



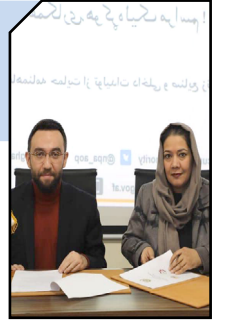
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Heart of Asia

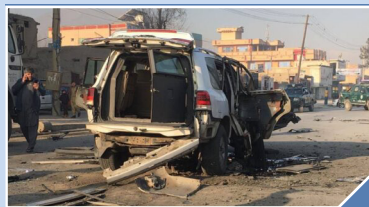
Your Gateway to Afghanistan & the Region

Monday, January 25, 2021

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Da Afghanistan Bank staff once again targeted in IED explosion

A senior official of De Afghanistan Bank, (the Central Bank) was targeted in an IED explosion in Kabul early Sunday morning, the bank confirmed.

The bank said in a statement that Abdullah Dawrani, the head of the Financial Dispute Resolution Commission, was the target in an IED explosion at around 8.15 am this morning.

According to the statement, Dawrani was wounded and his bodyguard was killed in the blast.

The bank stated that another person was also injured in the explosion, which occurred in the Shah Shaheed area of PD8 of the city but did not reveal the person's identity.

No group has claimed responsibility for the attack.

This is the second targeted attack against Central Bank employees. ... **P2**



One up, Afghanistan meet Ireland in 2nd ODI on Sunday

Already one up in the three-match One-Day International (ODI) series, Afghanistan are all poised to take on Ireland in the second encounter in the UAE on Sunday.

Afghanistan, having outplayed the rivals by 16 runs in the opener on Thursday, are eyeing a series win. Ireland, on the other hand, are looking to level the series.

With no changes expected in the national squad, the Afghans middle order will focus on enhanced strength to ensure sealing the series.

Following Thursday's loss, Ireland will have to keep the Afghan batsmen in check. In the first ODI, ace spinner Rashid Khan punished the Irish bowler and helped Afghanistan set the opposition a formidable target.

Poverty Rate Increases by 4 Percent in Afghanistan



Karima Hamid Faryabi, the Minister of Economy says the poverty rate in Afghanistan's cities has risen by 4 percent.

Ms. Faryabi, who briefed the nation on the one-year activities of the

Ministry of Economy on Sunday, said the outbreak of the Coronavirus and the imposition of travel restrictions were the main reasons for the increase in poverty rate.

According to her, the Afghan

government has made poverty reduction a priority.

Recently, Save the Children released a report stating that about half of Afghanistan's population is in need of humanitarian assistance.

The report, released on Tuesday, last week, said that 18.4 million people in Afghanistan, including 9.7 million children, were in urgent need of humanitarian assistance.

Save the Children has called for \$ 3 billion in aid to address the situation in 2021.

"Afghan citizens are suffering from war, violence, poverty and the crisis caused by the coronavirus," said Chris Neyamandi, the country director of Afghanistan at Save the Children. Earlier, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) reported that by 2021, some 18.4 million people in Afghanistan would be in need of humanitarian assistance.

According to OCHA, the number of needy people in Afghanistan will increase in 2021 compared to four years ago.

However, the Afghan government recently launched a program called the "Destarkhan-e Mili" to help more than 4 million families at a cost of more than \$ 244 million.

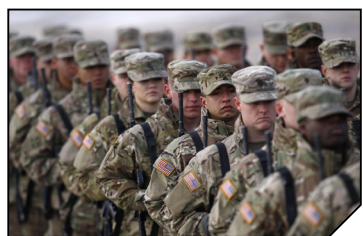
During the program, food aids are provided to families affected by the outbreak of the Corona virus.

Covid-19: U.S. service-members being vaccinated in Afghanistan

The U.S. military has launched a drive to vaccinate personnel in Afghanistan against the coronavirus pandemic. The Modern vaccine arrived in Afghanistan on Jan. 17 and the inoculation campaign got underway the next day.

The vaccine was given to people with increased likelihood of contracting COVID-19, U.S. Forces - Afghanistan said in a statement.

Also people with conditions that expose them t high risk if they contract the virus are being given the vaccine, according to the statement. ... **P3**



Gov't Calls on Pakistan to Persuade Taliban Break Ties with Terrorist Groups

In reaction to the Pakistani Foreign Minister's remarks, the Afghan Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) said it expects the Pakistani government and all Afghan international partners to compel the Taliban to fulfill their commitments to reduce violence, establish a nationwide ceasefire and cut ties with the terrorist groups.

MoFA in a statement has stated that Afghanistan believes that a regional and international consensus is needed to achieve lasting peace, as well as the efforts of all parties to "sincerely" support the Afghan peace process.

According to the statement, the Foreign Ministry expects the parties involved in the peace process to fulfill their commitments to achieve peace.



MoFA stressed that Afghanistan had taken the most important steps to build trust and pave the way for a comprehensive political agreement by releasing more than 6,000 Taliban prisoners, declaring readiness for immediate and nationwide ceasefires, and participating in the peace talks.

MoFA noted that the Taliban not only failed to meet their commitments to reduce violence and go on a nationwide ceasefire, but also increased unprecedented violence.

According to the statement, the Taliban have created new challenges in the path ... **P3**

Da Afghanistan...

In November last year, Yama Siavash, a former TV news anchor, and an employee of the Central Bank, was killed in an IED explosion in PD9 in Kabul. Meanwhile, an IED blast rattled Jalalabad city in eastern Nangarhar province on Sunday morning. The blast happened in PD4 of the city, police confirmed. Farid Khan, a spokesman for Nangarhar police told Ariana News that at least three civilians were wounded in that explosion.

Putin to...

with the United States but it cannot keep doing this endlessly and is not ready to tolerate rude behavior and diktat, Peskov said.

In comment on the host's remark that Russian-US relations were worsening and at a certain point someone should make a concession, the Kremlin spokesman noted that "flexibility is a necessary element of inter-state relations."

"We are ready to show flexibility, [but] we are not ready for a diktat, we are not ready for rude behavior and we are not prepared for crossing 'the red lines.' As for the rest, certain flexibility was shown," he stressed. "But it cannot be shown endlessly."

The TV host voiced an opinion that Russia "should have been more flexible" and gave the example of the situation with the coup d'etat in Ukraine in 2014 and granting asylum to former National Security Agency (NSA) whistleblower Edward Snowden. "No, these are these the red lines, which cannot be crossed," Peskov stressed.

By Dr Moonis Ahmar

How can Afghanistan be peaceful in 2021?

If the year 2020 marked a breakthrough in US-Taliban negotiations leading to the signing of the Doha Accord on February 27, and the unleashing of intra-Afghan dialogue, the year 2021 will be quite challenging if during the first 100 days of the Biden-Kamala administration, American forces remain in Afghanistan and there is no positive development in talks between the Taliban and the Afghan government.

Since September 2020, the US Special Representative for Afghanistan Reconciliation, Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad, has been regularly visiting Islamabad, Kabul and Delhi in order to give an impetus to the Afghan peace process. During his visit to Islamabad in early January 2021, he met the Chief of Army Staff and other high-ranking Pakistani officials while expecting Islamabad to play a significant role in persuading the Taliban to help form an interim government which can pave the way for the ownership of the Afghan peace process and total withdrawal of foreign forces from Afghanistan. Why is Khalilzad — who was also the US ambassador to Iraq and Afghanistan, and as an Afghan-origin American official is an old guard ensuring US interests in the war-torn country — frequently visiting Pakistan? What are his intensions for the periodic meetings with high-ranking Pakistani officials? Will the Biden-Kamala administration retain him as a top negotiator for Afghanistan or will he be replaced?

Khalilzad, who had his schooling in Kabul, left Afghanistan for the US in 1970s and after studying in various American universities joined the State Department during mid-1980s. Fluent in Pashto and Dari, he has played a pivotal role in convincing the Taliban leadership during negotiations in Doha to reach an agreement with the US to not attack American forces in Afghanistan and not allow Afghan soil to be used for terrorism against America; and in return he gained consent from the Trump administration for the total withdrawal of American forces from Afghanistan. Even then, violence has continued in Afghanistan and there is a question mark about the durability of the US-Taliban Doha Accord in the Biden-Kamala administration because of two main reasons.

First, the Doha agreement was reached after bypassing the Kabul regime and second, because of the reservations held by NATO allies and the Pentagon about the total withdrawal of American/foreign forces



from Afghanistan out of fear that the vacuum will lead to a fresh outbreak of violence and another of civil war. In a country like Afghanistan which is 200 years older than Pakistan and has not been able to settle down as a nation state, the root cause of unabated violence is the fragmented state and society of that country. Lack of common ground to pull Afghanistan from decades of instability and armed conflicts is because of the divisive culture and mindset which promotes disunity instead of cohesiveness and coexistence. Had this not been the case, the Taliban and other Afghan groups representing various interests would have agreed to resolve issues peacefully instead of trying to impose their will and ideology on others. It is this internal discord and polarisation in Afghanistan which has promoted foreign intervention and occupation. There is no other country in the modern era which has experienced attack and occupation by three major powers: Britain, the Soviet Union and the US. The feudal, tribal, ultra-conservative, sectarian and ethnic cleavages in Afghanistan along with its failure to establish a central control over the countryside transformed the country into a fragile, failing and failed state.

After 9/11 and the disbanding of the Taliban regime by the US-led attack, thousands of Afghans who had left the country and settled in the West because of war, returned in order to contribute to the rebuilding of their destroyed homeland. Prosperous overseas

Afghans thought that with the strong backing of the West and other friendly countries they could transform Afghanistan into a stable and thriving country. But soon they realised that they were wrong as due to failed governance, rampant corruption and insecurity, it was not possible for them to help change the destiny of Afghanistan.

Because of three main reasons, Afghanistan is unlikely to be peaceful and stable in 2021.

First, there is no indication on the part of the Taliban that they have renounced violence against the Afghan security forces. On January 15, a Taliban attack killed several Afghan soldiers. It is not possible for the Taliban to continue their attacks and target Afghan security forces and for intra-Afghan talks to also go on. Unless the Taliban amend their intransigent position, agree to become part of the political process, form a political party and participate in elections, one cannot expect peace in Afghanistan. If the Taliban leadership blames hardline field commanders for violence because of their rejection of the Afghan government, how can then intra-Afghan talks continue? The problem is that the Taliban still demand that the government should be handed over to them so that they can re-establish the "Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan". Their assertion to capture power by force will be counter-productive because of the predictable resistance from their opponents.

Second, it is yet to be seen whether the ... **P3**

By Laurel Miller

The Myth of a Responsible Withdrawal from Afghanistan

President Joe Biden is now the fourth American leader to oversee the U.S. war in Afghanistan. He inherits a fragile peace process that members of his team have wisely signaled they will work to advance. In February 2020, then President Donald Trump struck a deal with the Taliban to withdraw all U.S. and NATO troops by May 1, 2021. In exchange, the United States received security assurances and a commitment from the Taliban to begin peace talks with the Afghan government. After 40 years of bloodshed and nearly 20 years of direct American involvement in Afghanistan, there is no question that Biden should give these talks a chance. Reaching a comprehensive settlement that ends the Taliban insurgency would be by far the best way for the United States to wind-up its military engagement in the country.

But the slow-moving Afghan talks remain a long shot for peace.

The Taliban and the Afghan government still disagree on fundamental issues, including whether the country should remain a republic or even retain any features of electoral democracy. And both parties have been hounded to the table; neither believes it has exhausted its military options.

The Biden administration will therefore have to decide quickly whether to honor Trump's agreement to withdraw all troops this spring or to extend the military mission, perhaps indefinitely. Some analysts advocate calling it quits regardless of what happens with the peace talks, arguing that the primary U.S. objective of decimating al Qaeda was achieved long ago. Others, including some former officials, call for the continued use of U.S. troops and firepower to prevent the Taliban from overrunning the Afghan government—at least until a peace settlement can be reached.

Given the shortcomings of both options—leaving promptly and staying indefinitely—a seeming middle-ground idea has come to dominate Afghanistan policy discourse: "responsible withdrawal," a conveniently malleable concept that holds out the promise of ending an "endless war" while continuing counterterrorism operations. Biden himself seemed to endorse a version of "responsible withdrawal" on the campaign trail, before the Trump administration struck its deal with the Taliban. In a February 23 interview on Face the Nation, Biden said the United States should maintain a "very small" counterterrorism footprint dedicated to preventing the resurgence of al Qaeda and the Islamic State, or ISIS.

But as attractive as splitting the difference may seem, it is almost certainly impossible. Regardless of what happens with the peace process, the Biden administration

will soon find that it must choose a more decisive course in Afghanistan.

VANISHING MIDDLE

There is virtually no chance that the Taliban would agree to allow the United States to maintain an indefinite counterterrorism footprint on Afghan soil. Doing so would require the group to abandon its number one demand and the rationale for its insurgency: the removal of all foreign forces. Because they prize cohesion, Taliban leaders wouldn't make an agreement that they couldn't sell to the group's commanders and rank and file—especially since the Trump administration already agreed to withdraw all U.S. troops by May. One can't entirely rule out the possibility that a future Afghan government that includes the Taliban would agree to cooperate with the United States on counterterrorism, but Washington certainly shouldn't count on it.

Nor are the Taliban the only obstacle to an indefinite U.S. counterterrorism presence. To negotiate and implement any peace deal, the United States

would need the support of regional countries such as China, Iran, Pakistan, and Russia—none of which want to see permanent U.S. military bases in Afghanistan. To the extent that these countries support U.S. peace efforts, they do so because they expect a resultant agreement to herald a U.S. military departure. The U.S.-Taliban deal reinforced those expectations. If the United States jettisoned that deal in order to keep troops in the country, Pakistan in particular might decide to increase its support for the Taliban.

It is impossible to disentangle counterterrorism from counterinsurgency in Afghanistan. Of course, the peace process could fail, in which case the issue of regional support would become moot. But even then, the United States wouldn't be able to maintain an exclusively counterterrorism footprint. Having gained and then lost a U.S. commitment to withdraw, the Taliban would once again violently contest any U.S. presence. In such a scenario, just protecting U.S. personnel would require offensive operations against Taliban insurgents. ... **P3**

Pact binding governmental organs to use domestic products signed

An agreement was signed on Saturday between the National Procurement Authority (NPA) and the Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Industries, binding all government departments to use domestic products.

Ilham Omar Hotak, NPA chief, told the agreement-signing gathering that the government must procure domestic products despite being 25 percent expensive.

Hotak said after signing this agreement, all government administrations were bound to use domestic products.

"Earlier when I would ask government departments that why they do not

use domestic products? They would talk about the low quality of these products, but it would no longer be an issue," Hotak said.

Hotak claimed that according to the agreement, the Afghanistan chamber of industries would guarantee the quality of products in order to use them with surety.

ShirbazKaminzada, chief of Afghanistan chamber of industries, urged industrialists to deliver their products to the market keeping in mind their quantity, quality and competitiveness. Shirbaz stressed that all industrialists must standardize their products.



How can Afghanistan...

Biden-Kamala administration will own the Doha Accord which lacked the involvement of the Afghan government. Will the US now agree for a total withdrawal of its forces because both NATO and Pentagon have expressed their reservations about the exit strategy as the vacuum created will be dangerous and force Afghanistan into a fresh civil war?

Afghan critics of the Doha agreement argue that it was like making a deal with Al Qaeda. There is no indication that the Taliban have delinked themselves from their former erstwhile ally Al Qaeda, and deep down the nexus between the two will become obvious once foreign forces leave Afghanistan and the Kabul regime faces a collapse. The nightmare of the Taliban again seizing power and imposing their own brand of Shariah is not a myth but a reality because on numerous occasions the Taliban have made it clear that if they gain power again they will practise the same policies they were following from 1996-2001.

Third, Pakistan's predicament is of the devil and deep blue sea: if foreign forces leave Afghanistan, the country will be plunged into a new phase of civil war resulting in a fresh influx of refugees dismantling the barbed fence along the Pak-Afghan border. And, if the foreign forces remain in Afghanistan, it would mean sustained violence and terrorism, thus deepening chaos, disorder and instability in Pakistan's western neighbour.

Pakistan's past patronage of the Taliban and its 'interventionist' policy in Afghanistan since the withdrawal of Soviet forces in February 1989 still haunts Islamabad because it led to deep scars and resentment in Afghan society about the manner in which Islamabad tried to impose its supported regime in Kabul.

The way out of violence and instability in Afghanistan is to hold a referendum about whether the Afghan Taliban join the political process and follow a democratic path through elections. A referendum, if held in an impartial and peaceful manner, will help decide the future role of the Taliban in Afghanistan.

Covid-19: U.S....

Social distancing and mask wearing will remain mandatory for the roughly 2,500 U.S. troops and more than 18,000 contractors in Afghanistan.

Meanwhile, Stars and Stripes reported U.S. officials refused to say how many troops in Afghanistan have tested positive for the coronavirus.

The Myth of...

And if the Taliban go back to fighting the United States, they would have little reason to sever their remaining ties with al Qaeda as they promised to do in the February 2020 deal—thereby sustaining the very terrorist threat that the United States seeks to counter.

Finally, the United States wouldn't be able to maintain bases in Afghanistan purely for its own purposes while withholding operational support from its host and counterterrorism partner. The United States would need to continue providing the Afghan military with at least some essential backup in its existential fight with the Taliban. Absent that support, the Taliban probably wouldn't sweep rapidly through the country, but the war would intensify and Kabul would lose ground. And if Afghan government forces felt abandoned, the risk of insider attacks against U.S. personnel could rise. In other words, it is impossible to disentangle counterterrorism from counterinsurgency in Afghanistan. If the United States wants to keep any forces at all in the country, it will have to maintain a footprint that looks a lot like "staying the course."

BUYING TIME

The Biden administration should accept that there is no feasible middle way for a "responsible withdrawal." Washington should instead attempt to reach an agreement with the Taliban to extend the May 1 troop withdrawal deadline—using this step to gauge the group's commitment to reaching a peace deal that, however unlikely, would be the best outcome for Afghanistan and for the United States. Three months is not enough time to

reach any kind of deal—except, perhaps, one that grants extraordinary concessions to the Taliban, relies on support from opportunistic members of President Ashraf Ghani's political opposition, and involves the United States essentially greenlighting a coup against him. That kind of deal would not leave the United States feeling confident that its security concerns are assuaged.

Washington has been the primary driver of the peace process, so talks are unlikely to survive a near-term U.S. withdrawal. Nor are they likely to survive if the United States simply ignores the May 1 withdrawal deadline, since the Taliban are liable to walk away from the negotiating table in that case. The Biden administration must therefore explore the extent of the Taliban's patience and seek at least a six-month extension. Peace talks are unlikely to survive a near-term U.S. withdrawal.

The Biden administration should spend those six months thoroughly assessing the terror threat emanating from Afghanistan and determining whether U.S. boots on the ground are necessary to neutralize it. Much of the threat analysis in the public domain focuses excessively on tabulating the numbers of militant groups and their members, measures that say little about their intent or their ability to carry out successful external operations. One reason for skepticism about the severity of the threat is the lack of public reporting in recent years of ISIS or al Qaeda plots against the United States originating from Afghanistan; another is that most successful attacks in the United States and Europe in recent years have been linked

to militants in Syria and Iraq or perpetrated by local "lone wolves" inspired by jihadi media.

For the long term, the United States will need a counterterrorism capability that doesn't depend on a permanent U.S. military presence in Afghanistan. The Biden administration should work swiftly to develop such options, enhancing counterterrorism cooperation with other countries in South and Central Asia, ensuring U.S. capacity to mount operations in Afghanistan from outside the country, and putting in place covert arrangements for monitoring and countering transnational terrorist activity.

Some of these undertakings will be politically charged, and together they may not be as effective as the current U.S. setup in Afghanistan. But the only alternative is an indefinite, intertwined counterterrorism and counterinsurgency mission.

"Responsible withdrawal" is not a real option for the United States in Afghanistan, to the extent that it means leaving a residual counterterrorism footprint in the country for years to come. As a result, the Biden administration faces essentially the same choice that bedeviled its predecessors: an indefinite military mission that isn't clearly making Americans safer versus a withdrawal that U.S. government analysts won't declare risk free for the United States and that would likely precipitate the Afghan government's undoing. The unpalatability of both options may be enough to persuade the Biden administration to push ahead with a low-probability peace settlement for as long as possible. Eventually, however, it will have to make a choice.

Gov't Calls on...

to negotiations and lasting peace by carrying out targeted killings.

The remarks came as Pakistani Foreign Minister Shah

mahmood Qureshi called on the new U.S. administration to adhere to a peace agreement with the Taliban in the latest reaction to the peace talks. Qureshi made the remarks in

an interview with Al-Jazeera, calling the talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban a major achievement and stressing that Pakistan had played a major role in the talks.

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Portugal chooses president amid surge in coronavirus cases

Portugal held its presidential election on Sunday with the moderate incumbent candidate strongly favoured to win a second five-year term while COVID-19 cases reached record levels.

Voters queued up as polls opened in the Lisbon parish of Santo Antonio, guided by red stickers on the ground marking the two-metre (six-foot) gap.

"I'm here among the first to avoid groups and queues," Cristina Queda, 58, said as she waited. "Since the date of the elections wasn't changed, I decided to come early to avoid that situation."

The head of state in Portugal has no legislative powers, which lie with parliament and the government, but is an influential

voice in the running of the country.

Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa, 72, is regarded as the clear front-runner among seven candidates. He is an affable, approachable law professor and former television personality who as president has consistently had an approval rating of 60 percent or more.

To win, a candidate must capture more than 50 percent of the vote. But a severe surge in coronavirus infections in recent days could keep turnout low and perhaps lead to a runoff between the two top candidates, which would take place on February 14.

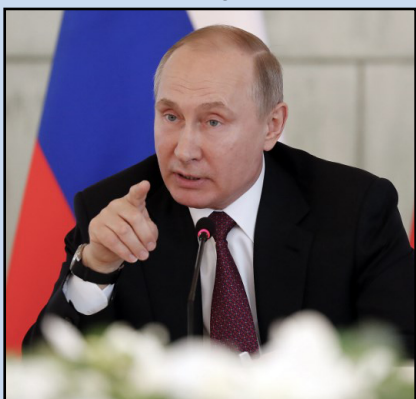
portugal has increased the number of polling stations and allowed for early voting to reduce crowding on election day.



A look at the world

Putin to reciprocate if Washington ready for dialogue with Moscow - Kremlin

Russia expects that Moscow and Washington will manage to establish dialogue, and if the new US administration is ready for this, Russian President Vladimir Putin will certainly take a reciprocal step, Kremlin Spokesman Dmitry Peskov said on Sunday. "The thing is that the Russian Federation has been consistently and traditionally calling for kind relations [with the US]," Peskov said in an interview with "Moscow. Kremlin. Putin" program on Rossiya-1 TV channel. "We are saying in deed and not in name that we are ready to consider the Americans as our partners, they are not ready. But here love can't be forced," Peskov stressed. "Certainly, we expect that we will be able to establish dialogue," he noted. This will be dialogue in which the sides will confirm that there is some disagreement. But at the



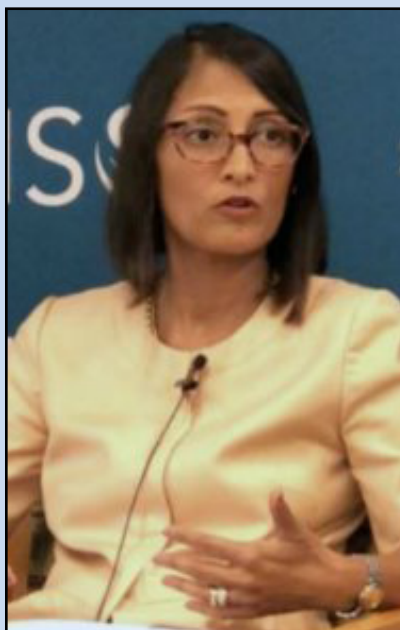
same time dialogue is always an opportunity to find "those smallest areas where our relations coincide," Peskov said. "If the current US administration is ready for this approach, I have no doubt that our president will reciprocate," he stated.

The Kremlin spokesman drew attention to the first remarks of new White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki, who called for investigating cyber attacks against the US, of which Washington immediately accused Moscow, and "the alleged bounties on US soldiers in Afghanistan."

According to Peskov, this approach was "quite predicted." "That's because the new administration is old and well-known people," he explained. "As for the statements, the word 'partner' is probably not applicable to us for Washington and certainly they still view us more as foes," Peskov noted.

Flexibility in relations
Russia showed flexibility in relations ... **P2**

Biden Appoints Indian American as Director for South Asia Affairs



U.S. President Joe Biden team announced the appointment of Indian American Sumona Guha to the role of Senior Director for South Asia at the National Security Council, Indian media outlet The Hindu reported.

Guha co-chaired the South Asia foreign policy working group on the Biden-Harris campaign, and was a member of the transition team, the report said, adding that she will succeed the Trump administration's Lisa Curtis in the role.

Guha, a former Foreign Service officer, has been a Senior Vice President since mid-2018 at the Albright Stonebridge Group, whose chair is former U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright.

She has also worked at the U.S. India Business Council and, prior to that, in the Secretary of State's Policy Planning Staff with responsibility for South Asia, according to the report.

She was also a Deputy Director for Afghanistan Affairs in the Office of the Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan and has been a special advisor for National Security Affairs in the Office of the Vice President (during Biden's tenure).

The transition team also announced other NSC appointments and roles, as part of Biden's restructuring of the NSC, which will be headed by Jake Sullivan, who had said that Biden had asked him to "reimagine" national security.

Venezuela hopes to 'turn the page' with U.S.

Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro expressed willingness Saturday to "turn the page" with the U.S. now that Joe Biden is in charge in Washington.

Maduro's desire is that the two nations can reach a "new path" after years of tension between the Maduro government and the Trump administration. The Venezuelan president said the path should be based on "mutual respect, dialogue, communication, and understanding."

He said that government should focus on "breaking the blockage, achieving an economic recovery, and establishing a great national dialogue."

The U.S. officially broke diplomatic ties in January of 2019, when the Trump administration recognized Juan Guaido as Venezuela's interim president. At the time,



Guaido was serving as president of the Venezuelan National Assembly.

Later that year, the U.S. imposed a series of economic sanctions against Venezuela and its oil industry, PDVSA.

The measures, according to Maduro, have resulted in Venezuela losing 99% of its revenues. Similarly, Vice President for Planning Ricardo Menendez estimated that the country has lost more than \$40 billion because of the sanctions.

In November, when Biden won the U.S. presidential election, Maduro congratulated the then-president-elect and said his government was "ready for dialogue and good understanding with the people and government of the United States"

Maduro repeated the message in December. Later that month there were reports that the Biden was ready to reestablish talks with Venezuela.



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