional pressures on the Taliban:**

After the postponement of peace talks, the Afghan government and Zalmi Khalilzad have instigated visits to many countries that have influential role in the region region and can contribute to end the current war in Afghanistan.

In the series of his visits to the region, Zalmi Khalilzad included Afghanistan, China, India, and Pakistan to his fourth visit. Similarly, the National security advisor Mr. Hamdullah Moheb also visited China, India and Saudi Arabia. Both had one goal which was to receive their assistance in ending the war in Afghanistan and to constrain the Taliban to negotiate with the Afghan government.

Meanwhile, China is one the countries, which does not have the politics of interference and conflicts but tries to expand its supremacy through economics and business. By rebuilding Kabul – Islamabad relations, China can assist in peace negotiations process as it needs a sustainable Afghanistan for long term profits.

Additionally, Saudi Arabia from one side has a higher significance in Islamic world, on the other hand has announced to pay billions of dollars to Pakistan, through which, Saudi Arabia can put pressure on the Taliban to begin peace talks with the Afghan government.

Finally, Pakistan has more influence on the Taliban compared to any country and where Taliban are presumed to have concealments. Therefore, there is always covet from Pakistan regarding Afghan peace negotiations. The United States began to pressure Pakistan a long time ago and it seems like Pakistan, due to such pressure began to intimidate the Taliban for Afghan peace. This is because last week's reports express that the Pakistani army [captured](#) a high ranking member of Taliban and released him after a few hours.

## Can regional pressures induce Taliban for peace?

In the course of Afghanistan government and US pressures, the [Taliban](#) in a proclamation threatened to delay peace talks, if United States doesn't return the previously agreed agenda.

The Taliban have stated that in a meeting in November 2018, the United States has agreed to discuss the withdrawal of US forces and not using Afghan soil against any other country. However, United States is trying to avoid the agenda now and struggling to add issues to it which are in favor of the US.

Furthermore, the proclamation states that "if the Americans want to negotiate with good will and accept the demands of the Muslim nation of Afghanistan, the problem can be solved. However, if they are trying to escape from lawful demands of Afghans, and use peace talks for their own and military purposes, or pressure us through bribing other countries, this will mean that they have no interest of resolving the issue through peace negotiations".

The proclamation seems to indicate that the coercion on the Taliban has increase regarding the Taliban – US peace negotiations which intimidates the new Afghan peace process

Last week, [Reuter's](#) news agency stated that the conflict over the location of peace talks is one the main factors of postponement of negotiations and has occurred due to personal disagreements among a number of countries. Based on Reuter's report, Saudi Arabia and UAE do not want the the peace talks to take place in Qatar, and on the other hand, Iran opposes the peace talks to happen in Saudi Arabia or United Arab emirates.

It seems that the mutual relations among involved countries in recommencing peace negotiations can either succeed or fail the process. In this situation, the Afghan government officials are responsible to keep the process away from the personal relations of countries and strive to build a true mutual agreement in order to reinstate the negotiations.

## The rise of traffic incidents and responsibilities of Afghan government



Besides loss of dozens of lives and daily casualties of due to the current war, insecurities and natural disasters, traffic incidents are another cause of deaths and injuries for our nation every year.

Based on the recent report released by the ministry of [Public health](#), 52,657 people have visited their hospitals due to injuries caused by traffic incidents in 2018. Nevertheless, 4555 people have been transferred to Hospitals, injured by explosions and suicide attacks during the same year.

The statistics from 2018 indicate that the amount of injuries caused by traffic incidents are twelve times higher than the injuries of caused by explosions and suicide attacks.

Here, we discuss the upswing of traffic incidents, reasons behind the rise in incidents and accountabilities of the government.

**Traffic incidents:**

Traffic incidents and its mass casualties around the world are basic intricacies of well-being and have raised a lot of concerns. Based on statistics released by [WHO](#), more than 1.25 million people dies and around 20 to 30 million get injured and disabled because of traffic incidents every year.

18th November is memorialized to remember the victims of traffic incidents every year. The day was first memorialized by the Road peace foundation in 1993 and officially recognized by the United Nations in 2005.

The purpose of the memorial is to encourage governments to disseminate safety guidelines, ameliorate roads and increase of safety for transportation equipment. Despite Afghanistan's agreement with targets for sustainable development and promised to make half of the road safe -by 2020 and completely safe by 2030, but traffic incidents are increasing every year and no actions have been taken to prevent such incidents.

According to the World health organization, Afghanistan is among the countries, which have high rates of traffic incidents casualties. Likewise, based on the information of the central statistics organization of Afghanistan, the number of traffic incidents are rising every year, which have resulted an increase in the number of their victims. The data collected from general directorate of [traffic](#) department indicates that 562 traffic incidents have occurred in Kabul from 1st of Hamal 1397(1<sup>st</sup> March 2018) till the end of Aqrab (21<sup>st</sup> November 2018).

**Table 1:** Traffic incidents in Afghanistan statistics, (1394-1396)

<u>Year</u>	<u>1394</u>	<u>1395</u>	<u>1396</u>
Bus	235	348	269
Lorry	360	403	443
Cars with speed	1169	1048	1498
Motorcycle	1163	1290	1031
<b>Total</b>	<b>2927</b>	<b>3089</b>	<b>3241</b>



### **Causes of Traffic incidents:**

There are many causes, which lead to deadly traffic incidents in Afghanistan. The most common reasons are:

1. Demolished and below standards roads: Destroyed and low standards of roads are considered the main causes of Traffic incidents in Afghanistan. In spite of the fact that Afghanistan is a mountainous country and has many bent and curved roads, ~~and~~ many of the roads goes through mountains and valleys. They are unpaved, partially paved, tight and without traffic signs which leads to Traffic incidents. In addition, because of extensive corruption in roads reconstruction contracts, most of the roads are constructed without being standardized and are not according to the standards of the world. Lack of transportation weight controllers, explosions and other incidents are also among the reasons of destruction of the road.
2. High Speed and unprofessionalism of drivers: High speed of cars transporting passengers in long route such as Kabul - Herat or Kabul - Bakhshan, cause major traffic incidents. Similarly due to lack of inspection by the officials, absence of supervision of Traffic police over transportation equipment and nonexistence of organized rules and regulation for transport have resulted defiance of driver from traffic rules. Unprofessionalism of drivers, unnecessary speed, unhealthy and ruthless competition among
3. Drug addiction of drivers: Most of the drivers use drugs along the road and are under the influence of drugs while driving. Such usage of drugs by the drivers transporting passengers' in order to avoid sleep leads to Traffic incidents.
4. Disregard to Traffic laws: Following Traffic laws, such as putting on seat belts while driving or wearing helmet while riding motorcycle can avoid some casualties of traffic incidents. However, lack of consideration towards safety rules has caused the traffic incidents to increase in Afghanistan.

### **Responsibilities of government and people:**

Collaboration between the government and people is essential in order to lessen and control traffic incidents. Consideration of both and their cooperation can prevent many deaths and injuries.

As the government has the responsibility to guard the lives and properties of its nationals, take actions in order to prevent deadly and injurious incidents, they are liable to consider some points as well to prevent traffic incidents.

**First:** Installation of required traffic equipment such as traffic signs, speed limit predictors, weight estimators and supervision of Road reconstruction companies, which have contracts with the government are measures for which the officials are accountable to step up for their implementation, because every measure has important role in reduction of traffic incidents. Devotion to these measures not only prevent incidents, but also protects the roads and preclude excessive government expenditures.

**Second:** Accurate supervision of law implementation leads to stoppage of negligence by traffic police. Additionally, it forces drivers and passengers to always fasten seat belts. Thus, traffic incidents can be prevented.

**Third:** Corruption in traffic offices have led to issuance of driving license without passing training period and exam. Further, disregarding traffic crime for a small amount of money has also resulted disobedience from Traffic laws. The circumvention of corruption is a serious need in order to prevent traffic incidents.

Besides government, people are also required to take responsibilities for the safety of their own, surroundings and for the discipline of the society. Among whom, the owners of transport agencies are liable at the first stage. They are ones who can control their drivers, quality of equipment, facilitate and evaluate services and are able to follow the laws and regulations of the traffic in the country.

Drivers who stands as bridge between companies and the passengers have to understand that" being cautious while is not a sign of fear or lack of experience but a sign of your smartness about life and property of yours and others". They

have to realize that they are accountable for the passengers and any incidents that may occur as they are liable to know the traffic rules and signs. Therefore, they should not sacrifice their lives and the lives of many other for their pleasure of driving faster than others.

In addition, the passengers who are financial supporters of companies and are the main victims of Traffic incidents should know how to decide and choose transport for travel, as nobody is willing to carry them for free. Thus, they should not travel with companies which do not have hygiene for the travel.

The end

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