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Threats and opportunities amid U.S.-NATO withdrawal from Afghanistan

By: Shokrollah Amiri

When U.S. President Barack Obama's decision to end America's long...
Threats and opportunities amid U.S.-NATO withdrawal from Afghanistan
Opportunities
The military withdrawal could nevertheless present several opportunities for Afghanistan...

Editorial

Pakistan behind Taliban's terror legitimization

While the US pullout is proceeding ahead of schedule, the Afghan peace process remains in a state of deadlock and there is a significant surge in violence. Another complicating factor injected into an already deteriorating situation is the cooling in relations between Kabul and Islamabad, as the neighboring country has been time and again accused of supporting Taliban.
President Ghani's remarks against Pakistan during an interview with Der Spiegel Magazine and National Security Adviser Hamdullah Mohib's comments on neighboring country's lack of commitment regarding the Afghan peace process, has further raised tensions between the two countries.
Pakistan has repeatedly denied having relations with Taliban, however, the group leadership and their families enjoy luxury lives in Pakistani cities and their fighters are logistically being supported by ISI and the country's military.
While fighting Taliban and al-Qaeda militants in the country, the Afghan forces have arrested or killed dozens of Pakistani citizens that were fighting for Taliban against Afghan people. Meanwhile the weaponry used by Taliban and their lieutenants beyond the Durand Line proving Pakistan's sincere support to the group.
Presence of the Taliban leadership in Pakistan and their well-known Quetta Shera, as well as the group's consultation with Pakistan officials during Doha talks, clearly show how the country has strong influence on Taliban. Afghan politicians' remarks against the neighboring country is not something new, and for decades, Pakistan has been accused of harboring militants and logistically supporting them against the Afghan state.
Regional and Afghanistan's neighboring countries, mainly Pakistan, have been monitoring the crisis and its continuation in Afghanistan for more than four decades and have no other plans.
The continuation of crisis and deterioration of Afghanistan as well as lack of an authoritative government in the country are deep in Pakistan's strategic plan. Taliban are practicing what the jihadists did during their time. Currently, the Taliban are involved in killing and destruction in the name of jihad. The ideology of jihad has not faded for the extremist and dogmatist individuals, and it still leads to enormous destruction in Afghanistan. However, this cycle of destruction may lose its sanctity due to the speed of information and spread of news circulation.
Therefore, Pakistan seems to be looking for an alternative way for the continuation of conflict and crisis in Afghanistan. The country not only accept their friendly ties with the terror groups, but also blame the Afghan government for sabotaging the peace process.
Legitimizing the Taliban as well as strengthening terrorist groups can both accelerate the destructive and prolonging the peace process for years. With housing Taliban leaders and inviting their Qatari members to Islamabad, Pakistan, on the one hand, is seeking to show that it is not only involved in equipping and financing terrorists, but also gain international legitimacy for this group.
Afghans and the international community have now been in a common sense that without Pakistan support, Taliban cannot survive, and militancy can be stopped in Afghanistan and the country would be backed on a peaceful track post foreign troops withdrawal.

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