

افغانستان آزاد – آزاد افغانستان

AA-AA

چو کشور نیاشد تن من مباد بدین بوم ویر زنده یک تن مباد
همه سر به سر تن به کشتن دهیم از آن به که کشور به دشمن دهیم

www.afgazad.com

afgazad@gmail.com

European Languages

زبان های اروپایی

http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2012\06\04\story_4-6-2012_pg1_7

China steps up Afghan role as West pulling out

6/4/2012

China and Afghanistan will sign an agreement in the coming days that strategically deepens their ties, Afghan officials say, the strongest signal yet that Beijing wants a role beyond economic partnership as Western forces prepare to leave the country.

China has kept a low political profile through much of the decade-long international effort to stabilise Afghanistan, choosing instead to pursue an economic agenda, including locking in future supply from Afghanistan's untapped mineral resources.

As the US-led coalition winds up military engagement and hands over security to local forces, Beijing, along with regional powers, is gradually stepping up involvement in an area that remains at risk from being overrun by insurgents. Chinese President Hu Jintao and his Afghan counterpart Hamid Karzai will hold talks on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation summit in Beijing this week, where they will seal a wide-ranging pact governing their ties, including security cooperation.

Afghanistan has signed a series of strategic partnership agreements, including with the United States, India and Britain among others in recent months, described by one Afghan official as taking out "insurance cover" for the period after the end of 2014 when foreign troops leave.

"The president of Afghanistan will be meeting the president of China in Beijing and what will happen is the elevation of our existing, solid relationship to a new level, to a strategic level," Janan Musazai, a spokesman for the Afghan Foreign Ministry, said.

“It would certainly cover a broad spectrum which includes cooperation in the security sector, a very significant involvement in the economic sector, and the cultural field.”

He declined to give details about security cooperation, but Andrew Small, an expert on China at the European Marshall Fund who has tracked its ties with South Asia, said the training of security forces was one possibility.

China has signalled it will not contribute to a multilateral fund to sustain the Afghan national security forces - estimated to cost \$4.1 billion per year after 2014 - but it could directly train Afghan soldiers, Small said.

“They’re concerned that there is going to be a security vacuum and they’re concerned about how the neighbours will behave,” he said.

Beijing has been running a small programme with Afghan law enforcement officials, focused on counter-narcotics and involving visits to China’s restive Xinjiang province, whose western tip touches the Afghan border.

Training of Afghan forces is expected to be modest, and nowhere near the scale of the Western effort to bring them up to speed, or even India’s role in which small groups of officers are trained at military institutions in India. China wants to play a more active role, but it will weigh the sensitivities of neighbouring nations in a troubled corner of the world, said Zhang Li, a professor of South Asian studies at Sichuan University who has been studying the future of Sino-Afghan ties. reuters