

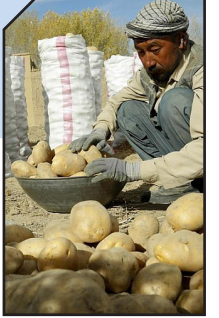


Page 2 | NATIONAL  
The Vietnam War's  
Lessons Went Unlearned  
in Afghanistan

**Bringing Peace to Afghanistan And Myanmar Won't Be Easy**

Efforts to end two major conflicts in India's neighbourhood have become intense. To the east, the Association of Southeast ...

Page 3 | ECONOMY  
Afghanistan Produces  
Over 855,000 Tons  
Potatoes Last Year: Gov't



Kabul  
25 / 15



Herat  
22 / 15



Nangarhar  
37 / 24



Balkh  
35 / 23



# Heart of Asia

Your Gateway to Afghanistan & the Region

Monday, May 3, 2021

Issue No. 956

www.heartofasia.af

10 afs



**Nine Killed, 14 Injured in Massive Fire in Kabul**

At least nine people were killed and 14 others were wounded after a major fire broke out on Saturday night in Kabul in which dozens of fuel tankers, trucks and other vehicles were burnt, a source from the Ministry of Interior said on Sunday. The fire broke out in Qala-e- Murad Bek area in Shakardara district north of Kabul at a fuel tanker and damaged several other fuel tankers, trucks and cars, said Tariq Arian, a spokesman for Interior Ministry.

Eyewitnesses said that more than 50 fuel tankers, trucks, other vehicles, as well as, houses and shops were damaged in the fire. The reason behind the incident is not clear so far.

Power supply to many parts of Kabul was disconnected shortly after the incident, the country's power distributor, Da Afghanistan Breshna Sherkat (DABS) said, adding that "a team has been sent to the area to reconnect the power."



**70 Operations In 3 Months Against Taliban In Herat**

At least 260 Taliban insurgents have been killed and over 200 others have been wounded in 70 operations launched by security officials in Herat province over the past three months, said Herat police chief Ghulam Sanayee Stanekzai at a press conference on Sunday.

Stanekzai added that 24 Taliban insurgents had also been detained as a result of the operations, which took place at Adraskan, Zawl, Kohzur, Kashkakhana, Obe, Pashtun Zarghun, Kashk Robot Sangi, Golran, Karkh, Zandijan and Ghorian districts.

He added that some of these military operations were carried out independently by the police.

Meanwhile, Herat police have arrested 450 people in the last three months on various charges, including murder, kidnapping, armed robbery, membership in armed groups, drug trafficking, forgery of documents and bribery, in the city and districts of the province. He added that cases of more than 70 robbers have been sent to the Herat Prosecutor's Office.

## Peace Chief Says Afghan Gov't Must Step Up



Afghanistan's chief peace negotiator said Saturday the often-fractured Afghan political leadership must unify in its peace talks with the Taliban or risk the withdrawal of U.S. and NATO troops bringing more bitter fighting. Abdullah Abdullah, head of Afghanistan's National Reconciliation Council, said the time is now for Afghanistan's political leaders to

stand united in the talks. But some of them are former warlords with fierce reputations, heavily armed militias and deep-seated grudges.

In an interview with The Associated Press in the Afghan capital, Abdullah warned that history and millions of Afghans — already frustrated by what they see as government ineptitude and runaway corruption — will judge

them harshly if unity eludes the powerful leaders now in Kabul. In the early 1990s bitter fighting between many of the same leaders killed thousands of mostly civilians in the capital and gave rise to the Taliban, who took power in 1996.

Abdullah said the withdrawal that officially began Saturday of the remaining 2,500 to 3,500 U.S. troops

and about 7,000 NATO allied forces will present "huge challenges."

"I wouldn't call it the end of the world for our people. I would say that it will be very challenging and that's why I am of the opinion that the whole focus has to be on achieving peace, that does not only take us, it takes the other side," he said.

Still, Abdullah said he is unconvinced the Taliban want peace. He said the National Reconciliation Council, of which he is the chairman, has put out countless calls for the Taliban to put all their demands on the table.

Messages go back and forth between a variety of Taliban to senior negotiators, including himself, said Abdullah. He noted that he has received countless messages from Taliban officials, some written, some as voice messages. Sometimes they are detailed, and other times terse and brief. But he said he has yet to see a commitment to peace from the insurgent group on which he can rely. Abdullah said his response to the Taliban has been consistent: "Put everything that you want on the negotiating table. We are ready to discuss it. We are ready to find ways that it works for both sides."

He said the withdrawal adds ... **P2**

**US Introduce Bill for Duty-Free Economic Zones Along Pak-Afghan Border**

US senators have introduced a bipartisan bill to promote and generate economic benefits for Pakistan and Afghanistan by establishing Reconstruction Opportunity Zones along Afghanistan and Pakistan border. The bill is called the 'Pakistan-Afghanistan Economic Development Act'. The legislation proposes the setup of a reconstruction opportunity zones along Pak-Afghan border areas. "The bill would establish Reconstruction Opportunity Zones (ROZs) in Afghanistan and Pakistan's border regions to allow certain products from these areas to enter the US ... **P3**



**Sustained Engagement Necessary to Ensure Lasting Peace: IRC**

Condemning Friday night car bomb blast in Logar province in which 30 people, including high school students died, the International Rescue Committee (IRC) has called on the global powers to continue its support to Afghanistan even after the foreign troops withdraw from the country.

"Logar incident could be the first in a line of incidents to mark the dialing down of international support for peace in Afghanistan. Situation in Afghanistan is perilous, especially when the peace process hangs in the balance. Support from the international community has never been more urgent; smart, targeted, long-term assistance can both bolster the likelihood of a sustainable peace agreement and Afghanistan's resilience to future shocks. Sustained diplomatic and financial engagement from countries like the US and UK has



never been more critical to ensure an inclusive peace process and meaningful improvement in the lives of millions of Afghans," said Vicki Aken, country director for the IRC in Afghanistan.

Civilian casualties are all too common after four decades of war in Afghanistan. Afghanistan represents the modern face of humanitarian crisis, enduring a triple threat

of climate change, conflict and COVID-19. A peaceful resolution to the ongoing conflict is the only sustainable solution.

Meanwhile, even Russia's special envoy Zamir Kabulov has called for compromise between the United States and the Taliban. "US will need to find a compromise so that the Taliban does not resume large-scale hostilities," he said. ... **P2**

## Peace Chief...

pressure on both sides to find a peace deal.

The Taliban cannot win militarily, he said, and even regional powers — including Pakistan with its influence over the insurgent group — have steadfastly rejected a military takeover in Afghanistan. Taliban leaders are headquartered in Pakistani cities.

An “inclusive, peaceful settlement, this is what everybody believes in. ... God forbid if we don’t have peace then, of course, nobody has forgotten the recent history of the country. So, everything has to be done in order to mitigate the serious consequences of the withdrawal.”

Meanwhile, Abdullah questioned assurances Washington has received from the Taliban to reject terrorist groups, particularly al-Qaida, the reason Washington and NATO invaded 20 years ago. Links between the Taliban and al-Qaida have continued to surface and al-Qaida publications and websites pledge allegiance to the Taliban leadership.

“What has happened to al-Qaida?” he asked. “That’s a big question.”

## Sustained...

“We need to create a normal, inclusive, as they say now, government in Afghanistan, capable of dealing with these tasks on its territory and Moscow will make every effort to ensure that peaceful inter-Afghan negotiations take place, including cooperating with the American side,” he added.

US troops were originally scheduled to withdraw from Afghanistan by May 1 as part of Washington’s deal with the Taliban. However, the date has been pushed back to September 11 after Joe Biden’s announcement on April 14.

By Max Hastings

# The Vietnam War’s Lessons Went Unlearned in Afghanistan

Four months from now, the last 2,500 American troops will have left Afghanistan. The British, Australians, Canadians and other allies will be in the same boat, figuratively if not literally, having also sacrificed blood and treasure in the 20-year struggle first, to remove Kabul’s Taliban government, thereafter to sustain its successor regimes. Why has President Joe Biden lost patience, the West essentially thrown up its hands in despair? We should recall a significant conversation, during the 2003 invasion of Iraq.

“We want to be a benevolent and humble presence,” said U.S. Gen. David Petraeus, as U.S. troops forged through teeming crowds to enter Baghdad. Washington Post reporter Rick Atkinson, embedded with Petraeus’s 101st Airborne Division, captured the scene in his book, “In the Company of Soldiers”:

A distinguished elderly man in a white robe emerged from the throng and identified himself as Abdul-Razzaq Kasbi, a teacher at the Saddam Secondary School. He spoke English with slow formality, enunciating each syllable.... ‘Mr General,’ he said to Petraeus, ‘we are afraid you will control us, as he has done.’ There was no need to specify who ‘he’ was....

‘No,’ Petraeus said, ‘we won’t!... We will show you by our actions.’ ... He offered the teacher a brass division coin to seal the bargain, but Kasbi politely refused the token.

‘I can’t have anything of you unless I am sure you have come for the sake of our people. We want to live in peace. We don’t want to substitute one bad person for another bad person.’

Petraeus took the rejection gracefully.... ‘I understand the intellectual aversion to nation-building,’ Petraeus mused. ‘On the other hand, I don’t see how you avoid it.’

The failures in Afghanistan, as in Iraq, through the ensuing two decades have not been battlefield defeats. They have been caused, instead, by our inability to establish, within a timeframe acceptable to chronically impatient Western politicians and electorates, a sustainable local system of governance that also supports Western interests. Petraeus, smartest of modern American generals, understood from the moment he entered Baghdad at the head of his “Screaming Eagles” that an army cannot accomplish the re-ordering of a society. Nation-building is much more difficult than winning battles, and we are not very good at it. Some American strategy gurus are at pains to argue that 21st century wars in far-flung places have nothing in common with Vietnam. As the author of a history of the latter struggle, I disagree. I see many parallels, as do distinguished veterans.

The first Vietnam message is that the Northerners won that war not because they were communists, but mostly because they were Vietnamese. Almost everybody hates being bossed around by foreigners. Throughout the war years, Vietnamese knew that no representative of the Saigon government could leave his bed in the morning without asking his American paymasters which side to get out. A Southerner named Chau Phat said: “The communists could ceaselessly remind us how humiliating it was to be occupied.”

This is the same message that, for the past 20 years, the Taliban have been delivering to a thousand Afghan towns and villages. Responses from our side must be seen to be home-grown, not foreign. Australian counterinsurgency specialist David Kilcullen has written that an insurgency “derives its morale, its physical strength, its freedom of action, and its will to act [from] its connectivity with the local population in a given area. Insurgent’s ride and manipulate a social wave of grievances, often legitimate.” In Afghanistan it exasperates Westerners that many communities choose to seek domestic arbitration from Taliban courts dispensing Islamic justice, rather than from those of the government.

On a visit to Kabul some years ago, I was invited to meet a government minister, who proved to be a bright young man, with imaginative ideas for his country. But he had spent most of his own life in West Coast America: I suspect that his English was better than his Pashto. Many prominent members of recent Afghan governments have kept a substantial part of their assets outside their country, against the contingency of being obliged to flee for their lives. They have thus — albeit with prudent realism — been less than wholly committed.

The operations of Western armies place a crippling heavy footprint upon primitive societies. Flying low in Blackhawks over both Iraq and Afghanistan, I have often speculated about how housewives beneath us must feel about Westerners, as dust storms whipped up by our rotors swept through their washing on clotheslines. I wrote in my Vietnam book that,

even before considering the kinetic consequences of the military presence, “American decision-makers failed to realise the economic and cultural impact of a huge foreign army. A Vietnamese secretary at USAID earned more than a South Vietnamese colonel. Bulldozers and conexes, antennae and armoured vehicles, watchtowers, sandbags and concertina wire ravaged the environment even before guns began to fire, helicopters to swirl overhead, huge soldiers to purchase the sexual attentions of tiny local women.” The U.S. sought to conduct the sort of conflict that suited its armed forces, rather than the one it was stuck with, against a foe who set the lightest imaginable footprint.

All this has happened again in Iraq and Afghanistan. Who would want to serve the Kabul government, for a fraction of the pay available to those who work for foreigners? Only a tiny number of Westerners can communicate directly with local people. As a journalist accompanying a British patrol through an Afghan village, I do not think it was a figment of my imagination to discern hatred in the eyes of watchful local men. Western warriors in body armor and sunglasses look more like robots than humans.

I urged on a British army chief the need to make more soldiers Pashto-speakers. He responded that it would be unreasonable to interrupt men’s professional careers to learn a language that had no application outside Afghanistan. The U.S. Army has run an energetic language program, but the number of deployed troops who can talk to local people is still very small. ... **P3**

By C. Raja Mohan

## Bringing Peace to Afghanistan And Myanmar Won’t Be Easy

Efforts to end two major conflicts in India’s neighbourhood have become intense. To the east, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) has produced a diplomatic opening with Myanmar’s military leadership over the weekend. The Tatmadaw, as Myanmar’s army is known, took charge of the nation in a coup in early February and has cracked down hard on protestors since.

To the west, a peace summit on Afghanistan, seeking to end decades of conflict there, was also scheduled to take place in Istanbul over the weekend. It had to be postponed given the Taliban’s refusal to join any such peace conference until all foreign forces leave Afghanistan. Although the US and NATO have agreed to leave Afghanistan before September 11, the Taliban has refused to budge.

The Taliban wants to denude Kabul and its international supporters of the last bit of their declining military leverage before the talks begin. Scepticism about the Taliban’s willingness for peace has been high ever since the Trump Administration in the US began engaging with it in the summer of 2018. Political forces in Myanmar worry

that the ASEAN initiative will only legitimise the coup and give the military leadership time to consolidate. Similar concerns were expressed when the US and the international community began to negotiate with the Taliban over the heads of the elected government in Kabul.

It is arguably easier to produce peace settlements between states by finding compromises where possible, finessing difficult issues where necessary, glossing over complex problems with diplomatic language that can be interpreted in different ways, and kicking the can down the road on the most complex issues.

Those general techniques are indeed much harder to apply when it comes to civil wars. The stakes for warring parties within a nation are much higher. One element is to gain dominant control over the state. The fear of the winner taking all is real and power-sharing arrangements are difficult to negotiate and implement. More often than not, civil wars have their origin in either sharply divergent perceptions about organising and governing the society or in deep ethnic, religious, regional and linguistic cleavages. Unlike

states that can negotiate in a cold-blooded manner about interests, near-term and long-term, and find ways of reconciling them, partially or in full, political passions drive civil wars and it is hard to step back and accept solutions that do not meet the original demands.

No two civil wars are the same. The context and issues at hand in Afghanistan and Myanmar are indeed different. But both have a long history. The sources of the Afghan conflict go back to the late 1970s; since then we have seen different phases of the conflict — the rise and fall of a left-wing government, Soviet occupation and the jihad against it, the chaos that followed the Russian retreat, the 9/11 attacks, and the US military intervention that is now drawing to a close.

Although the crisis in Myanmar appears recent, the tension between civil-military relations is not new. Back in 1988, the army annulled the huge mandate won by Aung San Suu Kyi and unleashed massive repression. Political reconciliation was found at the turn of the 2010s, but the uneasy coexistence of the last decade has broken down.

While all civil wars are different,

there are at least three common themes in any effort at peace and reconciliation. The first is about ending violence. In Afghanistan it has been near impossible to get a resurgent Taliban to agree to stop its attacks on government forces or the civilian population. It has certainly stopped violence against the US forces, but it appears determined to push for a complete military victory. The ASEAN initiative in Myanmar calls for an immediate cessation of violence and utmost restraint from all sides. The opposition demanding restoration of democracy might find this rather ironic, since it is the army that is employing violence and has shown scant restraint. As in Afghanistan, so in Myanmar, persuading the main perpetrator of violence to stop is not easy.

The second theme in the ASEAN initiative — “constructive dialogue among all parties” to “seek a peaceful solution” — is also common to all peace processes. But getting the parties to move towards productive engagement is easier said than done. The Taliban found all kinds of excuses to delay a dialogue with the Kabul government that it always saw as illegitimate. So far, it has avoided one. In Myanmar, the army might be ready to engage the opposition in a prolonged dialogue and defuse international pressure; but it will be hard for the victims of the coup

to accept a dialogue on the army’s terms.

That leaves the final theme of the peace process — the role of third party mediators. The Afghan conflict, as we mentioned before, has long been internationalised. All major powers, including regional actors and neighbours, have acquired stakes in the way the Afghan conflict is resolved.

Most of them are involved one way or another in the various formats of the peace process. The external actors are unsurprisingly divided on the nature of the solutions. This unfortunately makes the construction of an internal settlement that much harder.

In Myanmar, the ASEAN has set the ball rolling by agreeing that a special envoy will be traveling to the region and will engage with all parties to the conflict. It remains to be seen the kind of terms that Myanmar might set for the visit and the dialogue with the opposition.

Peace diplomacy, however, is reinforced by carrots and sticks. The US is hoping that the Taliban will moderate some of its hardline positions given its need for significant international economic assistance for reconstruction, political legitimacy as well as the awareness of the costs of winning power in Kabul in opposition to the US and the West. In Myanmar, too, the international community will hope the military would want ... **P3**

## Afghanistan Produces Over 855,000 Tons Potatoes Last Year: Gov't

Afghanistan harvested 855,395 metric tons of potatoes in all farms across the country in 2020, the country's Ministry of Agriculture Irrigation and Livestock announced on Sunday.

"Most potato fields are located in Bamyan, Maidan-Wardak, Logar, Ghor, Herat, Farah, Baghlan, Balkh, Faryab, Jawzjan, Nangarhar and

Kunduz provinces. The area under potato cultivation reached 53,674 hectares last year," the ministry said in a statement.

"Potatoes are those vegetables which have numerous customers to consume. As a result of the efforts of experts and farmers, a great difference has been unveiled compared to the

past in quantity, price and quality of potatoes," the ministry said.

The ministry also built thousands of zero-energy cold storages to store potatoes in different provinces, it said. The agro-climatic conditions of Afghanistan are ideally suitable for good quality potato production. Potatoes are a significant commodity

for the country, with a strong domestic market and a seasonally fluctuating import and export market. The Afghan government has taken measures to invest in agricultural sector to further create job opportunities for people and to boost economy in the land-locked Asian state.

### Bringing Peace...

to avoid the risks of political isolation and economic punishment. But how the Taliban and the Myanmar army calculate these costs and benefits could be very different. Both have long experience of surviving external pressure and enduring sanctions. They can also bet on the unsustainability of external pressure over the long-term and hope to exploit the differences among the major powers. What matters in any civil war, in the ultimate analysis, is the balance of forces between rival forces or a fundamental rethinking of positions by the warring parties.

Few civil wars have seen the kind of massive external effort to change the internal dynamics as in Afghanistan; but to no avail. In Myanmar, it is not clear how far the international community might go. Nor is there evidence of fresh thinking among the stronger parties in the two nations. The prospects for positive change in Afghanistan and Myanmar, then, do not look too bright in the near term.

### US Introduce...

duty-free," a statement read.

The bipartisan bill was introduced by Democrat Senators Van Hollen, Maria Cantwell and Republican Senator Todd Young. The outlined objectives of the say that fostering trade with the Pakistan-Afghanistan border region will help bolster economic development and improve the livelihoods of local populations.

The effort will further US diplomatic objectives in the region by contributing to political stability and addressing the root causes of violent extremism, as well as expanding trade with Pakistan will strengthen ties with a key strategic partner and enhance economic development in a region important to US interests. Pakistani-born American Democrat leader and well-known businessman Tahir Javed says this legislation allows textile goods to be sent to US without duty. "If [this] bill becomes part of law after approval, it will be of great benefit to Pakistan for 10 years," he said, adding that Pakistan's exports to US could increase tenfold.

Javed expressed the belief that the legislation will bring economic benefits to Afghanistan and Pakistan.

The democrat leader said the bill has been introduced to promote stability in the region and can solve many of Pakistan's problems. The Democrat leader said this bill could mean relations between Pakistan and US may find a new direction Efforts will be made to get 60 votes in making the economic bill a law, he said.

### COVID-19: Over...

claimed over 3.18 million lives in 192 countries and regions since December 2019.

Over 151.51 million cases have been reported around the world, with recoveries now nearing 88.4 million, according to figures compiled by the US' Johns Hopkins University. The US, India, and Brazil remain the worst-hit countries in terms of infections, while the death toll is currently highest in the US, Brazil, and Mexico.

## Heart of Asia

Chief Editor: M. Hamid Hamdard

Reporters: Safiullah Nasary, Shafiq Amirzay,

Jawad Temori & Hameedullah Hamidi

Graphic & Design: Arman

Phone: +93-202502100 - +93-777989696

Website: www.heartofasia.af

Email: heartofasiadaily@gmail.com

Address: Behind Rahman Baba High School

- Opposite to 3<sup>rd</sup> District,

Kabul - Afghanistan

Print: Waygal Printing .Co - +93 - 202512626

### The Vietnam...

In 2012, TV journalist Ben Anderson was embedded with a British unit. Back home, he got a translator to transcribe conversations he had filmed, conducted through interpreters. These revealed that much of the language reported by the latter to the soldiers was false, softened to mask the rudenesses of the Afghan original. There was little authentic intercourse.

Atrocities have taken place, which attracted little attention back in our own countries but rendered more difficult a relationship of trust. Some members of U.S., British and Australian special forces have engaged in deplorable and indeed murderous treatment of local people, for which retributive justice has proved elusive. I do not mean to detract from the courage and skills of most special force's personnel, who do fine things. Memories of the murderous ones, however, linger longer in Afghan and Iraq minds than do the heroes. It is hard to cure some Western warriors of the mindset — which of course prevailed toward so-called "gooks" in Vietnam — that "what's one towelhead the less?"

You cannot kill your way out of an insurgency, even if some killing must play a part in achieving an acceptable outcome. Sensible strategy demands the elimination of a minority of irreconcilable enemies, but also the persuasion of a majority that they will gain more by talking than fighting.

Most Westerners deployed in Afghanistan have served tours of duty too short for them to understand either the place or the people. U.S. soldiers complete a year, but the British have run six-month rotations. Their units have thus spent the first two months in-country learning their business; the last month, packing up.

Such a policy may have been necessary to sustain the morale of young troops, to whom a year overseas can seem an eternity. But contrast that with the policy of European imperial forces stationed abroad in the 19th century, or even of Americans in the 20th century Philippines: Their generations expected to spend half their careers in overseas postings, and to become imbued with local cultures and languages.

A subsidiary problem is the weakness of grass-roots "humint" — human intelligence about local conditions. At its higher levels, Western intelligence can be formidably

empowering, especially in exploiting electronic interception. It is much less impressive, however, in fathoming the tribal and family issues that play a critical part in determining behavior in Muslim societies. I have heard many officers complain that, whatever their commanders may know about the activities of Taliban or Islamic State leaders hundreds of miles away, their own briefings reveal pathetically little about what is happening on their patch, in the next village.

Whatever fig leaves of pretense are placed on commitments for propaganda purposes, our recent campaigns have been conducted — as in Vietnam — to serve Western interests. Of course every nation that goes to war has selfish motives. But the consequence is that, however much material aid is lavished on local people, it is hard to persuade them that our interests and theirs coincide.

In the years ahead, Islamic terrorism is likely to remain a chronic problem. Western governments will again feel obliged to intervene in faraway places, perhaps including Afghanistan. We must simply learn to do this better, and to think much longer. Kilcullen urges the importance of "higher levels of cultural understanding... [which] is difficult within the culture of regular armies." In his 2010 handbook on counterinsurgency, he argues passionately that Western interventionists can prevail, but only provided that "victory" is sensibly defined, as it was not by the administration of President George W. Bush after 9/11.

Well-intentioned Westerners are often mystified by how Afghans and others can bring themselves to spurn the security, prosperity, women's advancement, education and health care that the incomers offer. Yet success can only be achieved by convincing the population that their government and its representatives are identified with themselves, and not with foreigners in Washington or London. To reassert the Vietnam comparison: The Taliban are close to victory because they are Afghans, whereas the present Kabul government is identified with the U.S. and its allies.

Moreover, our enemies unfailingly display more patience than ourselves. In 1966 in Hanoi, North Vietnamese premier Pham Van Dong taunted the visiting New York Times journalist Harrison Salisbury:

"How long do you Americans want to fight, Mr. Salisbury? One year? Two years? Three years? Five years? Ten Years? Twenty years? We shall be glad to accommodate you." As history records, the communists bore the pain, and the vast casualties, of sustaining that war until the U.S. tired of it. Again and again since, America and its allies have committed to a five-round fight, only to discover that their opponents propose to stay in the ring for ten.

In Afghanistan, let us recall Kilcullen's phrase about definitions of victory. We cannot extinguish the Taliban, nor indeed militant Islamists anywhere; we can only aspire to contain them. This aspiration is by no means a bad one, but it does not suffice for President Biden. He is only the foremost among Americans who are weary of stalemate. Afghans have always been opportunists. Some time ago, most concluded that the Taliban were likely to outlast the West, and placed their bets accordingly.

Yet if Washington and its allies displayed the will to keep a very modest stake on the table in Afghanistan — small numbers of troops and quite large amounts of cash—they might not win a "victory," but they could probably frustrate a Taliban triumph that otherwise seems almost inevitable. It would be naive to anticipate that the Taliban will respect the terms of its February 2020 agreement with the U.S. not to allow Afghanistan to become again a base for international terror. The country is overwhelmingly likely to rewind the clock: to drag the more than 3.5 million Afghan girls who now attend school back to a future as domestic and sexual servants; to remove women from the modest but growing number of responsible posts they occupy; to restore to the imams the power that they exercise to such baleful effect in Iran.

Maybe the war was always unwinnable. Maybe the U.S. president is merely displaying a realism that his predecessors lacked. But it is depressing to acknowledge before the eyes of the world that the 47,000 civilians who have perished since 2007 died for nothing, not to mention the Afghan, U.S., British and other foreign troops who have lost their lives. If we cannot teach ourselves to intervene abroad with more skill, sensitivity and conviction than we have displayed in Afghanistan, we had better stay home.

### Exchange Rates

77.45	\$	77.55
92.6	€	92.7
105.4	£	105.5
494	Rp.	495
20.9	دراهم	21
1060	₹	1070

### Contact Numbers

Kabul Police - 119

Kabul Ambulance - 112

Wazir Akbar Khan Hospital

0202301360

Ata Turk Hospital

0202500312

Corona call center - 166



Aksos

اکسوس کتابپلورنژی  
Aksos Book Store



Add a Book  
to  
Your Life

- Dehbori Crossroads in front of Park Kabul
- 0798 98 9696, 020 250 46 52
- aksosbookstore@gmail.com
- www.aksosbookstore.af
- Aksos Book Store
- Aksos Book Store



WAYGAL Printing Co.

If You Can Think It,  
We Can Ink It.

#### OFFSET PRINTING

- Logo Design
- Business Card
- Books
- Latterheads
- Magazines
- Newspapers
- File Folders
- Brochure
- Flyers
- Calendars
- Posters
- other...

- +93 (0) 704 734 984
- +93 (0) 782 98 9696
- +93 (0) 202512626
- Dehbori Crossroads in Front of Park Kabul
- waygalprinting.co@gmail.com

# Tehran-Riyadh Talks May Continue at Ambassadors Level

In a report, the New York Times claimed that the next phase of talks between Iran and Saudi Arabia may be held in May between the ambassadors of the two countries.

The US media made the claim citing Iranian and Iraqi officials who spoke on condition of anonymity.

Recent reports claimed that Tehran and Riyadh have held negotiations in Baghdad to solve disputes. Both Tehran and Riyadh have rejected the reports.

Meanwhile, Iran's Foreign Ministry Spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh reacted to the recent remarks made by Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman about Tehran-Riyadh relations and the region.

"Iran and Saudi Arabia, as two important countries in the region and the Muslim

world, can enter a new chapter of interaction and cooperation to achieve regional peace, stability, and development by adopting constructive and dialogue-based approaches," Khatibzadeh said on Thursday.

"By presenting proposals and initiatives for dialogue and cooperation in the Persian Gulf region, including the Hormuz Peace Endeavour (HOPE), the Islamic Republic of Iran has been a pioneer in the path of amity and regional cooperation, and welcomes the change in Saudi Arabia's tone," he added.

Khatibzadeh finally expressed hope that the holy month of Ramadan, the month of divine mercy, would be a blessed beginning for convergence among the Islamic society and end of war, displacement, and insecurity in this region.



### A look at the world

#### Denmark Accused Of 'Sacrificing the Future' Of Syrian Children

Danish authorities have been accused of putting the futures of dozens of refugee children at risk by threatening to expel them to Syria, despite warnings that it is not safe to do so.

In a statement released on Wednesday, children's rights group Save the Children said it was "deeply concerned" to discover that at least 70 refugee children are at risk of being expelled to Syria.

Denmark sparked outcry after it announced plans to strip Syrian refugees from Damascus of temporary protections allowing them to stay in the country



after officials determined that it was safe for them to return home due to the security situation in parts of Syria having "improved" significantly.

The move comes following a report last year in which the government said "the conditions in Damascus in Syria are no longer so serious that there are grounds for granting or extending temporary residence permits".

As a result of the decision, hundreds of Syrian refugees from the region are at risk of losing their residency permits, which would likely force them to return home to a country that has been embroiled in conflict for the past decade.

Speaking with Euronews on Wednesday, Amjad Yamin, Advocacy, Media and Communications Director at Save the Children's Syria office, said the organisation was aware of at least 70 children who are awaiting on a final decision on whether or not they lose their rights to stay in Denmark. If their rejections are confirmed, they and their family members would have to make plans with Danish authorities to return to Syria or they could be placed in departure centres for an indefinite period, he said.

#### Iranian Foreign Minister Apologizes for Leaked Comments



Iran's foreign minister apologized Sunday for recorded comments that were leaked to the public last week, creating a firestorm in Iran less than two months before presidential elections.

The recordings of Mohammad Javad Zarif included frank comments on powerful late Iranian Gen. Qassem Soleimani, who was killed by a U.S. drone strike in 2020. The attack at the time brought the U.S. and Iran to the brink of war. Soleimani's funeral processions in Iran drew millions of people to the streets.

In the recordings, Zarif criticizes Soleimani's separate relations with Russia and for refusing to stop using the national carrier Iran Air for Syrian operations despite Zarif's objections. Iran Air has been sanctioned by the U.S.

Zarif said in an Instagram post Sunday he hoped Soleimani's family would forgive him. "I hope that the great people of Iran and all the lovers of General (Soleimani) and especially the great family of Soleimani, will forgive me," he said.

Zarif's leaked comments were highly controversial in Iran, where officials mind their words amid a cut-throat political environment that includes the powerful Revolutionary Guard, ultimately overseen by the country's supreme leader.

Besides the criticism of Soleimani, a top commander in the Guard, Zarif's leaked remarks included cutting references to the limits of his power in the theocracy.

Zarif can be heard saying at various points in the seven-hour tape that it was not meant for release.

"If I had known that a sentence of it would be made public, I certainly would not have mentioned it as before," he said in his Instagram post.

Zarif has said he will not run for president in the upcoming election. Some had suggested him as a potential candidate to challenge hard-liners in the vote.

#### COVID-19: Over 1.1B Vaccine Shots Given Worldwide

Over 1.1 billion doses of COVID-19 vaccines had been administered around the world by the start of May, according to figures from the online resource Our World in Data.

With 253.46 million jabs China is the country where the greatest number of vaccine shots have been given to date.

It is followed by the US with 240.16 million, India 154.98 million, the UK 48.14 million, Brazil 41.99 million, Germany 28.77 million, Turkey 22.87 million, France 20.97 million, Indonesia 19.89 million, Russia 19.52 million, Italy 19.42 million, Mexico 17.36 million, Spain 15.86 million, Chile 14.62 million, Canada 13.13 million, Poland 11.47 million, and the UAE at 10.55 million doses.

The country with the highest vaccination rate



is the island nation of Seychelles, where the number of doses administered per 100 people is 127.66.

It is followed by Israel at 121.24, the UAE 106.64, San Marino 85.36, Chile 76.47, Malta 75.06, the Maldives 73.63, Bahrain 71.94, the US 70.97, the UK 70.91, Bhutan 62.25, and Monaco with 62.15 doses per 100 people.

Turkey 7th in the world According to the Turkish Health Ministry's figures, over 22.87 million [22,874,102] doses of COVID-19 vaccines have been administered in Turkey to date. The figure puts Turkey at number seven on the list of countries where most doses have been administered.

The number of vaccine doses given per 100 people in Turkey presently stands at 26.76.

Over 13.74 million [13,740,100] people have been given the first dose of a vaccine in Turkey, while more than 9.13 million [9,134,002] have completed a two-dose course.

Drastic gap in hemispheres Continents in the northern hemisphere have a clear lead when it comes to vaccinations, with Asia's 520.94 million jabs the highest in the world, followed by North America with 273.13 million and Europe with 221.22 million. In the southern hemisphere, 74.6 million jabs have been administered in South America, 17.68 million in Africa, and 2.41 million in the Oceania region.

Worldwide tally The COVID-19 pandemic has now ...



# Shigal

English Academy

AMERICAN ENGLISH FILE



Western Street of  
Kabul University Close to  
Dehbori Park.



+93 (0) 789 98 9696



shigal.edu@gmail.com



Shigal English Academy