

Research paper

Forum: Security Council

Issue: Taking steps towards easing the tensions with Taliban government in Afghanistan

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Background:

During the Cold War, both the US and the Soviet Union sought to gain footholds in Afghanistan, first through infrastructure investments and then military intervention. Once they withdrew in the late 1980s, the country entered a civil war — a backdrop to the rise of the Taliban. The Taliban movement emerged after the withdrawal of the United States from the region and during the anarchy that followed the collapse of the Afghan central government in 1992. In 1996, they took Kabul and overthrew the government. By 1998, the Taliban regime controlled 90% of Afghanistan. The international community treated Afghanistan under the Taliban as a pariah state because of human rights violations, still they didn't intervene until after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. Osama bin Laden, who, with his al-Qaeda network, orchestrated the attacks that killed almost 3,000 people in the US, had found a safe harbor in Afghanistan. When the Taliban refused to hand bin Laden over, the US attacked Afghanistan and eventually toppled the Islamist government. In 2018, the US began directly negotiating a peace treaty with the Taliban, without involving the elected Afghan government. Intra-Afghan peace talks between the government and the Taliban began in September 2020, but soon stalled. US President Joe Biden announced in April 2021 that US and NATO troops would be withdrawn by September 11 of the same year.

Current State of Afghanistan:

The Taliban have seized power in Afghanistan two weeks before the U.S. was set to complete its troop withdrawal after a costly two-decade war.. Countries are evacuating their troops, civilians and refugees from Afghanistan. The speed of the Afghan government's collapse threatens a mass exodus of refugees from Afghanistan and has exacerbated an already dire humanitarian crisis.

Major Countries and Organizations Involved:

United States

The United States ended their war in Afghanistan with the withdrawal of their troops. US has not recognized the new Taliban government. The Biden administration is evacuating the remaining Americans and refugees from Afghanistan.

China

China and Afghanistan share a border. Beijing welcomed the Taliban's statements about wanting "to grow sound relations with China." The militant group also said it looked forward to China's participation in the reconstruction and development of Afghanistan. China could become a crucial supporter of Taliban-led Afghanistan, building Beijing's influence in South and Central Asia as long as the regime in Kabul does not export extremism.

Pakistan

Pakistan shares a border with Afghanistan. Pakistan has supported the Taliban before the beginning of the war in 2001, when Pakistan declared themselves US allies. The Taliban takeover in Afghanistan has delivered a strategic victory to Pakistan, establishing a friendly government in Kabul for the first time in nearly 20 years. For nearly two decades, Pakistan provided safe havens to Taliban leaders and medical facilities for wounded fighters.

Russia

Russia has done a number of diplomatic efforts to take advantage of the recent events. Russian embassy continued their work while Western countries evacuated. Moscow designated the Taliban as a terrorist organization and outlawed it within Russia. Still, the Russian government was working on establishing relations with the Taliban amid anticipations of Taliban's return to power. Russian military has their military alliance in Afghanistan's neighboring countries. Russia has garnered international recognition as the guardian of the Central Asian nations.

Qatar

Qatar allowed the Afghan Taliban to set up a diplomatic and political office inside the country. It has been a center point of international meetings between the Taliban, US, European governments and UN. Qatar does not consider recognition of Taliban government their priority. The country also agreed to provide aid to the Afghanistan.

Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia has recognized the Taliban government in the late nineties. Despite that, Saudi Arabia is not likely to show any support to the new government. Saudi Arabia is also prioritizing their alliance with US, which shows that the country will not express their support towards Islamist extremists.

Iran

Iran shares a border with Afghanistan. Iran had conflicts with Afghan Taliban in the past, but the country has made several efforts over the recent years to keep contacts with the Taliban and maintain relations. Iran welcomed the new Taliban government after the US withdrawal.

UN

UN did not recognize the Taliban government as the legitimate government of Afghanistan. In early 2000s UN drew up sanctions against officials and leaders of Taliban. In 2010 the sanctions have been lifted. UN SC issued resolutions regarding the provision of humanitarian aid and access for the UN to ensure that humanitarian assistance reaches all those

in need. UN is determined to promote peace and stability in Afghanistan and decided to remain seized of the matter.

Al-Qaeda

In late nineties, Osama bin Laden was able to forge an alliance with the Taliban. Mullah Omar refused to hand over bin Laden after 9/11 attacks, which led to the invasion of Afghanistan in 2001 and beginning of war. After the 2020 peace deal with the US, the Taliban agreed not to allow Al-Qaeda to operate in areas under their control. They reiterated this vow after taking over Kabul in August 2021, but despite that, there was no public statement that they rejected Al-Qaeda either.

Previous Resolution Attempts:

- In 1988, under negotiations chaired by the UN Secretary-General, the Soviet Union agreed to withdraw its troops from Afghanistan. However, the issue of Afghanistan's future political and social order remained open. After the Soviet troop withdrawal, the UN General Assembly authorized the Secretary-General to extend his good offices role to include helping Afghanistan to develop its own broad-based government.
- On 18 September 2001, Former US president George Bush signed into law a joint resolution authorizing the use of force against those responsible for the 9/11 attack.
- Resolution 1378 (2001) November 14, the UN Security Council passed a resolution, calling for UN to establish a transitional administration and inviting member states to send peacekeeping forces to promote stability and aid delivery.
- Resolution 1383 (2001) and Resolution 1386 (2001) which are important regarding the Bonn Agreement and ISAF.
- Resolution 2593 (2021) adopted by Security Council on 30 August, which stated that the SC reaffirms its sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and unity of Afghanistan. Demands the Afghan territory not to be used as a threat and reminds of importance of combating terrorism in Afghanistan. Provision of humanitarian aid and calls for importance of human rights.

