

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



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How Afghanistan Can Ensure its National Interests in the Peace Talks

Nearly all previous U.S. administrations had rejected repeated Taliban demands to hold direct talks with Washington, saying they should be talking to their own government. The Taliban calls the Kabul government a U.S. "puppet. But, Trump's administration accepted to engage in direct talks with Taliban, when full war strategy and silent diplomacy did not result to fruition. During his presidential campaigns, President Trump had described the Afghan war as a "total disaster" and had vowed to bring home U.S. forces.

As a result, the US started direct talks with Taliban, who have been backed by Pakistan from the Time the group was formed. Indeed, concerns about Pakistan involvement in the peace process are frank. No one can deny the influence that Pakistan enjoys over the Taliban. Many Afghans hold that these meetings could never have been possible without Pakistan's pressure, and now the Pakistani army is even claiming that openly. It makes sense if Afghans remain apprehensive about Pakistan's role in the negotiations; because they fear that the neighboring country may try to exert influence to determine the outcome of talks that may compromise the national interests of Afghanistan. As a consequence Second Vice President Mohammad Sarwar Danish, who addressed a conference on Introduction of Government's Communication Plan for the next solar year, said peace should not be an excuse for sacrificing the past 18 years' achievements. And top member of Harasat and Sabat council of Afghanistan Abdul Rab Rasoul Sayyef has insisted that officials from Afghanistan side should significantly consider the National interests, respecting the values of Afghanistan's constitution, and halting of war for ever which discussing Afghanistan's peace and stability in quartet peace talks process in Islamabad. In addition to this, President Ashraf Ghani has said, he wanted peace from the strength of the country, not weakness, a transparent and clear peace not a hidden deal, peace with protecting Afghanistan's achievements.

How Afghanistan Can Ensure a Fair Peace Deal According to Khalilzad, Afghanistan needs a team where government's leadership is respected and at the same time, the participation of other political elements is ensured as a must. Afghan citizens must support a peace talk's process that can end war and observe the National interests of Afghanistan, including 18-year achievements, sovereignty and Afghanistan's independence should be considered in the process. What is amazing is that, though Afghan politicians have deep differences on many political issues in the country, they all insist on having a unified voice in the talks in order to abide by the redlines identified for the peace talks by The newly-established Reconciliation Leadership Council.

Peace talks are one of the most vital processes for Afghanistan. The negotiators play a strategic role to ensure a fair deal to be accepted by all Afghans. Any deal will shape the future of the country and coming generations. Therefore, Afghan leaders must put the national interests of the country first in order to have a durable and dignified peace.



Rohingya Crisis: Bangladesh Takes Actions Positively to Resolve it

By: Sun Xiqin, Luo Andi & Qin Ruijing

Rohingya people are one of the minority groups suffering the most severe oppressions in the world. Rohingya people refer to the stateless group, who are India-Aryan race not accepted by the Myanmar Government, live in Rakhine State of Myanmar, and believe in the Islam. Rohingya people are generally called as "Bengali" by Myanmar government and the public, meaning that they are Bengalese. In 1977, Myanmar President Ne Win, Myanmar Immigration Office and military troops joined hands to carry out "Operation Nagamin". Myanmar government implemented ethnic cleansing of Rohingya people, Myanmar troops arrested, expelled, tortured, raped and murdered Rohingya people, and consequently 200,000-250,000 Rohingya people fled to Bangladesh. This is the starting point for Rohingya people to be recognized as refugees by the United Nations, and also for Bangladesh to receive Rohingya refugees.

By September 28, 2018, as many as 1.1 million Rohingya people had sought shelter in Bangladesh. Some scholars think that "the Rohingya issue" causes the security predicament of Bangladesh, and "Rohingya people" exiled to Bangladesh are confronted against the lack of security and a worrying future. Plus, some Rohingya people associate with local Islam extremists, and they also occupy resources. All of these have added the security and economic burdens of Bangladesh, and brought troubles for Myanmar-Bangladesh relations.

Bangladesh takes actions actively to resolve the Rohingya people issue. Although Rohingya people have caused many governance issues to Bangladesh, Bangladesh spares no efforts to provide humanitarian aids to Rohingya people within its territory, such as food, clothes and medical treatment. Bangladesh has called upon the international community to get involved in resolving Rohingya people issues and creating the international public opinion environment. In September 2018, for instance, Bangladeshi Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina appealed to the United Nations and the international community to attach due importance to the violence and injustice suffered by Rohingya people in the 73rd United Nations General Assembly. In the bilateral field, Bangladesh has had negotiations with Myanmar, China, etc. actively to resolve the Rohingya people issue, and after many negotiations, Bangladesh and Myanmar have reached an agreement concerning repatriating Rohingya people in Bangladesh (However, so far the agreement is not well fulfilled). Targeting at the Rohingya people issue, Bangladesh has discussions and negotiations with China, and it hopes China could play a role in resolving the problem. Mr. Wang Yi, the Foreign Minister of China, raised the "Three-Step" suggestions concerning this issue, which are supported by Bangladesh, Myanmar and the international community. Bangladesh has mobilized its domestic resources to provide relief as much as possible to Rohingya people.

The measures taken by Bangladesh to resolve the Rohingya people issue fully reflect that Bangladesh is a responsible and independent country with teamwork spirits. The United Nations put the Bangladesh onto the list of the least developed countries in 1975. Bangladesh has witnessed rapid socioeconomic development during recent years, and its economy has maintained the growth rate above 6%. In March 2018, the U.N. Committee for Development Policy announced that Bangladesh should become a developing country from "the least developed country". The Bangladesh is working hard to improve its national economy and comprehensive strengths. However, according to the data from the World Bank, Bangladesh has a population of over 160 million, of which 21.4% of its people live under the poverty line. Under such circumstances, Bangladesh does not refuse the needs of Rohingya refugees to flee here and seek for shelter, and instead it provides humanitarian aids to them initiatively, admits the status of Rohingya people as refugees, works actively with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and offers aids and shelter for Rohingya refugees. The humanitarian aids provided by the Bangladesh to Rohingya people are obvious to all, and Bangladesh plays a "leading" role in the refugee issues, and makes an example to resolve the regional refugee crisis. Therefore, Bangladesh not only builds its national image as a quite responsible country, but also plays a positive

role in facilitating the refugee issue settlement.

When dealing with the Rohingya people issues, Bangladesh displays its independent diplomacy characteristics. Most developing countries consider the "Herd Effects" as its diplomacy policies, attach themselves to great powers in terms of international actions or economic trade, and even yield to the opinions of great powers in issues which may affect their national security. However, Bangladesh has set an example for developing countries when dealing with the Rohingya people issues, and made its diplomatic gestures as a third world country perfectly. Rohingya people have flooded into Bangladesh since 1977 continuously, and the U.S. and E.U. have requested the Bangladesh to receive Rohingya refugees. However, the Bangladeshi Government does not compromise, and it has sufficient negotiations and discussions with Myanmar government and requires the Rohingya issue to be resolved in a proper way. Furthermore, the Bangladesh also calls upon the United Nations to put pressure on Myanmar, and to provide the safest and most appropriate shelter for Rohingya refugees. When resolving the refugee crisis, Bangladesh also safeguards state sovereignty and stays away from influence of great power politics. In terms of international relations, Bangladesh displays the influence and initiative as a developing country to other countries, and shows the independent, democratic and peaceful diplomatic gestures.

Bangladesh is an open country with teamwork spirit. "It's easy to break off one chopstick, but it's hard to break a dozen". One country is powerless to deal with the refugee issues, but many countries working together can handle the issue more effectively, and even strengthen regional peace and exchanges. When severe disasters occur, some countries would not like to reveal crisis and therefore refuse aids from other countries or international organizations, in an attempt to protect their images, so untimely rescue which misses the golden time for disaster relief, etc. will be caused, and more severe crisis will be triggered. Bangladesh shows a good style and spirits when facing and dealing with Rohingya refugee issues. In order to resolve the Rohingya people issue, the UNHCR entered into the Bangladesh officially in 1992, provided capital and in-kind aids for refugees and played the role as a coordinator. In the meanwhile, Bangladesh invited the UNHCR as the third party to coordinate with the refugee issues between Bangladesh and Myanmar, the MOU was signed successfully by the two countries, and Rohingya refugees were repatriated to Myanmar. Bangladesh conducted negotiations with Myanmar actively and called upon neighboring countries to resolve the Rohingya crisis fundamentally. In this way, Bangladesh proves to be a friendly, open and inclusive country with teamwork spirits.

The Rohingya people issue still exists, so Bangladesh and the international community need to make more collective efforts. It has been 30 years since Rohingya refugee crisis occurred, but the issue has not been handled properly, and it has been a regional and even international non-traditional security issue. The Bangladesh has worked together with the UNHCR, international organizations and NGOs to provide relief to Rohingya refugees, but the Rohingya people issue is complicated and factors like the history, nationality, religion, etc. are involved. In spite of efforts made by all parties, the issue is not settled properly. Like Bangladesh, China is a developing country and its economic society is on the upswing. In order to develop itself, Bangladesh needs to maintain friendly partnership with neighboring countries and handle problems occurring in cooperation properly. Considering the complicated and long-term Rohingya people issue, countries in the region and the international community need to hold the consultative and cooperative attitude, have negotiations actively, establish the Rohingya refugee crisis handling mechanism, facilitate the issue to be settled together, and promote the regional stability and development. China would like to join hands with the Bangladesh, create the peaceful, developmental and prosperous "Amar Shonar Bangla", and promote the construction of the community of shared future for the mankind.

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ICC Rejects Appeal to Investigate War Crimes in Afghanistan

By: Mohammad Zahir Akbari

ICC is an International Criminal Court investigates and brings to justice people responsible for genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes, intervening when national authorities cannot or will not prosecute. The ICC was established by a UN treaty in 2002, and has been ratified by 123 countries, including Afghanistan but several large countries - including China, India, Russia and the US - have refused to join. The US administrations have long criticized the ICC, arguing its soldiers could become the subject of political lawsuits. However, President Bill Clinton signed the treaty establishing the court before the end of his term in office, but the US Congress never ratified it.

In November 2017, Fatou Bensouda, the ICC Chief prosecutor, asked judges to open a formal investigation into the alleged war crimes committed by the Taliban, the Haqqani network, Afghan forces, the US military and CIA. On Friday, the International Criminal Court's pre-trial judges unanimously rejected the request by the court's chief prosecutor to investigate alleged war crimes and crimes against humanity possibly committed on the territory of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan -- a move applauded by the Trump administration. As quoted, a statement from the time, Bensouda's office "determined that there is a reasonable basis to believe" that members of the US armed forces and the CIA committed "war crimes," particularly in 2003-2004.

The allegations against the United States relate to torturing Taliban and al-Qaida prisoners in Afghanistan and at secret CIA detention facilities. ICC prosecutors have also blamed the Taliban for some 17,000 civilian deaths from 2007 to December 2015, including "numerous attacks" on schools, hospitals and mosques. Reportedly, they also alleged that Afghan security forces have tortured prisoners at detention centers.

The court decision comes after US secretary of State Mike Pompeo last month warned ICC to sanction and revoke the visas of ICC staffs. Bensouda's US visa already was revoked as both Fatou Bensouda's office and the US State Department reportedly confirmed that her entry visa to the US had been revoked. "The Office of the Prosecutor has an independent and impartial mandate under the Rome Statute of the ICC. The Prosecutor and her Office will continue to undertake that statutory duty with utmost commitment and professionalism, without fear or favor," as quoted her office said in a statement. According to a media release about the decision, the three judge panel "concluded that at this stage investigation in the current situation of Afghanistan would not serve the interests of justice." The judges considered the time since the 2006 preliminary examination "and the political changing scene in Afghanistan since then" as well as "the lack of cooperation that the Prosecutor has received," which they said was "likely to go scarcer

should an investigation be authorized."

However, the judges found Bensouda's request "establishes a reasonable basis to consider that crimes within the ICC jurisdiction have been committed in Afghanistan," according to the release. Bensouda's office noted this in its statement about the decision and said it would "further analyze the decision and its implications, and consider all available legal remedies." On the other hand, Amnesty International pilloried the decision, calling it "a shocking abandonment of the victims" that "ultimately will be seen as a craven capitulation to Washington's bullying and threats." "The court has a moral and legal duty to reach out to the victims of crimes in Afghanistan and explain this decision," Biraj Patnaik, South Asia Director at Amnesty International, said as quoted in a statement.

The Trump administration welcomed the move, which came after Secretary of State Mike Pompeo announced in mid-March that the US would deny or revoke visas for ICC staff in response to the potential investigation. "This decision is a victory for the rule of law and the integrity of the ICC as an institution, given the United States is not subject to the ICC's jurisdiction," Pompeo said in a statement Friday. Reportedly, Washington signed, but not ratified the Rome Statute though it worked with the ICC under the Obama administration to bring Ugandan militants to justice.

"This would have been a very political effort to try to take on people acting on behalf of the United States in ways that were completely inconsistent with our laws and try to hold them accountable in ways that were completely inappropriate," he said. "I am very pleased the ICC made this decision today. It's the right one." "Know that if Americans are found things to have done things that are unlawful or against the laws of war, the US system will always hold them accountable, but the ICC is not the right place to do it," Pompeo said. President Donald Trump said that it was "a major international victory, not only for these patriots, but for the rule of law."

"We welcome this decision and reiterate our position that the United States holds American citizens to the highest legal and ethical standards," he said in a statement, warning that "any attempt to target American, Israeli, or allied personnel for prosecution will be met with a swift and vigorous response." The US National security adviser John Bolton hailed the move as "a vindication of our position." "We are a democratic society, we are accountable for what we do and we hold our own citizens responsible for their actions. No international court under those circumstances can be constitutionally legitimate," as reflected in media Bolton said during a briefing with reporters on Friday.

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