Kabul inhabitants use four tons plastics on daily bases

The officials of Kabul municipality and environment said that nowadays large number of Afghanistan use plastic bags for shopping instead of fiber or paper bags.

Health officials have always warned that use of plastic bags causes physical damages, so citizens shouldn't use plastic bags, Kabul municipality has also asked people to use paper bags.

Use of plastic bags in one of the environment problems and leaves negative impacts on people health.

Despite of this, Kabul people use futons of plastic on daily bases which is a concerning issue with environment authorities as the materials used in plastic bags are not dissolvable and gradually spread clinical and harmful gases that destroys environments.

MoPH says that execive use of plastic causes cancer, skin, cells and respiratory diseases.

Kazem Humayoon, director of NEPA said that the citizens should realize the harms of plastic bags. Plastic is one of the industrial products which is extracts from remnants of (Tar) or fossil energy.

According to NEPA data, 70 pc of people use plastics in their homes and offices.

In their conversation with The Kabul Times reporter, a number of Kabul people said that no doubt certain relevant department have neglected in upgrading of people level of awareness. If they pay further attestation improve the people level of awareness, most probably people would stop use of plastic bags and use fiber of paper bags.

In believe of Afghan people, foreign plastic products have inflicted strong blow on the health of Afghan people especially plastic products. The culture of no use of plastics should be launched in the city in order to promote the people comprehension.

Amrullah Safi chairman of Kabul municipality cleaning department said, "daily consumption of plastic in Kabul is fortunes and majority of plastic products are imported from Iran, Pakistan, India and UAE. Exercise use of plastic products have caused environment pollution. Safi went on to say, they are expected to work on a plan to encourage people to use an alternative option for plastic bags is fiber or paper bags. NEPA director said that before production of paper and fiber bags existed in Afghanistan but due to lack of supportive policies, these factories paralyzed. **Shukria Kohistani**

Friends of Afghanistan urge NATO, EU to continue . . .

From P1

abandon the Afghan people and their democratic republic."

The letter signed by former foreign ministers, former ambassadors to Afghanistan, diplomats, along with a range of civil society groups and leaders states that while NATO armed forces are leaving Afghanistan, "it is the obligation of all NATO and European countries to continue to strongly stand by our Afghan partners." The letter urges NATO and the EU to continue the financial support to the Afghan state, protect the human rights of Afghan women and girls, and continue to provide "robust financial" support to the Afghan national security forces.

The letter calls for support in six major areas, including to protecting women's rights and human rights and providing a robust and sustainable support to the Afghan state. It asks to reaffirm robust financial support to the Afghan national security forces, continue development assistance to key Afghan institutions, support a strong UN role in the Intra-Afghan peace talks, and reaffirm support to civil society and human rights groups.

The endorsees remind NATO and the European Union that the world has a "responsibility" to Afghanistan and that it "must come together in their support to the Afghan National Security Forces as who are fighting to protect Afghan lives from terrorists as well as work towards our shared security interests."

Eleanor Smeal, president of the Feminist Majority Foundation signed the letter, reiterating the importance of continued support to Afghanistan at this critical moment.

"We cannot stop our support and funding to the Afghan people, especially to the women and girls of Afghanistan. They need our assistance now more than ever as they try to defend their country and protect their people," she said. Smeal has advocated for the human rights of Afghan women and girls for 25 years and believes that despite many challenges, "the Afghan people, especially women and girls, have achieved amazing gains in education, employment, leadership, health care and provide hope for an equal and prosperous society. Their tremendous efforts deserve our support."

The U.S. has pledged to continue to provide support for the Afghan people, including Afghan women, girls, and minorities through development and humanitarian aid as well as the continued provision of security assistance to support Afghan National Defense and Security Forces. While such support and messaging from allies and partners is critical, it is important to stand with Afghanistan for years to come.

The letter highlights the current high levels of violence perpetrated by the Taliban and their affiliates "who are using violence to silence and oppress the Afghan people." For over a year, the Taliban offensive attacks have been at its peak, targeting school girls, women leaders, journalists, judges, doctors, charity workers, teachers, government officials, minorities and even religious scholars.

The letter states that the "Afghan people, just as our other allies, deserve peace, justice, liberty and dignity" and that the "killing and destruction of the people and institutions that uphold our shared values is not only a threat to the Afghan people who have been our allies for twenty years, but also to our core principles, legitimacy and global security." **The Kabul Times**

Changing dynamics in Central & South Asia: The role of Uzbekistan

From P6

space. The establishment of an early peace in Afghanistan is an ideal recipe for strengthening the interconnectedness amongst the countries of Central and South Asia. In this context, Uzbekistan's initiatives to build the trans-Afghan transport corridor, and other Afghanistan-related projects launched within the framework of the SCO are quite consistent and reasonable. The plans to strengthen connectivity between Central and South Asia logically follow Tashkent's regional policy, through which it manifests itself as a driving force for regional transformation.

However, it is clear that Uzbekistan's efforts alone are not enough and Tashkent needs to step up diplomatic efforts to strengthen its role as a voice for all Central Asian states in the neighbouring region. To meet this challenge, the Uzbek Foreign Minister, Abdulaziz Kamilov, made a tour to Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, and Turkmenistan, soliciting the support of Uzbekistan's neighbours. In addition to the bilateral agenda, the issue of developing economic ties with Afghanistan and the countries of South Asia has been discussed during the high-level talks.

For Tashkent, Nur-Sultan's encouragement of its plans is a matter of fundamental importance, given the hidden competition for regional leadership. In an effort to ensure a broader international consensus, the Uzbek authorities have already invited delegations from the UN, SCO, Afghanistan, Iran, India, China, Pakistan, Russia, and other states to take part in the international conference "Central Asia and South Asia regional connectivity:

Challenges and opportunities" being organized under the initiative of President Mirziyoyev in July.

It is obvious that in the context of the Afghan settlement, Uzbekistan will receive certain support from the United States, including encouragement of its ambitions for the role of a regional leader. However, the United States Strategy for Central Asia adopted in 2020 focuses also on Kazakhstan. The declining US interest in the other three regional republics (Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan) probably means that Washington seeks to focus on the key vectors to achieve immediate benefits. The endless war in Afghanistan and Washington's inability to achieve even relative security and stability at the peak of its military presence nullified the implementation of priority transport and energy projects. Therefore, peace in Afghanistan is vital for the full-fledged interregional cooperation, not to mention a breakthrough in the development of interregional ties.

In the meantime, other transport corridors have been promoted, including the International North South Transport Corridor with the participation of India, Russia, and Iran as founding members. The route from Mumbai to St. Petersburg should pass through the Caspian Sea, but it is adjacent to the transport infrastructure of Central Asia and is suitable for the development of cooperation with India.

The 2011 Ashgabat Agreement among Iran, Oman, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan aims to implement a transport corridor project that also has the potential to link Central and South Asia. The major role in this respect has been played by Iran, namely, the Chabahar port, reconstructed by India, which opens the way to the Indian subcontinent.

Another route bypassing Afghanistan runs through China. The Karakoram Highway connecting China and Pakistan is considered a key transport route. In October 2017, a new transport corridor Tashkent–Andijan–Osh–Irkeshtam–Kashgar was opened offering an access to South Asia. However, the bypass routes are longer, and this negates the main advantage of the southern vector. They deprive Central Asia of one of its major assets—the shortest possible route to the World Ocean, while the region itself is considered as part of larger projects. For these reasons, none of the logistics plans resulted in strategic changes. Thus, Afghanistan's uncertain future continues to delay trans-Afghan transport and energy projects compli-cating the quest for the cherished goal.

Yet, to its credit, Uzbekistan demonstrates persistency and pragmatism:

Despite the protracted Afghan conflict, Tashkent does not refuse to develop transport projects in the southern direction. The foundation is laid for the project of the Mazar-i-Sharif-Kabul-Peshawar railway to connect the South Asian railway system with the Central Asian and Eurasian branches and provides access to the Pakistani seaports (Karachi, Qasem, and Gwadar). The trans-Afghan railway construction project worth over US $4 billion has been approved by Prime Minister Imran Khan and is scheduled to start in September 2021.

The Kashmir question

Yet, in order to fully open South Asia and enter the markets of India and other South Asian states to the east of Pakistan, a more significant obstacle beyond the Afghan factor must be cleared – the India-Pakistan conflict. The Kashmir issue has led to a zero-sum game across the entire spectrum of bilateral relations, with regional and global implications. Pakistan and India deny each other transit through their territory. It is no coincidence that the transport corridors bypassing Afghanistan, connecting Central and South Asia, lead to only one of these states.

In general, today the prospects for resolving the conflict in Kashmir, as well as the entire complex of relations between India and Pakistan, despite the agreements on a ceasefire in the disputed territory, seem even more uncertain than the peace process in Afghanistan. Therefore, the expansion of interregional relations in Central and South Asia, the realisation of the immense potential of their complementary markets and transit capacity may look natural and logical but they are stuck in the vortex of geopolitical turbulence and have become hostages of the Great Game 2.0.

The security situation in Afghanistan, coupled with the vague prospects for a peaceful resolution, leaves each of the trans-Afghan projects largely as declarations of good intentions, while the India-Pakistan conflict further blocks the corridor of opportunities for full interregional integration.

The limited resources of Tashkent's own influence on these processes, and other factors make Uzbek initiatives so far only a good resource for the future transformation of interregional relations. A resolution of these conflicts will fundamentally reshape the geopolitical landscape of Central and South Asia. From this perspective, Uzbekistan's diplomatic efforts to bring the conflicting parties and other stakeholders to the same table in July and repeat 55 years later the success of the 1966 Tashkent Declaration, merit every respect and deserve support.

Why U.S. drone strikes are at an all-time low

From P3

agency in their review—another recommendation of the Finer memo—in an effort to forestall the kind of bureaucratic pushback that Biden confronted when he made his decision on Afghanistan. In his April 14 speech announcing the withdrawal, the president appeared to refer several times to all the backbiting he had to deal with from the Pentagon and intelligence community, which for years have insisted on waiting for the right "conditions" for a stand down in their counterterrorism campaigns.

"'Not now'—that's how we got here," Biden said, referring to the answer given by U.S. generals in years of briefings he sat in on as senator, vice president, and president, on when would be the right time to leave. "I'm not hearing any good answers to these questions," he said.

Bureaucratic resistance remains strong, especially in the Pentagon, intelligence community, and national security offices of the Justice Department. "The forever wars debates are about resources and power," the Biden official said. "These guys have been systematically pumped with resources since Sept. 11, and to lose the main argument for it means they have to respect budgets like everybody else. They are ludicrously overresourced and overstaffed, and the table is wildly disproportionate in favor of people pushing these counterterrorism concerns."

The Biden administration review encompasses what the Finer memo called a "vast network of counterterrorism agencies and offices," including the National Counterterrorism Center, the counterterrorism offices within the Department of State, the Department of Defense, various law enforcement and intelligence agencies, and a counterterrorism policy process led by the deputy national security advisor and homeland security advisor. And senior Biden appointees are gradually moving in—like Abizaid, who also signed off on the Finer memo, and who was recently confirmed as director of the National Counterterrorism Center.

Asked to comment, National Security Council spokesperson Emily Horne said nothing had been decided yet beyond Biden's interim national security strategy announced in early March, which stated simply: "The United States should not, and will not, engage in 'forever wars' that have cost thousands of lives and trillions of dollars." Horne said Sullivan and the National Security Council are engaged in "a thorough interagency review" of counterterrorism policies and "it would be premature to anticipate specific recommendations."

It's clear that the number of Islamist terrorist threats to the United States has dropped considerably, facilitating the stand-down in drone strikes and raising questions about whether al Qaeda and its offshoots represent a significant a strategic threat any longer. Though terrorist activity is creeping back in places like West Africa and Syria, the main targets appear to be regional and local forces, not the United States. An April report by the Center for Strategic and International Studies found that the proportion of domestic attacks and plots inspired by a Salafi-jihadist ideology fell to 5 percent in 2020—a sharp decline compared to recent years.

Biden is also determined to avoid the frustration he saw his former boss, Obama, go through. Obama, too, made speech after speech decrying "endless war" and trying to get off what he called "a perpetual war footing." Yet even as he spent his presidency trying to reduce America's fight against international terrorism to something manageable, al Qaeda spawned new affiliates, and the chaos of Iraq and Syria gave birth to the Islamic State. Obama ended up vastly increasing the number of drone strikes and giving up his plans to close Guantánamo. According to the United Kingdom-based Bureau of Investigative Journalism, Obama launched a total of 563 strikes, mostly by drones, targeting Pakistan, Somalia, and Yemen, compared to 57 strikes under President George W. Bush.

Since then, however, the Islamic State and other Islamist threats have been significantly degraded, and those that remain have turned their attention elsewhere for the moment. In addition, "there was a lack of commitment by Obama himself," the Biden official said.

Still, Biden is deferring a key element of his efforts to end the forever wars to Capitol Hill: repealing the 2001 Authorization for Use of Military Force (AUMF), which has justified broader counterterrorist military campaigns since 9/11. Biden wants it replaced it with a new AUMF that prescribes "a narrow and specific framework that will ensure we can protect Americans from terrorist threats while ending the forever wars," Horne said.

To this point Congress has focused mainly on repealing the 2002 AUMF authorizing the Iraq War. On Tuesday, the House of Representatives also voted to repeal the 1991 AUMF that authorized the Gulf War in Iraq, as well as a long-antiquated 1957 resolution that opened the door to military action in the Middle East to protect against "armed aggression from any country controlled by international communism."

But the 2001 AUMF remains a sticking point.

"A drawdown in troops and drone use are almost irrelevant with the 2001 AUMF still in place," said Marc Garlasco, a former military intelligence official who works for PAX for Peace. "It, and it alone, is the true litmus test for this administration's desire to put the forever wars behind us. With the AUMF the U.S. can turn the spigot of war on again at their discretion."

Biden could well find himself confronting a new challenge if al Qaeda or its affiliates manage to regroup in Afghanistan after the U.S. withdrawal. According to former Ambassador to Afghanistan Ryan Crocker, under the new peace agreement, the Taliban "will be the dominant force." "They accepted two decades in the wilderness rather than give up al Qaeda," Crocker said. "It's not likely they're going to block al Qaeda now."

This article earlier appeared in foreign policy weblog.

Afghan Advertisement

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ANNOUNCEMENT FOR BIDDING

Procurement Entities	NPA on behalf of Kabul Municipality (KM), Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.
Funded By	World Bank
Item Description / Ref No.	Upgrading of Mandawi Kabul RFB No.: NPA/KM/1400/W-3294/NCB
Deadline for submission Bids	**4 August, 2021 at 10:00 Hours** (Local Time). The public opening of Bids received will be held immediately after the deadline.
Address for Bid submission	Attention: **Saboor Safi** BFS Manager	Bidding Facilitation Secretariat Deputy Operation & Resources Administrative Office of the President, Pashtoonistan Watt, Kabul, Afghanistan Office Address: National Procurement Authority (NPA) Administrative Office of the President (AOP), Pashtunestan Wat, Kabul, Afghanistan	Kabul Afghanistan. Office PH NO: +93 (0)202926290	+ (93) 797609999 *Electronic mail address: saboor.safi@npa.gov.af* *Copied to: Email: Mirwais.rahim@npa.gov.af*
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