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Editorial

Retaking lost territories, a must

Nowadays, once again murmurs are heard on resumption of peace talks between the Afghan government and Taliban. The US Special Representative for Afghanistan Peace process Zalmay Khalilzad has resumed his regional visits and arrived in Qatar as he has said that was trying to end the long suffering of Afghans. Khalilzad had met the government negotiating delegation in Doha as well.

Addressing a press conference, the other day, former president Hamid Karzai said that he was optimistic about the peace process in the country. According to Karzai, peace talks would be resumed soon, however flames of war can be seen in every corner of the country and Taliban have occupied further areas and are trying to take the power through violence and with the support of other terror networks.

In previous rounds of talks, Taliban shown no sincerity and failed to create this believe that they are in favor of peace and ending of war. Upon troops withdrawal from Afghanistan, Taliban increased their concentration on expansion of geography under their control and occupation of more villages and districts.

They even have attacked provincial capitals of Badghis, Ghazni, Takhar and Baghlan. Comparing to the last two or three months, Taliban have occupied more geography and this issue has given a false believe to Taliban that as if they can manage to take over the whole power in Afghanistan through war and resorting to violence.

Therefore, Taliban might again not enter real and constructive negotiations and would waste the time with offering impractical conditions, which would only create a new deadlock in the process. If Taliban somehow show readiness for any constructive negotiation, still it won't be on the interest of Afghan people and government, since Taliban's violence expanded to across the country.

Meanwhile, Taliban have occupied more districts and extended geography under their control and in such a circumstance, if the talks produce result, ceasefire and subsequently sharing of power will be discussed. If ceasefire is agreed, Afghan forces cannot operate in areas that have recently been out of government control.

During discussion on power sharing, Taliban would attempt to achieve maximum concessions. They would put the areas under their control on the talks table and would request privileges accordingly. Therefore, the Afghan government should not allow such a scenario be implemented.

Prior to beginning of every talk with Taliban, the government should recapture the occupied areas and push back the Taliban militants from districts, villages, ports and strategic points and expand geography under their control. ANDSF should not procrastinate in retaking of the Taliban occupied areas even a moment, as Taliban sparing no efforts to also take control of more territory and add to the miseries of Afghan masses.

The situation in the battlefields directly impacts the talks table, therefore, the government is required to take over initiative in the battlefields. Prior to beginning of peace talks, they are needed to liberate the occupied areas and expand geography under its control. Meanwhile it's of immense important for the Afghan people to support their forces and help protect the system and the achievements made in the last twenty years.

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Russia opposes possible US base in Central Asia



Russia has warned of possible US military base in Central Asian countries following full troop withdrawal from Afghanistan.

Russia stated its opposition Tuesday to a possible plan by the United States to deploy its troops in Central Asia countries, once it pulls out its troops from Afghanistan on August 31, which will also mark the end of six decades of military engagement in Afghanistan.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said that the presence of US and NATO forces in Afghanistan in the past decades did not result in a victory for the US in Afghanistan and questioned what the US wants to achieve by deploying troops outside.

"Separate from the collective security treaty, there are some indications that the Pentagon officials are trying to transfer their resources along its neighboring regions of Afghanistan in order to attack Afghanistan if needed," said the Russian Foreign Minister.

What will be the result of presence of foreign troops outside Afghanistan?"

A spokeswoman to Afghanistan Ministry of Defense says international terrorism requires international effort to fight it, therefore, cooperation of other countries with Afghanistan will cover power threat to other countries.

Meanwhile, former US ambassador to Kabul and donor of US facility for diplomatic Rafael Novak says establishment of a military base to support Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF) will be very useful and it will be very challenging to support the Afghan forces in case each base is not created in the region.

And did US troop withdrawal from Afghanistan, the establishment of US possible military base in Central Asia can be effective for supporting the Afghan security forces in war as some based on analysis done in this regard.

The base is considered as joint cooperation force with central Asian countries for maintaining the security of northern parts of Afghanistan.

On the other hand, Russian officials and Central Asian countries have repeatedly warned of suspicious and secret activities of terrorist groups in the region. Russian officials particularly Iranian and warned of US "Khuzestan as one of section of threats, having thousands of fighters in Afghanistan."

Russia's increasing concern over presence of US-Khuzestan in the region has raised the concern.

It is said that one of the three countries as Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan said to be hosting the US possible military base. Both Kazakhstan and Tajikistan have the membership of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO).

Currently, the respective countries are hosting military bases of the Russia. Therefore, establishment of US possible military base in the respective countries will require more complicated conditions than the CSTO.

Yet, Uzbekistan has no membership of any security organizations in the region for now. Therefore, it seems the country has good and easy conditions to host the US military base.

The country had hosted a US military base in 2001 too.

Lafuma News

