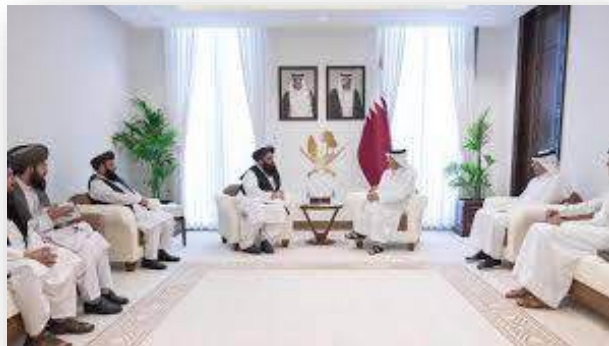


WEEKLY ANALYSIS

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A LOOK AT THE VISIT OF THE ACTING FOREIGN MINISTER OF THE ISLAMIC EMIRATE OF AFGHANISTAN TO QATAR



Weekly Analysis is one of the CSRS publications analyzing significant weekly political, social, economic, and security events in Afghanistan and the region. The prime motive behind this is to provide strategic insights and policy solutions to decision-making institutions and individuals in order to help them design better policies. Weekly Analysis is published in Pashto, Dari, English and Arabic languages.

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A LOOK AT THE VISIT OF THE ACTING FOREIGN MINISTER OF THE ISLAMIC EMIRATE OF AFGHANISTAN TO QATAR

Introduction

The recent visit of Mawlawi Amir Khan Muttaqi, the Acting Foreign Minister of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, to Qatar holds special significance in the context of ongoing international sanctions and the diplomatic isolation faced by the Taliban-led government. Taking place between April 27 and May 4, 2025, this trip was made possible through a special exemption granted by the United Nations Security Council under Resolution 1988. The visit reflects a growing willingness among the international community to engage with the Islamic Emirate—even without granting it formal recognition.

While such diplomatic engagements offer the Islamic Emirate a chance to ease its international isolation, several structural challenges hinder its path toward global legitimacy. These include ongoing restrictions on girls' education and the absence of an inclusive government—two critical areas where the international community expects meaningful progress.

From an international relations perspective, this visit can also be understood within Qatar's long-standing role as a mediator in Afghan affairs. Since 2012, Qatar has hosted the Taliban's political office and has maintained strategic ties with major global powers. This has positioned Qatar as a vital channel of communication between the Islamic Emirate and the international community.

This trip further serves as a test of the Islamic Emirate's diplomatic capabilities and the extent to which the global community is willing to show flexibility in engaging with its leadership. However, the lack of meaningful changes in the Emirate's domestic policies continues to limit the scope and depth of such interactions.

THE POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ACTING FOREIGN MINISTER'S VISIT TO QATAR UNDER CURRENT CONDITIONS

The recent visit of Mawlawi Amir Khan Muttaqi, Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, to Qatar holds considerable political and diplomatic importance, especially given the prevailing international sanctions and restrictions. This visit was made possible through a one-week travel exemption granted by the United Nations Security Council's Sanctions Committee, allowing Muttaqi to meet with Qatari officials in Doha. The exemption itself signals the international community's cautious willingness to engage with Afghanistan's interim government, without extending formal recognition or legitimacy. For the Islamic Emirate, this represents an opportunity to demonstrate a readiness to cooperate, which could help reduce its diplomatic isolation.



Since 2012, Qatar has hosted the political office of the Islamic Emirate and has played a central role in international negotiations with the Taliban movement. Owing to its strategic relationships with the United States, Arab states, and countries in Central Asia, Qatar has emerged as a key mediator between the Islamic Emirate and the broader international community. Amir Khan Muttaqi's visit to Qatar must be understood within this context. Taking place amid continuing international sanctions, the visit reaffirmed Qatar's role as an influential diplomatic actor. By facilitating high-level talks, Qatar has once again positioned itself as a conduit for international engagement, helping the Islamic Emirate to establish the necessary conditions for expanding its foreign relations.

At the international level, this visit also serves as a test case for the global community, particularly Western states, to assess the possibility and limits of engaging with the Islamic Emirate. It may signal a readiness among various countries to initiate dialogue, especially concerning the acceleration of humanitarian aid to Afghanistan. While the Islamic Emirate may view such engagement as a pathway out of international isolation, the absence of substantive commitments to social and political reforms, as expected by the global community, continues to restrict the scope of these interactions.

Unless the interim government makes meaningful progress on key issues, such as inclusive governance and human rights, the international community is likely to maintain its cautious and conditional approach. Thus, Amir Khan Muttaqi's visit to Qatar is not only a diplomatic opportunity for the Islamic Emirate to connect with the world but also a litmus test of the government's acceptance on the international stage.

KEY DISCUSSION POINTS DURING THE VISIT

On April 28, 2025, Mawlawi Amir Khan Muttaqi, Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Emirate, met with Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al Thani, Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Qatar, in Doha. During the meeting, both sides discussed the current situation in Afghanistan and reaffirmed Qatar's comprehensive support for the Afghan people. The Qatari Prime Minister emphasized his country's commitment to promoting security, stability, prosperity, and a dignified life for all segments of Afghan society. This meeting underscored Qatar's critical role as both a mediator and a supporter of the Afghan people during this sensitive period.

One day later, on April 29, 2025, Muttaqi met with Dr. Mohammed bin Abdulaziz bin Saleh Al-Khulaifi, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of Qatar. In this meeting, the two sides exchanged views on political and humanitarian developments in Afghanistan and explored strategies to support the country's stability and socio-economic development. They also discussed regional and international efforts aimed at enhancing stability and delivering effective humanitarian



assistance to the Afghan population. These discussions reflect Qatar's strong commitment to working with the Islamic Emirate in pursuit of lasting security and sustainable development, further solidifying Qatar's commendable role in this context.

The central themes of Amir Khan Muttaqi's discussions included the current political and humanitarian landscape in Afghanistan, the challenges ahead, the role of regional countries and the international community in supporting Afghan stability, and collaborative efforts to promote human and economic development. While the full details of the negotiations have not been officially disclosed, the official statements indicate that these issues were central to the agenda. These engagements highlight the critical importance of regional and international cooperation in supporting the Islamic Emirate and advancing sustainable development in Afghanistan.

Simultaneously, media reports indicate that Qatar is working to facilitate the fourth round of the Doha meeting on Afghanistan soon. Additionally, according to recent reports, the United Nations is deliberating the possible appointment of Suhail Shaheen, the Islamic Emirate's ambassador in Qatar, as Afghanistan's official representative to the United Nations.

HUMAN RIGHTS AND HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

Amir Khan Muttaqi's recent visit to Qatar carries significant humanitarian dimensions, particularly in light of Afghanistan's current socio-economic challenges. In recent years, Afghanistan has faced a multitude of crises, including widespread poverty, with approximately 12.4 million people living below the poverty line. During this visit, Muttaqi held meetings with two Qatari female ministers—Maryam bint Ali bin Nasser Al-Misnad, Qatar's Minister of State for International Cooperation, and Lolwah Al-Khater, Qatar's Minister of Higher Education. These meetings primarily focused on humanitarian, scientific, and cultural collaboration.

Qatar, as one of the leading providers of humanitarian aid to Afghanistan, has played an active role in recent years. During the visit, the two sides reached agreements to facilitate the deployment of Afghan workers to Qatar. Additionally, Qatar expressed its readiness to expand cooperation in the fields of culture, health, and sports with Afghanistan.

Throughout the engagements with Qatari officials, the importance of continued humanitarian assistance was repeatedly emphasized. Qatari representatives reaffirmed their country's commitment to supporting the Afghan people and improving the country's humanitarian conditions. This builds on recent reports, including those from a month prior, which highlighted the operations of the Qatari Red Crescent and another charitable foundation within Afghanistan.



These interactions not only strengthen bilateral ties but also underscore the broader significance of international cooperation in alleviating Afghanistan's humanitarian crises. However, despite these efforts, substantial challenges remain. Key concerns include a lack of transparency in the distribution of aid and doubts regarding whether assistance is reaching those most in need. Furthermore, these meetings indicate that while the Islamic Emirate continues to seek international legitimacy, the focus of most countries remains primarily on the humanitarian situation in Afghanistan.

ECONOMIC AND COMMERCIAL DIMENSIONS OF AMIR KHAN MUTTAQI'S VISIT TO QATAR

Undeniably, international sanctions and the suspension of foreign aid have significantly contributed to a decline in Afghanistan's gross domestic product (GDP), a sharp rise in unemployment, and a dramatic deterioration in living standards. Afghanistan's economy, which was already heavily dependent on international assistance, has entered one of its most challenging phases in the aftermath of the withdrawal of external support. The widespread poverty and declining purchasing power of the population reflect the worsening condition of many Afghan households and signal the looming threats of famine and an inability to meet basic human needs.

In this context, Qatar has the potential to play a pivotal role in supporting Afghanistan's economic recovery. Through investment in infrastructure projects and the continued provision of humanitarian aid, Qatar could contribute meaningfully to stabilizing Afghanistan's fragile economy. In the past, Qatar has been actively involved in reconstruction and development initiatives and has emerged as a significant commercial partner for Afghanistan. Qatari officials have, on several occasions, expressed their commitment to sustaining humanitarian support and expanding economic, trade, and investment cooperation, particularly in infrastructure and development sectors. These repeated commitments reflect Qatar's strategic interest in fostering economic ties with Afghanistan, which also carries considerable humanitarian significance.

During Amir Khan Muttaqi's recent visit to Qatar, he engaged in high-level meetings with Qatari officials where economic and commercial cooperation was a central theme. These engagements indicate the Islamic Emirate's efforts to attract foreign investment and enhance economic partnerships with Qatar and other regional actors.

Nevertheless, the Islamic Emirate's policies on human rights and related international concerns continue to deter many states and private investors from establishing close cooperation with the current Afghan administration. Furthermore, ongoing international sanctions and financial restrictions have made it exceedingly difficult for the Islamic Emirate to access global financial systems. Despite these challenges, engagement with countries such as Qatar presents a



potential pathway for Afghanistan to break out of its diplomatic and economic isolation and to pursue a trajectory toward sustainable development.

INTERNATIONAL IMPLICATIONS OF AMIR KHAN MUTTAQI'S VISIT TO QATAR

Amir Khan Muttaqi's recent visit to Qatar comes at a particularly sensitive time and reflects the Islamic Emirate's efforts to break out of diplomatic isolation and gain international support. Although no country has formally recognized the caretaker government of the Islamic Emirate, this visit provided a rare opportunity for engagement with the global community and an attempt to present the Emirate as a reliable and trustworthy partner. By strengthening its regional and international presence, the Islamic Emirate is trying to gain more political, economic, and humanitarian backing. Despite the many challenges, this move can be seen as a significant step toward rejoining the international stage.

Qatar, as one of the few countries maintaining an active relationship with the Islamic Emirate, has played a critical mediating role. It has served as a bridge between the Emirate and Western nations, including the United States and European countries, helping to create space for diplomatic and political dialogue. The meetings between Muttaqi and high-ranking Qatari officials highlight this important role. By using its strategic position and diplomatic networks, Qatar may help the Islamic Emirate open more doors for international engagement. Its role as a facilitator has strengthened its reputation as a credible and influential player in international diplomacy.

Muttaqi's visit to Qatar carries multiple messages. On one hand, it signals the Islamic Emirate's willingness to engage with the world, showing a degree of openness that has not always been evident. On the other hand, the fact that international organizations granted a special one-week travel exemption for this visit points to the ongoing human rights concerns and the complicated nature of the Emirate's global relationships.

Nevertheless, major obstacles remain. The absence of formal recognition from the international community, continued sanctions, and lack of transparency in governance are serious challenges for the Emirate's international standing. Without clear progress in these areas, efforts to build strong diplomatic ties will continue to face limitations.

In this context, Amir Khan Muttaqi's visit to Qatar represents both an opportunity and a test. It allows for diplomatic engagement, but also highlights the fundamental barriers that still stand in the way of the Islamic Emirate's full acceptance on the world stage.



CONCLUSION

The visit of Amir Khan Muttaqi to Qatar reflects the broader efforts of the Islamic Emirate to help Afghanistan move beyond its current crisis. Taking place amid international sanctions and ongoing humanitarian challenges, the trip focused on key areas such as political engagement, economic support, and humanitarian aid. Through meetings with Qatari officials, the Islamic Emirate aimed to gain greater international legitimacy while strengthening Qatar's role as a strategic mediator and partner. In this context, the Emirate seeks to boost economic ties, attract foreign investment, and expand trade relations, although significant challenges remain.

Despite these efforts, serious limitations within the Islamic Emirate's policies, particularly regarding women's rights and the absence of an inclusive government, have hindered the full realization of the trip's objectives. While Qatar continues to play a key role in providing humanitarian support and facilitating economic assistance, structural and international barriers persist. Ultimately, this visit represents an opportunity for the Islamic Emirate to rebuild international relationships and work toward sustainable development in Afghanistan. However, achieving these goals will depend on the Emirate's genuine commitment to addressing the current challenges.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Islamic Emirate should strengthen its diplomacy by leveraging Qatar's mediating role and continuing engagement with both Islamic and Western countries, to avoid isolation and work toward international legitimacy.
2. Economic cooperation with Qatar and other Gulf countries—particularly in infrastructure, mining, and agriculture—should be expanded through joint investment funds and large-scale development projects.
3. The Islamic Emirate can benefit from Qatar's influence at the United Nations to facilitate humanitarian aid and push for the easing of financial sanctions.
4. Breaking out of international isolation is a critical need for the Afghan people, especially given the humanitarian situation. The Islamic Emirate must take serious and practical steps in this direction.

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