**Peace talks between the Taliban and Afghanistan’s government begin**

Peace talks begin between the Taliban and Afghanistan’s government after all the delays. The talks started in Qatar, the Gulf state. Mike Pompeo, the US Secretary of State considered it a historic meeting before he flew off to Doha for the ceremony.

Talks due in February got delayed due to the disagreements about the swapping of a controversial prisoner. Now the next stage started following the US-Taliban Security deal.

On 11th September 2020, Afghan’s leading delegation left Kabul and moved to Doha. It is also the same day when around 19 years ago the US went ahead with a deadly attack, marking the end of the reign of the Taliban. As specified Abdullah Abdullah, the delegation’s head, “they were seeking a just and dignified peace”.

Also on Thursday, the Taliban confirmed attending the meeting after the release of around 6 of the prisoners.

**Expectations from the talks:**

The confirmed meet and talks will be the first one of the kind between the Afghanistan government’s representatives and the Taliban. Before now, the militants always refused considering meeting the government and considered them American “puppets” and powerless.

With the meets, the parties aim at ending the ongoing violence from decades and political reconciliation. The ongoing violence is the one that started back in 1979 with the Soviet invasion.

Previously, there were confirmations for beginning the talks in March 2020, which further got delayed due to the disputes about exchanging a controversial prisoner as agreed in the US Taliban deal in February. Another reason behind the delay was the ongoing violence across the nation.

The US Taliban agreement aims at the assurance of withdrawing foreign forces and counter-terrorism. This got around a year for its finalization and the talks between the government representatives and Taliban might come out being even more complicated. People also worry that with the ongoing process, there might be the sacrifice of the rapid progress in the rights of women.

With the talk, there is an aim to ensure challenging the Taliban for bringing a flexible politics-based vision for Afghanistan. This is because of their naive beliefs and statements revolving around the preference of the Islamic nation and Inclusive government.

However, there are some changes in the militant group since the 1990s when they followed the Sharia law for ruling over the nation.

The huge halls of Doha’s Sheraton Grand Hotel feel the buzz with the coming officials, negotiators of Afghanistan, journalists coming out of the chartered flights, foreign diplomats who worked hard, and spent years for this moment, and also a few Taliban.

The ceremony started with several speeches: some calling it the “show” and that there are going to be the “Afghan talks”. However, there are still uncertainties about the duration of the talks and the agenda of the discussion.

Multiple people stated that the ongoing ones are the Afghan decisions, but there are no agreements as of now from any of the sides. This will be the supervised procedure without any guarantee of succeeding. But, even a start for peace in such a scenario is a great step in an unending war.

**The deal of February 2020:**

There were agreements from the Nato allies and the US for the withdrawal of the troops in 14 months and the Taliban agreed to stop the operations of the extremist groups like al-Qaeda under the controlled areas.

The US also assured the removal of the sanctions against the Taliban and working with the UN for the assurance of lifting the other sanctions against the group. They also agreed on minimizing the troop members from 12,000 to 8,600 and also agreed on closing some of the bases.

It has already been around 2 decades for which the US troops are present in the regions of Afghanistan. It has been since in 2001 when they launched the airstrikes aiming for expelling the Taliban, and that was then followed by the 9/11 al-Qaeda attacks in New York that turned out to be the deadly ones. Later, the Taliban also refused handing over the leader of al-Qaeda, Osama Bin Laden.

Previously, in the February 2020 talks, there was no participation from Afghanistan’s government, but they expected the peace talks in March 2020 with the Taliban.

The deals also cover swapping the prisoners that accounts for around 5,000 of the Taliban ones and 1,000 of the Afghan personnel who were previously detained. The delay in the finalization of the same lead to the delay of the peace talks.

**Everything that happened after that:**

There was a disagreement between the Afghanistan government and the Taliban about freeing the number of prisoners and also on who they might be. There were also ongoing violent movements that added on to delay the talks.

Taliban wanted to free a few of their men (their commanders) involved in the major deadly attacks. Meanwhile, at the same time, a government negotiator stated that “We cannot release the killers of our people”.

Previously in August 2020, there were posts from Washington, revealing another reason for the delay. The point was over three of the Afghans accused of staying involved in the loss of the lives of some US troops. Slowly progressing towards the peace talks, the government of Afghanistan agreed to free 400 prisoners of the Taliban after the approval from a grand assembly of elders, Loya jirga.

Soon after the disclosure of the agreement, both Australia and France objected to freeing six prisoners who were earlier accused of the fatal attacks. They were accused of killing the nationals of these two countries as well as their humanitarian workers. Following this objection, not all out of 400 decided ones got released.

The final obstacle later got removed with the release and the transfer of the prisoners to Doha.

**All about the longest war in history:**

Afghanistan’s conflict has been the longest in the history of the US, going on for almost 19 years.

In 2001, the US joined the fights due to an international coalition, leading to the removal of the Taliban from the power. However, the militant group launched several deadly attacks against the forces lead by the US and the military of Afghanistan.

In 2014, the mission of the international coalition ended, and by then around 3,500 people lost their lives. Out of that all, around 2,400 were the US military personnel and 450 were the US soldiers.

Recently in November 2019, Brown University’s Watson Institute estimated the life loss of around 43,000 civilians, 64,000 Afghan security personnel, and 42,000 anti-government fighters.