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### **Strategic Partnership Agreement between Afghanistan and U.S. (Effects and impacts of the agreement on security in the region)**

Security in the region is one of the most important issues in International studies because it had many ups and downs during last decades. Although International Society leading U.S. sent troops to Afghanistan in order to fight against international terrorism, but still security challenges are remained the same. However, currently there are more concentrating on roots of terrorism in Pakistan, but they are going to withdraw troops from Afghanistan after 2014. Some countries were pessimistic on presence of U.S. because they think U.S. has interests in Asia, controlling China, Russia and Iran. But others are worrying about future of region; especially that extremism is being extended to the east part of China, Central Asia, and even to the south borders of Russia. Strategic agreement between Afghanistan and U.S. may have both negative and positive effects and impacts on security in the region.

**Key words:** Agreement, Partnership agreement, security, regional security, New Silkway strategy, troops withdrawal,

P. Azhad

### **Соглашение о стратегическом партнерстве между Афганистаном и США (эффекты и влияние данного соглашения на безопасность в регионе)**

Несмотря на то, что международное сообщество, в котором ведущую роль занимают США, отправили войска в Афганистан, чтобы бороться с международным терроризмом, все же проблемы безопасности остались прежними. Тем не менее, все больше внимания уделяется корням терроризма в Пакистане. Предполагается вывод войск из Афганистана после 2014 года. Некоторые страны были пессимистично настроены на присутствие США, потому что они думают, что у США есть свои интересы в Азии, например, контроль Китая, России и Ирана. Однако другие беспокоятся о будущем региона, особенно, что экстремизм в настоящее время распространяется в восточной части Китая, Центральной Азии, и даже на южных границах России. Стратегическое соглашение между Афганистаном и США может иметь как отрицательные, так и положительные эффекты и воздействие на безопасность в регионе.

**Ключевые слова:** Соглашение, Товарищеское соглашение, безопасность, региональная безопасность, стратегия Новой шелковой пути, вывод войск.

P. Azhad

### **АҚШ пен Ауғанстан арасындағы стратегиялық серіктестік жөніндегі келісім (келісімнің аймақтағы қауіпсіздікке әсері мен ықпалы)**

Аймақтағы қауіпсіздік халықаралық қарым-қатынас іліміндегі маңызды мәселелердің бірі болып табылады, себебі өткен онжылдықта оның көптеген оң және сол жақтары болды. АҚШ халықаралық қоғамы Ауғанстанға терроризмнің алдын алу мақсатында әскер жібергенімен, әлі де қауіпсіздік мәселесі үлкен нәтиже бере қойған жоқ. Қазіргі таңда Пәкістандағы терроризмнің тамырын табу басты назарды талап етіп отырғандықтан, Ауғанстаннан әскерді шығару 2014 жылға шеттетіліп отыр. Көптеген елдер АҚШ әскерінің орналастыруын, оның Қытай, Ресей және Иранға өз ықпалын жүргізу мақсатында Азияға қызығушылық танытып отыр деген теріс көзқараста болды. Ал басқа сарапшылар осы аймақтарда экстремизмнің тамыр жайып, Қытайдың шығысы, Орталық Азия және Ресейдің оңтүстік шекарасына дейін жетіп отыр деп қауіптенуде.

**Түйін сөздер:** Келісім, серіктестік келісімі, қауіпсіздік, аймақтық қауіпсіздік, Жаңа жібек жолы стратегиясы, әскерлерді шығару.

**Introduction:** The U.S.–Afg. Strategic Partnership Agreement, officially titled Enduring Strategic Partnership Agreement between the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the United States of America, is an agreement between Afghanistan and the United States of America that provides the long-term framework for the relationship between Afghanistan and the United States of America after the drawdown of U.S. forces in the Afghanistan war. The Agreement went into effect on July 4, 2012, as stated by US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton at the Tokyo Conference on Afghanistan: "Like a number of countries represented here, the U.S. and Afghanistan signed a Strategic Partnership Agreement that went into effect four days ago." [1]

**Definition:** The Strategic Partnership Agreement (SPA) is a legally binding executive agreement, undertaken between two sovereign nations. The President's goal in negotiating such an agreement has been to define with the Afghan Government what's on the other side of Transition and the completed drawdown of U.S. forces. The agreement will detail how the partnership between the United States and Afghanistan will be normalized as we look beyond a responsible end to the war. Through this Agreement, we seek to cement an enduring partnership with Afghanistan that strengthens Afghan sovereignty, stability and prosperity, and that contributes to our shared goal of defeating Al Qaeda and its extremist affiliates. [1]

To be clear, the Strategic Partnership Agreement itself does not commit the United States to any specific troop levels or levels of funding in the future, as those are decisions will be made in consultation with the U.S. Congress. It does, however, commit the United States to seek funding from Congress on an annual basis to support the training, equipping, advising and sustaining of Afghan National Security Forces, as well as for social and economic assistance. Finally, the Strategic Partnership establishes implementing arrangements and mechanisms to ensure that we are effectively carrying out the commitments we've made to one another. [1]

**Regional Security:** Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan affirm that the three countries bear a shared and common responsibility for security and stability in the region, and reaffirm the commitment to playing their due role in the reconstruction of Afghanistan, a joint declaration said Saturday. "We agree that regional stability and security can only

be advanced through sincere and strict adherence to the principles of non-interference in the internal affairs of each other as well as respect for each other's sovereignty and territorial integrity," said the declaration signed after the trilateral meeting of the foreign ministers. Addressing a joint press conference with his counterparts from Iran and Afghanistan, Pakistani Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi said that Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan are the most important neighbors for establishing peace and stability in Afghanistan, adding that peace in Afghanistan means peace in the region [2].

The caretaker Afghan Foreign Minister Rangin Dadfar Spanta stressed that his country will not allow any country to operate on its land against its neighbors, especially Pakistan. The Iranian formal Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki said that regional approach is the key solution to resolve Afghanistan's problems and security challenges. The Pakistani foreign minister announced that Iran will host a conference of regional foreign ministers to discuss peace, security and cooperation to deal with the threat of terrorism and militancy. He said the meeting will be attended by Afghanistan and its six immediate neighbors [2].

**Events leading up to the agreement:** In March and April 2012 the U.S. and Afghanistan reached two agreements which have been reported by several newspapers as progress regarding the framework for U.S. involvement in Afghanistan beyond 2014, when the last foreign combat troops are due to leave Afghanistan. [3]

First a memorandum of understanding to transfer control of the Parwan Detention Facility next to Bagram Airfield from the United States to Afghanistan was signed on March 9, 2012. The agreement "will put an Afghan general in charge of Parwan within days, but will also give a six-month window to gradually transfer detainees to Afghan oversight. U.S. will continue to provide logistical support for 12 months and a joint US-Afghan commission will decide on any detainee releases until a more permanent pact is adopted." The memorandum of understanding shifts also the responsibility for all U.S. detention facilities to Afghanistan. [3]

Second, the United States agreed to turn over the control of special operations to Afghan forces on April 8, 2012. Part of the agreement is to give Afghan military units greater control of controversial

night raid operations unpopular with locals and to bring the raids under Afghan judicial authority, while American troops shift to a supporting role. The document was signed on 8 April 2012 by Afghan General Abdul Rahim Wardak and U.S. General John Allen. "Today we are one step closer to the establishment of the US-Afghan strategic partnership. Most importantly, today we are one step closer to our shared goal and vision of a secure and sovereign Afghanistan," Allen said at the deal's signing. [3]

According to Al Jazeera the U.S.-Afghan strategic partnership "is expected to provide for several thousand US troops to stay and train Afghan forces and help with counter-terrorism operations. It would outline the legal status of those forces, their operating rules and where they would be based." The Obama administration hopes to finalize the U.S.-Afghan strategic partnership before the 2012 NATO Summit in Chicago, but US efforts to finalize this partnership after one year of talks between the Afghanistan and American government have been complicated by incidents involving the U.S. such as the burning of copies of the Quran and the death of 17 Afghans in southern Afghanistan. [4]

Draft text: On April 22, 2012, after more than a year and a half of negotiations, Afghanistan and the United States finalized the draft text for the US Afghan strategic partnership, which will be reviewed by both countries' governments before it becomes final after the Afghan and American president sign it. [4]

The agreement named "Enduring Strategic Partnership Agreement between Afghanistan and the United States" has a duration of at least 10 years, lays out the framework for a future U.S. role in Afghanistan, including aid assistance and governance advice, and covers the areas of social and economic development, institution building, regional cooperation and security. U.S. help to support Afghan economic development, health care programs, education and social initiatives are part of the agreement. The status of U.S. troops and the details of their operations after the 2014 withdrawal of NATO forces is not included in the partnership, but shall be covered in a separate status of forces agreement. Long-term US access to military bases in Afghanistan as well as the size or location of US bases in Afghanistan are also not part of the strategic partnership. [4]

According to Afghan Foreign Minister, Zalmi Rassoul, there will be no permanent US bases in Afghanistan. He told the Afghan Senate that the United States is "not interested in having military bases in Afghanistan which might be seen as a threat to our neighbors", but Afghan National Security Advisor Rangin Dadfar Spanta said before the Afghan parliament "After signing the strategic pact, a separate security agreement which will allow or not allow the existence of US permanent bases in Afghanistan will be signed after one year if agreed." [5]

The strategic partnership draft text contains broad provisions for matters (such as economic development and security) which are of common concern for both countries, however, an unnamed U.S. official told Time magazine "specifics that go beyond the scope of the framework will need to be discussed and addressed in future memorandum of understanding, agreements or other arrangements as appropriate." Obstacles on the way to the agreement of the draft text were the issues of night raids conducted by U.S. troops and the operation of detention facilities by the United States. [5]

The New York Times reported in this context in April 2012: "In March the two sides signed a memorandum of understanding shifting responsibility for all detention facilities in the country to the Afghans, and they handed final authority for night raids to Afghan security forces, who are now carrying out all raids unless American assistance is requested. With those two issues resolved, the strategic partnership was quickly completed." [5]

Signing and content of agreement: On May 2, 2012 Afghan President Hamid Karzai and U.S. President Barack Obama signed the "Enduring Strategic Partnership Agreement between the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the United States of America", after Obama arrived to Afghanistan as part of unannounced trip on the first anniversary of Osama bin Laden's death to sign the agreement, to visit American troops and to address the American nation from Bagram Air Base about his plans to responsibly end the war [6].

The White House released a fact sheet to the agreement which stated that the agreement is a legally binding executive agreement the purpose of which is "to cement an enduring partnership with Afghanistan that strengthens Afghan sovereignty, stability and prosperity, and that contributes to our

shared goal of defeating Al Qaeda and its extremist affiliates". The agreement shall help to promote NATO training of Afghan forces, reconciliation and reintegration process for Taliban fighters who leave the battlefield and regional stability with a focus on improving relations with Pakistan. [6]

The duration of the agreement is 10 years and requires from both parties to replace the current status of forces agreement with a bilateral security arrangement to be negotiated within a year. Covered areas under the agreement are military and security issues as well as assistance in building Afghanistan's economy and its democracy. [6]

One of the provisions of the agreement is the designation of Afghanistan as a major non-NATO ally of the U.S. to provide a long-term framework for security and defense cooperation. Other provisions of the agreement are:

- The United States' commitment to support social and economic development, security, institutions and regional cooperation for 10 years

- The commitment by Afghanistan to strengthen government accountability, transparency and oversight, and to protect the human rights of all Afghans, Access to and use of Afghan facilities by US personnel beyond 2014

- Granting the United States the possibility of keeping forces in Afghanistan after 2014 for purposes of training Afghan forces and targeting al-Qaida

- Non-Commitment by the U.S. to any specific troop levels or funding levels in the future

- Commitment by the U.S. to seek funding from the U.S. Congress on an annual basis for social and economic assistance for Afghanistan and supports to ANSF [7]

Reactions to the agreement: President Karzai said that the agreement "will close the season of the past 10 years and is going to open an equal relationship season. With the signing of this agreement, we are starting a phase between two sovereign and independent countries that will be based on mutual respect, mutual commitments and mutual friendship". During a background briefing on the strategic partnership agreement by senior administration officials aboard Air Force One en route to Afghanistan, an unnamed U.S. official said: "This agreement will make clear to the Taliban, to al Qaeda, and to other international terrorist groups that they cannot wait us out. The agreement is not only a signal of long-term commitment by

the United States, but a document that enshrines commitments by both countries to each other with a common purpose. Our commitments to support Afghanistan's social and economic development, security, institutions and regional cooperation is matched by Afghan commitments to strengthen accountability, transparency, oversight, and to protect the human rights of all Afghans, men and women." Another U.S. official told The New York Times the agreement is necessary to give the United States the capacity to carry out counter-terrorism operations in order to prevent Al Qaeda's resettlement in Afghanistan and ensures "a regional equilibrium that serves our national security interest. And that's ultimately why we went in there in the first place." [7]

According to The Christian Science Monitor, concerns have been raised about the agreement to end combat operations and withdraw troops earlier than previously planned, in particular regarding Afghanistan's security. The newspaper stated that anti-Afghanistan militants continue to carry out attacks on Western troops and that the Afghan military and police are not ready to assume responsibility for the country's security. Other concerns the Monitor noted include: a potential increase in illegal drug trafficking; negative impact on the economy and on social reforms, particularly those for women and destabilization of the country that could affect neighboring countries Pakistan and Iran. Concerns were also raised by Iran; following the announcement, a spokesman for Iran's foreign ministry stated that the agreement will lead to increased instability in Afghanistan due to the continued presence of U.S. forces. Investigative historian and journalist specializing in U.S. national security policy Gareth Porter said that neither the Strategic Partnership Agreement (SPA) nor the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) regarding night raids will end the Afghanistan war nor in Afghanistan unpopular night raids conducted by U.S. Special Operations Forces (SOF). [7]

The agreement received criticism from Republican members of Congress including Buck McKeon and James Inhofe. McKeon argued that the agreement did not provide anything new, and Inhofe, a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, called it "an attempt to shore up Obama's national-security credentials". Conservatives including Inhofe and Heritage Foundation fellow James Carafano criticized the timing of the agreement and

Obama's visit to Kabul, which they argue appears to have been related to his re-election campaign. However, they support the signing of the agreement to ensure the long term presence of U.S. forces in the country necessary for its stabilization. [7]

**Iran Denounces US-Afghan Strategic Partnership:** Iran denounced the recently signed Strategic Partnership Agreement between Afghanistan and the United States. It sees the basing of American forces in the country and across the Persian Gulf as a security threat and has even reached out to the Sunni Taliban to balance this perceived threat. The Iranians have long voiced discomfort with the prospect of a long term American presence on its eastern border. They have attempted to use their clout within the political system of Afghanistan and the means of bribery to influence Afghan parliamentarians to vote against any security pact with the United States. Fazal Hadi Muslimyar, the speaker of Afghanistan's upper house of parliament, told The Wall Street Journal that Tehran's newly appointed ambassador to Kabul told Afghan lawmakers that they should not ratify the U.S.-Afghan Strategic Partnership Agreement. [8]

The American forces in Afghanistan, far from being a solution to the problems of the region, are seen by Tehran as likely to intensify the regional insecurity and instability. Yet Iran's own threat perception is in part fueling insecurity in Afghanistan and instability throughout the region. Tehran has made no secret of its displeasure with the accord. Ramin Mehmanparast, the spokesman for Iran's foreign ministry, said that the presence of U.S. forces was destabilizing the region, and that peace could be achieved in Afghanistan only by the complete withdrawal of foreign troops. Iran's large Afghan refugee population gives Tehran leverage over Afghanistan's cash-strapped government. Mr. Muslimyar, the parliamentarian, said he rebuffed the request made by the Iranian ambassador, Abolfazl Zohrehvand. "I told him that we are an independent country, and it's up to us with whom we want an agreement and with whom we don't," Mr. Muslimyar said he told Mr. Zohrehvand. [8]

The pact appears to have already strained relations between Afghanistan and Iran with Afghan diplomats in Tehran claiming that they are being intimidated and their movements have been severely curtailed. This may be a sign of worse things to come in the future. Iran believes that the

presence of American military bases and troops and access to military facilities in several other countries in the region such as Bahrain, Kuwait, Turkey and Qatar, is part of a deliberate strategy of encircling and containing Iran. Tehran fears that such a strategic position would enable the United States to monitor its nuclear program and launch attacks against it. The capture of an American unmanned drone aircraft in December of last year, which was used by the United States to look for tunnels, underground facilities and other places where Iran could be producing centrifuge parts or enrichment facilities, confirm Iranian suspicions. It has also been alleged that the United States are using their bases in Afghanistan to extend covert support to Sunni and Balochi insurgents, such as the Jundullah group, in Iran's southeastern most Sistan and Baluchestan Province. [8]

It is no surprise then that the Strategic Partnership Agreement is bound to enhance Iranian anxieties about the American troops in its neighborhood, even if the pact explicitly states that America cannot use Afghanistan to launch attacks on a third country. The mere presence of the United States in Afghanistan will pose an obstacle to the expansion of Iran's influence in the country, particularly in its traditional sphere of influence—western Afghanistan, where Iran has spent millions of dollars over the past decade. Iran has resorted to several means to undermine the American mission in Afghanistan, many of which are far from being positive in nature. Iran has been accused of sending shiploads of text books into western Afghanistan with the aim of promoting the Shī'ah culture, the contents of which have been found offensive by the Sunni population. Such attempts at fueling sectarian tensions in Afghanistan make the task of managing the country much tougher for the Americans. [8]

Similarly, it has been alleged that Iran exerts its influence over Afghanistan's education curriculum through institutions like the Khatam-al Nabyeen Islamic University in Kabul, with the aim of promoting Iranian culture, win over the Afghan Shī'ah community and spread anti-Americanism. Iran has also, in the past, cut off its fuel supplies to Afghanistan, which caused massive outcry in Kabul, as it believed that petrol and diesel, which was meant to be used by Afghans, was siphoned off to NATO. However, the most intriguing development has been Iran's measured support of the Taliban. The foreign forces in Afghanistan have often intercepted

weapons, rockets and missiles that originated in Iran and were similar to the ones that were used to undermine the international counterinsurgency efforts in Iraq. There have also been suspicions of Taliban fighters being trained in Iran. [9]

The alliance with the Taliban is one of necessity as the group posed a significant security and ideological threat to Iran when it was in power in the 1990s. The two nearly went to war in 1998 following the massacre of Iranian diplomats in Balkh in northern Afghanistan. Even today, Iran would not favor a government in Kabul that is led or dominated by the Taliban. The support for the Taliban was envisioned as a short term measure to make the Americans bleed and keep them preoccupied in Kabul, thereby diverting their attention from Iran. However, as the United States look set to stay on in Afghanistan beyond 2014, albeit in reduced numbers, Iran is likely to maintain its support for the Taliban and indulge in other covert destabilizing activities, thereby prolonging the insurgency and the instability in the country. [9]

Designation as Major non-NATO ally: On 7 July 2012, as part of the Enduring Strategic Partnership Agreement, the United States designated Afghanistan a major non-NATO ally after US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton arrived in Kabul to meet with President Karzai. "Please know that the United States will be your friend," Clinton told Karzai. "We are not even imagining abandoning Afghanistan. Quite the opposite. We are building a partnership with Afghanistan that will endure far into the future." Afghanistan is the first country awarded the major non-NATO ally (MNNA) status by Barack Obama's administration. The change, which comes into effect immediately, makes it easier for Kabul to purchase US military equipment and simplifies arms export procedures. [9]

Clinton said: "There are a number of benefits that accrue to countries that have this designation... They are able to have access to excess defense supplies, for example, and they can be part of certain kinds of training and capacity building." Some of the privileges of MNNA status include in addition eligibility for training, loans of equipment for cooperative research and development, and ultimately foreign military financing for commercial leasing of certain defense articles. "We see this as a powerful symbol of our commitment to Afghanistan's future," Clinton said at a press conference after talks with President Hamid

Karzai. "This is the kind of relationship that we think will be especially beneficial as we do the transition." And she added: "It will open the door to Afghanistan's military to have a greater capability and a broader kind of relationship with the United States and especially the United States military." The Times of India described the MNNA status in this context as "a catalyst for maintaining effective Afghan National Security Forces and building a robust peace-time security relationship between Afghanistan and the US." [9]

The designation by the United States grants a country special privileges, like access to American military training and excess military supplies, Hillary Clinton said. In a separate statement, the State Department said Afghanistan would also be able to obtain loans of equipment from the United States and financing for leasing equipment. The agreement does not, however, "entail any security commitment" by the United States to Afghanistan, the State Department said Designating Afghanistan an ally, however, has the potential to raise awkward issues for the United States. There is Afghanistan's hot-and-cold relationship with Pakistan, also an ally, and the possibility the two neighbors could have a falling-out, especially if Afghan officials believe in the years after 2014 that their Pakistani counterparts continue to aid the Taliban. [10]

American and Afghan officials said after Afghanistan's designation as major non-NATO that they now must turn to working out, as mandated by the Strategic Partnership Agreement, a bilateral security arrangement that would keep a residual American force in Afghanistan to continue training Afghan National Security Forces and tracking down insurgents after 2014. Talks on the arrangement have not yet begun according to American officials. Estimates of the number of troops that could stay vary from as little as 10,000 to as many as 25-30,000. But Mrs. Clinton reiterated on 7 July 2012 that Washington did envision keeping American troops in Afghanistan, where they would provide the kind of air power and surveillance capabilities needed to give Afghan forces an edge over the Taliban. [10]

Conclusions (Bilateral Security Agreement): Under the strategic partnership agreement signed by the U.S. and Afghanistan in May 2012 both countries are obliged to negotiate a bilateral security agreement within one year. These negotiations were scheduled to begin on November 15, 2012.

The talks will attempt to set conditions for U.S. forces in Afghanistan after 2014 as part of a "train, advice and assist" mission and are aimed at building a security framework, not a detailed agreement. Besides immunity from Afghan prosecution for U.S. soldiers accused of crimes and the Afghanistan demand that the U.S. guarantee that it will respond to any cross-border incursion or artillery attack on Afghanistan territory negotiators will attempt to set broad outlines for air rights over Afghanistan and the use and disposition of hundreds of U.S.-built bases — especially the huge air bases in Bagram and Kandahar. They may also discuss potential roles for U.S. Special Operations troops and unmanned drone aircraft, as well as the future of existing U.S. drone ground control stations in Afghanistan — subject to a final White House position on these issues. The details of these and other issues will be hammered out in "implementing documents" to be negotiated after any security agreement is signed. [10]

The Governments of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the United States of America

officially launched their negotiations on a Bilateral Security Agreement (BSA) on November 15, 2012, in Kabul.[60][61] H.E. Eklil Hakimi, Ambassador of Afghanistan in Washington, was leading the Afghan negotiating team while Ambassador James Warlick, Deputy Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan, was leading the United States negotiating team. Both sides affirmed that the key guiding principles in these important negotiations was full respect for Afghan sovereignty and Afghan national interests, including advancing the cause of peace and security across Afghanistan, strengthening the capacity and capabilities of Afghan national security forces so that they can independently provide security for the Afghan people and defend the country against external threats, and pursuing both countries' shared goal of eliminating trans-national terrorism. Both sides clarified that these negotiations are premised on the understanding that the United States does not seek permanent military bases in Afghanistan, or a presence that was perceived as a threat to Afghanistan's neighbors. [10].

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