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Will Istanbul Summit Ensure Durable Peace or End up in a Civil War?

The peace scenario in Afghanistan is taking on a new shape by passing every day. The same game with the like characters. Peace talk discussed behind closed doors does not seem promising. That is the reality not being pessimistic. The organisers of the peace negotiation are the same architects who have been involved in continuation of war so far for justification of their presence in Afghanistan. Who are primarily responsible for the current situation, the ghost war for destruction in Afghanistan?

So far, the slogan of peace to assure tranquillity and to stop the bloodshed has not achieved, even for a short time, a tangible outcome for our people. A new government was formed after the Bonn Conference. US troops and NATO allies have occupied Afghanistan for two decades under the false slogan of fighting Islamic extremist groups. The people of Afghanistan pronounce that the occupying countries being engaged, 'in our killings and in our country's destructions to accomplish their strategic goals and insatiable economic interests. They plunder our underground mining reserves in cooperation with Pakistan and uses the terrorist groups as a coverup. The United States has not occupied Afghanistan for good well. Otherwise, the problem of unrest, conflict and systematic killings

would have been halted long time back. The root of extremism would have been annihilated in Pakistan which has provided a haven harbouring terrorist for many years. Even a layman is aware of that, so it is hard to believe why not America.

For two decades, the United States has installed the most corrupt individuals, Hamid Karzai, and Ashraf Ghani, on Khalilzad's recommendation at the helm of power in Afghanistan and has supported them in gaining and staying in state authority. Ashraf Ghani has always been involved in strengthening the Taliban, escalating ethnic divisions, deploying corrupt and inexperienced people in civilian, military, judicial, political bodies and in embassies. He has appointed the most corrupt, ethnocentric characters in the central and provincial administrations as governors and security chief. Ashraf Ghani has been exercising and abusing power in an authoritarian way, worse than dictatorial regimes in the history of this country. Afghanistan, under the slogan of democracy and fraudulent elections, has been transferred to a hotbed for the growth of terrorists such as Taliban, ISIS, Haqqani and others.

“Why 5500 Taliban most terrifying and criminal fighters who committed heinous crime against our people were released just after a telephone call by Zalmay Khalilzad, the US envoy for destruction of Afghanistan? Why Anas Haqqani, the leader of Haqqani terror group, being accountable for horrible explosions, killing hundreds of people were released and transferred to Qatar as a VIP guest?”, as was said by an interviewee on TOLONews. Undeniably, foreign intelligence agencies have played their trump cards, pursuing their own interests in this filthy game. Its tragic consequences are experienced in Afghanistan for twenty years in unrest, massacres, suicide bombings, explosions, destruction of economic infrastructure, millions of drug addicts, serial killings of civilians and soldiers, assassinations of national and popular figures including women children and journalists. The chaotic situation is being carried out incessantly every day. According to TOLONews in the last three months around 1000 people were killed and injured.

Observers Predict a Murky Image on Istanbul Peace Deal, Kabul Regime not able to offer a single concrete Plan at the Summit.

The Turkish summit is considered very crucial for the peace of Afghanistan. It is said that the United States will be handing over the management of the summit to the United Nations, with the participation of all neighbouring countries including regional and global actors. If the meeting is chaired by the United Nations and attended by all the influential countries involved, in fact, a new parliament will be formed to create a new government and even a new system in which the Taliban will play a major role.

There is still no single plan, perception, or position for this meeting in Kabul and not in the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. The High Council for Reconciliation (HCR) is talking about amendments to the US plan that it wants to present as a peace plan.

Hekmatyar, the leader of Islamic Party has his own plan. He claims to present his party plan to the prominent parties. However, he has not much credibility within his own party. He is a welfare receiver of Kabul government. He insists that Ashraf Ghani should resign, and an interim government should be established. Ashraf Ghani and his team talk about, as part of their government plan, an early election in the next six months. However, Hamdullah Moheb, his National Security Council adviser, said that the plan for early elections would not be presented at the Istanbul summit. He warned of an early US withdrawal before a peace deal could be leading to a civil war in Afghanistan.

While a single plan and a single position by the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, according to Ashraf Ghani and his allies, by “the Republic “in the meeting of Turkey and the Taliban “Emirate” is especially important, but there is no sign of it yet. It is only believed and stated that “God willing” we will go with a single plan. The Taliban, who treated the Republicans (the Kabul Government representatives) and even Hamid Karzai insultingly at the Moscow summit, considered themselves the victors of the war. They will have the same beliefs and demonstrate similar behaviour at the upcoming Turkish summit. According to the Taliban, the main footing for a solution and peace is the Doha Agreement. In that agreement the government and the

ruling system of the Republic was rejected, and the post-peace Islamic system is being emphasized.

The Americans are in a hurry and are interested in using the Turkish summit to reach a peace agreement to withdraw from Afghanistan. But a lasting peace has not been guaranteed in the American plan. Therefore, the efforts and expressions of American officials seems vague and uncertain. US rivals such as China, Russia, and Iran want the Americans to leave Afghanistan as soon as possible. They will not take any responsibility for ensuring lasting peace and financing it. All foreigners want to take the burden of the Afghan war off their shoulders, but what is unclear is that no one is prepared to take the burden of Afghan peace and accept responsibility for guaranteeing peace and its cost.

The issue of the Taliban has been exaggeratingly magnified, and it is shown that it is the Taliban who are the main problem. The Taliban, meanwhile, barely represent 20 to 30 thousand, a small number as compared to the national army. The only skill that the Taliban have, is using terror and destruction techniques with the help of the ISI of Pakistan and the financial assistance of the Arab countries. But the major problem in the country is in the so-called Republican camp (Kabul government), which has not any consensus, no coordination, no alignment. The main problem of all seditions and crises is the unbridled monopoly of power. The setback of Afghanistan is structural and systemic. The system needs to be changed to horizontal division of power, justice, and equality in all political, economic, judicial, and social spheres of life.

But the fact is that the constitution and the structure of the current system do not have the capacity to achieve consensus, coordination, convergence and to ensure participation of the masses in the management of society as well as to ensure peace in the country. Consequently, the country has stuck in a sort of Bermuda Triangle. One side of this triangle is the Taliban. The other side is the Mujahideen, and the third side is the Pashtun technocrat's dissident from the United States, who hold power and authority by US bayonet force and Arab money, according to Dr. Aziz Arianfar.

In fact, the main power struggle is between the technocrats and the Mujahideen. US Pashtun technocrats, meanwhile, have only partial

support for urbanites in Kabul and perhaps two or three other cities. While the Mujahideen enjoy the strong support of the villagers all over the country. As a result of the disharmony between the Pashtun technocrats from the United States and the Mujahideen, who have in fact been marginalized, the country has disintegrated, and the work has led to a deep crisis and in a strategic stalemate.

The Taliban has been used just an excuse. Highlighting the Taliban as one of the main sides of the equation is to deceive the people and divert their attention from the bitter internal realities. Let us not forget that the technocrats are divided into two groups, Durrani and Ghiljai and the Mujahideen are divided into several groups. Precisely speaking, the situation is very chaotic, and complicated. The only way out of this crisis is to reform the structure of the system, the best could be a sort of federal system. Otherwise, the situation will get worse by passing every day. The peace conferences should be aligned with change of the constitution where all people should have equal right as citizen of Afghanistan without affiliation to any party or religious affiliation.

Why is the situation complicated in Afghanistan and its consequences?

For illustration of the matter, it is necessary to consider many players involved in the shaping the current situation. In other words, there are several unknowns placed in a matrix formula, such as Pakistan, India, China, Iran, USA, Russia, Israel etc, as illustrated here under:

Pakistan (is the US and British ally, also a friend of China but the enemy of India)

India is friendly with Israel which supports anti-Taliban forces against the Taliban which are mercenaries of Pakistan.

Russia and China are friendly with Iran, they have extensive trade and political ties with each other.

The United States opposes Iran after the fall of Reza Shah, who was an ally and supporter of the United States. After the Islamic Revolution,

the United States did not even give him (the Shah) a refuge in America he was chucked in the waste bin as a depreciated and used spare part.

Russia and China oppose US military presence in Afghanistan and consider it against their interest.

Israel, Britain, and the United States have always been in conspiracy against Iran.

The United States has supported the opposition to the anti-Soviet regimes, and has supported the Mujaheddin, then the Taliban, subsequently the puppet regimes after the Bonn Conference, and now the Taliban.

The Arab countries are traditionally following the American path as usual.

Therefore, for resolving the issue, it is required to consider application of this formula, to find out the unknowns in the matrix.

1- The role of the intelligence countries in the region, neighbours, especially the United States and NATO allies and reactionary Arab countries that have a military presence for almost two decades in Afghanistan with all necessary facilities is clear to every Afghan observer.

2. The countries mentioned in above have played their role in shaping the current situation, including the creation, strengthening, embedding, equipping the Taliban, ISIS, Haqqani and other terrorist groups. The opium cultivation and trafficking, riots, explosions, and suicide bombing are the by-product of the foreign intelligence's proxies in cooperation with their internal agents within and outside the regime. The serial killings operations, the financing of human rights abusers and professional criminals, the puppet governments are the outcome that our people witness since the Bonn conference.

3. The United States and its allies have always supported one opposition group against the another, especially after the PDPA military coup and the rise of the pro-Soviet regime under the auspices of the former Soviet Union. From the jihadists against the pro-Soviet regimes to the Taliban against the jihadist government (President Rabbani and Commander Masoud), from the Western restaurant

technocrats after the Bonn Conference against the Mujahideen government of the Jamiat-e-Islamic and its allies.

4. All the rich and powerful mafia circles, from the merchants to the commanders from the Mujahideen to the politicians, from A to Z, were created intentionally because of generous dollars of the United States and NATO, which flowed in the name of rebuilding Afghanistan. The mafia circles became the owners of palaces inside and outside the country.

5. So according to the Afghan people's perception, scholars, politicians, and analysts of Afghanistan affairs the main purpose of America and its partners was to create a mafia ring under the name of democracy. The post-Bonn regimes have been the most corrupt system in the country's history for many years, with more than 80 percent of the population are living below the poverty line and three million drug addicts despite billions of dollars donated to Afghanistan. It is a big challenge for any future government to overcome in years.

6. The United States has not withheld any direct or indirect arms or political support from post-Bonn regimes. It has played an active role in all areas of our people's lives since the Soviet military presence in Afghanistan and the Cold War period. Creating a mafia system, appointing, and removing politicians, jihadists, and Taliban, reviving the ethnic army, appointing, and removing political and military figures, the temporary fall of the Taliban, installing Karzai and Ghani, perpetuating unrest to justify the long-term US presence in the region has been executed and formed one after another in the presence of its desired agents.

In any case, with the coming to power of the Afghan Taliban, they will be divided into areas of power, and each of the countries that oppose the US military presence will be strengthened, which will be repaid only by the Afghan people who have paid so far. It goes without saying that the intelligence of the countries involved in the Afghan case is aware of how their future will shape. Given the complexity of different countries' interventions in Afghanistan, the Ashraf Ghani's regime intends to stay in power by prolonging the peace process and creating new scenarios.

Qatar's proxy peace processes the internal mafia has been stalled due to the involvement of a wide range of foreign countries. Changes in the leadership of the White House persuaded Kabul rulers, who once backed the Taliban on ethnic grounds. They are now seen as Ashraf Ghani is discrediting the Taliban because they see them as a potential threat to his regime. Beating opponents, creating fear and panic, restraining freedom of speech. To pretend to the United States that peace with the Taliban does not have a good outcome because the Taliban are violating human rights standards and not observing a ceasefire.

The best way to achieve peace and not to repeat the mistakes of Bonn Conference:

It is helpful to involve the international community - especially neighbouring countries and the region - in the UN-led peace process in the envisaged Istanbul Summit Afghan peace talk. Consensus of all countries involved in the Afghan issue is vital for ensuring a durable peace. The virtue of the peace plan would be to maintain Afghanistan traditional neutrality, which lays a "foundation" for peace. The condition of neutrality can work as the renunciation of the territorial claim to the lands and territories of the neighbours. The most important, perhaps the only cause of unrest and crisis in Afghanistan, is the territorial claim that Kabul rulers make about the lands beyond the Durand Line.

Most importantly, the division of government power between the Taliban and the current government should be studied carefully. Bearing in mind that while the Taliban movement is a Pashtun-based ethnic party, by giving them 50 percent of government seats, we are depriving other ethnic groups of their rights, because the main body of the current government in Afghanistan is also made up of Pashtuns. Therefore, they may get more than 50 percent of the government's share. In this case, the remaining 25 percent will go to the rest of the Afghan people, who make up more than 75 percent of the country's population. This matter will push the country to new unrest, leading to a civil war.

Another point in this peace is crucial to be mindful of not insisting on the presidential system. As it is a repetition of the failed experience of the current centralized presidential system, of which was laid in Bonn conference. The experience of the last 20 years has shown that in a multinational country like Afghanistan, centralized structures - such as the presidential system - have lost the rights of minorities and ethnic groups, providing the basis for the domination and legal superiority of one ethnic group. It is better and constructive change to redistribute the power into to access the prime minister and president or in a federal structure of government, according to the those who believe in a just and fair just system to ensure the rights of all citizens irrespective of their ethnic and religious affiliations.

Will the Istanbul Conference end the war in Afghanistan? What challenges are foreseen?

The people of Afghanistan and the world hope that the Istanbul Conference, to be held in early April, will end the 40-year war in Afghanistan. The Moscow Conference breathed new life into the dying soul of the Doha Agreement. In addition to discussing the future of the system, a ceasefire, the creation of a transitional government, and the withdrawal of foreign forces were discussed. The United States, Russia, China, and Pakistan, along with Pakistan, opposed the Taliban's self-proclaimed Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA).

However, Mr Biden told a news conference that the withdrawal of US troops was "very difficult" at a date set by President Trump and that the United States would consult with its allies. The Taliban warned Washington of this delay and would continue fighting if the Doha agreement were not implemented. The sharp tensions between the Kabul regime and the Taliban and the US reluctance to mention a specific time reference for its troop withdrawal from Afghanistan, despite hopes, will make the tasks of the Istanbul conference participants more challenging.

Another worrying issue is the strained relations between the United States and Russia and China, although the United States, Russia, and China are cooperating on Afghanistan. The White House sees Russia

and China as key and growing threats to US strategic interests, and that will affect the conference. With the "Cooperation, Competition and Confrontation" strategy, the Biden government requires cooperation and competition with these two nuclear states within the framework of American rules, and these countries must play according to American rules, and based on this plan to prevent anarchism, authoritarianism, and power failure.

Russia and China condemn US unilateralism in the political, economic, and social spheres, and see pressure and dictatorship as contrary to their national interests and world order. Although both China and Russia are not in favour of confronting the United States. The new Cold War has created an unprecedented kind of mistrust in their relationship. It is feared that the strained relations between the United States and Russia and China, both of which agree on the Afghanistan issue, will lighten the weight of the Istanbul conference, as both countries are permanent members of the UN Security Council and will unite against US resolutions in 2018. They can use their veto power.

Top officials in those countries have lost faith in US intentions in the fight against terrorism and US promises to withdraw from Afghanistan. Russia and China consider any delay or reason for the withdrawal of US troops to be the greatest threat to the future of peace. The Istanbul Conference will be the biggest test for the participants of Afghanistan to put aside their obstinacy and egocentricity for the sake of peace and the future of Afghanistan. They should not allow Afghanistan to become a playground for the great powers and threaten Afghanistan's territorial integrity.

New Taliban move postponing the Istanbul Conference.

In a new move, the Taliban group has opposed holding an Istanbul summit in April. The group has suggested that the Istanbul summit be held after Ramadan. It was previously agreed that the meeting would take place on April the 15th. According to Islamic calendar, 15th of April is equal to the second day of Ramadan this year. The reason given by the Taliban for opposing this date is the month of Ramadan and fasting. Ramadan this year starts on April 14 and ends on May 12. Of

course, it should be borne in mind that the time of the beginning and end of Ramadan is different every year, and the moon sight is a condition in it. The Taliban are a key player in the Afghan peace process. The consent of this group is conditional on the time and place of the negotiations. Therefore, it is predicted that the Istanbul meeting will be postponed until after Ramadan and three days of Eid al-Fitr. Unless all parties agree to hold this meeting before the month of Ramadan. This option, however, does not seem practical now.

The element of time is of particular importance at the Istanbul Summit. The terms and conditions of the meeting will vary depending on whether it is held in April or May. Representatives of the Taliban may enter the meeting in April with one plan and in May with another. It is natural that this difference can affect the conditions and results of the negotiations at the Istanbul Summit. Hence, time is a key element for holding the Istanbul Summit. The Taliban have been shrewd in choosing the timing of the Istanbul summit. According to the group, the best time to hold this meeting is in the second half of May. These days, according to the Doha agreement, foreign troops must leave Afghanistan.

The Taliban group's proposal to postpone the Istanbul summit to the days after Ramadan is in fact an attempt to test US sincerity and commitment under the Doha Agreement. The group wants a clear answer to the question of "whether foreign troops will leave Afghanistan on May the first by proposing a change in the timing of the meeting." If the answer is yes, the Taliban will be confirmed at the Istanbul summit. If foreign troops do not leave Afghanistan on May the 1st, then Taliban representatives will refuse to attend the Istanbul summit in protest. If they participate, they will be behind the table with different agenda and proposal, will speak in a different tune, language, and literature. Hence, the Taliban are currently looking to see what the United States does on May the 1st and what decision the group should make.

Holding the Istanbul Summit in the days after Ramadan will create new troubles. One of these problems is to cast deeper doubt on the US and NATO decision to withdraw from Afghanistan on May the 1st. The United States and NATO have previously said that their decision to

withdraw from Afghanistan depends on the progress of the Afghan talks and the situation in the country. The decision to withdraw international troops from Afghanistan will be easier when the Istanbul Summit is held in April and the participants can agree on a general framework for peace. With this offer from the Taliban, however, it has become difficult to decide. At present, the United States and NATO cannot risk leaving Afghanistan without a general peace agreement or a clear vision for peace in Afghanistan, according to some observers.

On the other hand, there is a danger that the Taliban will return to war against foreign forces. If the United States and NATO fail to withdraw their troops from Afghanistan on May the 1st due to uncertainty about the future of Afghanistan, they will face Taliban attacks. This is a warning that the Taliban has repeatedly given to the United States and NATO. If the war between foreign forces and Taliban fighters resumes, the knot of Afghan peace talks will become more complicated.

The Taliban are the main culprits in the failure of the Afghan talks so far. Unfortunately, this group wasted no time in conducting "shadow negotiations" and the Afghan negotiations did not proceed according to the timetable drawn in of the Doha Agreement. Now, with the Taliban's new offer, the knot has become more complicated. However, there is an open way to prevent the failure of the negotiations and to stop the peace process. The United States and the Taliban must negotiate to extend the mission of foreign troops until a lasting peace agreement is reached in Afghanistan. The proposal is also based on the Doha Agreement. According to the agreement, the withdrawal plan will be realized when the parties to the war in Afghanistan have reached a comprehensive peace agreement. Hence, the Taliban are expected to take a more flexible stance on the issue and leave the Afghan peace process to succeed. If the current opportunity for peace is wasted by the Taliban's inflexible stance, it will not be blamed on any party other than the group, according to experts.

But as the game of war and peace has been going for so long, we cannot be sure until we see peace and tranquillity in Afghanistan. We need to wait to see the outcome of the rolling game.

