

THE MOSCOW AND TURKEY TALKS ABOUT THE AFGHAN PEACE

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A letter of the US secretary of State to president Ghani unbolted a new stage for the Afghan peace. The Doha dialogue faced stagnation when the US announced that they will request Turkey to host Afghan peace talks. Subsequently, Russia also proclaimed about conduction of a regional conference for the Afghan peace, which is planned to be held on 18th March, 2021, in Moscow. Here, we discuss perception of Afghans, expectations and anticipated fallouts of the Talks.

First: The latest happenings shouldn't have occurred in a civilized nation, but they did.

Civilized nations resolve all conflicts and disagreements through talks and negotiations. They neither allow others to interfere in their internal affairs, nor confound their conflict to a stage where concord is difficult to happen. But sadly, due to corrupt and self-centered political leadership of the country, the Afghan nation has lost several opportunities for peace since last few decades. Foreigners have always determined and decided Afghanistan's fate, which has always consequently led to chaos and tragedy. The recent opportunity created after the agreement over US pullout has been lost and now the other countries of the world are gathering to decide the fate and future of Afghanistan. Commonly, such decisions do not resolve problems of the nation and create further obstacles and complications. Yet, there is no other way to resolve the matter of Afghanistan, as it seem improbable to bring peace

through intra-Afghan talks. Now the question is, why circumstance have worsened after the US-Taliban peace agreement and why the Doha talks did not have considerable results?

Second: Why the Doha dialogue did not provide expected results?

In order for the Doha talks to succeed, establishment of an environment of trust was vital, which eventually did not occur. Conversely, it has been intentionally strived to stagnate and delay the talks. In fact, it was a well-planned strategy. Mawlana Farid, Advisor to the first vice president during a TV interview expressed about the US new policy that the new policy of the US is just on a piece of paper and cannot be implemented. As we failed the US-Taliban peace agreement, we will fail the new policy as well. He explicitly stated that they failed the Doha agreement and will keep failing any future relative strategies in this regard.

In order to fail the Doha agreement, security condition of Afghanistan was worsened to an extent that no one would dare to put any sort of pressure. Due to fear of explosions, protests, effective peace gatherings and consolidation of political parties for peace did not occur. Any possible amalgamations of political groups were eliminated through different means. Those prominent figures of the country who individually strived to work for peace were assassinated or threatened in order to fade the peace efforts.

Now, the question is, why did the government undertake such actions? In this regard, it is reasonable to say that the Afghan government's leadership used to believe that the new administration of Joe Biden will reconsider the Doha agreement, which will include removal of the architect of the Afghan peace process, Republican Zalmi Khalilzad from the equation. As a result, the government expected lesser political which will consequently lead to continuity of its power. In addition, they strived to force the Taliban to accept their own definition of peace, which means that they Taliban should either merge with the government the way Hezbe Islami did, or continue war. In order to force the US to stay in Afghanistan, violence, night operations, airstrikes and raids of Special Forces dramatically increased. These were just to show the international community that terrorism still exists, hence, they should keep their forces in Afghanistan.

The current government leadership team is making such efforts at a time when vast majority of public believe that government has lost all its legitimacy and its means of survival. This is due to the fact that corruption has reached its peak, the public institutions being dominated by incompetent people and governmental and public positions which shall provide public

services are being sold. In addition, poverty rate is rising and 70% of people of Afghanistan are living under poverty line, while public's wealth is being stolen and taken abroad by corrupt officials.

As a result of increasing interferences of international and regional countries, people no longer consider themselves safe. Many religious scholars, civil and social activists, teachers, and political figures are either being killed or forced to leave the country to protect themselves.

The Afghan government's leadership team was proved to be wrong in his own calculation, as neither the new US administration led by Joe Biden reviewed its decision to withdraw its troops, nor Zalmay Khalilzad's role got abolished in Afghan peace process. Instead, his role in the peace process became more vital. This is perhaps due to the fact that in institution-based countries, such strategic decisions are taken institutionally, rather than individually. In such countries, decisions are made after utter precision. And change in government's leadership and individuals has no effect on them.

In order to maintain strong position on the negotiation table and to receive major share in next regime, the Taliban persist on war despite their ceasefire with foreign forces (US and NATO). Since a year, the Taliban have not targeted foreign forces. However, they have increased their operations against Afghan forces and still pursue attacks and operations in the cities. As a result, countless Afghans lost their lives.

Because of these irrational decisions, the nation has reached a point where peace has become a vital necessity, and a matter of life and death. Those who truly feels the pain of Afghan people believe that if it is not resolved through dialogue, and both sides do not respond to the voices of reason, the country will face another catastrophe. It will lead to another civil war which would destroy all existing foundations and will open a door for endless chaos and misery in the country.

In order to avoid any unfavorable result, the US has emerged as a rescuer, and has come up with a new plan to save the inter-Afghan dialogue. While the fact is, if the US government truly wanted the success of Afghan peace deal, they could have used political pressure in order for Afghans to reach an agreement. But they did not do so, until the situation reached a point where they can easily force both sides to accept their proposal.

The Moscow Talks

Although the letter from the US Secretary of State called on the Turkish government to host talks between Afghans, countries of the region and the international community, but in order to maintain its political influence in international and regional matters, Moscow has arranged a conference ahead of the Turkish summit, which will take place on March 18, 2021. The conference will be attended by a number of Afghan political parties, prominent figures, and officials of the government.

Expectations of the Afghan Nation From the Moscow and Turkey Talks

Afghans expect a number of outcomes from these talks. This is because the current circumstances are unbearable for the people. If the current situation of Afghanistan does not change for good, the country will witness another civil war and the achievements of the past two decades will get washed away. The following are some expectations and demands of the people:

First: The talks must have an outcome and should resolve all the key matters. Also, factors contributing to continuity of war should be eliminated. This is because if both sides are given option to decide, they will play with the fate of the nation and by any means will avoid to resolve the problem through talks.

Second: An interim government should be established in order to enable an environment of trust. In absence of an environment of trust, it is improbable to end the ongoing war.

Third: Instead of protecting their own personal interests, both sides should work for the interest of the nation. This is because interests of individuals and parties create distance between viewpoints. However, interests of the nation bring everyone closer and contribute to unity and harmony.

Fourth: The forthcoming agreement should maintain equitable distribution of power. A side should not be provided with a large portion of power while another is deprived. This is because such failed experience was witnessed during the Bonn conference which had unfavorable results.

Fifth: an immediate ceasefire should be announced. Both sides should avoid even firing a single bullet. This is because peace and war are antithetical.

Sixth: it should be assured none the sides should claim victory of the war. Because if the Taliban enters cities with the belief of victory, it will mean that all establishments and institutions should be wiped out. Consequently, the times of the Mujaddin in 90s will be repeated, during which, Afghanistan faced a great tragedy.

Seventh: Countries in region should assure that they will avoid interfering in internal matters of Afghanistan.

Eighth: The international community should promise that they will financially support the interim government until election for a new government are conducted based on the new constitution. Without such support, the interim government cannot perform its duties.

If these demands of the people are considered, the talks will have fruitful results. We request the political leader to be considerate regarding the matters of peace. They should use the opportunity for the best interest of the nation. Otherwise, they will be face humiliation and the future generations will remember them as traitors.



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