The Rocky Road of Afghan Peace Process

Both the Taliban delegation and U.S. Special Representative for Afghanistan Reconciliation Zalmay Khalilzad said that the two sides had made headway in the ongoing peace talks in Qatar. But the U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo described the talks “incredibly complex” and was afraid that a “significant breakthrough” would not come until the late summer. In any case, the U.S. government was “Actively preparing but not yet operationalized” to begin the withdrawal of 4,000 U.S. soldiers, which was to be completed in 2024, however, the Taliban demand pullout in exchange for a cease-fire. Afghanistan has been ravaged by war for over 40 years. Meanwhile, Kabul government needs to struggle for meaningful negotiations.

Afghan officials prepare for consultative Loya jirga to achieve a national consensus and believe that only an intra-Afghan peace talk will bear the desired result. Afghan leaders support an “Afghan-owned” and “Afghan-led” peace process. In the fifth round of peace talks, the Taliban and U.S. negotiators were still far apart, with no clear sign on a deal that could bring peace to Afghanistan. Meanwhile, the international community, regional stakeholders, and the Afghan government are mostly likely to be controversial – and guaranteed to create a vacuum in Afghanistan, however, Chinese State representatives are still bargaining for the withdrawal of U.S. troops. This hinders the peace process and pushes for many other issues. For instance, the U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo described the talks “incredibly complicated” and said that the talks were a few among them who were relatively experienced and remained committed to the electoral process.

Meanwhile, Abdullah Abdullah, the country’s chief executive officer, urged leaders to prepare for the timely holding of presidential elections, and as soon as possible announce the results of the parliamentary elections. He said that holding presidential elections never means renunciation to the peace process but respect to the people’s will. He added that the new commissions of the electoral commissions should rebuild the people’s confidence in the electoral process. Meanwhile, the government’s disapproval, which suggests a rift between the government and the Taliban in this administration. Bolton’s remarks suggest that there is a trust deficit between the Taliban and the U.S. and they say that the talks are a delaying strategy for U.S. troops to leave Afghanistan. “There is no vacuum in Afghanistan needs to be filled, because the land belongs to the Afghans of Afghanistan.” He added. “This year marks the centenary of Afghanistan’s independence. We ardently hope that this country, after suffering so much, will have the courage to set itself free from now on and live genuine and independent and lasting peace.” Reiterating his government’s position, Wang said, “China will respect its wish and needs, comprehensive and sustainable development in Afghanistan.”

In addition, Uzbekistan and Russia have also signaled their intention for supporting peace process and urged for a resolution. In my past commentaries about peace talks, I reiterated that involving regional stakeholders would yield positive outcomes.

It is self-explanatory that the participation of the Taliban stakeholders in the peace process and the recognition of the government and the U.S. government of the Taliban government of Afghanistan will go a long way in the political and economic difficulties of the country. It is expected that the new leadership of the Taliban will be able to achieve the desired progress and stabilize the situation.

Unfortunately, ending 18 years of conflict seems a highly challenging issue and will not take place overnight. Therefore, the U.S.-Taliban talks, which started in Qatar, must be reviewed and push for many other issues. For instance, the U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo described the talks “incredibly complex” and said that the talks were a few among them who were relatively experienced and remained committed to the electoral process.

For now, the main challenges to be seen are the national elections in the entire country. It is expected that the new leadership of the Taliban will be able to achieve the desired progress and stabilize the situation.

The situation was so critical that all of the public trust and resources governmental mechanisms have been spent on the war and the nation’s stability.

Based on this analysis, everything now depends on the new leadership of the Taliban and how they agree to their proposal and the final result of the talks. In any case, the U.S. government was “Actively preparing but not yet operationalized” to begin the withdrawal of 4,000 U.S. soldiers, which was to be completed in 2024, however, the Taliban demand pullout in exchange for a cease-fire. Afghanistan has been ravaged by war for over 40 years. Meanwhile, Kabul government needs to struggle for meaningful negotiations. In any case, the U.S. government was “Actively preparing but not yet operationalized” to begin the withdrawal of 4,000 U.S. soldiers, which was to be completed in 2024, however, the Taliban demand pullout in exchange for a cease-fire. Afghanistan has been ravaged by war for over 40 years. Meanwhile, Kabul government needs to struggle for meaningful negotiations.

At some point in the future, the Taliban’s delegation will be able to fulfill their proposal and announce the results of the presidential election. For the first time, the foundation of this dialogue between the government and the Taliban will be established. Therefore, as frequently demanded by public opinion, the talks should be transparent and all the parties should be involved in this dialogue.

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Iran and North Korea Highlight Pitfalls of Trump’s ‘Maximum Pressure’ Strategy

Donald J. Trump’s ill-fated ‘maximum pressure’ approach to Iran, as well as for that matter North Korea, begs the question what options is left if the regime should continue to operate as a significant threat to US security?

In the case of Venezuela, it remains to be known whether the country’s supposed rebuilding of a rocket launched site after the US president last month walked away, a poised to re-ignite a new Cold War-style competition. The situation was so bad that the problems of illegal violence potentially are proving to be more effective than maximum pressure. The FATF demands have put Iran between a rock and a hard place. Iranian resilience backed by key players in the international community demonstrated its ability to extricate itself from several sanctions. However, the nuclear deal seems to still face a lot of challenges. The situation was so bad that the problems of illegal violence potentially are proving to be more effective than maximum pressure.

In the case of North Korea, it remains to be seen whether the country’s supposed rebuilding of a rocket launched site after the US president last month walked away, a poised to re-ignite a new Cold War-style competition. The situation was so bad that the problems of illegal violence potentially are proving to be more effective than maximum pressure.

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Iran’s parliament has so far passed two of four bills required for membership in the International Atomic Energy Agency, a step towards full nuclear transparency.

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