

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



April 29, 2015

President Ghani's Maiden Visit to India

In the world entitled global village, any state can not survive in utter isolation—henceforth foreign relation carves the significant most position in international politics. During the first seven months in office, President Ashraf Ghani has been to Iran, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and China. To renovate the foreign relation of Afghanistan with India with the elements of reliance, alliance and timeless companionship, President Ashraf Ghani accompanied by long list of ministers are paying a three-day official visit to India these days. Earlier he received an official ceremonial welcome at Rashtrapati Bhavan, the Indian president's residency when he reached in India. Subsequently, he held talks with Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi.

The premier of two states discussed scores of issues with inclusion to security matters, economic ties and regional issues standing on top of the list. Following the resumption of office of presidency it is president Ghani's first state visits to India structured to chalk out bilateral relations and future course of action on key issues such as security and the matters related to the Taliban.

The gesture exercised by president depicts, the politics of favorite is put an end to, is a mark shift in foreign policy. Earlier, while speaking to a local Indian TV channel early, President Ghani said: "Afghanistan is going to be a platform for regional and global cooperation, not a battlefield for proxy wars." Undoubtedly, Afghanistan can serve bridging resources rich central Asian countries with developing countries of south Asian and the rest of the world. The TAPI gas project that involves transportation of gas from Tajikistan to Afghanistan, Pakistan and India, is potentially important project that readily fulfills the energy requirement of developing India. Consequently, it wants to improve transport connectivity and economic collaboration with countries in Central and South Asia.

Bilateral relations between the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the Republic of India have traditionally been strong and friendly. India after the overthrow of the Taliban regime became the largest regional provider of humanitarian and reconstruction aid to Afghanistan. Indians are working in various construction projects, as part of India's rebuilding efforts in Afghanistan. During the 15th SAARC summit in Colombo, India pledged another USD \$450 million alongside a further US\$750 million already pledged for ongoing and forthcoming projects. The Ghani-Modi meeting is expected to provide India with the opportunity to reinforce its commitment to Afghanistan—a country it has supported extensively over the years in terms of providing aid. To date it has invested over \$2 billion USD in Afghanistan—making it the country's fifth largest donor.

Afghanistan is a mineral rich country while India is an industrialized state; like many other developed states she is searching a market for its goods, certainly Afghanistan can serve to be the desired state. Afghanistan certainly is the land of opportunities, it therefore many countries are seeking to expand their economic and political presence.

The president's visit to India will certainly cast positive impact on Kabul-Dehli political ties provided earlier president Ghani suspended the arms purchase deal with India. Following this development it was assumed the Kabul relations de-railed with Dehli. Nonetheless, the analysts view the president's trip to India as a good opportunity to expand Kabul-New Delhi relations. Some analysts however assume, Afghanistan deepening inclination towards Pakistan, to table peace talks with Taliban has impacted the Kabul-New Delhi relations.

But a number of MPs have called this trip an important one that will help balance Afghanistan's foreign policy. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has said that close relations between Kabul and Islamabad has had no impact on Kabul-New Delhi relations and that the president's trip to India will result in further expansion of political and trade relations between the two countries.

Ghani's first trip to India is seen as crucial as it aims to expand trade and economic relations between the two countries and to specifically encourage investment in Afghanistan and to secure the continuation of aid to Afghanistan.

Later the two premiers during press conference reaffirmed their commitment and ties by extending greater support and confidence on each other. Ghani emphasized that Kabul and New Delhi could build their future based on their historic relations. "The relationship between India and Afghanistan is not just between two countries or governments. It is a timeless link of human hearts," Modi noted.

The talks between the two premiers underlined many assurances from president Modi, given he assured Afghan trucks would be allowed to use the Attari border which is situated 3 kilometer from Indo-Pakistani border at Wahgah. The easing of this border will facilitate Afghan traders transporting their goods to Indian markets and their items to Afghan market. He assured the students that government would resolve their issues regarding payments, passports and visas. Pointing to his country's contribution to Afghanistan's reconstruction over the past decade, Modi assured Ghani to continue assistance to rebuilding the war-ravaged country. The terrorism and extremism will turn malicious to both Afghanistan and India; its consequently Mr. Modi renewed India's continued assistance to Afghanistan in its fight against terrorism and extremism. Modi, on his part, pledged continued commitment to developing both land and sea trade routes with the country.



Ghani, in Quest of Peace

By Zafar Iqbal Yousafzai

Exclusive for the Daily Outlook Afghanistan

There are intricate and complex challenges to the National Unity Government in Afghanistan, one of which are how to bring the insurgent groups in the mainstream politics, in order to overcome the labyrinthine security situation and turbulence in the country. In his recent past visit to the US, one of his major demands was to seek US support for the peace talks with the Taliban. The reconciliation of Pakistan and China between the Taliban and the Afghan government is a major part of those efforts started by Ghani. Similarly, when Ghani demanded the US support for peace talks with the Taliban, in response, the US put forward three main conditions to be considered while making an agreement with the Taliban, which are: First, the Taliban should cut off their relations with Al-Qaeda. Second, the Taliban should stop anti-US and anti-state activities in Afghanistan. Third, women, minorities and human rights should be protected while making complicit with the Taliban.

Notably, at present, the ground is ready to make success of this reconciliatory process because of these veritable factors: First, the US exit (although not completely) escalated pep in the said process which was previously dodgy in the presence of US and coalition forces. The withdrawal of the foreign forces from Afghanistan has been remaining one of the major demands of the Taliban. Earlier, in the previous government of Hamid Karzai, the Taliban were demanding the withdrawal of the foreign forces from Afghanistan when the Taliban had set up an office in Qatar.

Second, the herculean efforts and realistic approach of the President, Ashraf Ghani has inclined the Taliban to come on to the negotiation table with the Afghan government. Indeed, there is need for a multi-ethnic broad based government in Afghanistan; for this purpose, therefore, the Afghan government intends to appoint the Taliban governors in three southern provinces i.e. Helmand, Nimruz and Kandahar.

Third, Pakistan interest in Afghan peace process is also a vital factor. Last month, Pakistan's advisor on Foreign Affairs and National Security, Sartaj Aziz said, "We are playing the role of facilitator and are persuading the groups which are in contact with us". This statement shows that Pakistan is interested in the Afghan peace talks and also making backdoor contacts with the Taliban's leadership.

Fourth, Pakistan's practical steps against extremism and terrorism have awakened a sense of fear in the extremist factions. Furthermore, Pakistan is not willing to tolerate these elements in her areas especially in FATA. Operation, Zarb-e-Azb has not only considerably dismantled the Taliban from North Waziristan but also shows Islamabad's commitment

to eliminate terrorism from the country. Now, the Taliban have realized that Afghanistan is the only sphere of influence for them, where Afghan National Security forces are getting strength to cope with the anti-state elements. These factors have also their role in the initiation of Afghan peace talks.

Fifth, China's efforts cannot be neglected. China has been remained neutral throughout their history in Afghanistan in term of interference. China has their own interests in Afghanistan's peace and stability as China wants to pursue her economic interests as well as to counter Xinjiang insurgency. Afghanistan's insurgency has serious repercussions for Xinjiang insurgency which is considered a threat to China's integrity. Additionally, for China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), peace in the region is pre-requisite which China would like to attain at any cost. Therefore, China will try her best for the success of Afghan peace talks.

Despite of the above-mentioned favorable conditions, there are some factors which could create a stalemate in these proposed peace talks. In the first place, the Taliban's demand of withdrawal of the foreign forces, yet, has not been completely fulfilled. In this connection, a source close to the Taliban's leadership said, the presence of some foreign troops beyond 2014 in Afghanistan could be the main impasse. However, this impasse could be removed by giving extra concessions to the Taliban.

Obviously, the Taliban will likely ask for guarantors before starting negotiations with the Afghan government. Constitutional immunity from prosecution will be an immediate demand of the Taliban. Albeit, initially, if both the parties, the Taliban and the Afghan government succeeds to carry on this peace process; the other groups, i.e. Hizb-e-Islami would try to spoil this process as being left out in these peace talks.

At present, instead of US, China and Pakistan are involvement in peace talks between the Taliban and the Afghan government. Pakistan's Chief of Army Staff (COAS), General Raheel Sharif during his visit to Kabul in February communicated the Taliban's willingness to talk to the Afghan government. Pakistan could play a positive role in this peace process.

On one hand, the success of these peace talks depend upon the Afghan government, on the other hand, the Taliban leadership should also show some flexibility in its stance. The peace and stability is fundamental to the survival of Afghanistan as one unit and also for the government which is still struggling with internal strife and failures to overcome security lapses. Durable peace only returns once the grievances of the insurgents are fully addressed. In the shape of success in these negotiations, it will not only stabilize Afghanistan but will also bring peace and stability in the entire region.

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Policy – A Path to Prosperity

By Hujjatullah Zia

A mob has the power to punish a criminal by lynching; people who believe in the rule of law consider that only a court of law has the authority to punish a criminal legally as the law says. Authority refers to a claim of legitimacy, the justification and right to exercise that power.

Authority does not necessarily mean to have extrinsic elements; a father's influence in a family is also called authority for being justifiable and acceptable. In a government, power changes into authority for having legal, traditional and religious bases. Therefore, authority is the truncated form of power and cannot surpass law, tradition, religion, etc.

In a monarchy, the divine right of kings establishes the political legitimacy of the rule of the monarch; legitimacy also derives from the popular perception such as tradition and custom, and acceptance of the monarch as the rightful ruler of nation and country. This sort of legitimacy is circled with a halo of sanctity. For example, when a king passed away in the past, his scion inherited the throne and people pledged allegiance to him respectfully and only the king's heir deserved the throne of the deceased king – the "patriarchal system" was rife in the past and still seen in today's world. However, in a democracy, government legitimacy derives from the popular perception that the elected government abides by democratic principles in governing, and thus is legally accountable to its people.

A charismatic leader is also believed to gain legitimacy through extraordinary charm and divine attraction. A leader's heroism, virtue and moral characters influence the populace and they would pledge allegiance wholeheartedly. History shows that the prophets' (PBUH) charismatic personalities influenced the human societies and they ruled the hearts of people, thus they gained legitimacy through charisma.

There are many perceptions about policy. Based on realistic perception, policy is means for preserving law and order and preventing from chaos and disorder. However, the most paramount issue in this perception is protecting power. The main reason behind stressing justice, religion and moral principles is to avoid from jeopardizing power. Machiavelli believes that, for protecting power, a king must learn the characters of lion and fox (repressing and trickery) and applying force and violence is allowed to avoid from lawlessness.

Idealistic perception, however contradicts the realistic one. Base on this, policy and power are mean for higher ambitions such as public prosperity and justice rather than being the main objective. Plato believes that the goal of policy is to lead mankind to idealism. According to him, the restricted

blessings such as power and wealth lead to conflicts which will ultimately establish despotic regime and oligarchy. But the unrestricted blessings such as recognition, beauty and superiority will lead to utopia. Therefore, policy shares a strong tie with morality. An idealistic politician, as "philosopher king" will direct the society to justice and virtue. He favors the kingdom of middle class for, according to him, the kingdom of the rich will tend to luxury and physical comforts, and the regime of the poor will be void of justice and virtue. So, the middle class will choose the middle way which is close to the main objective of policy, namely justice and moral practices.

There is also a liberal perception of policy. According to this view, policy is the most significant tool for protecting the natural rights of the individuals and defending them against absolute political or religious powers. The first nation-states, which were established in Europe in the age of religious reformations, claimed full authority and sovereignty against the churches.

English philosopher John Locke wrote that all people are born with the inherent rights to life, liberty, and estate. These rights are not unlimited, Locke said, and may only be appropriated according to the fair share earned by the labor of each person. Gluttony and waste of individual liberty are not permitted, Locke argued, because "nothing is made by God for man to spoil or destroy." Hence government has the responsibility to protect the citizens' natural rights.

The Creator has endowed men with natural rights, which are inalienable and immutable. If government's laws are enacted inconsistent with nature, reason or morality, people can protest against such laws. As a result, the Declaration of Independence allows men "to alter or to abolish" destructive governments – the same as Locke believes. Moreover, Cicero, a Roman orator, was the first who expressed his disagreement with statute which stands against natural law as he said that if the man-made law allows theft and adultery, it would be no more than the law of thieves and villains. Hence, government cannot deprive one of his life, liberty or property without any reason.

So, a democratic government derives its authority from nation through election and it is therefore accountable to protect the citizens' dignity and rights irrespective of one's race, color, sex and beliefs. After all, it is believed that the public will favor idealistic perception, especially in our society. Justice, ethical codes and virtue are the soul of a society which have to be gained through power and policy. In short, policy is an instrument for providing moral values, public prosperity and security rather than being an objective to be protected at the cost of using force and violence.

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