

Afghanistan

Flash Analysis and Prediction

12 October 2021



Internal tensions within the senior Taliban leadership team will be presented as a united face

Media have reported that internal tensions within the senior Taliban leadership team resulted in clashes between bodyguards on 11 September leading to deputy prime minister Abdul Ghani Baradar remaining out of the public eye until 15 September. The tensions were apparently between Baradar and Khalil ur-Rahman Haqqani, the current Taliban minister for refugees. Sources from a variety of different media sites have stated that tensions had been exacerbated over the structure of the interim government. There is a conflict between “moderates” and the more hardline element within the senior Taliban leadership team over the formation of the government. Baradar was reportedly suggesting that the Taliban’s success in Afghanistan was down to the diplomacy in Doha, (reportedly due to his strong links with Qatari foreign minister Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani), whilst ur-Rahman Haqqani and other members of the group claimed it had been won through fighting. They were also reportedly against a more “moderate” outlook for the Taliban government including allowing former members of the previous government and women to serve.



Analysis

Differences between the older generation of Taliban - who fought against the USSR and Northern Alliance 20 years ago and then led the previous Taliban government - and the newer leaders of the Taliban are **LIKELY** to have become compounded by differences between diplomacy and governance, as opposed to guerilla warfare. The view by the younger generation Taliban, that those of the older guard who lived in relative luxury in Quetta/Doha while the others fought on in the hills against the Pakistani state and the US/ISAF contributes to these tensions. Adding to the current pressures of governance for the Taliban is the ongoing concern over the lack of hard cash resources as the international community has frozen Afghan cash held in global banks.



Prediction

- The Taliban moved quickly to present a united face. The Haqqani clan’s action over the last two decades have suggested that they are pragmatists and that they understand the need to build and maintain alliances. They are aware that they need finances to ensure food, fuel and money flow into Afghanistan. They need the Taliban’s diplomats – based in Doha – to keep up these relations with the international community. The meetings held by the ‘Doha Taliban’ with both the UK and the US in early October shows their desire for international support. However, the Haqqani network’s current grip on the government’s structure and output means that for now the older generation including Baradar will remain as figureheads not drivers of policy.
- The lack of cash will hit the Afghan economy hard. Economic hardship will **LIKELY** increase the number of IDPS and refugees from Afghanistan, as the country also continues to struggle with an ongoing drought due to climate change and severe poverty brought on by decades of war.

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