

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



November 10, 2018

## Afghan Peace Process: Gaining Success Gradually

The Moscow meeting on Afghan peace process was kicked off on Friday with delegations from High Peace Council (HPC), the Taliban and 12 countries in attendance. The Moscow summit's agenda is the Afghan peace process and providing the facility for peace negotiations between the Afghan government and the Taliban.

Afghanistan conflict has been in stalemate for several decades. And Afghan war on terror is one of the longest US wars too. However, the Taliban has demonstrated a surprising ability to survive and conduct high-profile attacks in cities like Kabul, it is weaker today than most recognize. It is hamstrung by an ideology that is too extreme for most Afghans, a leadership structure that is too closely linked to the Pashtun ethnic group, an over-reliance on brutal tactics that have killed tens of thousands of innocent Afghan civilians and alienated many more, a widespread involvement in corruption, and a dependence on unpopular foreign allies. Most senior Taliban leaders still hope that they will one day be able to re-take Kabul, overthrow the Afghan government, and establish an extreme Islamic emirate in the country. But given the group's weaknesses and the United States' decision to keep troops in Afghanistan that is unlikely.

On the other hand, president Ghani has offered the Taliban a political framework for peace talks. According to the Afghan government's political framework for talks there are no preconditions to negotiations while underscoring that the rights of all citizens, especially Afghan women, must be safeguarded. This framework produces a ceasefire, the Taliban's registration as a political party, and participation in an electoral process. The legal framework for peace that include a constitutional review through legal mechanisms as well as legal processes for prisoner releases and sanctions release. This framework suggests methods for reaching peace, such as official recognition of the Afghan government, respect for rule of law, further efforts for government reform and balanced development, the return of Afghan refugees, programs for social development including for refugees and former insurgents, and security measures for all citizens, particularly the reconciling Taliban, underscoring the need for a dignified process, and very important elements such an office for the Taliban, a path towards travel documents, being allowed to travel freely, help in the removal of sanctions, access to the media, and repatriation for their families.

As the the United States, conditions-based South Asia Strategy ensures the Taliban cannot win on the battlefield, both Taliban and Afghan government and its allies have no options but to negotiate to put an end to the conflict. what remains uncertain at this point, however, are the answers to two overarching questions: How will key regional stakeholders – Pakistan, Russia, Iran, China, and India – manage shifting interests and threat perceptions at a time when the United States is pushing for a peace deal, and is there a contingency plan if talks fail? While pushing for a comprehensive political settlement, complexities associated with internal political dynamics and regional posturing add to the levels of fluidity and uncertainty. It is, therefore, imperative to have contingency plans in case talks are delayed or thwarted. A Plan B would be the least all parties could do in order to prevent a further debacle.

Bringing both sides of the Afghan conflict to Moscow is still a major success for Russia as the Kremlin seeks to reclaim its clout and influence on the world stage. However, the key to the latest Afghan peace process successes lays in the nature of the Afghan government pragmatic peace policies. It has proven abilities and charm to win over all the factions and major players; it has practiced the art of compromise; it should innovate its diplomacy in ways ensuring the protection of the basic rights of all ethnic groups of Afghanistan and ensure all of the ethnic groups that inhabit this country live side by side peacefully and happily.



## China Steps up its Opening-up Policy

By: Hujjatullah Zia

Chinese President Xi Jinping reiterated "nationwide opening-up", "multilateral trading system", "win-win strategy" and making "an open world economy" in his Monday's keynote speech at the opening ceremony of China's International Import Expo (CIIE) in Shanghai, which was attended by 172 countries, regions and international organizations and 3,600 companies from around the world. Xi pledged China's support to open wider to the outside world and strengthen multilateralism and urged the world to reduce the negative spillovers of national policies, pursue innovative growth and make the global economy more open. He believed protectionism and seclusion would put an adverse effect on the entire world and winner-takes-all lead to dead-end; whereas open and liberalized economy would be productive for all nations and conducive to the fulfillment of common aspiration.

"China's door will never be closed. It will only open still wider. China will not stop its effort to pursue higher-quality opening-up. China will not stop its effort to pursue an open world economy. And China will not stop its effort to pursue a community with a shared future for mankind," said Xi in the event, themed "New Era, Shared Future". He added, "In inter-connected global village, to share the fruit of innovation is the common aspiration and natural choice of the world community".

Xi stressed the opening-up policy on multiple occasions and pointed out that communication rather than confrontation will resolve the challenges and partnership rather than alliance will lead to peace and prosperity.

It is believed that China's "smile diplomacy" will pave the ground for peace and prosperity. China has been constantly upholding common ground and seeking to promote the development of friendly relations between nations. Meanwhile, China has shared the fruit of its reform and opening-up, which began in 1978, with the world through contributing to global economy.

Currently, China is the second largest economy with a market of over 1.3 billion consumers, which provides the global enterprises to enter the Chinese market. China's imports of goods and services are expected to exceed US\$ 30 trillion and US\$ 10 trillion, respectively, in the next 15 years, which was also mentioned by President Xi, and will further support global economy through providing foreign enterprises to en-

ter Chinese market. Likewise, "China has," said Xi, "shortened the negative list on foreign investment to reduce investment restrictions and promote investment liberalization." Xi also reaffirmed China's commitment to promote the Belt and Road Initiative through international cooperation "in the spirit of consultation and collaboration for shared benefits." It should go without saying that to reinforce global trade and connectivity, the world is in need of a land-based and oceangoing route such as the Belt and Road. Political figures and writers have highlighted that global connectivity, cultural exchanges and people-to-people interaction, which are the building blocks of a community of shared future, are the very objectives of the BRI.

All in all, Chinese officials believe that to live in a world free from fear and want and in a world where every individual could enjoy peace and prosperity – which is proclaimed as the highest aspiration of the common people – all nations have to accept and embrace one another, support the spirit of brotherhood and abandon only-my-backyard policy.

To live a peaceful and prosperous life in the "global village" and build a community of shared future for mankind, President Xi proposed two essential issues. First, implementing the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This Agenda pays especial heed to eradicating poverty, fostering inclusive societies, strengthening global solidarity, creating conditions for sustainable and inclusive economic growth and shared prosperity, etc. In other words, implementing the UN 2030 Agenda will resolve the bulk of the global challenges and pave the ground for building a community of shared future.

Second, promoting international cooperation at multilateral and bilateral levels and making economic globalization more open and inclusive. He urged the world to uphold the rules of the World Trade Organization and defend multilateral trading system.

Since we live in the global village, protectionism and zero-sum game will have repercussions for the entire world. To contribute to global economy and build a community free from want and need, the world has to practice upon the rules of the WTO, support multilateralism and implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Hujjatullah Zia is the permanent writer of the Daily Outlook Afghanistan and freelance writer based in Beijing. He can be reached at zia\_hujjat@yahoo.com

## Living with Climate Change

By: Patrick V. Verkooijen

For anyone still undecided about the consequences of global warming, the summer of 2018, one of the hottest on record, should have tipped the scales. Across far-flung longitudes and latitudes, regions are struggling with the fallout from large-scale climate-related events.

In the southern United States, cities and towns pummeled by Hurricane Florence in September were still drying out when Hurricane Michael brought more flooding in October. In California, firefighters are battling the embers of the largest wildfire in state history. And in parts of Latin America, Europe, Africa, and Asia, agricultural output is in freefall following months of stifling heat.

Cooler weather has done little to ease the suffering. According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, "moderate" to "exceptional" drought conditions cover 25.1% of the United States. But "extreme" and "exceptional" drought – the worst categories – expanded to cover 6.3% of the country, up from 6% in mid-September. Regions in Australia also are struggling with the worst drought in a generation.

In fact, for a growing number of people around the world, floods, landslides, and heatwaves – Japan's summer in a nutshell – is the new normal. A recent study in the journal PLOS Medicine projects a fivefold increase in heat-related deaths in the US by 2080; the outlook for poorer countries is even worse.

The climate debate is no longer about causes; fossil fuels and human activity are the culprits. Rather, the question is how billions of at-risk people and businesses can rapidly adapt and ensure their communities are as resilient as possible. Even if the world meets the Paris climate agreement's target of limiting the increase in global temperature to 2° Celsius relative to pre-industrial levels, adaptation will still be critical, because climate extremes are now the new normal.

Some communities have already recognized this, and local adaptation is well under way. In Melbourne, Australia, for example, planners are working to double the city's tree canopy by 2040, an approach that will lower temperatures and reduce heat-related deaths.

Similarly, in Ahmedabad, a city of over seven million people in Western India, authorities have launched a major initiative to cover roofs in reflective paint to lower temperatures on "heat islands," urban areas that trap the sun's warmth

and make city living unbearable, even at night. These are just two of the many infrastructural responses that communities around the world have undertaken.

But adapting to climate change will also mean managing the long-term economic fallout of extreme weather, and this is a requirement that countries are only beginning to take seriously.

Consider water scarcity. According to a 2016 World Bank analysis, drought-related water crises in Africa and the Middle East could reduce GDP in these regions by as much as 6% by 2050. That would be painful anywhere, but it would be devastating in regions already rife with political turmoil and humanitarian crises.

At the same time, rising sea levels will cause severe damage to coastal areas. The decline in property values will have far-reaching implications not only for individual wealth, but also for the tax bases of communities and the industries that serve them.

A related concern is that homes and businesses around the world will eventually become under-insured or even uninsurable, owing to the frequency of weather-related catastrophes. ClimateWise, a global network of insurance industry organizations, has already warned that the world is facing a \$100 billion annual climate risk "protection gap".

No single international organization or authority has all the answers to the cascade of challenges that climate change has triggered. But some are taking key leadership roles and pushing governments and local communities to act with more urgency. One of the more promising initiatives to accelerate solutions, launched just this week, is the Global Commission on Adaptation, chaired by former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates, and World Bank CEO Kristalina Georgieva.

Over the next 15 years, the world will need to invest some \$90 trillion in infrastructure improvements. How these projects proceed, and whether they are designed with low-carbon features, could lead the world toward a more-climate resilient future – or they could undermine food, water, and security for decades to come.

Patrick V. Verkooijen is Chief Executive Officer of the Global Center on Adaptation, and Non-Resident Professor of Practice of Sustainable Development Diplomacy at the Center for International Environment and Resource Policy, Tufts University.



Chairman / Editor-in-Chief: Moh. Reza Huwaida  
Vice Chairman / Exec. Editor: Moh. Sakhi Rezaie  
Email: outlookafghanistan@gmail.com  
Phone: 0093 (799) 005019/777-005019  
www.outlookafghanistan.net



The views and opinions expressed in the articles are those of the authors and do not reflect the views or opinions of the Daily Outlook Afghanistan.