

In the Name of God, the Most Merciful, the Most Kind

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Preventing Historical Mistake in Last Minute

When Zalmay Khalilzad, who has served as U.S. ambassador to Afghanistan during the administration of President George W. Bush, was named as President Trump's special adviser to Afghanistan to try to bring the Afghan government and the Taliban to reconciliation on September 05, 2018, Most Afghans welcomed it. He was one of the best candidates for this job because Afghan government and people could trust him as a person who may not ignore the Afghan national interests as he's been very critical of Pakistani policies, in the past and held Pakistan responsible for rising insecurity and revival of Taliban in Afghanistan.

However, when the first round of the talks ended in Qatari Capital Doha, the first signs of the US and Taliban talks, as a controversial talks appeared; the talks were focused on the US troop withdrawal and Taliban must guarantee that Afghanistan is no longer a safe haven for terrorists to attack the United States and its allies. Actually, what concerned Afghans were not of the priority of the talks; e.g. the political system of Afghanistan, 18 years achievements of Afghanistan and international community, human rights, women rights, freedom of media, basic rights and rights of minority groups.

During the peace talks, there were no signs of positive changes in the Taliban political and military behavior. What the Afghan and international community expected was to see reduction in violence. However, they only increased attacking government military bases and deliberately targeting the civilians and public spaces. In some cases which the civilian casualties were very high they did not accept the responsibility and blamed ISIS for the attacks. And ISIS accepted the responsibility; because they only want to be on the stage here.

When the 9th round of the talks concluded, few Afghans trusted the closed-door negotiations between the United States and the Taliban. Many Afghans expressed fears that the Trump administration would make too many concessions to the insurgents, giving them free rein to re-impose extreme Islamic rule and sacrificing gains in rights and freedoms under democratic rule. Thus, they were right to some extent, because it was disclosed later that even in draft peace agreement they were mentioned as the Islamic Emirate. As a consequence, everyone was afraid the U.S. would sign a cease-fire but the Taliban would continue their war against the Afghan government and people.

When Donald Trump cancelled a secret meeting with Taliban and Afghanistan leaders after a bombing in Kabul that killed 12 people, including an American soldier. And in addition to this, he called off peace negotiations with the insurgent group, nearly all Afghans felt relieved and happy; Afghan officials, analysts and citizens warmly welcomed President Donald Trump's announcement that he was calling off the troubled US-Taliban peace talks aimed at ending the 18-year conflict. At the same time, Afghan government strongly welcomed Trump's announcement. According to them it coincided with official worries in Afghanistan that the Taliban were manipulating the peace process. Afghan government reiterated long-standing insistence that only direct bilateral talks between Afghan and Taliban leaders could bring about an enduring and substantive settlement. Afghan government termed this decision of the President Trump as having proper a proper understanding of the situation and believing that the Taliban were not committed to peace.

The nightmare of the US and Taliban peace agreement ended with the timely and wise decision of President Trump. Taliban are the main barrier to peace in Afghanistan. Any lasting peace deal requires the Taliban must stop killing Afghans and agree to negotiate directly with the Afghan government. Afghan government has always pursued a meaningful peace process and is the implementer of that process. Without a clear framework for Amendment of the Afghan constitution, preserving the 18 year achievements, protecting human rights, women rights, citizen's basic rights including religious and rights of minority groups, there will be no sustainable peace in Afghanistan.

Why Washington Calls Off the Afghanistan's Peace Process?

By: Mohammad Zahir Akbari

The US President Donald Trump said through a series of tweets that he was cancelling the peace talks with Taliban leaders after a car bombing in Kabul killed one U.S. service member and 11 others. Trump said in a tweet that he had been planning secret meetings with the Afghan President Ashraf Ghani and senior Taliban leaders at David Camp on Sunday. "I immediately canceled the meeting and called off peace negotiations," Trump wrote on Twitter, "What kind of people would kill so many in order to seemingly strengthen their bargaining position?" The U.S. President said if the Taliban cannot agree to a "ceasefire during these very important peace talks" then they probably don't have the power to negotiate a meaningful agreement anyway.

The negotiations have been underway since last winter, when Mr. Trump's special envoy for Afghanistan, Zalmay Khalilzad, began regular trips to Doha, Qatar, for grueling sessions with Taliban representatives. Finally the talks ended a draft agreement which faced with widespread criticism inside and outside of the United States. It means, in addition to the US soldier event, the Americans top leaders want to show that no negotiation is better than bad negotiation. Nine former US officials who already served in Afghanistan issued a joint statement that the US troop's withdrawal would lead to another civil war in the country. A former US envoy to Afghanistan, Jamie Kong-ham, said that the agreement would not create required conditions for peace; thus, Ryan Crocker described the agreement as very dangerous. They emphasized that the withdrawal of US troops from Afghanistan before a real peace deal with the Taliban would face a full-blown civil war in the country.

According to some sources, Mike Pompeo was also not satisfied with the US peace deal with the Taliban; as a report quoted, he said that America was ready to sign the agreement but not any ridiculous agreement. Meanwhile, US Secretary of Defense, Mark Spar, said that his country is making efforts to reach a political agreement with the Taliban but these efforts do not mean that the US will accept "any deal" with the Taliban. "We want to make sure we reach a favorable agreement; an agreement that at least guarantees the security of the United States and specify a clearer path for the Afghan people," he said. The US House Foreign Relations Committee had also asked Zalmay Khalilzad to explain the provision of the agreement in the House.

In Afghanistan, the Afghan Presidency expressed concerns about the implications of the agreement and called the United States to explain the agreement consequences. The second vice president had also reacted to the deal calling mentioning or formality of the "Islamic Emirate" in the agreement is unjustifiable. The Civil Society Network Working Group has also expressed concerns over the achievements of the past two decades and called for the preservation

of these achievements in Afghanistan.

In general, there were several points which were more highlighted inside Afghanistan: firstly, the terms of the agreement had been adjusted accordance with interests and demand of Taliban only. The contents of agreement could create a mentality as if they were able to force the United States and the international community to leave Afghanistan through the military forces. Secondly, the term of "Islamic Emirate" in the context of the agreement was reminiscent of the Taliban's most important demand and extreme ideology. It was interpreted that the Islamic Emirate is the Taliban's red line and that the group will never give up on the demand. Thirdly, the negotiations fully marginalized the Afghan government and Afghan people. No Afghan had role in codification of the draft agreement text, and even it was not available to the government until the recent days. This issue could cause the Taliban feel prideful and superior during the intra-Afghan peace talks. Fourthly, the agreement cared about security of the United States and its allies but nothing mentioned about security of Afghan government and Afghan people after the withdrawal of international forces. Fifthly, the agreement does not say anything about a global ceasefire in Afghanistan, and only predicted a limited ceasefire between the US and the Taliban. Based on this, war, suicide attacks, bloodshed and other types of crimes could continue after the agreement. Thus, the agreement does not specify who will take the power after the withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghanistan. Electoral government, transitional government or ...

Overall, the agreement mainly focused only on demands of Taliban and the withdrawal of US troops from Afghanistan. It paid no attention to Afghan people and past achievements neglecting its deleterious consequences for the country. Therefore, many Afghan people have warmly welcomed the Trump's decision urging not to gamble on the future and fate of Afghan people with its irresponsible withdrawal from Afghanistan. It must be stressed that the democratic political system in Afghanistan is common point between Afghan people and the US government. This common point can be changed to a real friendship between the two countries through ensuring a sustainable peace in Afghanistan. Therefore, the US leaders should not allow Khalilzad or anyone to record another Vietnam in the history of that country just for the sake of certain personal tendencies.

Meanwhile, it is also the responsibility of Afghan government to protect the supreme interests of the country against terrorists and their supporters. We must not allow the country to be repeatedly invaded by terrorist groups and other foreign elements. The political circles and political leaders must not try to victimize national interests against their own personal and family interests. *Mohammad Zahir Akbari is the permanent writer of the Daily Outlook Afghanistan. He can be reached at mohammadzahirakbari@gmail.com*

Deep Aftereffects of 9/11 And War Against Terrorism

By: Rajkumar Singh

The fateful event of 11 September 2001, also called the 'Black Tuesday' has entered the contemporary history of the world as a landmark date. It reminded the prophetic words of George Tenet, the then CIA Director, who told the Congress at the end of January 1999 that Osama bin Laden could strike 'at any time' against symbols of American power. In this devastating attack the terrorists targeted all the symbols of the US power and dominance. The World Trade Center (WTC) represents US economic power; Pentagon its military capabilities and the White House, where target was missed was the symbol of the overall US dominance as a sole super power in the post-Cold War global power structure. The twin towers in NewYork city symbolised the magnificence of American capitalism, were reduced to rubble. Brazen and audacious acts of terrorism executed with implacable cruelty exposed the fragility of the world order. Fortress United States, thus far unscathed by the forces of destruction, never imagined that fundamentalist forces could produce demons who, in the name of religion, would seek glory in self-destruction. Michael Cox has described this attack as 'the most devastating terrorist atrocity in the history and the first mainland attack on the USA since the British burnt the white House in 1832.

Systemic faults of US

The twin towers of the WTC in NewYork, symbol of America's greatness and grandeur, My latest interview with Asian News International (ANI) published at Business Standard: CPEC project for Pakistan's elites, lacks local leadership, says researcher taken seven years to construct at a cost of \$ 30 billion. The iconic targets of the Al-Qaeda attacks reduced the magnificent structure to rubble within 90 minutes. CIA, the custodian of America's security with its \$ 30 billion annual budget, global reach, mastery over numerous spy satellites and world-wide espionage network of at least 100,000 well trained and fully equipped staff, drew total blank. The failure of the US intelligence was monumental. What a great irony that even a secret office of the CIA was destroyed in the attack, temporarily disturbing normal intelligence operations. It demonstrated further the first major failure of the CIA in half a century since its inception in 1947. Both the CIA and the FBI abruptly failed to tail the movements of Bin Laden's operations. It is estimated that total cost of the lost economic growth around the world might have crossed a trillion dollars where as the Al-Qaeda attack itself would have cost hardly a few hundred millions. A pall of gloom had descended on America in which some six to seven thousand lives are feared lost and citizens of many countries were buried under the molten debris of what once stood as the symbol of America's military and economic pride. The message of the aggressor was loudly heard throughout the world that henceforth the world and America shall not be the same again. No doubt, the attack had global ramifications; it generated unprecedented political trauma, economic downslide, military challenges and ideological vibrations. The whole dynamics of world security underwent a sea-change.

In addition to intelligence failure, the terrorist attacks exposed America's military might, its foreign policy bankruptcy along with its unilateralist postures and expansionist designs which it had continuously nourished since the collapse of the USSR. What a great paradox is contained in the fact that even after the termination of the Cold War, the US kept on continuously spending forty per cent of the world's total military expenditure which accounted for sixteen per cent of US budget. The US defence review holds that it was all set

to maintain its dominance in the post-Cold War world. The events of 11 September 2001, have changed the whole Western approach towards terrorism. Of this there are two specific aspects. One was that for the first time, terrorism attacked the mightiest of the powers, in its otherwise secure home turf, and injected a serious sense of vulnerability in a society that was internally enjoying the supreme sense of security. Secondly, and this is more important that the events were more than a mere act of terrorism. These were a challenge to the prevailing hegemonic power structure of the world and a powerful statement that the dominance of the US in this power structure was not acceptable, that it could be challenged through the use of force and violence. In the circumstances, what was most unacceptable to the US was the challenge to its hegemony and dominance. Without massive retaliation the credibility of the hegemony could not have been restored and reinforced.

World wide reactions

The incident of 9/11 had evoked resentment in and outside the country, worldwide. The President George Bush, National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice, Director of Policy Planning in the State Department Richard N. Hass and the national C.E.O. Dick Cheney were important among those who, in the prevailing situation argued to restructure the world order in favour of the US. Apart from complete elimination of Terrorism in future, their statements involved the consolidation of the strategic hierarchy with the US dominance in global power structure. Ms. Rice, for instance, had compared the post 9/11 situation with the one that prevailed during 1945-47 or the formative years of Cold War and pleaded that it is important to try to seize on that and position American interests and institutions before they harden again. Richard N. Hass wanted to evolve a new doctrine of integration that proposed that the US should 'integrate other countries and organisations into arrangements that will sustain a world consistent with US interest and values. The goal in the post 9/11 period, as described by Dick Cheney, is to create the arrangement for the 21st century in order to assure that 'the United States will continue to be the dominant political, economic and military power in the world. Combating of terrorism emphasised

It was in this context the war against global terrorism and the international coalition to fight this war to the finish should be seen and understood. But the attack was not just terror and the resultant agony and a few facts about it stretched beyond human imagination. The incident itself provoked us to serious pondering over the phenomenon of terror, its implications for future inter-state relations and the shape of things to come in international relations. It gave the US and countries of the world a justifiable cause in the name of fighting terrorism. No country can justifiably say that it would not collaborate, in whatever manner possible, in the fight against terrorism or would not support the US war against terrorism. The incident clearly implied that the ugly face of terrorism may fork anywhere, any time, anyway and anyhow. It never came with a warning to America, but it brought loads of loss that humans cannot endure any more. This is why cutting across continents, political divide, national and religious boundaries, the world seemed one to fight terrorism to the finish. There is no more the talks about your terrorism, their terrorists or my terrorism. Thus, it is a common, pernicious phenomenon, pervasive everywhere, dangerous to everyone, injurious to the health of every nation and detrimental in every way to the cause of peaceful development.

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