

# **My experience from Doha: Lessons for the Peace Treaty Initiative and Beyond**

Mohammad Amin Ahmadi

Edited by Arne Strand

Presentation at workshop organised by INSTITUTE FOR INTEGRATED TRANSITIONS (IFIT)

8/9/2022.

I'm thankful to the Leadership of IFIT for this opportunity to share my ideas and experiences based on my participation in the intra-Afghan peace-talk on this important topic on peace treaty initiatives.

I hope we have a more peaceful world in the future.

## **Introduction**

### **The importance of the Doha peace talks as a case study**

I believe the Afghanistan peace talk is an important case-study for the international discussion on peace treaties. It illustrates gaps in international law, and in the mechanism for defence of peace, prevention of violence and protection of human dignity and human's basic needs and rights.

So, my hope is that a new international peace treaty should improve the capacity of the international community to prevent violence against human dignity and rights and improve the process of peace building. Thereby removing and preventing more and more kinds of violence and lead to a more lasting peace.

The Qatar facilitated peace talks shows that current international mechanism cannot support this kind of a peace process and thereby can't prevent violence or protect human basic needs in Afghanistan, and neither prevent future conflicts and violence.

As we know, the 2021 collapse in Afghanistan is a big tragedy for a nation. The Afghanistan people lost many necessities required for their dignity and basic needs, and goes into a dark future under a harsh, sectarian and extremist religious dictatorship.

### **What were the gaps in Doha?**

I like to point out six gaps in the international mechanism, which could have been avoided. We can now determine these gaps through a history counterfactual method, so that if we did not have these gaps, we don't have the current situation in Afghanistan:

1. The partner states of Afghanistan should have considered the danger of the collapse of Afghanistan for its people and human rights, in their policies and decisions. As we now know, they ignored this danger. Their policies placed the Afghan people in danger and made them vulnerable to harm. Moreover, the international community has not proposed to take on any responsibility for their policies (specifically decisions regarding commission and omission) that led to harm and danger for the entire a nation that has been under their influence, and they have been used its lands and country for their security interest like war against terrorism.
2. As peace and nonviolence studies shows, negotiation with authoritarian, totalitarian groups or governments is not a god way for peace and democracy. Because, at the negotiation table, power is more effective than reasoning. To attaining a lasting peace, we need to transform the conflict. That is not possible without shifting

the power relation between the sides of conflict into one that benefit democracy. In the Afghanistan case the international community and Afghanistan's partner states gave many privileges to the Taliban for accepting to negotiation peace with Afghan government, while at the same time they obliged the Afghanistan government to negotiation and forced them to do so. There was not any balance at the negotiation table. So, this was a policy that created threats and danger for democracy and human rights and lead to increased violence. At that time, we needed to have shifted power relations to the benefit of democrats. This shifting of power, as nonviolence studies shows, was achievable through peaceful ways that could be used by Afghanistan's Civil Society in that time, and international community didn't have any policy on this matter.

3. As peace studies shows, for achieving conflict resolution, a necessary first step is for the conflicting parties to stop warfare and violence, and secondly to accept that negotiation and conflict resolution is the best way for achieving peace. But, in Afghanistan's case this basic condition was not met. The International community, as a third part, did neither help to provide this necessary condition, they only emphasized the continuation of the negotiation as if the negotiation by itself will create such a solution.
4. The international community, as an influential third part, should have recognized the distinct identity of the Taliban as a sectarian religious extremist group. Their cultural and organisational structure and their system of belief is deeply violent rather than being a peaceful culture. It is therefore impossible to find a solution that meets their aspirations through peaceful and just ways, like more democracy, more human rights and establishment of a federation. This is counter to Galtung believes that conflict resolution would be possible through a peaceful and just way. We

needed to specifically have consider this type of conflict and conflict actor. But the international community satisfied themselves by saying that Taliban had changed.

5. The kind of peace sought by the international community for Afghanistan was a limited political settlement and seeking compromises between the parties, not a positive peace. A lasting peace requires more than compromise and a political settlement, it requires conflict resolution and conflict transformation which is attained by peacebuilding and producing of a new reality which can create a win – win situation. We cannot create this situation without equity and elimination of structural and cultural violence, and elimination of trauma through reconciliation.

In fact, the literature and the international systems diplomatic and official mechanism and approach is not in accordance with findings of peace studies. So, this new treaty discussed at this workshop is a good opportunity to fill this gap.

6. The lack of effective mediation. As peace studies shows the mediation process is an important part of negotiation for peace. A successful mediation requires the following criteria:
  - a. The objective for a mediation is to help create a win – win situation. So, mediators, [as Galtung says](#), should take three steps: mapping, legitimizing and bridging. For successful conflict resolution we need as the first step to understand what the parties to the conflict want to achieve, or what their goals are, defined as *mapping*. The second step is *legitimizing* these goals and what the parties want to achieve. Legitimizing is done by their comparing these to law, human rights, and meeting of a population's basic needs. The third step is *bridging*. In this step,

we find the resolution and go beyond the conflict (*transformation*).

- b. He or she (the negotiator) negotiates separately with the sides to the conflict to recognize what they want.
- c. The mediator help identify the resolution and transformation of the conflict and should have good knowledge and experience in this field.

But there was no mediation in Doha and even if the Qatari government was performing the role of mediation, it did not meet these basic criteria.

### **Conclusion**

I think the new treaty should make a new legal, political and technical capacity, and provide a political and legal guarantee that can avoid the gaps we experienced in the Doha peace talk.

I therefore suggest that we should study this indicative text by asking this question “does it produce an effective legal framework for that capacity as I mention? “