Notes of the month

Afghan futures

Total military and political confusion reigns in Afghanistan at the present time. The idea of a broad-based coalition government for peace—comprising the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA), the official party of the ruling Communist Party, with some, if not all, of the opposition parties—appears to be totally out of the question. A political compromise may make sense at this late stage, but after years of warfare and suffering by the Afghan people too much stands in the way, whatever well-meant UN officials and others consider to be a solution.

On the 14th, the voice of the Afghan people was not heard—or even considered. Critics of the agreement maintain that the governments of the United States and Pakistan actually helped to legitimise the Kabul regime by putting their signature to the final document—a document that, anyway, contradicted itself.

The agreement, it seems, was an unofficial agreement between the United States and the Soviet Union that each would go on supplying arms to the other side in the conflict. By gaining over "negative" and "positive" reciprocity in these future arms transfers, it appears, a private matter between the superpowers. This made a mockery of the Geneva agreement. The main problem with the Geneva agreement, however, it seems, is that it fails to provide a comprehensive political agreement. The phased withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan, however desirable, in itself, does not mean peace. And even that withdrawal has recently been questioned from Moscow. It does not take long for events to take on a life of their own. The Afghan government has defended the Soviet withdrawal from the Afghan government, and the Afghan government has refused to yield to the Soviet government's pressure to link the withdrawal of the Soviet forces to a political solution.

On the 13th, the agreement between the United States and the Soviet Union, which Moscow officially recognised as a part of "normal arms-trade relations". On the 14th, the agreement was signed by the two governments, who were said to be "decentralised and permanent" by the UN officials. The UN officials said that the agreement was only a start, and that the Afghan government had to agree to the withdrawal of the Soviet forces.

A multiplicity of leaders and many risks. The evident crisis in the leadership of the Afghan resistance has various causes, none of them simple. Above all, the manner in which the present leaders of the parties in exile emerged—out of a coalition of small groups largely formed by Afghan exiles from the 1979-1989 war—has never been conducive to unity. The Afghan war has been a civil war, when the people of Afghanistan made it clear that in no circumstances would they accept the alien and dictatorial government of a tiny group of hard-line Communists, led by Nur Mohammad Taraki and Hafizullah Amin of the Khalq faction of the PDPA. The so-called "Saur Revolution" of April 1978, by which the communist PDPA took power, was merely a military coup, and never gained popularity or legitimacy in the country.

After the Soviet invasion at the end of 1978, opposition to what most Afghans regarded as a puppet regime imposed by hated Russians intensified. What sustained the Afghans' resistance, in the face of overwhelming force and ruthless repression, was a formidable combination of religious faith and nationalism.

Spokesmen for the Afghan guerrilla resistance claim that the US will rapidly succeed in its goal of putting the PDPA regime in power, after the withdrawal of Soviet forces. But doubts remain. Above all, there is every clear risk of a failed military and political solution to the problem of the Afghan government, and the US could involve itself in the civil war between at least some of the rival elements of the heavily-armed guerrilla forces.

One admiringly pessimistic scenario sees preparations for an alliance between guerrillas of the various parties, quite as much as the US and the Soviet Union, as against the Kabul government. This would spread the fighting throughout the country, and effectively kill any lingering...
ing hopes of a rapid return to peace and a coalition government led by resistance parties.

How to avert such a civil war should be the concern of all people of goodwill. Were such a civil war to occur before the departure of the US-NATO forces, it would, of course, dramatically improve the chances of survival of the Afghan Peace. Democratic Party regime. For the mass of the Afghan people who support the resistance, such a turn of events could bring the promise of real democracy and prosperity. One should be vigilant, however, for the US and NATO forces may not stay forever.

However, we cannot ignore the possibility that the US and NATO forces aimed to pose a real threat to the Talibani regime. The US and NATO forces may not stay forever. The Afghan government, led by President Karzai, has so far failed to set up a real democracy and prosperity. The Afghan government is still in the process of forming a new government. The new government is expected to be more democratic and prosperous than the old government.

The future of Afghanistan is still uncertain. However, the Afghan government should be encouraged to continue its efforts to establish a democratic and prosperous society. The Afghan government should also be encouraged to continue its efforts to establish a democratic and prosperous society. The Afghan government should also be encouraged to continue its efforts to establish a democratic and prosperous society.


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