

The Role of the United States of America and the Peace Process in Afghanistan

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the international community in Afghanistan was to fight terrorism and ensure lasting stability. Now, more than a decade and a half after the military and political presence, the prospect of peace and security does not look very clear and promising. The mechanism for security and stability in Afghanistan now defined in bringing peace through the Taliban. Afghanistan's ambassador to the United States, Zalmi Khalilzad has met with Pakistani and Afghan officials for the first time. U.S. pressure on Pakistan and consultations with countries such as UAE and Saudi Arabia have helped accelerate peace efforts in Afghanistan.

Keywords- UAE; Saudi Arabia; International Community; United States; Peace.

point, is that in fact the main concern in this regard, is that the United States and the Western countries in general do not bypass the Afghan government to bring peace to Afghanistan, and no decision is made in the absence of the Afghan government and people. Nevertheless, government officials said the government was on the negotiating agenda and that the United States and other countries could act as facilitators of the peace talks. Zalmi Khalilzad has now begun serious efforts for peace in Afghanistan.

This is the third time he has met with Pakistani and Afghan officials during his brief role as US State Department representative for Afghanistan peace. As Khalilzad himself said, he is in a hurry to start negotiations, and these trips show the urgency of peace in Afghanistan for the United States.

US pressure on Pakistan and its consultations with countries such as the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia and the US President's letter to the Pakistani Prime Minister have undoubtedly helped accelerate this process.

I. INTRODUCTION

The international community, and especially the United States, is working harder than ever to end the war and bring peace to Afghanistan. The aim of the international community in Afghanistan was to fight terrorism and ensure lasting stability in Afghanistan. Now, more than a decade and a half after the military and political presence of the international community in the country, the prospect of peace and security does not look very clear and promising, and the foundations of stability do not seem solid. The policies of the international community during this period have always been variable and have not been strategically stable due to the current developments in Afghanistan. The instability of the international community's policies in the fight against terrorism and the maintenance of lasting stability has hampered all political processes.

The mechanism for security and stability in Afghanistan now defined in bringing peace through the Taliban. This definition stems from two beliefs, one being that there is no military solution to the war in Afghanistan and that the Afghan government cannot defeat the military insurgents. Second, the Taliban is not an inflexible and terrorist group with which the negotiation on peace to be impossible.

The negotiations between US officials and Taliban representatives in Qatar, which followed by the election of Zalmi Khalilzad as US State Department Special Representative for Afghanistan, were the first practical steps taken by the United States. The important

II. WHY IS AMERICA SO EAGER TO BRING PEACE TO AFGHANISTAN?

In a superficial view, this question may seem irrelevant, because the United States, as a country that has sided with Afghanistan in the new political era, rescued it from the international terrorism, and worked with other countries to rebuild the country and establish legal institutions and assistance in various fields. It must hurry to bring peace, and stability in Afghanistan. Secondly, peace is a vital and at the same time humane issue, and the United States and any other country must work on this issue as a human responsibility and within the framework of international law.

In a superficial view this question seem irrelevant as US seems the country which stand on the side of Afghanistan in period of new political arena, supported Afghans and saved the country from international terrorism, and along international community greatly contributed in Afghanistan rehabilitation. Therefore, US must hurry on bring peace and stability, and secondly peace is vital, and humanity and therefore US has a duty like other countries to facilitate the process in the framework of international regulation. However, when we go a little deeper into the

appearance of the theorem, we realize the importance of the above question. One perception is that the United States is tired of the war in Afghanistan and wants to get through the vortex of Afghanistan safely. Another perception is that in recent years, some of Afghanistan's neighbors have sought to create a serious obstacle to US policy in Afghanistan by supporting the Taliban. In practice, this has even diminished US political and economic pressure on Pakistan. By bringing peace, the United States can gain the influence of its neighbors in Afghanistan and keep the situation under control.

However, the peace process pursued more seriously by the United States. Nevertheless, there is serious concern about how the values of democracy and the political and cultural achievements of recent decades traded during political negotiations. It is natural that at the beginning of the negotiations both sides enter into negotiations with their highest demands; But in every negotiation there are green, gray, orange and red boundaries that define the bargaining framework. The main question is where the government do and the international community, including the United States, draw the red line for peace?

For four years, the US government, particularly Trump himself, has worked to end the peace process and withdraw US troops from Afghanistan; He therefore appointed Khalilzad as the US Special Representative for Afghanistan to accelerate the peace process and the withdrawal from Afghanistan.

Khalilzad worked hard during this period and on February 29, 2020, he was able to reach a new agreement with the Taliban. Under the agreement, the two sides pledged to start inter-Afghan talks after the release of all Taliban prisoners by the Afghan government.

The agreement signed while the Afghan government not allowed participating in US-Taliban talks, so after the agreement signed, Ashraf Ghani set a new condition for the deal. When Trump realized that the Afghan government was trying to disrupt the peace process, he sent his secretary of state, Mike Pompeo, to Kabul to negotiate and persuade the Afghan government.

In a meeting with Afghan officials, Pompeo threatened to cut \$ 1 billion in aid to Afghanistan if the peace process disrupted. After Pompeo's visit, the peace process accelerated and most of the Taliban prisoners arrested by the government released, leaving only 400 prisoners, and Ashraf Ghani declared their release is conditional to The Loya Jirga (General assembly) and Ashraf Ghani's move, was another obstacle to the Trump-led peace process.

After the Loya Jirga, Afghan lawmakers said there was no problem with their release. They issued a political statement calling on the Afghan government to release the remaining detainees, but a few days later, Australia and the French government called on Ashraf Ghani not to release some of the detainees because they killed their soldiers. This led to the suspension of inter-

Afghan talks. With the explanations given, the main question is why does France opposed the release of Taliban prisoners by Ashraf Ghani?

During talks between Khalilzad and the Taliban, the European Union sought to influence US-Taliban talks by influencing the process raising its concerns about Afghanistan's future with other countries playing a key role in Afghanistan. EU Special Representative for Afghanistan Roland Kubia, as well as German Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan Markus Potzel, have traveled extensively to the region, meeting with officials and discussing common concerns about Afghanistan. The EU tried hard to play a major role in the new deal between the United States and the Taliban, but Khalilzad did not allow Europe to play a leading role in the negotiations and downplayed Europe's role in the political process. Therefore, the concerns of the Europeans about Afghanistan were not included in the agreement between the Taliban and the United States.

Europe views Afghanistan and Iran as advantage to counter US unilateralism on the international stage. We saw a similar situation in the early years of the 21st century. At the same time, Bush invaded the region without regard to the role of Europe and without regard to the views of the United Nations. By entering the Iranian nuclear case at the time, the European troika sought to emphasize Europe's role in important global decisions. The current situation can be compared to the same period. Europe is fed up with Trump's idiocy and is looking for a third (relatively vital) issue from the United States, not a bilateral issue.

III. WILL THE WAR STALEMATE BREAK BY DIRECT US NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE TALIBAN?

One week after US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo visited Kabul and stressed that Washington was willing to engage in direct peace talks with the Taliban, US President Donald Trump recently ordered his country's top diplomats to hold direct talks with the Taliban.

The New York Times reports that the change in US policy aimed at helping start peace talks to end the 17-year-old war. However, the Afghan government says the news is not true and that the peace is owned and led Afghans.

The Taliban, meanwhile, have said they have not yet received a formal request from the United States, and the announcement of direct US talks with the group in the media could not reflect the US official position. The group said they are waiting for a formal US request for direct talks.

The US is trying to negotiate directly with the Taliban, but after the Afghan government announced a

temporary ceasefire, contrary to the expectations of National Unity Government, the Taliban returned to the battlefield and continued to kill security forces and attack Afghan military bases.

The Taliban have so far failed to respond positively to Afghanistan's repeated calls to join the peace process, and years of efforts by the Afghan government and its foreign allies have failed to bring the Taliban to the negotiating table and end Afghanistan's 17-year war.

IV. HAS US POLICY TOWARDS THE TALIBAN CHANGED?

The United States has always insisted on Afghan-led peace talks, and said that the peace process between the Afghan government and the Taliban should pursue through Afghan channels. In addition, the Afghan government has emphasized "Afghan-led peace and Afghan ownership" at several international and domestic meetings.

After Afghan President Ashraf Ghani's request to the Taliban to join the peace process went unanswered at the second meeting of the Kabul Process and the war escalated, the Afghan government's temporary ceasefire failed to win the Taliban's confidence to join the peace process. The group set fire at Eid for only three days, saying it was for the sake of the Afghan people.

The Taliban now control more areas in different parts of Afghanistan and have made great strides on the battlefield. This Taliban superiority has raised the question of how Donald Trump's strategy for Afghanistan and South Asia has affected the ongoing war.

Some experts argue that the US strategy in the military sector has not achieved its goals, so the country now wants to change its policy towards Pakistan and enter into negotiations instead of war.

"There is little evidence that senior Taliban leaders are seriously interested in terms of an agreement that is acceptable to Afghan and US officials," said Seth Jones, director of the Transnational Threat Project at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington. "Most Taliban leaders believe that time is of the essence and they are winning the war in Afghanistan," he added.

The New York Times also reports that the shift to prioritizing US initial talks with the Taliban over what has proved to be a failed "Afghan-Afghan" process is a reflection of Afghan and US officials' understanding that President Trump's new strategy for Afghanistan is fundamentally changing. The Taliban's achievements are not repulsed, it arises.

The report said the US willingness to negotiate directly, with no date set for the talks and any possible setbacks, is a sign of the Trump administration's rush to break the deadlock in Afghanistan. The Afghan government opposed in the past the plan of former US

President Barack Obama to negotiate directly with the Taliban. Afghanistan believed that it had abandoned its peace efforts. "Efforts are particularly focused on convincing the Afghan leadership that such talks are not a substitute for talks with the coalition government, but are aimed at breaking the ice and paving the way for talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban," the New York Times reported.

On the other hand, it seems that the change in US policy towards the Taliban is due to Trump's frustration with the war in Afghanistan. A number of senior US officials believe that Mr. Trump has expressed frustration with the war and is keen to end it.

The officials were apparently referring to Trump's recent remarks at the Brussels summit that people were tired of the war in Afghanistan. "It's been a long time coming," he said. "We have made a lot of progress, but this war has lasted a long time".

V. AMBIGUITY IN THE OWNERSHIP OF PEACE TALKS

Senior US officials have said the goal of talks with the Taliban is to break the deadlock and pave the way for broader talks. Alice Wells, a US diplomat on Afghanistan and Pakistan, believes her country is ready to facilitate, support and participate in peace talks and there is nothing stopping the United States from taking action against the Taliban. "We are doing everything we can to make sure that our actions help the Taliban and the Afghan government at the same table," he added.

Welcoming the Trump administration's new decision, the Afghan government argues that Afghan-led peace ownership has international support, but that the United States supports the peace process and has a supportive and facilitating role.

The main party to the dialogue is the Afghan government and no other country can replace the Afghan government and people in the dialogue," Shah Hussein Mortazavi, Afghanistan's vice president's spokesman, told to Etalaat Roz.

He said that for the first time, the Afghan government has a clear vision for peace, which it has presented at various meetings. According to him, the new movements that have emerged in the Islamic world also show that peace in Afghanistan is being supported.

At the second meeting of the Kabul Process, President Ghani stated that if the Taliban joined the peace process, his government would be ready to recognize the Taliban as a political party without any conditions and to pave the way for the group's political activities.

Following this meeting, the Afghan High Peace Council held several meetings inside the country and in one of these meetings, more than two thousand religious scholars declared the current war in Afghanistan null and void and called on the Taliban to join the peace process.

However, some analysts argue that the Americans do not have the necessary confidence in Afghan government leaders, so they are trying to negotiate with the Taliban. Along with this administration, Trump faced with the question of what the Americans will gain from the war in Afghanistan.

Wahid Mozhdha, a political analyst and former Taliban diplomat, told Etlait Roze that some US officials believe that the end of the stalemate is not the continuation of the war but negotiations. "This change will be in Afghanistan's interest," Mr Mozhdha said, referring to his meeting with several US officials. Nevertheless, the question is what happens to the security contract. "Now the Americans are just saying we are negotiating".

VI. WHAT WILL BE THE PRECONDITIONS FOR THE NEGOTIATIONS?

The United States has negotiated with the Taliban in the past. Under former Afghan President Hamid Karzai, the Taliban's office in Qatar was opened at the initiative of the Germans, and several senior Taliban officials represented the office. The Americans then took the initiative and entered into negotiations with the Taliban. The action angered Hamid Karzai and he opposed the Qatari office.

The National Unity Government also called for the closure of the Taliban office in Qatar last year, saying it was not working towards the stated goals but was working to attract political support and funding for the Taliban.

On the other hand, the Taliban have always insisted on the withdrawal of foreign and US forces from Afghanistan in the past. Now that the United States is seeking direct talks with the Taliban, the question is what the terms and condition of those talks will be.

The State Department says there are no preconditions for negotiations and everything, including the presence of US and NATO forces in Afghanistan, will be at the center of the discussion.

A Taliban official told Pakistan's Daily Times. He said the Taliban wanted to remove their group's leaders from the UN sanctions list, calling it a prelude to direct talks with the United States. In addition, the Taliban want them to open an office in Qatar.

"We will start a formal dialogue with the United States on the withdrawal of its troops from Afghanistan, and then we will talk about peace and other issues," said the Taliban official, who did not want to disclose his name.

Meanwhile, Wahid Mozhdha says that if direct negotiations take place, the Taliban will raise the date for the withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghanistan and the international guarantee with the United States. "I have heard from them (the Taliban) that they will raise two important issues; when it is guaranteed, negotiations

between the Afghan government and the Taliban will begin," he said.

The Taliban claim that the United States is on the side of the war in Afghanistan because it was the Americans who overthrew the Islamic Emirate regime after the 9/11 attacks. That is why the group has repeatedly stated that they want to negotiate with the Americans, not the Afghan government.

On the other hand, direct talks between the United States and the Taliban have come at a time when there have been several popular peace movements inside Afghanistan. David Sadani, a former deputy defense minister who has dealt with Afghanistan and Pakistan, says that while popular peace movements in Afghanistan can upset old calculations, progress on the battlefield and in negotiations with the Taliban remains dependent on effective pressure on Pakistan. What weakens the pressure, he says, is a lack of patience and "reflective motivation" to judge America's new strategy, which has suffered a short time since its inception.

According to the New York Times, signs from the Trump administration and the exceptions to military sanctions against Pakistan show that the United States has already eased pressure in the hope that Pakistan will force Taliban leaders to negotiate immediately.

"If so, the Pakistanis are once again reluctant to benefit from a United States," said Mr Sadani. If this is the only factor, the US to re-engage with the Taliban, as has been done several times, will be another mistake made by the US government that will escalate the violence and increase the Taliban's hopes for military victory.

VII. THE ROLE OF US-TALIBAN TALKS IN AFGHAN PEACE

Argument:

In the nine rounds of negotiations between the United States and the Taliban in Qatar, the Taliban had gained international prestige and good regional status. In each round of negotiations, new demands were made. At the end of the ninth round, which was supposed to be the signing of an agreement between the US and the Taliban, US officials refused to sign the agreement. President Trump, through three tweets, stopped nine rounds of US-Taliban talks due to the killing of a US soldier in Kabul. It was declared by the Taliban and until December 7, 2019, the shadow of a halt and stalemate over US-Taliban negotiations prevailed. Finally, on December 7, Khalilzad arrived in Qatar after meeting with President Ashraf Ghani and other politicians, and resumed talks with the Taliban.

In this regard, some questions raised is the US-Taliban talks a new round of talks or a complement to the previous round. Can the US-Taliban talks lead to peace in Afghanistan? Will the two sides consider the interests of the people and the government of

Afghanistan in these negotiations? I will answer these questions below.

VIII. NEW TALKS OR A CONTINUATION OF NINE ROUNDS OF NEGOTIATIONS?

According to the author, the talks that started between the Taliban and the United States in Qatar are in fact a continuation of the previous nine rounds of talks, and the two sides want to achieve the desired results as soon as possible. The two sides reportedly backtracked on their previous demands and resumed stalled talks.

The backlash means that the Taliban may have given up on establishing an Islamic Emirate in Afghanistan and promised more political and financial support to the Americans, and that reducing US troops before a final agreement could be another option. In any case, the new talks complement the previous nine rounds, and given Pakistan (the Taliban's main supporter) welcomes the start of talks, the two sides' withdrawal from their previous demands will pave the way for a US-Taliban peace deal. The talks will be the signing of a peace agreement between the United States and the Taliban.

On the other hand, according to sources close to the Taliban, the initial process of secret US-Taliban talks began in two arcs and ended on the fifth arc, and the two sides reached a general agreement. "The secret meeting between Zalmay Khalilzad and Taliban representatives ended yesterday after four days, and the previous disputes have been completely resolved," former Taliban member Sayed Akbar Agha confirmed the news to the Jomhur News Agency on April 26.

Thus, the talks, which officially resumed on Saturday, December 7, after a relatively long two-month hiatus, are in fact a formal recognition of agreements previously made secretly between Zalmay Khalilzad and Taliban representatives in Qatar.

IX. THE INTERESTS OF AFGHANISTAN OR THE UNITED STATES AND THE TALIBAN

It would be realistic if the Afghan government did not expect the United States and the Taliban to consider the interests of the government and the people in these agreements, because the basic principle in negotiation is self-help and pursuing its own interests rather than the interests of others. If there is a ceasefire as a result of US-Taliban talks, the only fire will be between US forces and the Taliban who will not be attacked by the Taliban when US troops leave Afghanistan, and on the other hand US forces will pass by the Taliban carelessly and they Do not target.

Accordingly, violence in Afghanistan may be reduced, given the possible ceasefire between the

Taliban and the United States, but the Afghan security forces will continue to be targeted by the Taliban. The Taliban will continue to use their attacks on Afghan security forces and sabotage in the country's metropolitan areas in order to gain prestige and excel in inter-Afghan talks.

Therefore, given the current realities of war and peace in Afghanistan, the Government of Afghanistan should try to pursue inter-Afghan talks and strive for peace and stability in the country, and have strong support and preventive and retaliatory military plans against the Taliban. To protect and defend the values of the last 18 years, the national interests and the freedoms of Afghanistan and the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in general in the mid-term negotiations with the Taliban.

X. PEACE BETWEEN WHO?

Given the reality of the international system and the fundamental principle of self-help and self-interest in the negotiations, the author's analysis is that the US-Taliban peace agreement will provide peace between the US and the Taliban and will only pave the way for inter-Afghan dialogue; But it is not the main way to achieve peace in Afghanistan. The basic principle for the formation of inter-Afghan talks and reaching a peace agreement with the Taliban and ending the conflict and war in Afghanistan is the political consensus of the influential political spectrums and the participation in the inter-Afghan talks with a comprehensive and unified program.

We have also recently witnessed the announcement of cooperation between the countries of the region, especially the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan, which, in the author's opinion, has a tremendous impact on the Afghan peace process, especially in the neighborhood, and this cooperation can lead to maximum impact. Turn an announcement into an action.

If the government, and especially the Afghan government, pursues peace in Afghanistan through the American path and hopes that the United States will bring peace to this country, this will be no more than a wish. Peace in Afghanistan is achieved when the government of Afghanistan demonstrates a strong political will and brings all political factions together around a single program and one goal, and practically turns political consensus into a slogan.

Given the current realities of society, the Government of Afghanistan should consider different political spectrums and include influential political parties (jihadi and democratic), members of the National Assembly, university professors, civil society and the country's leading scholars through open elections alongside agents. Afghanistan's foreign policy and peace in the Afghan-Afghan negotiating team strengthens the prestige of the pro-Islamic Republic negotiators and the core values of the last two decades so that it can defend

national interests and existing values with a single voice. On the other hand, the temporary suspension of US-Taliban talks is, according to the author's analysis, a diplomatic tactic after a general agreement between the two sides to determine the outcome of the Afghan elections. Determining the outcome of Afghanistan's presidential election presents two options for the United States. If the election is a definite victory, the United States will try to persuade the Taliban to participate in the Afghan political system with the help of countries in the region, especially Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, in which case the Taliban as a political group modeled on Hezb-e-Islami will win high seats. Will be political partners in the Afghan government. The second option is if the Afghan election does not have a definite winner. In this case, the United States, following the example of the Bonn Conference, with the help of its strategic friends, will try to persuade the Taliban to work together with the various political factions in Afghanistan in a relatively new structure. In this case, amendments to the constitution will be unveiled and some changes in the type of political system in Afghanistan will not be unexpected.

XI. CONCUSSION

US-Taliban talks will remain at the level of US-Taliban talks, and the benefits provided will be solely US-Taliban interests, and the outcome of the US-Taliban peace agreement will facilitate inter-Afghan talks. But how to protect and defend the existing values and system of the Islamic Republic in Afghanistan will be the responsibility of the negotiating team, which will participate in the inter-Afghan talks from the Afghan government-led address. Whatever the outcome of Afghanistan's elections, the winner will be in the hands of the Afghan government and people when they come to the inter-Afghan negotiating table with full or at least partial political consensus and resolutely defend the achievements of jihad and recent decades.

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