

## What Direction will Afghanistan's Geopolitical Fortune and the Region's Resources Lead to?!

(Translated)

### News:

The US House Committee on Armed Services has marked up an Act to restrict Donald Trump's planned withdrawal of 4,000 US troops from Afghanistan by the end of the presidential elections. Liz Cheney, a member of the House Republican leadership, said that the US troop's withdrawal from Afghanistan must not undermine the fight against 'terrorism' in Afghanistan. She also added that, "It's a sensitive plan that focuses on what's really important – what we need to do to strengthen our security and what needs to be done in Afghanistan. We have to ensure that leaving Afghanistan will not increase the risk for the formation of new terrorist safe havens inside Afghanistan. We must also make sure that we can carry out counter terrorism missions out there." (Ref: ToloNews)

### Comment:

The US has apparently reduced its troops' numbers from 13,000 to 8,600 in Afghanistan after signing the peace agreement with the Taliban, and within 14 months of signing the agreement, the US is expected to withdraw its remaining forces following the Taliban's full pledge to the agreement. Recent reports indicate that Pentagon is seeking to finalize a plan to withdraw about 4,000 more troops from Afghanistan, which, for the time being, is being restricted by the US House of Representatives.

It is unfortunate to declare that scenarios such as 'war and peace', 'complete and/or partial' withdrawal of US forces, 'economic opportunities' in Afghanistan and the region are being apparently linked to the US political games and Trump's election campaigns by the media outlets. Following the Coronavirus pandemic, the US is in the throes of a severe global crises: record-high unemployment rate, disastrous economic recession, blatant social crisis, and many other precarious crises. Besides, Donald Trump has barely proven to the world that his team is unable to manage the affairs in the midst of crises. Therefore, there seems to be no way out for Trump but to take advantage of the situation in Afghanistan. That's why he intends to manipulate the Afghan peace talks for his own benefit to win the US public opinion in the election games.

However, the US is a government led not by individuals but by various institutions. These institutions usually have no dispute over national interests of the US and domestic institutions, defined on the US foreign policy; but occasionally, one could apparently see that these institutions turn against each other on the abovementioned issues. Therefore, what Donald Trump is currently trying to manage with Zalmay Khalilzad, the US envoy for peace in Afghanistan, may be seriously challenged by some institutions during the process and/or after the process is over.

That's why Trump is striving a lot to settle the Afghan peace process, proving himself as the only successful winner of the US elections in the eye of Americans. To achieve this goal, Khalilzad's recent trip to the region, discussing the "reduction in violence and timely release of the prisoners" seems to be a characteristically different trip than that of his previous ones as Adam Boehler, director of the International Development Finance Corporation was

accompanying him in Uzbekistan, Pakistan and Qatar. Prior to starting the trip, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Zalmay Khalilzad had a video conference with Central Asian Ministers of C5+1, conversing the probability of consolidation in Afghan peace talks which would unlock regional prosperity between these countries. Afterwards, Zalmay Khalilzad, in a series of tweets, commended the efforts of Central Asian countries to ensuring peace and stability in Afghanistan. “A Central Asia, made up of sovereign and independent states working together with Afghanistan bridging to South Asia is in the interest of the region and of the US,” he later tweeted.

Such messages could, on the one hand, be considered as a direct US intervention in Russia’s territorial stripes in Central Asia; and, on the other hand, would be an absolute signal to Central Asian countries to amplify relations with the US, taking no notice of China. If that is the case, then the Central Asian countries will get in the way of China’s giant project, ‘Belt and Road Initiative’.

Such strategy of the US in the region has made Afghanistan even a more important platform in order for the US to place major obstacles on the way of the so-called Chinese project in Pakistan, too. This policy appears to have been designed by the US and its allies to export more energy from Central Asia to South Asia, especially to India, to help India cause further tensions for China.

In fact, all of these US goals will be achieved only if Afghanistan relatively sees security and peace. Thus, the US has discussed the prospect of opportunities with the leadership of the Taliban’s political office in Qatar as well as the Qatari government’s investment in Afghanistan. An example of such measure could be obviously visible through Adam Boehler’s attendance on the recent round of Khalilzad’s trip. This policy could be seen as a measure to taking advantage of Afghanistan’s geopolitical position to curb the interests of China, Russia and Pakistan by giving India a superiority in helping out the US in this arena.

Undoubtedly, the US has realized that it will not win through war in Afghanistan which has also been repeatedly stated by high-ranking US military officials and diplomats. To sum up, in the current situation, the US is trying to alter its approach by means of exerting its cunning diplomacy, soft power and bridging economic opportunities in the region to seize the situation in its own favor. We must not forget that this policy clearly demonstrates that the US still continues to carry its enmity with Islam and Muslims. That’s why, there is an urgent need for Muslims in the region to stand up against all vicious agendas of the US, including China, Russia, and other countries, and to fight for the re-establishment of the Khilafah (Caliphate). Because it is the Caliphate and its fearless army only that will eradicate the states and the cunning occupations from the face of the earth, that have been hostile to Islamic Ummah. So, the Muslims would once again retain their own destiny, lands and resources.

**Written for the Central Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir by**

**Saifullah Mustanir**

**Director of the Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir in Wilayah Afghanistan**