

International Daily

WWW.thekabultimes.gov.af

● Farid Ahmad Farhang, Director of Govt. Dailies
Mob. 0704008080

● Editor-in-Chief: Hamidullah Arefi
Mob. 0700163568, 020-290.1766

● E-mail: Hamidullah_arefi@yahoo.com

● Deputy Editor-in-Chief: Fathulbari Akhtar
Mob. 0707005865

● Graphic designers: Editor Akhbar, Bakraah Shaibani and Ali Ahmad

● Distribution: 2500337 - 0785515151 - 07824900 - 076788447

● Printed at: Azadi printing press

● Address: 2nd Floor, Liberty Printing Press Building
2nd Microrayon, Kabul, Afghanistan

twitter.com/thekabultimes

www.facebook.com/thekabultimes

Editorial

Afghans fully capable to defend their country

The United States' military mission in Afghanistan will officially end on August 31, US President Joe Biden announced the other day, during an update on the troop withdrawal process. Biden stated a Taliban takeover of Afghanistan is "not inevitable" because the Afghan military not only outnumbers the Taliban but is much better equipped.

He also said the US intelligence community's recent warning that Afghanistan's government is on the verge of collapse is "wrong". Biden's remarks during a press briefing at the White House came after he and Vice President Kamala Harris met with national security leaders for an update on the troop withdrawal process.

With the resilience of the Taliban resurgence in mind, the US military commanders seem to have sketched precautionary measures by keeping some small number of troops and continue train and advise for the Afghan forces.

As per the Biden's saying, it is believed that the United States does not trust Taliban to honor their commitment to the agreement they signed in Doha, signs of which are emerging as the insurgents have substantially increased attacks on Afghan Government positions immediately after US announced complete withdrawal of forces from Afghanistan.

The Taliban have agreed to reduce violence and engage in peace talks with the Government of Afghanistan, though they did participate in the "peace talks" with Afghan Government, their motives to agree to terms that would lead the warring parties settle a peace deal is not in sight.

Despite the announcement by the US and the NATO to withdraw forces from Afghanistan, there are reports that both the US and the UK will leave hundreds of armed personnel in Afghanistan to protect their embassies and diplomats – including development workers.

Meanwhile there are reports that US would open an office to coordinate finding and training of the Afghan forces in Qatar. Meanwhile the country seeking ways to also keep some small number of troops in the region to provide timely air support for the Afghan forces.

US, its allies and even the Afghan neighbors never want a return of enemies as according to them the group's mentality towards media, women and even new developments made in the country, isn't changed and the recent takeover of Taliban in some districts show that they are totally against public infrastructures, girl's education and operation of free media.

The recent escalation of violence has also proved that Taliban have never been committed to Doha agreement and only thinking about how to take the power and rule the country. However, they would never reach to such goal, as Afghan forces have already denied taking the control of the major cities across the country.

As per Biden's remarks, Afghan forces are capable enough to fight Taliban and other insurgents and make it difficult for the group and their foreign backers to takeover of the whole country. Meanwhile according to President Ghani, Afghan will never surrender and will now allow any terrorist groups to takeover of their destiny.

Therefore, the recent openings against Taliban showed that Afghans are tired of war and Taliban's bloodshed and insurgency, and they will sacrifice their lives, to provide a safe and democratic atmosphere for the next generations.

But what is really important, that the US and its allies consider Afghans' daily sacrifice in war on terror and continue their support for the Afghan forces and government, so that they build ongoing insurgency and deny any safe haven for terrorists, Afghans fully capable to defend their country, but what is really required is to have support of the international community.

Annual subscription fee of The Kabul Times

For government organizations and individuals 4000 Afs

For six months: 2000 Afs

For foreign organizations and diplomatic missions: 8000 Afs

For six months: 4000 Afs

For domestic commercial organizations: 6000 Afs

For six months: 3000 Afs

For students: 2000 Afs

For six months half price

Address: Second Microrayon, Azadi Printing Press Building, second floor.

Contact No: 0202301675-0700163568

Will Turkey take over security at Afghanistan's main airport?

By Sinem Kosoglu



It used to be 20 years ago. Military victory. Hikmet Çetin, Turkey's former deputy prime minister and NATO's former senior civilian representative for Afghanistan, said despite the Taliban's claims to have changed, there is no one to be trusted.

KABUL: As American military and intelligence officers quietly slip out of Afghanistan, the security environment in the coastal city is increasingly becoming more fragile, including for the Hamid Karzai International Airport in Kabul that serves as a gateway to the world.

Following the first bilateral talks with US President Joe Biden during a NATO leaders' summit early June, Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan announced Turkish troops could continue to stay at Kabul airport to guard it and assist NATO's withdrawal.

That may happen on the condition that Turkey, a NATO member, should gain the necessary diplomatic, financial, and logistical support from the United States.

Flagrant, which took part in the airport mission as a NATO member, and Pakistan could also be involved.

American and Turkish defense officials are still negotiating the matter, and Turkey's public opinion is divided. There is a concern on whether Turkish troops would stay as part of another NATO mission, or on their own such as Ankara's military deployments to Libya, Syria, and Iraq.

Erdogan's announcement came with Turkey's NATO membership being questioned, not only among its Western allies but also inside the country. Turkey's relations with the West have been strained because of its purchase of Russia's S-400 missile defense system.

The acquisition was slammed because the business is not compatible with NATO systems. Also, selling relations are Ankara's military presence in Libya, Syria, and Iraq, and its alleged gas exportation activities in the Eastern Mediterranean and Caspian Sea.

Ankara believes it was threatened by its allies when they withdrew their air defense systems from the Syrian border, despite Turkey perceiving a direct threat from the outlawed Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) and the Syrian Kurdish armed group, the People's Protection Units (YPG), which Turkey says is an offshoot of the PKK.

Ankara's purchase of the multi-billion-dollar S-400, regional geopolitical challenges, and the growing oppositional challenges from its NATO ally, United States, are causing much controversy.

Through Sanctions Act, or CAATSA, and foreign government's refusal to fund India in the purchase of American weapons.

"A great Islamic country"

Turkey has more than 500 troops in Afghanistan as part of a noncombat NATO mission. The soldiers have overseas training, Afghan security forces, and some still serve as the Hamid Karzai International Airport in the capital.

As NATO's only Muslim member, Turkey's noncombat troops have maintained a close relationship with all ethnic groups, including the Taliban, the Islamist movement and military organizations spread across Afghanistan.

However, the Taliban – as it continues to seize territory – has rejected Ankara's proposal to assist and the Kabul airport is not under US-led NATO forces' control.

Turkey was part of NATO forces in the past 20 years so as such, they should withdraw from Afghanistan on the basis of the agreement we signed with the US on February 29, 2020," Taliban spokesman Suhail Shahrani said in June.

Otherwise, Turkey is a great Islamic country, Afghanistan has had historical relations with it. We hope to have close and good relations with them as a new Islamic government is established in the country in future. In addition, the combat-ready half of the 400 soldiers in Afghanistan, however, a Taliban delegation in Russia on Friday claimed 85 percent of Afghan territory was under the group's control.

Analysts suggest Turkey cannot step in Afghanistan unless the Taliban agrees to it. In the Turkish capital, the general perception is the Taliban is an undeniable reality in Afghanistan. Officials say the group has transformed its battlefield policies and is not what it used to be 20 years ago.

Hikmet Çetin, Turkey's former deputy prime minister and NATO's former senior civilian representative for Afghanistan, said despite the Taliban's claims to have changed, there is no one to be trusted.

However, he is one of those who believe it is Turkey's historical and cultural responsibility to stay and assist the Afghan people after the NATO withdrawal, as long as Ankara has support from the West – along with the Taliban's approval.

"While Taliban's political wing is in favor of reconciliation, the military wing is chasing a military victory. They want to reconquer. Otherwise, nothing will have changed from the last 19 years," Çetin told Al Jazeera.

He highlighted that Afghanistan needs support for any government in Kabul will require international recognition. It is still unclear whether foreign ministers would stay in a country ruled by hardliners, but a functioning airport is what everyone needs in Kabul, he noted.

International relations professor Moust Haki Çetin said Turkey and the Taliban would somehow agree as "there is no impossible in diplomacy."

He argued that Turkey and the US signed a new page in relations during the recent NATO leaders summit. The US is a superpower, Turkey is not. In its "real interests, Turkey will stay."

Çetin outlined that Turkish troops have a positive image in the country, and they have stayed within the scope of the law and never had any direct conflict with the Taliban.

"Take an active role"

Given its economic fragility and strained relations with the West, Erdogan wants to ensure the necessary support is provided for his military by the United States to stay in Afghanistan, observers say.

"Member states should uphold their founding principles and strengthen the alliance," Erdogan said at a press conference in Brussels last month.

