

# DROPS

ORGANIZATION FOR POLICY RESEARCH  
& DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

نهاد پژوهش و توسعه

Newsletter

October

2019

## Our activities:

- Executive Director Ms. Mariam Safi participated in Herat Security Dialogue.
- Head of Public Affairs Samina Ansari participated in an event held in Norway on the role of youth in Peace Building.
- Senior Research Officer Aziz Koshan participated in "Roundtable Discussion on China-Afghanistan Relations" in Beijing.
- DROPS held the first session of "7-Month Policy Studies Workshop."

Organization for Policy Research and Development Studies (DROPS) is an independent and multidisciplinary policy-oriented research organization based in Kabul, Afghanistan.

## **DROPS NEWS:**

### **Conference on Peace-Building in Afghanistan**

DROPS Head of Public Affairs Samina Ansari participated in an event conducted by Norwegian Afghanistan Committee held on October 12, 2019 in Norway on “Peace-Building in Afghanistan.” In this event she assessed the role of Afghan youth in peace building and said “youth constitute 64% of population & I urge the international community to involve the Afghan youth in all peace efforts.”



### **Discussion on Afghanistan-China Relations**

DROPS Senior Research Officer Aziz Koshan attended a roundtable discussion on Afghanistan-China Relations which was held in Beijing on October 22, 2019. The event was organized by the China Institute of International Studies (CIIS). Mr. Koshan presented the key findings of DROPS recent study on “Integrating Afghanistan into the Belt and Road Initiative.”



### **DROPS Moderated Panel at the Herat Security Dialogue**

On October 18, 2019, Ms. Mariam Safi, Founder and Executive Director of DROPS participated in “Herat Security Dialogue” conducted by the Afghanistan Institute of Strategic Studies in western province of Herat. In this event Ms. Safi moderated the panel on “Taliban 1 & 2: have they learned their lesson?” Panelists included Motasim Agha Jan former Taliban member, Lutfullah Najafizada Director of Tolonews, Dr. Jafar Mahdavi Secretary General of Nation Party, and Shoab Rahim Senior Advisor for State Minister for Peace.



### **7-Month Policy Studies Workshop**

On the October 16, 2019, DROPS held the first session of ‘7-Month Policy Workshop.’ 12 applicants from civil society organizations, government employees, and university students and lecturers participated in this workshop. The workshop was moderated by the DROPS senior Research Officer Aziz Koshan.





## DEVELOPMENTS ON AFGHAN PEACE-PROCESS:

### US defense chief in Afghanistan to help revive stalled talks

US Defense Secretary Mark Esper has arrived in Afghanistan where stalled peace talks with the Taliban and persistent attacks by armed groups have complicated the Trump administration's pledge to withdraw more than 5,000 American troops. Esper told reporters travelling with him that he believed the US could reduce its force in Afghanistan to 8,600 without hurting the counterterrorism fight against...

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### Getting the Afghanistan Peace Process Back on Track

President Donald Trump's suspension of U.S. talks with the Taliban has thrown U.S. policy toward Afghanistan into disarray. Beginning in late 2018, and for the first time, the U.S. had put at the forefront of its policy the aim to negotiate a political settlement of the conflict that includes a path for withdrawal of U.S. forces. Nearly a year of intensive diplomacy had brought a draft U.S.-Taliban agreement to the verge of signature. [Read more...](#)



### U.S. Moves to Restart Taliban Peace Process

The top U.S. envoy for Afghanistan reconciliation, Zalmay Khalilzad, met international diplomatic counterparts in New York in late September and met with the Taliban in Pakistan earlier this month. The meetings touched on confidence-building measures that could include a possible prisoner swap or a reduction in violence, according to the people familiar with the discussions. [Read more...](#)



### US, Taliban resume contacts to revive peace process

The talks "touched on confidence-building measures that could include a possible prisoner swap or a reduction in violence," The Wall Street Journal reported. A recent New York Times report noted that the first US-Taliban meeting after the collapse of the peace talks was held in Islamabad last week when both US and Taliban officials visited the Pakistani capital. [Read more...](#)



## Afghan Government Demands Cease-Fire Before Any Taliban Talks

Hamdullah Mohib, the Afghan president's national security adviser, told a news conference in the capital, Kabul, that the government saw a cease-fire as a test of whether the leaders negotiating on behalf of the Taliban still had the power to order an end to fighting, something that rising levels of violence during the group's talks with the United States had led it to doubt.

[Read more...](#)



## Mediators seek Taliban cease-fire before relaunching peace talks

Zalmay Khalilzad, the US special representative for Afghanistan reconciliation, recently embarked on his latest journey to hold consultations with important stakeholders concerning the Afghan peace process.

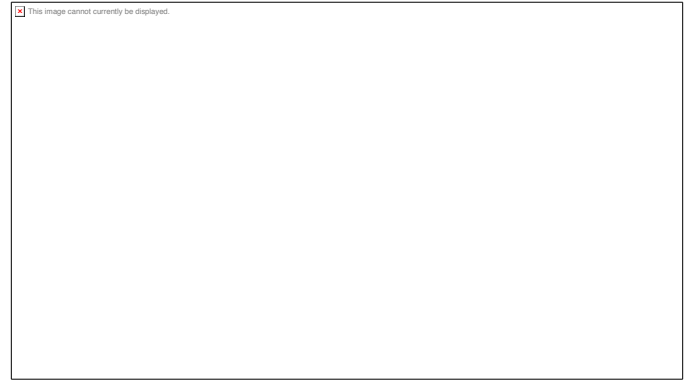
Hopes for Afghan peace rise whenever Khalilzad undertakes such trips to Afghanistan and Qatar, where the Taliban Political Commission, which is authorized by the armed group's leadership to hold peace negotiations, is based. [Read more...](#)



## With the Afghan Taliban in Islamabad, Is Pakistan Finally Getting What It Has Always Wanted?

Last week, an Afghan Taliban delegation led by a senior leader arrived in Islamabad. The delegation in its meeting with Pakistan's foreign minister agreed to resume stalled peace talks with the United States.

The development is significant, if not unprecedented, for many reasons. [Read more...](#)



## Taliban say new intra-Afghan peace talks to be held in China

A fresh round of intra-Afghan peace talks will be held in China next week, Taliban spokesman Suhail Shaheen said Tuesday, raising hopes for renewed negotiations, even as violence surges in Afghanistan's 18-year war.

The talks planned for Oct. 28 and 29 will be the first meeting between Taliban and prominent Afghans from Kabul since a July round of talks held in Doha, the capital of the Middle Eastern State of Qatar, where the Taliban maintain a political office. [Read more...](#)

