



Five Pillars of a Successful Transition in Afghanistan Post 2014

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The endgame in Afghanistan is likely to be complex and ‘success’ for the Afghans depends on how the future will unfold on many different levels. This notwithstanding, there are five essential conditions for a successful transition to a more stable Afghanistan after the departure of foreign troops in 2014.

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Most of the conditions for a successful transition into a stable Afghanistan would require appropriate bureaucratic and institutional mechanisms to ensure that the momentum for change is harnessed and that timely follow-ups take place. The major parties with stakes in the security of Afghanistan will need a roadmap and a framework for achieving the policy outcomes identified in this policy brief.

DEEPENING PEACE AND AMITY BETWEEN AFGHANISTAN AND PAKISTAN

Although Afghanistan and Pakistan are allies in the fight against extremism, they have serious differences, bordering on animosity, when it comes to finding joint solutions to problems. Both countries need to restore confidence in each other in order to jointly work to prevent growth of extremism and to avoid these tensions between them. The mechanisms suggested below must be in place by January 2015 when the transition process should be ready:

- Both countries should recognise the international border between them as the permanent border. If there are differences, these must be discussed and resolved amicably. As a first step the formation of a joint border commission may be undertaken to propose solutions and to ensure peace prevails on the border. This

OVERALL POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Afghanistan and Pakistan should intensify efforts to establish friendly relations
- The Afghan government should ensure free and transparent elections in Afghanistan in 2014
- Reconciliation efforts with the Taliban should be continued both with Pakistani assistance and the involvement of a UN peace envoy or special representative to oversee them
- The security transition based on strengthening the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) should be clarified and then implemented in full
- There should be a higher degree of convergence of policies between the Afghan government and the main international transitional frameworks



mechanism, coupled with the existence of a hotline between the two military headquarters will assist in ensuring peace.

- Talks should be initiated with the aim of drafting a water sharing agreement regarding the use of waters of the River Kabul, which are used by both countries. Both countries should agree to a joint monitored framework based on UN Charter principles of non-interference and respect for each other's sovereignty in border management.
- Both countries should agree on a definition of interference and then take steps to remove the causes where interference is reported and confirmed, through a joint mechanism involving both civil and military representatives of the two countries in the proposed bilateral border commission.
- A UN special envoy should be appointed to oversee transitional arrangements including peace on the border between the two countries. The UN may establish a mandated observer force working under this UN special envoy to report and redress any breach of code of conduct interfering with Afghan or Pakistani sovereignty, and other border issues.
- An extradition agreement between the two countries should be signed to transfer individuals who are wanted for criminal or terrorism charges and have taken refuge in the other's territories.
- Pakistan should shift its security paradigm and bring it into line with Article 40 of its constitution, which exhorts it to improve international security and to become a respected member of the international community.
- The future of Afghanistan should be viewed as an opportunity to develop energy and trade corridors North–South and East–West with access to neighbouring countries, for their benefit:
 - i. Afghanistan, the Central Asian States, Pakistan, India and Iran should create a regional energy institutional framework to exploit energy-related opportunities.
 - ii. A multilateral commercial trading company should be created between the countries in the region with the mandate to open up opportunities for trade and commerce amongst them. Although a percentage of equity funding for this company may be made available by participating nations it should, however, be led by the regional private business environment, while the participating countries should, meanwhile, facilitate the development of infrastructure and policy supporting commercial development.

HOLDING FREE AND FAIR ELECTIONS IN AFGHANISTAN

The political transition in Afghanistan is absolutely critical to a peaceful future for the region. To ensure that the forthcoming presidential election (April 2014) and the provincial, district and municipal elections are fair and free, the following steps must be taken immediately and should be in place before December 2013:

- Guidelines should be developed by the Afghan government to ensure free and fair elections. These guidelines should include electoral reforms and agreement on the structure of an independent election commission and electoral complaints commission. Non-compliance should lead to penalties, including the withholding of assistance, as stipulated under the Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework.
- The roles of the Supreme Court and Independent Commission for the Supervision of the Implementation of the Constitution (ICSIC) should be defined.
- A single, foolproof and uncontroversial voter registration list to replace the multiple voter lists that are currently in use. The latter are very irregular and will undoubtedly generate questions about the fairness of the upcoming elections.

RECONCILIATION WITH THE TALIBAN

To secure peace and prevent a future civil war, such as happened after the USSR's withdrawal from Afghanistan in 1989, reconciliation between the Afghan state and the Taliban is essential. Such a process should be guided by the following principles:

- It should remain within the terms of the Afghan Constitution.
- Reconciliation should not be based on power sharing. This would only cause the division of Afghanistan into ethnic strongholds and may lead to the partition of Afghanistan.
- Reconciliation should be based on negotiation and exchange of quid pro quos within a framework that must be identified before serious negotiations with the Taliban begin; this can best be achieved through back-door contacts. Entering negotiations without understanding the red lines of the parties will be futile. Therefore having an agreed agenda prior to talks will increase the chances of success of the negotiations.
- Reconciliation will mean a one-time chance for the Taliban to participate in the next round of elections. If there is no agreement, then the likelihood of a long drawn-out insurgency cannot be ruled out.



Afghan National Policemen in military training, Herat 2011. © Ahmad/Xinhua Press/Corbis

- In order to have a neutral mediator pursuing progress in the negotiations and preventing them from stalling, the presence of a UN special envoy as facilitator is strongly urged. This will not only assist in keeping the negotiations on a positive course but an envoy will work with the regional neighbours to build leverage for peace.
- Given the Afghan historical experience of handling national crises within the framework of its traditional institutions, it will be appropriate to summon a multi-ethnic *Loi Jirga* (Grand Assembly) as a lever to pursue reconciliation through the Afghan High Peace Council.
- Pakistan should continue to provide assistance but must refrain from doing so with any strategic motive in the new Afghanistan, and abide by the UN Charter pertaining to respect for Afghan sovereignty and territorial integrity. It should also not think of its security in terms of locating its 'strategic depth' within the borders of another country; this is against international norms and Pakistan can ill afford to alienate the world on this count.
- Pakistani security managers have a primordial fear of India. If any Indian presence is enhanced in Afghanistan it will lead to a negative reaction from Pakistan either directly or through proxies.

STRENGTHENING OF AFGHAN NATIONAL SECURITY FORCES BEFORE DECEMBER 2014

As the drawdown of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) picks up speed, the responsibilities of providing security have devolved upon the Afghan National

Army. Peace in Afghanistan post-2014 will be severely jeopardised unless a viable and effective Afghan military is in place.

In June 2013 ISAF handed over control of direct military operations throughout Afghanistan to the 350,000-strong Afghan National Security Force (ANSF). With the transfer of security responsibility from ISAF to the ANSF, the insecurity for Afghans has increased, but this was to be expected as a consequence of transition. Today there are differences in the level of security – the north and Kabul are more secure than Afghanistan's south and southeast. Clearly, improving Afghan security through Afghan forces is important. Yet, this may not be possible without assistance to capacitate the ANSF, help that was previously committed in Bonn 2011.

To resolve matters concerning provision of security by ANSF after 2014 it is essential that the commitments made in Bonn (2011) and Chicago (2012) be fulfilled:

- Thus far the US has agreed to support the ANSF to the tune of \$ 4.2 billion a year after 2014. However, it has committed only to the extent of \$ 2.7 billion; that still leaves a gap of \$ 1.7 billion per year to be filled. So far it is not known how this will be managed.
- Secondly, the support framework in terms of helicopters and other platforms required for confronting insurgents still needs to be finalised. These matters may be linked with the US–Afghan Strategic Agreement, but that too is silent on security assistance after 2014. For instance, it is unknown how many special operation forces or trainers the US will retain in Afghanistan in support of the ANSF.



- In order to remove these critical uncertainties the US must indicate at the earliest opportunity:
 - i. The amount of support that will be made available for upkeep of the Afghan National Army.
 - ii. The plans for retention of forces in Afghanistan up to the withdrawal of ISAF in 2014, and the support that the US is willing to provide in terms of aircraft and other assistance to ANSF to prevent the re-emergence of Al-Qaeda/Taliban.
 - iii. Dismantle terrorist sanctuaries and safe havens.
 - iv. Recognise the need for frequent political consultations between neighbours.
 - v. Urge the implementation of trade and other confidence building measures amongst member states.
 - vi. Propose the development of infrastructure to encourage economic growth and regional cooperation.

CONVERGENCE OF AFGHAN AND INTERNATIONAL TRANSITION FRAMEWORKS

A multitude of meetings have been held both in Afghanistan and internationally to achieve consensus on how to handle the security, political and economic transition in the post-2014 period. To achieve a convergence of policy between Afghanistan and its international partners, the national and international frameworks need to be in sync with one other. This is the fifth necessary condition for establishing peace and transforming Afghanistan into a peaceful region. A review of these frameworks indicates that the following policies will need to be implemented.

- All future national and international efforts must adhere to the principles declared in the Istanbul Process and further elaborated by the Kabul 'Heart of Asia' ministerial conference of June 2012. These two milestone meetings iterated the adoption of policies that would:
 - i. Recognise the central role of the UN in international affairs.
 - ii. Respect the territorial integrity and sovereignty of states.
 - iii. In Bonn the international community promised to help Afghanistan to become a democratic and a peaceful nation.
 - iv. It promised to help Afghanistan to eliminate terrorism.
 - v. It exhorted all states to support an end to external interference in Afghanistan.
 - vi. In Chicago the nations pledged to provide security assistance and capacity building support to withstand security challenges.
 - vii. In Tokyo, it was agreed to assist Afghanistan in meeting its financial needs for economic growth, infrastructural development and state capacity building.
 - viii. The Tokyo Accountability Framework laid out the conditionalities based on good governance that Afghanistan will need to adopt as a condition of support.

FURTHER READING

- Mona Kanwal Sheikh, Farzana Shaikh & Gareth Price (eds.), "Pakistan: Regional Rivalries, Local Impacts", DIIS Report, 2012:12, Copenhagen.
- Mona Sheikh & Maja Greenwood, "Taliban Talks: Past, Present and Prospects for the US, Afghanistan and Pakistan", DIIS Report, 2013:06, Copenhagen.
- Khalid Aziz, "Policy Report – Causes of Rebellion in Waziristan", RREPORT, Peshawar, 2007.
- Ghulam Sakhi, "Afghanistan's Political Opposition" (forthcoming report), DIIS, 2013, Copenhagen.

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