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Preface

The Chabahar port was officially inaugurated by the Afghan and Indian officials through a video call, and the first cargo of Indian aids moved to the port last week. Officials of both countries termed trade through this port as important and said that it was a major achievement in areas of economy for both countries. The Afghan Chief Executive said that this port would facilitate transit not only for Afghanistan but also the countries in the Central Asia.

The agreement to expand the Chabahar port was signed between Afghanistan, India, and Iran last year. This port is particularly important for Afghanistan as for this country it is an alternative way for the transit way through Pakistan. The impacts of the beginning of trade and transit through this port on transiting trade and then on politics in the region is an issue that is analyzed in the first part of the Weekly Analysis of the Center for Strategic and Regional Studies (CSRS).

In the second part of the analysis, you would read about the role of the UN in the Afghan issue and particularly in the maintenance of peace in this country. Last week head of the UN Security Council's sanctions committee visited Kabul and met the Afghan officials. In the meeting between him and the Afghan Chief Executive, the Afghan Chief Executive asked him to include the name of the Taliban leader in the sanction list of the UN. However, the Afghan President talked with him about the peace process with the Taliban. The role of the UN in Afghanistan, particularly in areas of peace, is analyzed in the second part of the analysis.

The Chabahar port and its impacts on the regional transit trade



India started exporting wheat to Afghanistan through Iran last week, and on 29 Oct 2017 the Afghan and Indian Ministers of Foreign Affairs officially inaugurated trade through this port. This is the first time that India sends food stuff through Iran instead of Pakistan. Before this Pakistan had allowed India to do so only in case of emergencies.

India's food aids are not as important as the transition of these aids through Chabahar port, which has evident importance from the trade, economy and a strategic point of view. For instance, according to the Indian Minister of External Affairs Sushma Suwaraj, it will develop trade in the region and will connect the region in areas of economy, politics, culture, technology, and services.

The phases of the Chabahar port agreement, the need for this port, and the impacts of the commenced trade through this port on the region are issues that are analyzed here.

The Chabahar port agreement

The Chabahar port is located in the South-east province of Iran, Balochistan. Based on its strategic geography, this port is located at the bank of Oman Gulf, close to the Hermez strategic strait, and is part of the Indian Ocean. This port has more than 14 thousand hectares of area and major ships can use it.

In 2003, when the BJP was in power in India, the agreement of this port was signed with the Iranian government. The Afghan government was also part of the agreement; however, due to international sanctions on Iran, the agreement to expand this port was delayed.

Despite the delay in the expansion of this port, India have spent about \$135m to construct the Zaranj-Delaram Street, which connects Afghanistan's Nimroz province to the Chabahar port. The construction of this street was completed in 2009. On the other hand, Iran has also invested \$340m in the Chabahar trade zone.

Currently, this port has the capacity to load and unload 2.5 million tons annually and the Iranian government is trying to increase its capacity to 12.5 million tons every year. Moreover, Iran has started the construction of streets and railways between this port and the Afghan border, and the other countries in the region are also trying to invest in this port.

The recent trilateral agreement on this port was drafted by the Iranian-India-Afghan technical-economic groups and legal experts and was signed on 23 May 2016 in Iran by the leaders of the three countries.

The need for the Chabahar port

In the Chabahar port there are three groups of countries that have, somehow, rivalry or issues with Pakistan. One of the most important of these countries is Afghanistan that relied on Pakistan for its trade with the world since the past several decades. Pakistan has always used this reliance of Afghanistan as a political tool to pressurize this country and whenever the Kabul-Islamabad relations are deteriorated, it had adverse impacts on transit through Pakistan.

On the other hand, India and Pakistan have a traditional rivalry and enmity that is why Pakistan always try to keep Afghanistan and India apart because Pakistan want to avoid an Afghanistan-India coalition over the unsettled Durand-Line issue.

Although Iran's rivalry with Pakistan is not to the extent of that of India and Afghanistan, due to economic profitability, Tehran wants Afghanistan's trade with India and the world to be through Iran's Chabahar port.

The failure of APTTAA agreement

APTTA is a transit-trade agreement between Pakistan and Afghanistan. After a longtime negotiations, Afghanistan and Pakistan signed the 2010 APTTA agreement to replace the 1965 ATA agreement. Based on this agreement, Pakistan allowed Afghanistan to use the Pakistani Qasem and Gwadar ports for transition purposes. Moreover, the Afghan traders were allowed to transport their goods until the Waga port in Lahore and get connected with India in areas of trade. Nevertheless, the Afghan traders were not allowed to import goods from India through the Waga port.

On the other hand, through Afghanistan, Pakistan found a way to trade with Central Asia and Iran. This agreement continued until 2015, and then Afghanistan demanded full allowance for trade with India if the agreement was to be extended.

However, since 2010, the Afghan government have made efforts to increase its transit ways (the Afghan government held some steps to construct the Lapis Lazuli and Chabahar ports) so that it could prevent Pakistan from using the transit way as a tool of political pressure. After the formation of the National Unity Government, these efforts increased and Afghanistan, India, and Iran signed the agreement of Chabahar port in order to bypass Pakistan.

The Chabahar port and its impact on regional politics

Trade between Iran, India, and Afghanistan through Chabahar port could have impacts in the following aspects:

First, Iran's Chabahar port will substitute Pakistan's Karachi, Qasem and Guader ports in the Afghan trade.

Second, trade through Chabahar port can also give a means of pressure at the hand of Afghanistan to pressurize Pakistan saying that if Pakistan wants to have trade with the Central Asia through Afghanistan, it has to allow Afghanistan to trade with India through Pakistan.

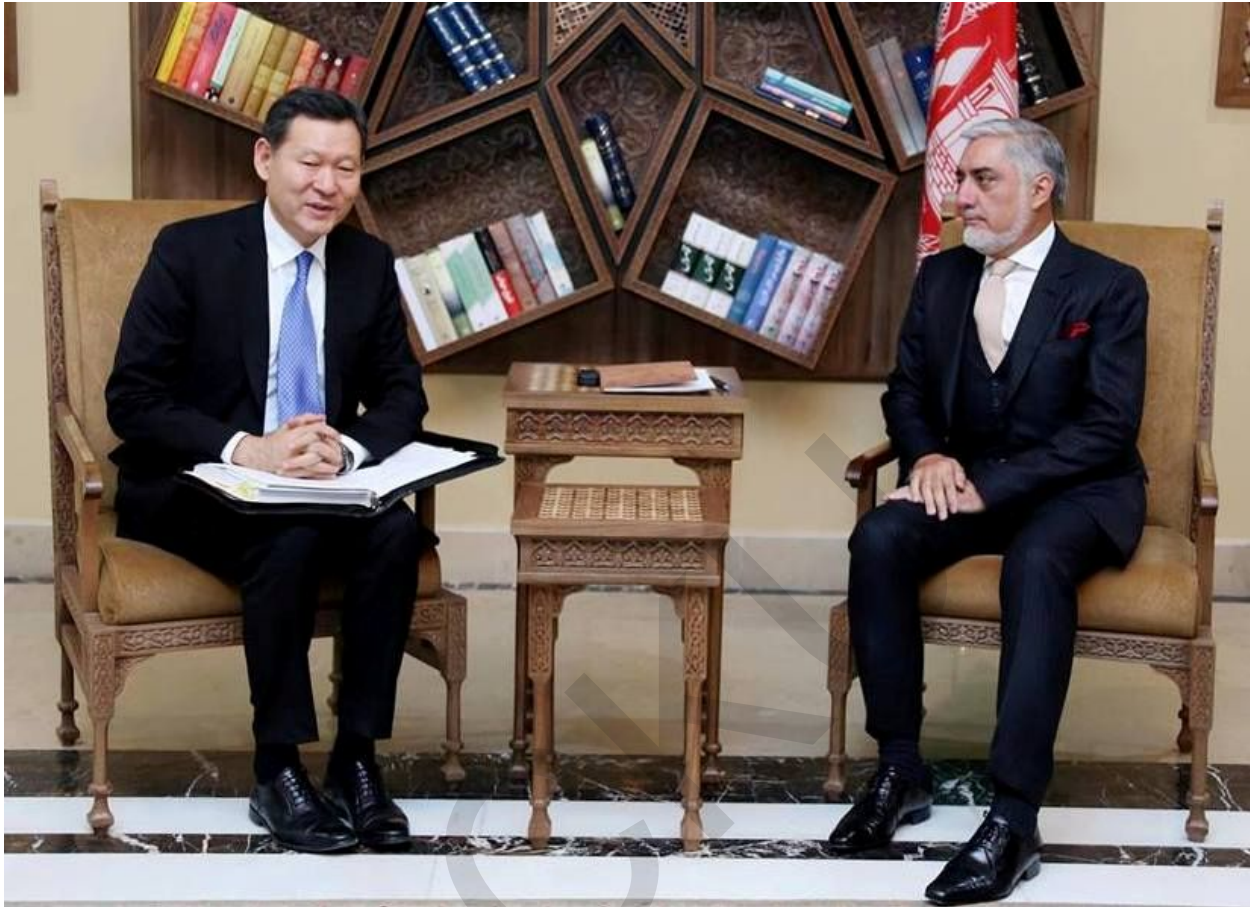
Third, since the Lapis Lazuli road is not opened yet, the closest way of trade with Europe for Afghanistan is also the Chabahar port.

Fourth, through the Chabahar port, India can expand its role in the Central Asia, something that India could never do through the transit ports in Pakistan.

Fifth, the Chabahar port deal will also increase the regional economic solidarity and trade, something that has been affected by the negative trade policies of Pakistan (negative security policy).

Sixth, the transition of the recent cargo of aids through this port will also decrease the criticisms on this port. This will decrease the obstacles on the way of trade through the Chabahar port.

The UN and the peace process in Afghanistan



Kairat Umarov, head of the sanctions committee of the Security Council of the UN and his fellow delegation visited Kabul on 29 Oct 2017 and discussed the issue of peace and security in his meetings with the Afghan President, Chief Executive and other government officials.

According to the Deputy Spokesperson of the Afghan President, in the meeting between the Afghan President and Umarov, the Afghan President reiterated on the role of the UN to maintain peace in Afghanistan and said that the Afghan government had always kept the doors for negotiations with the Taliban open and that the peace with the Taliban was feasible through intra-Afghan talks. Nevertheless, in his meeting with Umarov, the Afghan Chief Executive has demanded the inclusion of the name of head of the Taliban Mawlawi Hebatullah Akhundzada and other members of the group in the sanction list of the UN Security Council.

The two different demands, one for peace with the Taliban and another for the inclusion of the names of Taliban leaders in the UN blacklist, indicate the differences between the Afghan President and the Chief Executive.

Peace in Afghanistan is an issue that besides the Afghan government and people, many regional and international countries and organizations are striving to maintain. However, not only these efforts have not led to maintenance of peace in this country but has even further deteriorated the situation.

Here we have analyzed the role of the UN in the Afghan issue, the UN blacklist, and the Afghan government's call for the inclusion of the names of the Taliban leaders in the UN sanctions list.

Afghanistan and the UN

In 1945, after the end of the World War II, the United Nations (UN) was established and substituted the League of Nations (LN). This international organization that was first formed by 51 countries of the world had 193 member countries in 2006. Almost all of the countries that are recognized in international levels are members of the UN. Taiwan and Vatican are the only two countries that are not members of the UN.¹

Afghanistan gained the membership of the UN in 9 November 1946 and Mohammad Kabir Lodin was the first Afghan permanent representative in the UN. After him, Abdul Majid Aziz, Abdurrahman Pazhwak, Besmellah Sahak, Farid Zarif, Shah Mohammad Dost, Nor Ahmad, Khudaidad Basharmal, Rawan Farhadi, Zaher Tanin and Mahmood Saiqal were the Afghan representatives in the UN from 1950 until now.²

Until the occupation of Afghanistan by the Soviet Union in 1979, the UN did not have tangible presence in Afghanistan. However, after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, issuing resolutions, the UN protested against it and after seeing the unfavorable consequences of the invasion, the various institutions of the UN

¹ United nation, History of the United Nation, see it online:

<http://www.un.org/en/sections/history/history-united-nations/>

² Permanent Mission of Afghanistan to the United in New York: "Former Permanent Representatives":

<http://afghanistan-un.org/whos-who/former-permanent-representatives/>

started their activities in Afghanistan. The Geneva Accords, signed in 1988, was also a result of the efforts of the UN.

After the withdrawal of the Soviet forces from Afghanistan, the UN made efforts to find a political solution for the war in Afghanistan. In 1991, the UN proposed a plan based on which Dr. Najibullah had to step down from power and transfer political power to an independent administration and this administration had to pave the way for holding the elections and drafting the Afghan constitution. Nonetheless, with the collapse of Dr. Najibullah's government this plan failed.³

During the civil war in Afghanistan, once again, the UN tried to bring the combating factions and their leaders around the negotiation table. Although these parties sat around the tables for several times, they failed to implement their agreements. During the Taliban regime, the UN tried to make peace between the Taliban and the representatives of the Northern Coalition. Within this period, the UN also formed the group of (Six +Two) to resolve the Afghan issue, but the consecutive meetings of this group did not have any tangible achievements for Afghanistan.

With the collapse of the Taliban regime, this organization started its activities in Afghanistan and committed itself for various missions such as the creation of the administrative system; the convention of Loya Jirga (the Afghan National Assembly defined in the Afghan constitution); maintenance of peace, order, and security; reconstruction; attraction of financial aids; and holding elections. Currently, about 20 institutions of the UN are active in various areas in Afghanistan.

The UN sanction-list

The UN Security Council is one of the pillars of the UN and based on the Article-24 of the UN Charter, it is the primary responsible entity to maintain international peace and security. Based on the UN Charter, the Security Council must act on behalf of the members of the UN to serve this purpose.⁴

³ Read more here:

<http://8am.af/1395/08/04/united-nations-and-failed-peace-efforts>

⁴ Read the complete Charter of the UN here:

<http://www.aihrc.org.af/home/document/921>

Based on the seventh Chapter of the UN Charter, the Security Council can undertake executive measures to maintain and restore international peace and security. These measures include actions from economic sanctions to military option.

The sanction list of the UN, also called “blacklist”, is a means to pressurize particular countries, institutions, and individuals to persuade them to follow the objectives defined by the Security Council without the use of force. A person, country, or institution’s name can be added to this list with the demand of a member of the UN and after the approval of the Security Council. All the member countries of the UN are obliged to implement these sanctions.

These sanctions include freezing assets, imposing travel bans, and banning the direct or indirect sales of weaponry to the individuals and groups that are the subject of these sanctions. These sanctions are applicable until they are lifted.

The sanctions-list of the UN include two parts: the first include the names of individuals and, currently, the names of 642 individuals are included in this list and the second consists of the names of institutions and groups and until now 368 institutions and groups are added to this list⁵.

The demand to include the Taliban Leader in the blacklist

The 1267 (1999) and 1988 (2011) committees of the Security Council commonly work on imposing sanctions on the individuals that are involved in “terrorist” activities in Afghanistan. The first committee was established to monitor the sanctions on Al-Qaeda and “IS” and the second committee was formed to oversee sanctions on the Taliban. The 15 members of the Security Council are present in both committees.

Currently, the sanctions list of 1988 committee consists the names of 170 individuals and five institution (Haqqani Network, Two cashier offices and two companies). Most of these individuals are the leaders and some active members of the Taliban. On the other hand, recently, 27 members of the Taliban, Haqqani Network and Hizb-e-Islami were removed from this list.

⁵ Read more here:

<http://www.bbc.com/persian/afghanistan-39768751>

The Afghan President had demanded the inclusion of the name of Mullah Hebattullah in the UN sanction list about one and a half year ago, now, while he says that peace is an intra-Afghan process, he meets head of the UN sanction committee and talks about how to make peace with the Taliban, something that is a clear contradiction in his stances regarding the peace process.

On the other hand, the National Unity Government seeks peace through imposing sanctions and increasing pressures on the armed oppositions of the government. The spokesperson of the Chief Executive has said that “with the inclusion of the names of the leaders of the Taliban the way for peace will be paved.”⁶ The policy of peace through war is a failed policy that is why the Afghan High Peace Council have opposed the position of the Chief Executive.

Overall, the maintenance of peace in Afghanistan requires realistic efforts. Imposing sanctions and many other types of pressures in the past one and a half decade have not only failed to defeat the Taliban and maintain peace and stability in Afghanistan but also have intensified the war in the country. As after the announcement of the new US strategy towards South Asia and Afghanistan, in which the suppression of the Taliban and the continuation of the war have been reiterated upon, the attacks by the Taliban has increased and the current war in Afghanistan continues.

Conclusion

Although the UN has provided large quantities of aids for Afghanistan, particularly after 2001, the UN does not have a bright background in areas of peace in Afghanistan. Moreover, the Taliban have always questioned the impartiality of this organization.

In addition, despite the assistances of the UN, the Afghan government does not have political stability and has been the victim of internal differences since its formation and recently these differences have reached their heights.

⁶ Radio Azadi, «عبدالله عبدالله: هبت الله و اعضای دیگر طالبان شامل لیست تعزیرات ملل متحد شوند» [Abdullah: Hebattullah and other Taliban members must be included in the UN black list.], 8 Aqrab 1396: <https://da.azadiradio.com/a/28823298.html>

In the past 16 years, the Afghan government has failed to undertake an efficient policy to make peace with the Taliban. Currently, although the Afghan government says the peace with the Taliban to be its priority and reiterates that the doors for peace are open, it also asks for imposing sanctions on the Taliban, something that can never help the peace process.

The End

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Contact Us:

Email: info@csrskabul.com - csrskabul@gmail.com

Website: www.csrskabul.com - www.csrskabul.net

Office: (+93) 784089590

Contact with Officials:

Dr. AbdulBaqi Amin, General Director of CSRS: (+93) 789316120 abdulbaqi123@hotmail.com

Hekmatullah Zaland, Senior Manager: (+93) 775454048 hekmat.zaland@gmail.com

Note: Please let us know your feedback and suggestions for the improvement of Weekly analysis.

