

Afghanistan Peace Process: From Terrible Times to Glimpse of Hope

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Abstract

The potential of peace as of now is resting on four pillars of proposed peace deal which include ceasefire, counter-terrorism, troop withdrawal and intra-Afghan negotiations. Appointment of former Taliban commander Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar as chief negotiator to lead the peace process on behalf of Afghan Taliban is a sigh of relief. His influence over Taliban's of Afghanistan being the most respected leader after former Mullah Umer is without any doubt an important endeavor to forestall challenges to lasting peace. This paper makes the point that sustainability of peace process in Afghanistan is vested on the foundations of trust between Taliban and United States, which due to prevailing geo-political conditions is less likely to achieve. The fundamental demand of the Taliban has been withdrawal of the US troops, whereas the Americans have never demanded concrete guarantees from Taliban since they have been called terrorists from the very beginning. The draft of the proposed deal had reflected US demand as denying safe heaven to non-state actors that Taliban themselves would like to ensure. Taking the lead from geopolitical landscape of Afghanistan, this study had undertaken an analysis from the failures of previous peace dialogues to reflect insights on the ongoing peace talk between Taliban and United States. The study is deductive in nature and has applied Regional Complex Security Theory of Barry Buzan with subjective interpretations to delve upon the parameters associated with the complications of Afghan peace process.

Key Words: Afghanistan, Pakistan, Security, Terrorism, Peace, Geopolitics, Asia, India.

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Introduction

Afghanistan is a landlocked country, which is situated in the center of Asia. It is linked with Pakistan in the south and east of its border. Since late 70s Afghanistan has embraced brutal civil war due to internal political rifts, which maximized in the aftermath of Soviet invasion. The post-Cold War Afghanistan was no different as once again an internal civil disorder fueled the insecurity beyond its borders and benefitted non-state actors like Al-Qaeda to aspire violence and terrorism. Instability became the permanent fate of the country. Afghanistan being a decisive variable of Soviet disintegration became once again indecisive factor to its own tragic destiny into 21st century. The Al-Qaeda successfully executed an act of international terrorism through Afghanistan and targeted World Trade Towers in New York on September 11, 2001. This symbolic act of terror rejuvenated the military response from all responsible nations of the world and made Afghanistan once again an epicenter of insecurity, instability, and terror. This time the epicenter heated the dynamics of insecurity for the whole region. Pakistan, Iran, China, Central Asia, Russia, and the Western world saw an immediate threat from the security landscape of Afghanistan. All the stakeholders were mesmerized by the military power and took kinetic instruments to fight with terror.

Pakistan as a frontline state in the war against terrorism became decisive partner of the Western alliance. While doing so, it also became the frontline defense for the Western coalition fighting against the so-called terrorism in Afghanistan, which made Pakistan a battlefield for the non-state actors. International, regional and local terrorist networks operating to denounce the West found Pakistan the first battlefield. This evolved a non-traditional security dilemma for Pakistan with which the country was about to test all elements of national power. It did well but the mantra of 'do more' never accepted the legitimate sacrifices of Pakistan. Today, Pakistan has done all the best to maintain peace and security in the region but the driving forces who crafted the war on terror have failed to achieve their basic objective of maintaining peace and security in Afghanistan. Pakistan will be the last country on earth that would like to see instability in Afghanistan rather believes that the key to its peace and stability is vested in her neighborhood. The firm and resilient response of Pakistan outcast war mongering of United States is finally

voiced and dialogue has finally taken over the might. Though, without harvesting the cultivated dynamics of geopolitics, sustainability of peace process in Afghanistan is a long journey.

Looking at the geography of Afghanistan one can easily highlight some of the vested vulnerabilities in this country. For example, it is a landlocked country located at the crossroads of Central, West and South Asia. Afghanistan has an area of 652,225 square kilometers and a land border of 5,529 kilometers, divided into 34 provinces containing 407 districts. The population is 33.33 million including 2.7 million registered refugees in Pakistan and Iran (Barreto, 2018). Afghanistan, a war-torn country has been a battlefield for quite some time now; life paralyzed and economy is in total shambles. At the moment it is highly dependent on foreign aid, almost 90% of the GDP comes from foreign aid, unemployment has soared alarmingly, and 50 % of its total populace is out of work. Anarchy, massacres, bombings are norms of the day. Annual expenditure on the army and police amounts to about \$5 billion whereas the country generates less than \$2 billion in tax revenue every year (Sarvari, 2018). Opium is cultivated on 220,000 hectares of land with production exceeding more than 6000 tons. As per the United Nations estimates, Afghanistan now produces more than 80 percent of the world's opium and generates an estimated \$ 3 billion a year in profits (Sárvári,2018). The revenue from the sale of opium or heroin is about one-third of Afghanistan's measurable GDP; cannabis is being cultivated on another 15,000 hectares. Afghanistan has suffered a lot at the hands of others (Miltenburg, 2018). Last but not the least, the current Kabul regime is controlling only 55.5% districts of Afghanistan as the rest is in *de facto* control of Taliban (A Report to the Committee on Foreign Relations US Senate, One Hundred Eleventh Congress, First Session, August 10, 2009).

The American strategy regarding Afghanistan has been changing from time to time and no one is sure as to what are the real aims and purposes of the US. From defeating Al-Qaida, to killing Osama bin Laden, and to rebuild Afghanistan were some of the stated aims (Waltz, 2002). But with President Trump's new policy, now it seems that their presence is to be for an indefinite period, as the new policy is not time based, it is condition based (Fair, 2018). The current conflict is not ending any time soon and this will have destabilizing effects on the region. It earnestly needs peace but on whose conditions?

There are many foreign forces which are actively involved in the power politics and out maneuvering each other at the cost of peace in Afghanistan. Due to its strategic geopolitical location, Afghanistan has always been subject of the great game (Rubin& Ahmed, 2008). Many efforts at the bilateral, trilateral and multilateral levels for the restoration of peace have been tried but failed to achieve its desired aims, either for one reason or the other (Weiss, 2018).

Theoretical Framework

It is important to highlight that the dynamics of Afghanistan as part of South Asia shares much of the theoretical constructs that Barry Buzan has charted out in Regional Security Complex Theory (Buzan& Waever, 2004). Afghanistan though provides a buffer zone between two regions, South Asia and Middle East, but has an important dimension of security construct for both the regions (Rubin, 1995). Due to its geographical proximity, Afghanistan's security construct is more relevant with South Asia, where Pakistan due to its national security environment receives greater heat (Buzan& Waever, 2003). The political instability and issues of insecurity makes Afghanistan an important executing ground for the international actors to manipulate the strategic posture of the region. The strategic posture at this stage has invited both regional and international actors to imbalance the political process for their vested interests.

The Regional Security Complex Theory in this very mantra of strategic posturing highlights the visible competition between regional actors who to mobilize the environment has evolved an extra regional nexus of political alliances by inviting international actors. In other words, due to the nature of prevailing insecurity in Afghanistan, actors like India, Iran, Pakistan, China, Russia, and USA have formed their own strategic postures that more often gets heat from each other thus making the whole region hostile to instability and insecurity (Goodson, 2007). Therefore, to understand the basic premises of major hurdles in the Afghanistan peace process and its impact on the region, the Regional Security Complex Theory provides the only lens that will unfold not only strategic postures but also mantra of insecurity in the region.

Afghan Conflict: It's Genesis

The seeds of the current war on terror were unconsciously laid when in the aftermath of Soviet disintegration, the US withdrew from Afghanistan and left the country unorganized and

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uncultivated from the terrors of insurgency. Pakistan was a tested ally of US in the war against the Soviets. The defeat to communist empire would have never been possible without the support of Pakistan. Though Pakistan immensely suffered from socially as well as economically, yet it provided full support to the ambitious US plans to defeat the mighty Soviet Union. After paying all price by Afghanistan and Pakistan, the US left both the countries in miserable conditions. At that time the country was in tatters, divided into small areas of influence, no strong central government claims the writ. As a result, after the US withdrawal it became a battle ground, a free land for all (Stuart, 2011).

The Taliban seized Government by 1996 after overthrowing the weak and fragile government in Kabul, which set a stage for Osama Bin Laden to establish his strong hold in Afghanistan. By the summer that year, the Taliban had been in control of over 90% of the area, with the help of Al-Qaeda (Johnson & Mason, 2007). Pakistan immediately recognized Afghanistan as an independent state, which started a new era of its political life. Though, the country while struggling to get its international recognition came to lime-light when the twin towers of World Trade Center in New York were hit on September 11, 2001. The 9/11 incident was immediately linked to its so-called master mind, Osama Bin Laden who being the supreme leader of Al-Qaeda was blamed for the attacks. The US government charged with anger asked the Taliban government to hand him over to Washington, which was denied. The Afghan government based on their close ties with Osama Bin Laden was reluctant to hand him over to US government. Moreover, the decision was drastically unpopular that could squeeze all possibilities for the Taliban to sustain in power. The problem was more about ideological fixation of Osama Bin Laden who had been decisive to Soviet defeat during 80s and also incredibly supported the Taliban to take control of the Kabul. Simply handing him over to the US was about to accept the western power who one way or the other were labeled as enemies of Islam. Osama Bin Laden, for many in Afghanistan was considered even a bigger Muslim leader than the Mullah Omer himself. Therefore, the Afghan government wanted to avoid direct backlash both at home and abroad. So they offered to hand him over to a neutral country. The Americans did not agree to this. It was this denial which set the stage for attack on Afghanistan.

The war that started in the aftermath of the 9/11 incident can be divided into four main phases:

- i. **The First Phase—Toppling the Taliban:** Within the span of two months Americans started their military campaign to oust the safe haven of Osama Bin Laden, who was the prime suspect of the 9/11 attacks on World Trade Centers (Jayshree & Laub, 2011). The campaign started by CIA on 26th September 2001 was soon joined by US and British Special Forces. Arms and ammunitions together with advice were provided to the Afghans. The Operation Enduring Freedom was launched on 7th October 2001 and full blown aerial bombardment was started by the allied forces on Taliban's hideouts (Neil, 2011). Taliban forces started retreat when the Northern Alliance, supported hugely by the US, made advances and retook many cities back from the Taliban. The Northern alliance forces advanced and on 13th November 2001, took control of Kabul and Taliban abandoned the city without any fight. By 6th December 2001, the fall of Kandahar, the spiritual city of Taliban, heralded the ouster of Taliban from power (Carl, 2011).
- ii. **The Second Phase—From 2002 until 2008:** This phase focused mainly on building Afghan institutions and also defeating the insurgents militarily, which does not have direct impact on the regional security. As a matter of fact, this phase did impacted negatively on the United States foreign policy priorities as failure to establish strong institutions and counter insurgency in Afghanistan made the Washington vulnerable to international criticism particularly by China and Russia (Larson and Alexei Shevchenko, 2011). The concluding discussion on this phase takes only one lesson into consideration that the US commitments, plans, and investments miserably failed to establish strong and robust institutions of Afghanistan. They also failed to counter insurgency. Though, saturated claims about the internal stability had been made many times which in real stay too far from the reality. In-fact, the internal dynamics of Afghanistan have fed more instability then contributed towards stability. The gambling of good governance and institution building in Afghanistan has been only a scapegoat variable from the commitments that were made by the US and its allies. Moreover, the mantra of 'do more' shall also be seen in this context. Pakistan has played decisive role to vanish the foundations of terror from this region while paying exceptional price of both economic and human sacrifices. Regardless of behaving like

a responsible stakeholder of peace, the US manipulated its failure while blaming the nation who contributed on behalf of the whole world and ensured long lasting peace. Sacrifice of more than 70,000 human lives and billions of dollars economic loss are not ordinary things that could go in vain. A responsible nation does not assign political tagging to real sacrifices rather dispense recognition and acknowledgment without prejudice.

- iii. **The Third Phase—From 2008 to 2014:** This phase began in 2008 which was the use of traditional counterinsurgency doctrine (Anthony, 2010). It was accelerated when the Obama administration decided to increase the number of troops temporarily, to implement the strategy to protect the Afghan population from the terrorists and to wean away the foot soldiers from the Taliban and integrate them in the society. The strategy provided a schedule for the withdrawal of Allied forces and also envisaged a program to hand over gradually the administrative and governance responsibilities to the Afghans National army and police (John, et all. 2008).

Pakistan being the neighbor of Afghanistan and direct victim of the prevailing instability offered to mediate to bring peace in Afghanistan but unfortunately was always looked with suspicious eyes by the foreign forces. Every act of Pakistan was doubted, even the sincere ones (Matt, 2010). For example, the detention of Taliban deputy, Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar was discredited by many including the top UN former official, Kai Eide, who termed this sincere effort of Pakistan as being something to derail the peace process and to continue with the belligerent activities (Ruttig, 2011). Today, the world has witnessed a different reality when Mullah Baradar being chief negotiator in Qatar is helping the US to install peace in Afghanistan.

In June 2010, the military command of the US forces fighting with Taliban was changed and Mc-Chrystal was replaced with Gen David Petraeus with clear instructions by the US President Obama that there is no change in policy. The new commander was also to protect the civil population from the attacks of insurgents, building Afghan national institutions and minimize civilian casualties (Simbal, 2010). A withdrawal time table was announced by president Obama on 22nd June 2010, based on the assertion that since al-Qaida network has been destroyed and most of the militant's commanders have been killed, therefore the number of

troops was to be reduced by some thirty thousand within a year and complete withdrawal of all combat troops by end of 2014 (Krieg, 2016). The killing of former Afghan President Burhan Uddin Rabbani was a setback to the efforts of ending the war, as he was engaged with the Taliban to negotiate a mutually agreed settlement with the Afghan government.

In the wake of post 2014 US withdrawal from Afghanistan, an agreement was reached between Washington and Kabul which stipulated reassurances by the US Government its continued military support to Afghan Government (Posen, 2014). Another agreement, the Bilateral Security Agreement was also concluded by the newly elected President Ashraf Ghani, which guaranteed the training to Afghan forces and also to act as adviser, after the withdrawal of US and NATO forces from Afghanistan. The US and NATO formally ended their conflict mission in Afghanistan on 28th December 2014. This agreement endorsed an international force of about 13000 to stay in the country. The agreement to allow the foreign forces to continue their presence on Afghan soil was an unpopular one, but many people believed that their sudden withdrawal was not advisable either, as it may leave more chaos and lawlessness in the country.

iv. The Fourth Phase—Post 2014 Scenario:

The war in Afghanistan is not yet over. There seems to be a lot of confusion in the US strategy. The US strategy is keep shifting with mixed signals of isolation to reconciliation and then reintegration to negotiation. The situation is not clear at all and no one is sure as to what are the US ultimate aims and objectives in Afghanistan. Donald J. Trump as the new US President was expected to announce a withdrawal plan from Afghanistan but instead his blame game made the scene murkier, with no clear way forward (Yusuf, 2017). America's exit strategy from Afghanistan, therefore, remains a matter of mere speculation. So situation in Afghanistan will continue to remain as it is for a long time to come. By December 2014, combat mission of both International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and Operation Enduring Freedom ended. ISAF Mission was converted into Resolute Support Mission (RSM) under Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) and Operation Enduring Freedom converted into Operation Freedom's Sentinel through Bilateral Security Agreement (BSA). A total of 22,693 military personnel from troops contributing countries are now present in Afghanistan. Till Nov 2017, Afghan War has a total cost of \$ 1.07 trillion provided by the US as well as coalition partners and donors (Amadeo, 2018).

According to BBC report of January 2018, the Taliban are still in control of almost 70% territory of Afghanistan (Sharifi & Adamo, 2018). The Americans are trying to help raise and train the Afghan National Army that will withstand the Taliban's onslaught, is yet to be seen (Laub, 2017). Prior to 9/11, Afghanistan saw the rule of Afghan Taliban who had come to power after lot of bloodshed in the streets.

The Taliban system of governance was not moderate and there were elements of extremism and dogmatism which gave a unique color to it. Giving shelter to Osama Bin Laden earned the country the wrath of US and that came to be the immediate reason for US attack on Afghanistan. Apart from the US aspect the Afghan Taliban rule was not a source of any discomfort or instability in the region apparently, though all the regional countries had serious reservations about the way Afghanistan was ruled. Pakistan and Saudi Arabia were the two countries which had formally recognized Afghanistan as a sovereign country. There was comparatively peace and stability in the region. Pakistan, however, had not yet fully recovered from the previous shock in the aftermath of USSR occupation of Afghanistan. That long occupation and continued conflict had, and still have serious negative effects on Pakistan's social, economic and security situation. To undo such a backlash, Pakistan has supported all peace processes in Afghanistan and initiated few on his own to bring stability in the region. A detailed analysis on few of the important peace initiatives have been charted out in the subsequent paragraphs.

Peace Processes in Afghanistan

Afghan Interim Administration was established in 2001 as a result of Bonn Agreement (Chesterman, 2002). Three Presidential and two Parliamentary Elections have been held so far but without representation of largest warring group i.e. Taliban. This part of the paper very briefly discusses the latest peace efforts to resolve the Afghanistan issue. US, Afghan government and various neighboring states have endeavored to bring about a negotiated peace settlement with insurgents. Few of the important steps taken to install peace in Afghanistan are mentioned below:

- High Peace Council (HPC)
- Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process

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- Murree Peace Dialogue
- Quadrilateral Coordination Group (QCG)
- Trilateral Talks
- Six Nations Talks
- Peace Treaty with Hizb-e-Islami Gulbadin (HIG)

i. High Peace Council (HPC)

High Peace Council (HPC) was established on September 5, 2010 by the Afghan government to negotiate with Taliban groups. However, Council activities faded after assassination of its Chief Burhan Uddin Rabbani. US established direct contact with Taliban and Taliban representative office was opened in Qatar. Notwithstanding, the limited influence over Taliban, Pakistan also made concerted efforts to contribute in Afghan peace and reconciliation process, but the process did not make any headway.

ii. Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process

The heart of Asia–Istanbul process was initiated in November 2011 to provide a forum for promoting peace and stability, political and other economic interests of the regional countries. The member states were Azerbaijan, China, India, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Tajikistan, and Turkey. The region-led forum was launched to promote peace and to forge cooperation against terrorism and other security issues confronting the region. The US and twenty other countries and organizations serve as supporting nations to the process (Ruttig, 2011).

Pakistan as a participating member of Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process, was trying to play an active role but the forum was seemed to be controlled by the Indians, as was evident in the meeting on December 3-4, 2016 in Amritsar. In that meeting the Afghan President Ashraf Ghani and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi openly criticized Pakistan for ‘sanctuaries of Taliban’ and even rejected the Pakistani offer of \$500 million to Afghanistan (Nanda, 2016). The Amritsar declaration openly pointed fingers towards Pakistan for the presence of Taliban hide outs, and stressed the need for action against them by Pakistani Government. Due to the influence of India, the very rational of the Heart of Asia conference has lost its value and not many expectations could be associated to it.

iii. Murree Peace Dialogue

As part of an ‘Afghan-led and Afghan-owned’ reconciliation process, Pakistan hosted a meeting in July 2015 at Murree (Zulfiqar, 2015). However, the process was stalled after announcement of Mullah Omer’s death on 29th July 2015, by the Afghan Government, just before the next scheduled meeting and thus peace process was scuttled (BBC, 2015). There has been a lot of confusion as to whether the Afghan leadership was on board or not in the peace talk that were held previously. Some dust storm was created deliberately by few Taliban groups just to distance them from the talk process. The sudden announcement of the death of Mullah Omar at that crucial juncture was something which conveyed many messages. This made many people skeptical of the intention of some forces inside and outside Afghanistan regarding the peace efforts (Farrell, 2015).

iv. Quadrilateral Coordination Group (QCG)

On the side-lines of Heart of Asia conference in Islamabad, Pakistan announced initiation of a Quadrilateral Coordination Group (China, US, Pakistan and Afghanistan) to facilitate peace and reconciliation process. The QCG was formed in January 2016. The main aim of this initiation was to engage the Afghan Taliban in the peace process. So far six meetings of QCG have been held in Islamabad and Kabul, however, because of absence of Taliban no meaningful progress was made and the untimed killing of Mullah Mansur has probably sealed its fate for an unknown period of time.

The death of Mullah Mansur by an American drone just the moment he entered Pakistani territory from Afghanistan, was believed by many analysts that he has been killed deliberately on Pakistani soil only to scuttle the peace process and to pressurize Pakistan. One wonders as to why he was not killed inside Afghan or Iranian territory since he was under surveillance? The efforts of QCG have not yielded its results to bring peace to Afghanistan, because it has not been participated by the Taliban and secondly it seems that individual members of the QCG have their own agenda as well to follow.

v. Trilateral Talks

On 27th December 2016, officials from China, Pakistan and Russia held their 3rd meeting in Moscow to review what they perceive as a ‘gradually growing’ threat to their frontiers posed by Islamic State/DAESH extremists in Afghanistan. All these regional countries are having a common agenda and interest and that is peace in Afghanistan and in the region. These countries are also fearful of the new ISIS phenomena and sees with great suspicion as the threat of ISIS is spreading with a high speed. They also believe that the key to the afghan conflict lies with the regional countries (Khattak, 2017). It was in this spirits that trilateral talks were arranged. However, the talks couldn’t make any headway as the US and other Western countries did not participate, as observer. Afghan government also showed its annoyance for not having been invited to the meeting in Moscow.

vi. Six Nations Talks

The six nations include Russia, China, Pakistan, Iran, Afghanistan and India. So far two Six Nations talks have been held in Moscow since 2016 aimed at encouraging Taliban to negotiate with Afghan government (*TOLO News Afghanistan, 2016*). The US was not invited to the meeting thereby it suggested that both the major powers in the region want a regional solution to the Afghan conflict. Pakistan, Russia and China are in favor of direct talks with the Afghan Taliban; however, India is not accepting this suggestion, fearing that this will give a kind of legitimacy to the Taliban.

The main reason for the failure of the Six Nations Talks was the absence of a major stakeholder, Afghan Taliban. The issue of inclusion of Taliban has been strongly objected by the Indians as they believe that China, Russia and Pakistan want the Taliban to fight the ISIS. On the other hand, the Indians are also toeing the line of US. Therefore, without Washington’s consent the Indians will not budge an inch. It is these internal differences and interests that could not bridge the trust and are responsible for the failure of talks of this forum and also of the other forums.

vii. Peace Treaty with Hizb-e-Islami Gulbadin (HIG)

Of late, Afghan President Ashraf Ghani has formalized a peace treaty with Hezb-e-Islami, an armed group led by Gulbaddin Hekmatyar; a deal the government hopes will lead to more agreements with other groups. The aim of this peace deal was to integrate other Taliban groups in the society and put an end to the conflict. So far no any other important group of the insurgents has surrendered, although this episode was claimed as a success by President Ashraf Ghani. This peace deal was in fact a deal which was aimed by Gulbadin Hikmatyar to get some concessions from the Afghan government, mainly by getting Afghan government support for the lifting of US and UN sanctions against his faction and an honorary position in the Afghan government (Alizada, 2017). But this process of including other Taliban groups who agree to end the conflict has not occurred contrary to the expectations of the Afghan authorities.

1. The Glimpse of Hope: Is it real?

The above details on the peace processes clearly reveals that the peace processes have so far not successful to bring stability to Afghanistan. There has been bilateral, trilateral and multilateral talks aimed at bringing peace to Afghanistan but due to geopolitical and regional security reasons have not yielded the desired results. The main reason for its failure is either the non-inclusion of Afghan Taliban from the peace process or due to lack of trust between the parties. There is huge trust deficit. The US and India and the Afghan government believes that Pakistan is harboring the Taliban inside its territory. Similarly, Pakistan is highly apprehensive regarding the US role in Afghanistan that only dictates the mantra of 'do more'. On the fault lines, the enhanced role for India in Afghanistan is a big source of concern for Pakistan. China and Russia are also skeptical of the US role in Afghanistan. Likewise, US have also lot of doubts about the intentions of China and Russia in the regional and global context (Siddqiui, 2017).

Therefore, the glimpse of hope is resting on an iceberg of geopolitical interests, which the Taliban are in fact not capable of dealing with. As proxy or insurgency force they have been soldiers of great strength but when it comes to decode the great game, their ability to maneuver with United States is somehow of no value. The so-called effort of installing peace through directly engaging Taliban is not less than a hustle to gain time and decode what is going on in Beijing, Moscow, and Islamabad. Washington and New Delhi would never like to create an environment that could allow SCO, CPEC, and OBOR to take off the pace of unparallel success.

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If anything that could stop them is instability of Afghanistan. Hence, learning from the failures of previous peace dialogues along with complications of geopolitical landscape of Afghanistan, this study finds out that the ongoing peace dialogue with Taliban is not to include them into political process rather it is an effort to outcast them completely from the future of Afghanistan as stakeholders. This in other words means that the traditional leverage of Pakistan in Afghanistan will be ruled out. Furthermore, should one start believing that if United States decides to bring peace in Afghanistan then the peace would be installed immediately? It is time to think seriously because it is US political history that whenever they end up in mess, they 'run amok' while leaving the rest in the mess. Pakistan must play smartly and pursue her national priorities without getting mesmerized by the US way of getting into 'dilemma of peace into Afghanistan'.

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