



IICR'S  
EXCLUSIVE  
**GLOBE**  
2020

Discourse on Contemporary  
Global and Regional Issues

CHAPTER 3

**FROM INTER-AFGHAN  
DIALOGUE TO INTR-AFGHAN:  
HOW KABUL'S FUTURE WILL BE  
RESHAPED?**

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# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR WORDS

Islamabad Institute of Conflict Resolution aims to draw strategically comprehensive analysis on the contemporary conflicts. Moreover we not only aims to draw analysis but also to present foreseeable way-forward to the peaceful end of the conflicts.

I personally believe that it is that time when our country need think-tanks to play actively the role they are destined to. It is time that nation works collectively to overcome national and international hurdles. Yet there is a marathon to run in this regard

Sincerely,

**Ms. Sabah Aslam**

Founder/Executive Director IICR

IICR

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# ABOUT IICR



Islamabad Institute of Conflict Resolution (IICR) is an autonomous, independent research based think tank which believes in ethics of research. Regular research is conducted with the aim of a deep and insight based analysis in order to resolve various issues associated with peace and conflict at the domestic, regional and international level. IICR has a vibrant team of experts, researchers and scholars who have immersed themselves to make the purpose a success.

## **Mission**

Apart IICR believes in conducting in-depth research keeping research ethics into consideration. Our mission is to conduct an independent and unbiased research to propose sound solutions and policy recommendations to deal with humanitarian and security challenges of Pakistan and the region. In addition, we are closely monitoring China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), its progress and its implications for not only Pakistan but for the whole region.

## **Goals**

- a) To conduct in-depth research on issues concerning Pakistan.
- b) To identify key areas of cooperation especially in the field of security.
- c) To document, disseminate and strengthen peace and conflict resolution efforts through analytical discourse.
- d) To identify, articulate and evaluate conflict issues through research and other academic pillars i.e. round-tables, workshops, seminars, and conferences.
- e) To promote post-conflict rehabilitation while initiating and contributing to local, national, and regional peace and conflict transformation initiatives.
- f) To remain committed to promote core social values, as well as public awareness and practice of constructive conflict resolution.
- g) To enhance socio-economic and security environment through informed dialogue, and debate on key issues.
- h) To critically analyse Pakistan's political, socio-economic and foreign policy challenges and to support efforts to integrate the country.
- i) To integrate youth in research work particularly to conflict resolution and making peace efforts.
- j) To secure friendly and cooperative international system, &
- k) To present actual positive image of Pakistan.

## **Publications**

Monographs, Annual Reports, Monthly Briefs, Special Reports, and Weekly Rundown

# GLOBE 2020

## Discourse on Contemporary Global and Regional Issues

With changing global dynamics, international political landscape evolves continuously. Therefore, development of fresh understanding and building of new knowledge are warranted. In pursuit of this objective the Islamabad Institute of Conflict Resolution (IICR) plans to provide, a one of its kind of interactive platform, named Globe 2020 A series of discourses on contemporary global as well as regional issues with greater politico-strategic and socio-economic impact. The idea is to bring intellectuals and experts of the fields on one table to acquire their valuable opinions through intensive interactive sessions. Additionally, the IICR aims at drawing inferences from these sittings to formulate recommendations for public and policy makers in the best interest of people and states and for regional peace and stability. Globe 2020 comprises number of sessions, each highlighting a specific issue.

Due to COVID-19 IICR has converted the planned Discourses into Series of Webinars. The First Session: ***“CPEC At the New Crossroads”*** was conducted on May 1, 2020. The second in the series: ***“India’s Malevolence The Regional Peace”*** was conducted on 5th June 2020.

# Agreement for Bringing Peace to Afghanistan FROM INTER-AFGHAN<sup>03</sup> DIALOGUE TO INTRA- AFGHAN: HOW KABUL'S FUTURE WILL BE RESHAPED?



US- Taliban peace deal was not an easy job. It took years to conclude. Initial efforts that commenced as early as 2011 continued experiencing crests and troughs. Hiccups, delays and discontinuations and re-continuations kept taking turns. This peace deal also took renewed and very hard efforts of about a year plus. The peace deal is not an end in itself. However, it may be viewed as a ray of hope and a meaningful step towards building long lasting peace in Afghanistan through intra-Afghan dialogue and power sharing. US has committed to withdraw all its troops in 14 months. The peace deal has started facing retarders already. President Ashraf Ghani appears to be out of step with USA and is pursuing his own political scheme, yet one can be optimistic that US will be able to persuade him to engage in dialogue with Taliban and honor US-Taliban peace deal for better future of Afghanistan. However given the history of Afghan land all aspects seem to be hypothetical and wishful desires.

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# Speaker's Profile

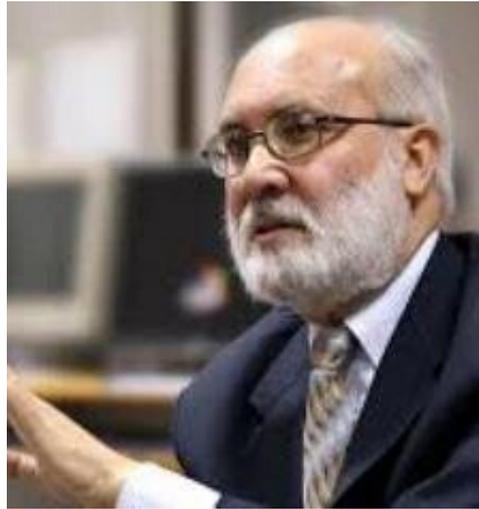


**Major General Raza Muhammad®** has varied Command, Operational and Intelligence experience. He has been an instructor at Pakistan Military Academy, Pakistan Staff College and National Defence University. He served on deputation in Saudi Arabian Army as well.

He has attended Leadership Academy of German Armed Forces Hamburg and did Peacekeeping Course for Decision Makers at Defence Institute of Legal Studies USA.

Before retiring he was Additional Secretary in Ministry of Defence Production. After retirement he was appointed High Commissioner of Pakistan at Mauritius. He also served as Executive Director in Army Welfare Trust Rawalpindi.

He has a Masters degree in War Studies from Quaid-i-Azam University Islamabad and M.Phil. in International Relations from National Defence University, where he is presently registered as PhD scholar in the Department of International Relations. He is a senior member advisory board in Islamabad Institute of Conflict Resolution (IICR).



Rahimullah Yusufzai is a Pakistani journalist and political and security analyst, best known for having interviewed Osama bin Laden, and Afghan Taliban leader Mullah Omar. He is a war correspondent.

Yusufzai was among the first journalists to report on the Taliban and visited Kandahar, Afghanistan in 1995. He is one of the few bona fide experts on Afghanistan, having reported on the country since the 1979 invasion of Afghanistan by the former Soviet Union.

Yusufzai is considered an authority on Afghan affairs and on the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) of Pakistan. Acknowledging his achievements in journalism, the government of Pakistan first awarded him with Tamgha-e-Imtiaz (Medal of Excellence) in 2005. Then he received Sitara-i-Imtiaz Award (Star of Excellence) from the President of Pakistan for his achievement in the field of journalism on 23 March 2010.

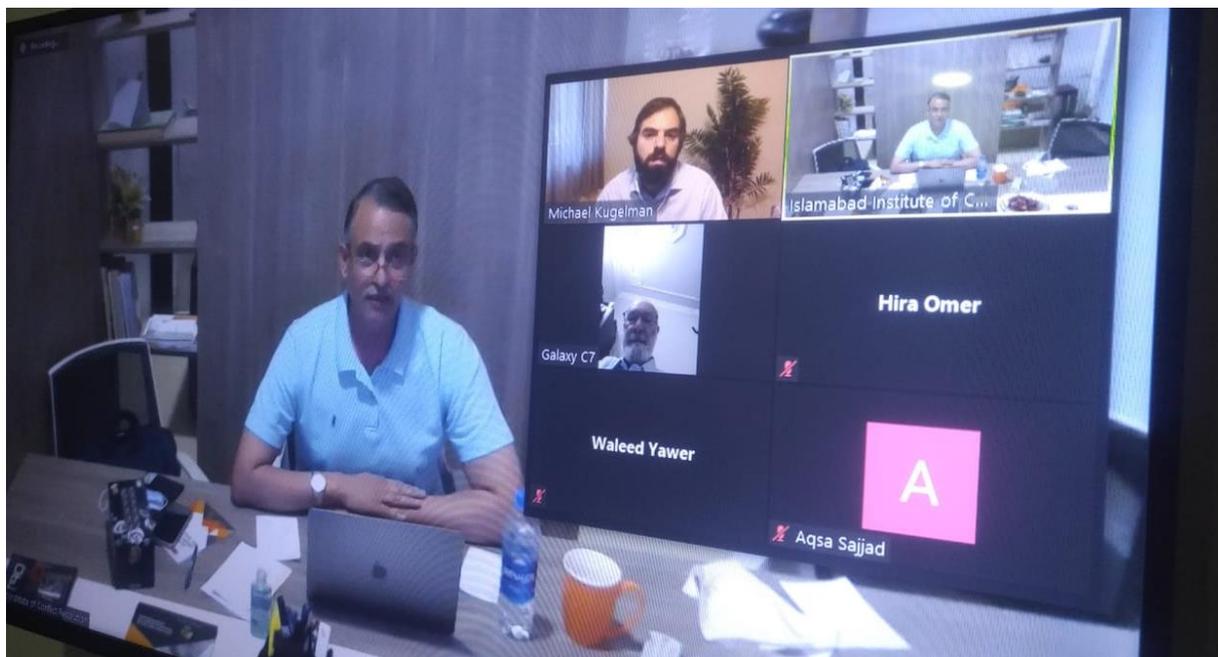


Michael Kugelman, the Deputy Director of the Asia Program and Senior Associate for South Asia at the Wilson Center, is a leading specialist on Afghanistan, India, and Pakistan and their relations with the United States. The editor or co-editor of 11 books, he has written for The New York Times, Foreign Policy, Foreign Affairs, and other publications, covering topics ranging from U.S. policy in Afghanistan to terrorism to water, energy, and food security in the region.

Mr. Kugelman writes monthly columns for Foreign Policy's South Asia Channel and monthly commentaries for War on the Rocks. He also contributes regular pieces to the Wall Street Journal's Think Tank blog. He has published op-eds and commentaries in the New York Times, Los Angeles Times, Politico, CNN.com, Bloomberg View, The Diplomat, Al Jazeera, and The National Interest, among others. He has been interviewed by numerous major media outlets including the New York Times, Washington Post, Financial Times, Guardian, Christian Science Monitor, National Geographic, BBC, CNN, NPR, and Voice of America.

## SESSION PROCEEDINGS:

The session was moderated by Maj. Gen. Raza Muhammad®, Chairman IICR while rest of the panelists presented their part.



### **Michael Kugelman:**

#### **Topic: US-Taliban Peace Agreement and Current US Policy on Afghanistan**

US goal in Afghanistan is simple. We all know that the President Trump wants to get out of Afghanistan and move its forces out of Afghanistan. This has been clear since the start of his presidency. He was never interested in military commitment in Afghanistan and when he announced his Afghanistan strategy in 2017, he said that he went against his own instincts when he agreed to stay in Afghanistan at that time. He was never comfortable for the stay.

He pursued talks with Taliban he wanted an agreement that would give him political cover to get out of Afghanistan. There is a reason in why the US or Trump administration succeeded in getting a deal done with the Taliban, which is that Trump Administration was willing to do what Barrack Obama was not. That is to hold bi-lateral talks without the Afghan Government. Taliban have been long interested in talks with US. They wanted US forces to be moved out of Afghanistan.

Trump wanted a deal, any deal to give him political cover to get out of Afghanistan and he did sign a deal, which is deeply flawed and very generous to Taliban. What the deal did? It improved relations between Pakistan and US. It has recognized that Pakistan was very helpful in bringing Taliban to the table.

The tricky part is intra-Afghan dialogue in which the role of US would be minimal, but it will be more active in it. Which is evident from the active visits of Zalmay Khaalilzad and Mike Pompeo. However, it is a tricky business to bring Taliban on extended cease-fire timelines and be less violent. If Intra-Afghan Dialogue begins, as it is said that the role of US would be minimized due to the fact it does not compel Taliban's to reach any deal with afghan government.

Another factor which adds into the equation is the recent UN report on Taliban's association with Al-Qaeda is highlighted. However, the US has not given serious concern over the report, as it wants to keep the deal in play. While in US even if Joe Biden wins the election in November there is less chance that policy related to Afghanistan would change due to strong bi-partisan support for the American withdrawal from Afghanistan.

#### **Key Findings from the Discussion:**

1. What happens to US funding to Afghanistan after the withdrawal? If it stops, it would have serious implications for Afghanistan, its security forces will also be affected ultimately making the field open again.
2. What happens to US-Pakistan relations after the withdrawal? It is a known fact that their partnership was largely depends upon Afghanistan. Henceforth both the countries need to find new avenues for cooperation.

#### **Recommendations which can be considered:**

1. US shall push Islamabad to make Taliban be less aggressive and violent.
2. United States shall also launch diplomatic offensive in consent with Kabul to make Taliban to lower the violence.

## **Rahimullah Yousafzai**

### **Topic: Intra-Afghan Dialogue and The Future of Afghan Nation**

There have been many ups and down after the Afghan peace deal has been signed. However, there is more hope that intra-afghan dialogue will happen. The Afghan peace deal has two main points i) the US forces will withdraw from Afghanistan and ii) The Afghan land shall not be used against United States. Nevertheless, there are also few hindrances as well. One was the release of the prisoners by both sides and next one was the Afghanistan's political issue. The later was solved few days back in form of coalition rule.

The deal is a plus for Taliban so they will propose quick proceedings however, for the sitting government, that could mean sharing of power and so they may adopt delaying tactics. For this, Taliban can use their military pressure, or any acts of violence in order to compel the central government of Afghanistan for a consensus as a result of an intra-Afghan dialogue, which will not be an easy task to perform.

#### **Key Findings from the Discussion:**

- Intra-Afghan talks would be more challenging as there are spoilers in the whole picture for Afghanistan.
- Taliban are no longer keen in any association, particularly the Al-Qaeda. They firmly believe that they have done their part and did enough of AQ and Osama Bin Laden in the past.
- Taliban now have political aspirations for Afghanistan.

#### **Recommendations:**

- Taliban must lower the violence in order to make things happen in a comfortable environment.
- Taliban also must lay a vision for the country and empathize with the people of Afghanistan in order to gain the local support.

**Maj. Gen. Raza Muhammad®**

**Concluding Remarks:**

It is for sure without any second opinion that Pakistan has suffered most in this whole Afghan saga. It has suffered in ever international and national aspect including huge monetary and human loss. The tripartite which was initiated in order to bring peaceful solution to the Afghanistan's everlasting pain, it was highlighted in it that there that there shall be talks with Taliban. However, at that time no one anticipated it as a viable solution. Most of the people though that Taliban can be overcome by force. However, here we are with a paper determining solution.

It is important to know the will of the Afghanistan's central government, as without them the half of the deal would be ineffective. If Ashraf Ghani and Abdullah Abdullah are willing to share their power with the Taliban, then there can be foresightedness of peace.

**Recommendations:**

- United States shall not stop its aid to the Afghanistan until the point or time of sustainability in Afghanistan. As after April 2021, there would be no or very minute presence in the Afghanistan, so not doing so would collapse the whole Afghan structure all the sudden.
- All parties shall consider the spoilers whether they are internal or external. There shall be proper mechanisms, which can be employed in order to minimize the role of spoilers.
- There shall be regional arrangement about the ownership of the agreement. Regional arrangement means those countries with effective role in Afghanistan such as: Pakistan, KSA, Turkey, Russia, China and Iran

**POST SESSION:**

**The Floor was then open for a discussion and Question-Answer session.**

**Michael Kugelman to Rahimullah Yousafzai**

**Michael:** How you see or react to the recent UN document, which enunciates that there is continued cooperation between Taliban and AQ leaders including talks between Zawahiri and senior leadership of Taliban prior to the Agreement?

**Rahimullah Yousafzai:** Let me tell you that there are two different sections of Taliban. One are the politicians, the political representators in Doha, Pakistan and Iran and also in various forums as well, and then we have the field commanders the people who fight, who plan attacks. Because of the very long association between Taliban and AQ it is not easy to dissociate all of the sudden. It is an agreeable fact that there are contacts but let me tell you that Taliban are not going to sacrifice their interest for the sake of Al-Qaeda, they may purpose that the AQ members in which majority of them are old, shall be allowed to go wherever they want. They will disassociate eventually.

I interviewed OBL twice. The first time was when he called me after the missile attack by the President Clinton on his bases in Khost. Then Mullah Omar called me on telephone from Kandahar, he was so angry with OBL. He told me that how come this man can declare jihad against the US from Afghan soil. I am the ruler Osama is a guest. Now Taliban know that they have suffered most due to Al-Qaeda and Osama Bin Laden, they don't want to suffer again. I don't foresee any long-term relationship between Taliban and AQ.

**Micheal Kugelman adding more in a discussion**

It is true that ceasefire is a necessary element in Intra-Afghan Dialogue. The Afghan government which at first was reluctant is now releasing prisoners which is a progressive step. Though, the Afghan government was not part of the clause of the prisoners' release part. There are lot of complexities as the intra-afghan dialogues begins. Although theoretically, intra-Afghan dialogue means, Afghan-led, Afghan-owned dialogue, but United States has an interlocutor role to play.

**Rahimullah Yousafzai Adding more**

It is very ironic situation indeed as on one side US wants Pakistan to play a major role in Afghanistan peace process, which Pakistan did. However, on the other hand Afghan government is not very keen of Pakistan to play a significant role specially now in Intra- Afghan dialogue. This is the dilemma that Afghanistan government thinks that Pakistan is doing it for its own interests to install a government of its choice in Kabul. I believe that Pakistan will play a less visible role in Intra-Afghanistan dialogue.

As far as spoilers are concerned Iran can be a spoiler as well as facilitator. India too, can be one of the prominent spoilers. Some time back, Afghan president's national security advisor was in Delhi and asked India to send troops to Afghanistan which was provocative request made by the advisor. It is high time to determine that what role India has to play because regional cooperation is very much important for sustainable peace in Afghanistan.

As far as internal situation of Afghanistan is concerned, people want peace now. Nevertheless, there is just power struggle in Afghanistan now as in last election the turnout was record low. President Ghani got less than 1 million votes in a country of 37 million people. It is good that Abdullah Abdullah has joined him there would be more assertive now. It is also important that the current spectrum of power shall agree to power sharing so that there could be peace in Afghanistan.

**Maj. Gen. Raza Muhammad® Concluding the Session**

As far as Pakistan and its establishment is concerned, they repeatedly have expressed to have regional peace. Even though, since the PM Khan came into power, he as well as the military leadership expressed strong desire of having cordial and friendly relations with neighbors. In that case, Pakistan even offered India multiple times to have dialogue which it denied every time. For the case of Afghanistan Pakistan always wanted sustainability because Pakistan's security is affected by Afghanistan. Henceforth, Pakistan will play its required role in bringing peace in Afghanistan. Moreover, regional ownership is also important.

# Coverage



**PTV World news package on webinar**

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