

Afghanistan: Conflicts in the way of Peace Process

Muhammad TARIQ

Amir ZAMAN

Riaz AHMAD

Dr. Manzoor AHMAD

Dr Zahir SHAH

Muhammad TARIQ

Elementary & Secondary Education Department
Mardan, KP Pakistan
E-mail: tariqawkum252@gmail.com

Amir ZAMAN

Department of Education
Abdul Wali Khan University, Pakistan
E-mail: amirzaman69@yahoo.com

Riaz AHMAD

HEC PhD Approved Supervisor,
School of Public Policy and Administration,
Xi'an Jiaotong University, China
E-mail: drriaz@zju.edu.cn, drriaz@xjtu.edu.cn

Dr. Manzoor AHMAD

Chairman Department of Political Science,
Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan, KP Pakistan

Dr. Zahir SHAH

Department of Department of Political Science,
Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan, KP Pakistan

Conflict Studies Quarterly

Issue 33, October 2020, pp. 53-62

DOI: 10.24193/csq.33.4

Published First Online: 05 October /2020

Abstract: Afghanistan that remained the epicenter of terrorism and insurgency in the post 9/11 incident, suffered irreparable loss in both human and infrastructure, is now heading towards an era of peace and political stability. The signing of the peace agreement on February 29, 2020 by both the US government and the Taliban is a great development for strengthening democratization and power-sharing among the stakeholders in Afghanistan. However, certain hurdles stand in the way of peace and stability. This paper discusses some of the key areas such as the dilemma of Afghan presidential elections, Pakistan's controversial role, role of neighboring countries and the Indo-Afghan Nexus. Lacunae in the US-Taliban agreement to the exclusion of the Afghan government in the agreement and the threat of the ISIS are some of the other hurdles in bringing peace and stability in the country. Bargaining among the US and Taliban and the various stakeholders of Afghanistan is the only viable solution to the problem which provides the basis for theoretical framework.

Keywords: Peace, Hurdles, Afghanistan, Taliban, US.

Introduction

The US has been fighting the war against terrorism in Afghanistan for the last nineteen years. During this period, both Afghanistan and the United States have suffered huge number of casualties. The US did not fight the war alone but was assisted by the entire international community, under the nomenclature of International Assistance Security Force (ISAF), North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) forces and, after the drawdown of the US forces in the post-2014 scenario, under the name of Resolute Support Mission (RSM). Now, the US and its allied forces have decided to withdraw all their troops from Afghanistan within fourteen months as per the US-Taliban Agreement of February 29, 2020. There seem some inherent hurdles in the way of peace and political stability in Afghanistan. The US-Taliban deal followed by the intra-Afghan talks envisaged for the swap of prisoners which will prove to be a milestone in the peace process of Afghanistan. But till now, no progressive development has been made that can give a clear picture of the peace process. Though the US, the Afghan government and the Taliban seem to be sincere in their efforts in bringing peace and stability to the war-stricken country of Afghanistan but some forces put hindrance in the way of peace. No single actor can be blamed to be a hurdle in its way but all the stakeholders and some regional powers also have to grind their own axe.

Afghan Presidential Election Dilemma

The long-awaited Presidential elections in Afghanistan were held in September 2019. Due to some irregularities and blame game by the contesting candidates, the result could not be announced until February 18, 2020 (FARR, 2020). Ashraf Ghani got 50.64% of the votes while his rival candidate Abdullah Abdullah got 39.5% of the votes but no settlement reached between the two candidates in a period of five months. Consequently, in February 2020, both candidates took charge of the office of presidency individually despite efforts by Zalmay Khalilzad, US special Envoy (Ambassador) to Afghanistan, to resolve the dilemma. Both the candidates took charge of their offices in their palaces. In the absence of a clearly recognized president of Afghanistan, it is difficult for Taliban to sign any agreement or enter into any sort of negotiation (FARR, 2020). The deadlock between the two presidents over the office of presidency may cause harm to the process of peace and stability in Afghanistan. This may even create a sense of despair for the international community and regional actors in their diplomacy and official correspondence with Afghanistan.

However, on May 17, 2020, the two rivals agreed on power-sharing formula and signed an agreement to this effect (ABC, 2020). Earlier, the two presidents had taken oath in their respective offices but the growing need of time brought them together:

- a. It is an un-denying fact that both the candidates made claims to the office of presidency in the September election of 2019. The two were adamant to accept the result but circumstances compelled them for patch up.

- b. The threat by the Trump administration to reduce or pull back \$ US 1 billion already announced for Afghanistan.
- c. Afghanistan's facing threat of extremism on a large scale since the signing of the US-Taliban Agreement.
- d. The difficulty faced by the Taliban in holding intra-Afghan talks of the country.
- e. The pressure from the US government to reach a settlement for the future of Afghanistan so as to expedite the withdrawal of the US forces.
- f. The pressure from the US government to hold the intra-Afghan talks and make it a success.

These steps could not be agreed upon in the absence of consensus at the high echelon of the government. The patch up between the two presidential candidates was the *sine qua non* for bringing peace and stability in the country. This would be very fruitful in making the intra-Afghan talks successful and help resolve the issues confronted by the war-stricken Afghanistan. Much depends upon the future prospects of the intra-Afghan talks and US-Taliban agreement whether the US completely withdraw their forces or reside some forces in the form of Resolute Support Mission. It is also important whether both the Taliban and the Afghan government will fulfill their pledge of prisoners swap or not.

US-Taliban Talks

It is an agonizing fact that during the US-Taliban talks the government of Afghanistan was not made a party to the agreement which also creates a sense of mistrust over the Afghan government. At the commencement of the agreement the Afghan government should have been taken into confidence and would have been made a party to the contract. The Afghan government was neither a party to the negotiation nor a signatory though Khalilzad tried to keep Ashraf Ghani informed and take on board. As the talks progressed, the Afghan government showed its resentment over their exclusion from the talks while deciding the future destiny of their country. In fact, it was the Taliban that insisted on the exclusion of the Afghan government on the plea that it was not a legitimate government and a puppet of the United States (FARR, 2020).

The non-participation of the Afghan government has created a great hindrance in the way of future negotiations leading to the anger of Ashraf Ghani and other leading Afghan officials. As per the agreement, the Afghan government would release 5,000 Taliban in lieu of 1,000 civilians held by the Taliban. The most significant point is that the prisoners are held by the Afghan government and not by the US this puts a question mark on the legal position of the Afghan government, which is not a signatory to the agreement (FARR, 2020). At first, the Afghan government was reluctant over the release of the Taliban prisoners but by March 15, 2020 President Ashraf Ghani agreed to release 1,500 Taliban prisoners subject to the provision of undertaking to the effect that they would not return to fighting after their release (Thomas, 2020).

Now, since the patch up has been reached between the two presidential rivals, it is hoped that peace would shape the future destiny of Afghanistan. Regional powers, such as Russia, Iran, China and Pakistan welcome the patch up as this would expedite the withdrawal of the foreign troops from Afghanistan. They support the view that the release of prisoners held by both the parties would be in compliance with the Resolution 2513 (2020) of the UN Security Council. Special envoys on Afghanistan from Russia, Pakistan, Iran and China urged all parties to the conflict in Afghanistan, including the Taliban movement (outlawed in Russia), for paving the way for the negotiations, as per the joint statement circulated by the Russian Foreign Minister on May 18, 2020.

Despite the agreement, the role of Taliban has also been doubtful in coming to terms of with the law enforcement agencies. Afghan security forces suffered the bloodiest week so far during the last 19-year Afghan war whereby 291 members of the Afghan law enforcement agencies were killed and 550 others wounded in the multiple Taliban attacks last week. During the period of one week, Taliban conducted 442 attacks in 32 provinces of Afghanistan. The attacks besides killing 291 security personnel and wounding 550 security personnel also resulted in the death of 42 civilians, including women and children and wounding 105 civilians.

Pakistan's Controversial Role

According to the official of Pentagon, Michael Rubin, Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence is opposed to a strong government in Afghanistan either due to Indian paranoia or the Pashtun nationalists that put a challenge to the territorial integrity of Pakistan (Times, 2020). Rubin further added that, *"Being victimized at times by some terrorist groups does not exculpate Pakistan for how intertwined its intelligence and security services have become with the Taliban and its fellow travelers, such as al Qaeda. This, of course, is best symbolized by the fact that Pakistan was caught red-handed sheltering al Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden in Abbottabad,"* Times, 2020). Rubin wrote in a piece titled 'Force Pakistan to close Taliban's sanctuaries with a deadline' in The Washington Examiner. He is of the view that throughout Taliban's insurgency, the Taliban have had to take shelter in the safe havens in Pakistan across the border. A handful of Taliban negotiators reside in Qatar be it the Quetta Shura, the Peshawar Shura, the Northern Shura, and the Haqqani Network, all reside in Pakistan (Times, 2020). Afrasiab Khattak, former senator also agrees with the statement of the Rubin and tweets that *"it is the high time for Pakistan to give a cut-off date for the Taliban sanctuaries on its soil after the recent development in Afghanistan. Taliban, sitting in Pakistan, shoulders the responsibility for suicide bombing in Afghan cities killing civilians. How can Pakistan absolve itself?"* Taliban's activities of violence are bad for the peace and good working relationship of both the countries (Times, 2020).

It is correct that in the past the Taliban had sanctuaries across the Pak-Afghan porous border but those sanctuaries have now been destroyed by the efforts and various

military operations of the Pakistani government (Tariq, 2018a). Of all the operations conducted against the terrorists, Operation Zarb-e-Aza was the most successful one in eradicating terrorism and insurgency from the country. The Peshawar School attack was the peak of terrorism in Pakistan that put the National Action Plan in vogue with its 20 points agenda bringing about an end to terrorist activities to a greater extent. There has been a tremendous decrease in the incidents of terrorism in Pakistan after the implementation of the National Action Plan throughout the country.

US Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia and Central Asia, Alice Wells praises the efforts taken by Pakistan in the peace process of Afghanistan. She praises the initiative taken by Pakistan in encouraging the Taliban for the advancement of the peace process and taking action against the insurgent groups that are disrupting peace and tranquility (Wells, 2020). She also praises the arrest of leader of *Lashkar-e-Tayyaba*, Hafiz Saeed and dismantling terror financing structure. She says that the US-Afghan talks are the outcome of a yearlong struggle that has resulted in bringing down violence in Afghanistan. The patch up between the two presidential officials is also appreciated by her as a sign of good omen for the peace and normalcy in the country. She shows her great concern that the US is looking forward to the implementation of the much-awaited intra-Afghan talks. It is in the interest of Pakistan to advance the peace process in Afghanistan while US has always noticed solid cooperation from Pakistan in this regard (Wells, 2020).

These are the two diverse views from the US about the role played by Pakistan in bringing peace and political stability in the country. Pakistan has always been looking forward to a stable and peaceful Afghanistan as this not only guarantees the stability of Afghanistan but also of Pakistan and the entire region (Tariq, 2018b). A secure Afghanistan is very essential for the entire region of South Asia. The reconciliation between the two presidential officials, will no doubt, pave the way for the successful culmination of US-Taliban talks and intra-Afghan talks that will ultimately result in the withdrawal of the foreign troops from Afghanistan within the specified time frame of fourteen months (Tariq, 2020). Pakistan is a peace-loving country and always stands by the norms and values of international law and never interferes in the internal affairs of a neighboring country.

Role of Neighboring Countries

Due to the strategic location of Afghanistan, the neighboring countries also want to ensure their presence in one form or the other. The role of India, Iran, Russia and China cannot be gainsaid in this perspective. Of all these countries, the role of India is very alarming in the internal politics of Afghanistan. Since 2001, India has given \$ 3 billion to Afghanistan for the purpose of reconstruction and business entrepreneurship. Its main concern is to minimize the role of Pakistan and prevent it from becoming a sanctuary for anti-Indian militants. Moreover, the Indians are not supporting the move of

the US government to reach an agreement with Taliban and disregard the Taliban as a legitimate actor (Maizland, 2020). India's strategic interest in Afghanistan is to weaken the security position of Pakistan in order that Pakistan may face security concerns from both its eastern and western borders (Tariq, 2015a).

Iran, a *Shia*-majority country, always sees Taliban as their foe for their being *Sunni* and supported by Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) (Maizland, 2020). Iran was in complete consonance with the US efforts in dethroning the Taliban in Afghanistan and installing a government of their own in 2001. The Iranian government, after the US-Taliban agreement, has sensed that the Taliban would be given some role in the power-sharing formula in Afghanistan; they (Iranians) have improved ties with Afghanistan. However, the two countries are confronted with the issue of drug-trafficking and opium addiction which may further deteriorate their relations in the future.

The Russians want to ensure their presence by strengthening their relations with Afghanistan that remained strained after their withdrawal from Afghanistan in 1989. Now, their main objective in Afghanistan is to counter the US and NATO forces by playing more role in the peace-making process of Afghanistan. Russia has the credit of hosting many dialogues between the Taliban and Afghan representatives. So, the Russians are more concerned with curtailing the power of the US in Afghanistan and the entire region.

China sees Afghanistan the other way from the perspectives of economic and trade purposes. Beijing is interested in integrating it into the belt road initiative, a collection of development and investment project (Maizland, 2020). China's potential of largest foreign investment is concentrated over capturing the vast natural resources of Afghanistan and through it get entry into the Central Asian Countries. China supports the US-Taliban agreement for the peace and stability of Afghanistan and in the late 2019, both the Afghan government and Taliban attended a conference in Beijing.

The fact is that both the US and the Taliban have got exhausted of the 19 years long war in Afghanistan but neither was ready to disarm itself. The global and regional actors remained involved in the war and wanted to secure its vested interest in the war on the Afghan soil (Nasri, 2020). It has been seen that countries like Russia, Iran and China that were earlier opposed to Taliban, diverted their attention towards Taliban in order to thwart the rising power of the ISIS in Afghanistan. Their main objective in doing so was to secure a clear position for themselves after the US withdraws from Afghanistan (Nasri, 2020). All these forces are trying their best to facilitate the peace process in Afghanistan for the reasons of their vested interest in the post-withdrawal scenario.

The threat of ISIS

ISIS is another potential threat to the peace and security of Afghanistan. It is neither on the side of the Afghan government nor on the side of the Taliban but has its own hierarchy of actors that are fighting for its own cause. The group is the Islamic State

affiliate, also known as the Islamic State–Khorasan Province (ISKP, also known as ISIS-K). The strength of the ISIS was estimated to range from 2,000 to 4,000 until it collapsed in the late 2019 by the US offensives and combat forces (Thomas, 2020). The ISKP and Taliban fought on many occasions on territory or political grounds or other differences (Reuters, 2019; Snow, 2020). The US is not clear about their activities in any particular area, some of them claim that they are engaged in the western part of Afghanistan but they disagree among themselves about the nature of the threat (Neff & Barnes, 2019). The fact of their being involved in terrorist activities is clear from their claiming responsibility of a large number of attacks, many targeted towards the *Shia* minority in Afghanistan. Some of the ISKP claim that they have been threatened by Taliban either to agree to a political settlement or to a continued US counterterrorism presence (Ignatius, 2019).

Thus, one the greatest threat that affects the security of Afghanistan comes from the ISIS. The threat by the ISIS has drawn the attention of the regional powers such as China, Iran and Russia. They are only against the Afghan government or Taliban or the US troops in Afghanistan but also against the *Shia* sect in Afghanistan. The greatest challenge for the Afghan government is not only from the Taliban but also from the ISKP. Unlike, other terrorist organizations, the ISKP has no affiliation with any particular network which poses great security concerns for the Afghan government. Prior to the US intervention in Afghanistan in 2001, they were faced with only two great organizations; the Taliban and the Al-Qaeda but now the third one, the ISIS is adding further to the agonies of the Afghan government as well as the US government.

Indo-Afghan Nexus

India poses threat to the peace and stability of Afghanistan by keeping itself engaged in many sectors of the country. The most influential regional competition for influence in Afghanistan is the tug-of-war between Pakistan and India, each concerned with its particular objectives (Constantino, 2020). India's strategic interest in Afghanistan is more directed against the national interest of Pakistan and for that purpose assists India militarily and provides assistance for the reconstruction of infrastructure (Tariq, 2015b). The main concern of India rests upon making Afghanistan as a natural partner and reliable fortification to be used against the Islamic militants, including Pakistan-backed groups both in Afghanistan and Kashmir.

It is very significant that the theoretical framework for the US-Taliban and intra-Afghan talks has been set but the most important task is enforcement and practical manifestation of it that has caught the attention of the entire world. The US has done a marvelous yet a fiddly job by recognizing Taliban as a legitimate political force in Afghanistan (Nasri, 2020). Now, much depends upon the outcome of the intra-Afghan talks to which the US will be only observer. The intriguing part is very captivating that the globally declared terrorist outfit and globally banned organization was recognized as a legitimate power.

The recognition of a non-state actor by the US creates room for the future prospects of other terrorist organizations to be given legitimacy. The ISIS may demand for their legitimacy in Afghanistan in future.

Conclusion

The war-stricken country of Afghanistan is going through the process of transition since the US government has decided to leave Afghanistan within a period of fourteen months. An agreement to this effect was signed between the US government and the Taliban which envisaged the intra-Afghan talks but the outcome is yet to come. One of the greatest hurdles is the Afghan presidential elections that were held in September 2019 but the result was delayed for five months. Even after the lapse of five months the two presidential could not reach any agreement which further delayed the peace process in Afghanistan. It made it impossible for the Taliban to proceed further with intra-Afghan talks as it was very difficult for them whom to talk, Ashraf Ghani or Abdullah Abdullah. Now, the consensus between the two presidential candidates over power-sharing in Afghanistan will pay the way for peace process in Afghanistan.

The non-involvement of the Afghan government in the US-Taliban agreement is another hurdle that again puts a question mark on the legal position of the Afghan government. If the prisoners are held by the Afghan government then they might have been taken on board as the actual problem is between the Taliban and the Afghan government. The intra-Afghan talks are the peripheral side of the main agreement which provides for the release of prisoners and power-sharing scheme in the future set up of the Afghan government. However, the reliance of the US government over the Afghan government for expediting the peace process and signing of reconciliation with the Taliban prognosticates positive signs for settlement of all outstanding issues in the country.

Pakistan's controversial role in the Afghan peace process is also noteworthy. Both Rubin and Afrasiab Khattak blame Pakistan for nourishing the terrorist activities of Taliban and providing them sanctuaries along the Pak-Afghan border. But this is just the dark side of the picture; the bright side of the picture is presented by the US Deputy Secretary of State for South Asia and Central Asia, Alice Wells appreciates the role played by Pakistan in expediting the peace process in Afghanistan. She applauds the role played by Pakistan in motivating both the Afghan government and the Taliban to reach a peaceful settlement. This is a very positive view and is in consonance with the national interest and foreign policy of Pakistan as peace in Afghan can bring more comfort and stability to Pakistan.

The role of the regional powers with their vested interests is another complicating point in the Afghan peace process. Since 2001, India has spent \$ 3 billion on various projects and infrastructure just to minimize the influence of Pakistan and maximize its own influence in Afghanistan though it does not share any border with Afghanistan.

The Iranians have their own sphere of influence in supporting the *Shia* community *vis à vis* the *Sunni* community. Support by the Iran for their religious community is a great impediment in the way of peace. The role of Russians is also concerned with grinding their own axe. Their support of the Taliban is to reduce the influence of the US troops and NATO forces so that they may enjoy the regional hegemony by having their presence in Afghanistan. China's concern is more of creating commercial and trade links with Afghanistan but that too is fraught with strategic interest of reducing the US influence and capturing regional market mechanism.

The ISIS poses threat to the future security and stability of Afghanistan. Its strength ranges from 2,000 to 4,000 personnel who are not only against the interest of the US in Afghanistan, the Taliban, and the Afghan government but also against the *Shia* community in Afghanistan. The ISIS is another emerging non-state actor which may further deteriorate security situation in Afghanistan after the US troops leave Afghanistan. The Indo-Afghan Nexus is another impediment in the way of peace process since Taliban are totally against the presence of the Indians in Afghanistan. The US-Taliban agreement, gave the Taliban legitimacy in the Afghan government which may create further space for other groups such as the ISIS.

The US withdrawal from Afghanistan shows that the theory of Realism has failed that has been used by the great powers for their vested interest and installing government of their choice under the norms of International Structure (Tariq, 2018c). Modern era is an era of liberalism and democratic government which believe in the power-sharing among the various stakeholders of the country. For a country like Afghanistan, federalism is the best remedy for the process of peace and resolution of conflicts (Tariq, 2018b). Since Afghanistan is a multi-ethnic country, the best option is the distribution of governmental powers between the center and the provinces in a just way. This will help resolve all the issues of ethnicity and accommodation of all groups in the governmental sphere.

References

1. ABC. (2020, May 18). Afghan Two Presidents Come to Power-sharing Agreement. *ABC NEWS*. Retrieved from <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-05-18/afghanistans-two-presidents-come-to-power-sharing-agreement/12257906>.
2. Constantino, Z. (January 29, 2020). *India-Pak Rivalry in Afghanistan*. Washington: United States Institute of Peace.
3. FARR, G. (2020, April 6). The Afghan Peace Agreement and Its Problems. *E-International Relations*. Retrieved from <http://www.e-ir.info/2020/the-afghan-peace-agreement-and-its-problems/>.
4. Ignatius, D. (2019, July 22). Uncertainty Clouds the Path Forward in Afghanistan. *Washington Post*. Retrieved from https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/global-opinions/uncertainty-clouds-the-path-forward-for-afghanistan/2019/07/22/f614f9b8-ac78-11e9-a0c9-6d2d7818f3da_story.html.

5. Maizland, L. (2020, March 2). US-Taliban Peace Deal: What to Know. *Council on Foreign Relations*. Retrieved from <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/us-taliban-peace-deal-agreement-afghanistan-war>.
6. Nasri, M. U. (2020). Peace Deal between Taliban and USA: Implications, Predicaments and the Way Forward. *JAHANGIR's WORLD TIMES*, 13(VII), 74–75.
7. Neff, T. G., & Barnes, J. (2019, August 2). U.S. Military Calls ISIS in Afghanistan a Threat to the West. Intelligence Officials Disagree. *New York Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/08/02/world/middleeast/isis-afghanistan-us-military.html>.
8. Reuters. (2019, April 24). Heavy fighting flares between Taliban, Islamic State in Afghanistan. *Reuters*. Retrieved from <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-afghanist-an-taliban-fighting/heavy-fighting-flares-between-taliban-islamic-state-in-afghani-stan-idUSKCN1S01MH>.
9. Snow, S. (2020, February 27). ISIS loses more than half its fighters from US airstrikes and Taliban ground operations. *Military Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.militarytimes.com/flashpoints/2020/02/27/isis-loses-more-than-half-its-fighters-from-us-airstrikes-and-taliban-ground-operations/>.
10. Tariq, M. (2015a). Dynamics of NATO Drawdown from Afghanistan and future Implications. *FWU Journal of Social Sciences*, 1(1), 115–124.
11. Tariq, M. (2015b). India-Pak Rivalry in Afghanistan. *FWU Journal of Social Sciences*, 1(2), 15–24.
12. Tariq, M. (2018, January 15). Afghanistan Turmoil and Its Implications for Pakistan's Security. *Ph. D Dissertation*. Mardan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan: Abdul Wali Khan University.
13. Tariq, M. (2018a). The Pashtun Tribal System and Issues of Security. *Global Social Sciences Review*, III(I), 101–112.
14. Tariq, M. (2018b). Prospects of Federalism in Pakistan. *Global Social Sciences Review*, III(II), 356–368.
15. Tariq, M. (2018c). An Analysis of Major Theories of Federalism. *Global Social Sciences Review*, III(IV), 400–412.
16. Tariq, M. (2020). US Withdrawal from Afghanistan: latest Development and Security Situation. *Sir Syed Journal of Education & Research*, 3(2), 290–297.
17. Thomas, C. (2020, June 25). *Afghanistan: Background and U.S. Policy in Brief*. Washington: Congressional Research Service.
18. Times, T. E. (2020, May 22). USA should address Pakistan problem in its Taliban outreach: former Pentagon official. *The Economic Times*. Retrieved from <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/usa-should-address-pakistan-problem-in-its-taliban-outreach-former-pentagon-official/articleshow/75871203.cms>.
19. Wells, A. (2020, May 23). *US praises Pakistan's Commitment to Afghan Peace Process*. Rawalpindi, Punjab, Pakistan: The News International.