

The Clash of the Great Powers in Afghanistan: Impacts on Pakistan

(2001-2020)



By

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2021

DEDICATED TO MY FAMILY
WITH LOVE

CANDIDATE'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the M. Phil. thesis currently submitted bearing the title “**The Clash of the Great Powers in Afghanistan: Impacts on Pakistan (2001-2020).**” is the result of my own research and has not been submitted to any other institution or for any other degree.

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Introduction

Afghanistan is a landlocked country located at the confluence of Central Asia, and South Asia. It has been widely admitted that Afghanistan contributes to the connectivity of Eurasia because of its strategic location. Afghanistan has an area of 652,860 square miles and is the fortieth largest country in the world, larger than France and smaller than Texas. It has 34 provinces known as “*Wilayats*” and these *Wilayats* are divided into sub-national districts known as “*Wulaswalis*”. It has five major rivers, mainly, the Kabul River, the Amu Darya, the Balkh Ab, the Murghab-Hari Rud and the Helmand Arghandab Rud.¹ It is lying along important trade routes connecting Eastern and Southern Asia to Europe and to the Middle East.

Afghanistan and Pakistan consist of feudal and tribal ethnicities. Ethnically, Afghanistan consists of ethno-linguistic groups and this is a source of contestation and political manipulation. Numerous ethnicities living in Afghanistan are Pashtuns, Tajik, Uzbek, Turkmen, Hazara, Aimaq, Baloch, Nuristani, Gujjar, Arab, Brahui, Qizilbash, Sadat and Kyrgyz. Many languages are spoken in Afghanistan but Pashto and Dari are the official languages. There is no confirmed consensus about the majority of any specific ethnicity, but according to most generous estimates Pashtuns are one-third of Afghanistan's population.² Therefore, Pashtuns, known as Afghans or Pathans are the largest ethnic group in the country.

Afghanistan has a history of failed foreign occupations due to its geographical location. Major international and regional powers give much attention to Afghanistan due to their geopolitical, naval as well as economic interests. Many great powers throughout history have shown their presence in Afghanistan, their history starts from the great Persian Empire through the

¹ Jonathan L. Lee, *Afghanistan*, (London: Reaktion Book LTD, 2018), 19.

² *Ibid*, 13.

Macedonian Empire of Alexander the Great, the Rashidun Caliphate, the Mongol Empire of Genghis Khan, the Timurid Empire, the Sikh Empire, the British Empire, the Soviet Union and most recently the United States and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) troops. All of these powers had invaded/occupied Afghanistan due to their material and political interests.

In late 1800s Afghanistan was considered as a buffer state between Russia and British India. Russia and Great Britain were engaged in Afghanistan before the First World Wars. After the Second World War (1939-1945) when the world was divided into two blocs, the interest of both communist and capitalist blocs in Afghanistan was to include the country into one of their blocs. The situation eventually led to the intervention of Soviet Union in 1979 which ended with the disintegration of communist bloc in 1989-1992. The laws of the history were once again repeated in a cyclical way and none of the bloc stood successful in their respective targets.

Afghanistan has always observed critical a situation and has been through several ups and downs. It observed civil war and many weak governments after the Soviet withdrawal. In 2001, the World Trade Center in America was attacked. So, the United States blamed the Taliban government and threatened them with retaliation if they deny participating in War against Terror. US and NATO intervened in Afghanistan and dismantled Taliban government. Their invasion added a new chapter to the history of Afghanistan.

Every foreign invasion in Afghanistan had very great bearings on the neighboring countries and Pakistan was a major affectee. It had very badly affected its economy and political setup. It had given rise to extremism and terrorism in the country. After the withdrawal of US and NATO forces, world international and regional powers struggle to maintain peace in Afghanistan while keeping in view their political and geo-economic interests.

Statement of the Problem

There are different although overlapping interpretations about the conflicts and foreign occupation in Afghanistan. Some of the interpretations view foreign occupation in the context of international and regional security complexities. Others view from different angles, claiming that terrorism, extremism, strategic location and natural resources of Afghanistan are the factors that have contributed to the instability and the intervention of foreign forces in the region. It will also not be wrong to say that internal political and social situation is source of turmoil and chaos in the region. With the abundance of interpretations, it creates confusion to understand that why the international and regional powers often have acted as direct or indirect agents and have turned Afghanistan into a battle-field, such as, Russian Communist intervention in Afghanistan in 1979 and after the disintegration of Soviet Union; Kabul once again faced intervention due to 9/11 terror attack on World Trade Center in United States in 2001. On the other hand, continued interventions and crisis in Afghanistan has direct bearings on Pakistan and it has raised alarming security situation in the region. Pakistan has observed extremism and violence with the unstable Afghanistan. Worse situation in Afghanistan has affected Pakistan's socio-political and economic condition.

The intervention in Afghanistan by other countries is not a new phenomenon rather the country has been invaded time to time since the emergence of nation states and even beyond that. Therefore, the current study will analyze the causes that destabilize Afghanistan and why it has an effect on Pakistan. It will also look into the interests of major powers which have turned Afghanistan into a battle ground. It will also analyze Pakistan's problem and will view it from the lens of an unstable Afghanistan.

Scope of the Study

The time period covered by the present study encompasses the decades of war on terror started from 2001 to 2020. It terminates with the dismantling of Ashraf Ghani Afghan government. It also goes into the background as it is very much needed to explain and elaborate upon the significant of the relevant events. These twenty years have captured great attention all over the world. Therefore, it is pertinent to carefully examine the causes that turned the attention of world major powers to intervene in Afghanistan via several means and has turned it into the battle field.

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study is that it looks into multiple aspects of the Afghanistan crisis from world powers point of view. Developments, insecurity, chaos and instability in Afghanistan have direct bearing on Pakistan`s internal security matrix and so it makes the study more important for general readers and research scholars. Pakistan has vital interests connected to Afghanistan. Therefore, to understand the reasons behind law and order like situation in Afghanistan and Pakistan make this study interesting and more valuable for scholars and general readers.

The significance of the study is also because it analyzes and interprets Afghanistan crisis from 2001 to 2020. In this context it is hoped that present study will root out ambiguity regarding Afghanistan crisis and will turn the attention of the scholars to conduct research on the subject which will help in better understanding of global powers policies regarding Afghanistan, through those researches scholars will suggest a way forward for the crisis.

Methodology

Major sources used in this study are primary and secondary in nature which tries to deal with facts and places world major powers in position. Therefore, the study is primarily exploratory and analytical with a strong element of interpretation. It also provides rational explanation. Henceforth, to address the questions qualitative method of investigation is preceded. This work includes mainly articles, books, documentaries, journals, reports and some unpublished sources like M. Phil and PhD theses.

Review of Literature

Before going to the work of different authors it will be pertinent to know about the sources. Therefore, as early mentioned sources used in this study are primary as well as secondary. Primary source includes interviews, private papers, state reports and publications, as well as memoirs. Secondary sources include books, documents, scholarly papers, Journals and information available on electronic media. Overall approach of the study is analytical in nature. An important drawback in the published sources about Afghanistan is that their focus is generally Central Asia and particularly Afghanistan.

Much work has been produced on the topic which makes it interesting to critically evaluate the perspectives and thoughts of different authors. Thus, for instance there is an article written by Muhammad Karim with the title of “World Powers Rivalry in Afghanistan and its Effects on Pakistan” in this article the author argues that situation in Afghanistan have direct bearing on Pakistan.³ Next is author writes this article which remains content to the shared socio-political and cultural history of Pakistan and Afghanistan. His work takes world powers rivalry

³ Muhammad Karim, “World Power Rivalry in Afghanistan and Its Effects on Pakistan”, *The Dialogue* 12, No, 3 (Np,Nd), 248-260.

into consideration. The problem in the article is that it does not look and analyze explicitly the causes that why the soil of Afghanistan has been used by major powers. The author only implicitly mentions some of economic causes.

In similar context there is another article authored by two writers, Qamar Fatima and Sumera Zafar, the title of article is “New Great Game: Players, Interests, Strategies and Central Asia”. Their work discusses major players and their involvement in the new great game and they are also talking about the interests of the world major powers in Afghanistan⁴. Problem with this work is that it is talking generally about major powers interests with reference to their natural needs. The problem with this article is that it is an outdated work which takes 1979 to 1989 time period into consideration. Therefore, present study will be completely change from this it will be specifically focusing Afghanistan crisis and its importance for world powers with reference to their proxies in the region. It will be looking into all these conflicts and war like conditions from 2001 to 2020. In addition to it study will also focus the effects of the Afghanistan crisis on Pakistan.

Furthermore, for background knowledge there is another account with the title of “*Afghanistan and the Frontier*” edited by Fazal-Ur-Rahim Marwat and Sayed Wiqar Ali Shah Kakakhel. This work gives a general perception about Afghanistan crisis. It also highlights the Frontier issue and tries to link it with Afghanistan crisis.⁵ Likewise a chapter of the book which starts from page -184- traces the shared socio-political history of the Frontier tribes with tribes living in Afghanistan. Analysis is on that basis. Core problem with this book which makes it different from the present study is that it is mostly consisted on history. It is only talking and

⁴ Qamar Fatima, Sumera Zafar, “New Great Game: Players, Interests, Strategic and Central Asia”, *South Asian Studies*, 29, No, 2, (December 2014): 624-635.

⁵ Dr. Fazal-ur-Rahim Marwat, and Sayed Wiqar Ali Shah, eds., *Afghanistan And The Frontier*, (Peshawar: Emjay Books International, 1993), 184-219.

highlighting Frontier issue. It traces the history of Afghanistan from Mir Abdur Rahman's time period. Therefore, present study will be using it only for background means. Present study has contrary views which include the contemporary Pakistan issues due to instable Afghanistan.

In addition to these works, there is another book written on Afghanistan Conflict. It is authored by Steve Coll, the title of this work is *Ghost Wars The Secret History Of The CIA, Afghanistan and Bin Laden, From The Soviet Invasion To September 10, 2001*. Steve Coll in this book traces the history of Afghanistan from Soviet invasion 1979 to War on Terror 2001. He tells about the involvement of US in Afghan Jihad and their covert support for Afghan Mujahidin.⁶ Then he talks about Taliban regime and their involvement in attack on world trade center. Again, the problem with this work is that it lacks objective analysis to address the question that, why Afghanistan soil is so charming which captures the world attention and what are the undercover interests that compel major powers to invade Afghanistan. Present study will be focusing on and elaborating specifically on these points.

There is another account for background section it is Ph.D. thesis of Doctor Abdul Hamid Khan with the title of *The Great Game in Kipling's Works* has been consulted. It gives a very clear insight of the subject matter.⁷ Present work is very much different from this thesis because thesis is based on both qualitative and quantitative data. Hence forth, the present study will be taking only qualitative data. Next is present study will be contemporary in nature.

In similar context an article authored by Ghulam Mustafa with the title "Major Powers Interest in Afghanistan and Pakistan" has been consulted. The central thesis of the article is that it talks about major powers interest bended with Afghanistan. The problem with this article is

⁶ Steve, Coll, *Ghost Wars: The Secret History Of Cia, Afghanistan And Bin Laden From Soviet Invasion To September 10, 2001*, (United States: Penguin Books, 2005), 15-159.

⁷ Abdul Hamid Khan, "*The Great Game In Kiplings Works*" (Phd diss, Peshawar University, 2014), 74-76.

that it views the Afghanistan issue with the context of its weak political situation. It put blame on some of regional problems. It also talks about Pakistan instability causes. But the present study will be completely changed from it. Present study will be not only taking world power interests but regional powers as well. It will analyze Pakistan issue in the context of regional powers.

Research Questions

During discourse following questions are systematically answered.

- Why Afghanistan a landlocked and poor country is the battle ground for world powers?
- What are the Geo-political, economic and strategic interests of world and regional powers in Afghanistan?
- How the unending conflict, instability, and involvement of foreign forces affect Pakistan's internal situation?
- How is peace possible in Afghanistan?
- What are the major International and regional powers doing in restoring peace in Afghanistan?

Hypothesis

Great powers in the modern age have demonstrated the capacity to intervene in Afghanistan but always failed to control the situation due to the social realities and harsh geography. The only hope in the present situation is for Afghans themselves to find a way out of instability and have the wisdom to establish an internationally recognized regime that is internally stable.

Chapter Outline of the Study

In addition to the introduction, Conclusion, Bibliography and References the present study is divided into four chapters.

First Chapter

Chapter one deals with the historical background and traces the history of Afghanistan from state formation, to different powers interventions, to rise and fall of different governments and in addition, it also identifies and highlights the causes of extremism in Afghanistan which led to the attack of world trade center and then to the intervention of United States and its allies. It also attempts to analyze and explain world major powers agendas and interests that compelled them to intervene in Afghanistan.

Second Chapter

This chapter examines the material interests of great powers in Afghanistan. The political as well as economic interests of the international and regional powers are well articulated and are soundly interpreted.

Third Chapter

This chapter explores the causes and answers the central question that what are the effects of this intervention on Pakistan? Why Pakistan with the intervention of Afghanistan destabilizes? It will look into Pakistan issues from Afghanistan crisis lens. It also takes a look and analyzes the situation from neighborhood point of view.

Fourth Chapter

This chapter is futuristic in nature. It deals with the future of Afghanistan while keeping in view the past history. The core of the discourse is that what great powers do for maintaining peace in Afghanistan after the disintegration of US installed government. What are the concerns of great powers regarding unstable Afghanistan? Therefore, fourth chapter analyzes and answers these questions in a very systematic way.

Chapter One

Historical Background

Land and people

Afghanistan is a small land locked country, situated in the strategic South West region of Asia. On its North there is Soviet Republic of Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan. On its West is Iran. Whereas on East as well as to the South is Pakistan. Due to Afghanistan geographical strategic location, it shares much of border with different countries. It shares a narrow 76 k/m border with China. Afghanistan consists of 252,100 square miles land and lies above 5000 feet. East-west distance of the country is 900 miles and North-South is 500 miles. Land mass is full of deserts, mountains and grassy plains. It has very attractive climatic view that contains highlands and lowlands. Among many small rivers there are two major rivers known as Amu-Darya River and Helmand River. Khyber Pass in Southeast is important that link Afghanistan with Pakistan.

Afghanistan is characterized by ethnic linguistic and religious diversity. Tribes living in Afghanistan are Pashtun, Uzbek, Hazara, Turkuman, Tajik, and Baloch. Pashtuns are the largest ethnic group and consist of 40 to 50 percent of Afghanistan Population.¹ When it comes to the religion of Afghanistan, so, in past Buddhism under the patronage of Khushans, from Gansu region of China was spread. It was followed by many Afghans. Similarly, Christianity spread into Northern, Eastern and Central Afghanistan. Same was the case with Hinduism. Southeastern Afghanistan and capital Kabul was Islamized in the early eleventh century by Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni. He invaded Ghur and other regions and forced people to accept Islam. Despite the

¹ Jonathan L. Lee, *Afghanistan*, (London: Reaktion Book LTD, 2018), 13.

historic history of Zoroastrians, Jews, Hindus, Christians and Buddhists, Afghanistan today has tiny minority of non-Muslim citizens.² People living in Afghanistan are either Sunni or Shia.

Constitution of the country was formally designated as an Islamic Republic in 2004. From 1920 its legal code has been strongly influenced by Hanafi jurisprudence, one of the four Sunni schools of thoughts.³ National language of Afghanistan is Pashto and Dari. Most of the people living in mountains, deserts and grassy plains are traditionally bound, independent and religious. People living in Afghanistan are known as Afghans irrespective of their language, sects and tribes.⁴

Natural Resources

Afghanistan according to some accounts is also a natural resource rich country. It has many natural resources like gas, oil, chromate, gold etc. Gas can be found in Shaberghan city, situated on the North of Hindu Kush. Oil can be found on the North and South-East parts of the country. Rich deposits of iron can be found near Hijighat pass. Similarly, Copper can be found in Kabul.⁵

State Formation

Afghanistan due to its transcontinental trade routes had been called the highway of conquest for many invaders from Persia, Arabia, Mongolia, India, and even China. All of these dynasties have ruled over Afghanistan and have contributed to the ethnic and cultural diversity of the country. Afghanistan due to its strategic location suffered from frequent invasions. It was

² Ibid, 31-39.

³ Ibid, 32.

⁴ Jagmohan Meher, *America's Afghanistan War: The Success That Failed* (India: Kalpaz Publications, 2004), 19-20.

⁵ Ibid. 20

conquered by numerous rulers, dynasties and powers like Alexander the Great, Mongolians, Marathas, Sikh, British, Soviet and United States.

Dynasties and Their role in Afghanistan

Khilji, a Turkish dynasty, ruled Afghanistan for a very short time period. Khilji are Turks according to tenth-century sources due to their dress, language and Turkish appearances. Sabuktigin a Turk from Barskon, today`s Kyrgyzstan was the founder of this dynasty. The capital of their kingdom was Ghazni. He was sent by Persian Samanid ruler of Bukhara to set up his own kingdom in this region. He was succeeded by Sultan Mahmud, most famous ruler of Gaznavid rulers in 1005/6. Sultan Mahmood of Ghaznah ruled Afghanistan till 1150 and their rule was destroyed by Ghurids. Guri dynasty, a Persian speaking dynasty, from Badghis, Ghur and the upper Murghab ruled Afghanistan after Mahmood of Ghaznah. After that Lodhi dynasty ruled over Afghanistan and was defeated by Zahir-ud-Din Babur.

Zahir-ud-Din Babur

Lodhi dynasty rule ended when the battle of Panipat in 1526 was fought between Ibrahim Lodhi and Babur. Zahir-ud-Din Babur was a descendant of both Timur Lung and Chinggis Khan. He stood victorious in the battle of Panipat and included Kabul and Southeastern Afghanistan into his kingdom. After the demise of Babur there was a civil war between his sons brooked out and eventually Humayun the eldest son of the Babur succeeded the throne.⁶

Sher Shah Suri

Humayun`s suppression, confiscation policies toward Afghans caused prejudice and deep resentments. Sher Shah Suri, an Afghan, the grandson of Ibrahim Suri and the son of Hussain,

⁶ Lee, *Afghanistan*, 56-57.

did rebellion against Humayun in Qanauj. He defeated Humayun in the battle field. Humayun left Delhi and went to Multan for hiding. Sher Shah was applauded by many Afghans from Kabul, Helmand and Kandahar.⁷

Safavid Dynasty

Safavid monarchy backed by Persia due to religious bonds, supported many rulers in Afghanistan and made alliances with the ruling class of Afghanistan. The basic purpose of Safavid alliance with Saddozai was due to power struggle between Mughal India and Safavid Persia. They both endeavored to control key frontier town of Kandahar.⁸

Mir Wa'is Hotak

Mir Wa'is Hotak, of Ghilzai tribe, of Kandahar in 1707 rebelled against Safavid Persia. He resisted their alliances and struggled to unite people of Afghanistan. Mir Wa'is son Shah Mahmud in 1722 son invaded Persia and displaced Safavid monarchy. He ruled a large empire stretched from Kandahar to Isfahan. Apart from it in 1717 Mir Wa'is himself revolted against Abdullah Khan Saddozai. He established Abdali Sultanate in Herat.⁹

Ahmad Shah Abdali

Ahmad Shah Abdali is the founder of Abdali dynasty. He is regarded as the founder of modern Afghanistan. After the death of Nadir Shah, Ahmed Khan Abdali came to Afghanistan with 4000 Afghan soldiers and settled in the Southern side of Qandahar Afghanistan. In October 1747, all of the Afghan leaders traditionally held consultation known "*Loya Jirga*". The purpose

⁷Himayatullah, Yaqubi, *Mughal-Afghan Relations in South Asia: History and Developments* (Islamabad: NIHCR, 2015), 91-93.

⁸ Lee, *Afghanistan*, 684.

⁹ Ibid, 51-52.

of this Jirga was to nominate a leader for Afghanistan. After lots of debate Sabir, a pious person who belonged to Saberi tribe suggested the name of Ahmed Khan popular as Ahmed Shah, so the tribal leaders agreed and Ahmed Khan was nominated as the king of Afghanistan.¹⁰

Ahmed Shah Durrani (Saddozai) after becoming the king of Afghanistan was given the title of “Darwaran”. That is why his family was known as Durrani. Ahmed Shah Durrani was also given the title of “Baba” due to his services in weak and aged life. He was very competent, kind and brave. In the succeeding twenty-five years he freed Afghanistan from the foreign invaders.¹¹

Ahmed Shah Durrani after lots of struggle united Afghanistan in 1747. At the very first stage he united the Pashtuns and then increased power to Tajik, Uzbek and Hazara areas.¹² Tribal leaders started to recognize Ahmed Shah Durrani as their sovereign leader.

Marathas War

The Maratha Empire had dominated large portion of the Indian subcontinent in 18th century. They were credited because of their ending Mughal rule over Indian subcontinent. Marathas following Chaut, regular tax, and their expansionist policy brought them in direct confrontation with Ahmad Shah Abdali in the third battle of Panipat in 1761. Ahmad Shah Abdali who had support of the foreign Muslim nobles defeated Marathas and halted their imperial expansion into Afghanistan.¹³

¹⁰ Abdullah Malik, *Afghanistan Qadeem-o-Jadeed* [Afghanistan Ancient and Modern] (Lahore: Al-Faisal Nashran, 2012), 41.

¹¹ Ibid, 41-42.

¹² Lue van de Goor and Mathijs van Leeuwen, “An Outline of the Conflict in Afghanistan,” *Clingendael Institute*, (2000): 15.

¹³ “Encyclopedia, Britannica,” *Encyclopedia*, last modified March 27, 2017, accessed October 23, 2021, <http://www.britannica.com/topic/Battles-of-Panipat>.

Anglo-Afghan Wars

After the death of Ahmed Shah Durrani many strong and weak rulers ruled over country. Afghanistan was considered as land of anarchy and barbarism.¹⁴ Foreign countries interfered and invaded several times. Afghanistan has always been the focus of International and regional countries. In nineteenth century, it remained as a buffer state between Russia and Britain. Anglo-Afghan wars were fought in 1839-42, 1878-80, and in 1919. These three wars were fought for a purpose that Great Britain from its base in India wanted to extend its influence and to control neighboring countries and to oppose Russian influence over Afghanistan.

First Anglo-Afghan War 1839-42

The first Anglo-Afghan war was fought during the reign of Dost Muhammad Khan, the king of Afghanistan. British governor general to India Lord Auckland permitted invasion with a view to dismantle Dost Muhammad Khan government. British were unsatisfied with his rule and they were feeling that either Dost Muhammad Khan was hostile to them or he was unable to resist Russian influence created with civil war of 1816. Therefore, they with the object to restore Shah Shuja government invaded Afghanistan and dethroned Dost Muhammad.

Second Anglo-Afghan War 1878-80

The second Anglo-Afghan war was fought in 1878-80 when new appointed governor general of India Lord Lytton was going to enter to Kabul with a mission. The Amir refused Lord Lytton permission to enter Afghanistan. He was turned back by Afghan forces at the border. Lytton decided to crush Sher Ali, the king of Afghanistan and the third son of Dost Muhammad.

¹⁴ Jeffery J. Roberts, *The Origins Of Conflict In Afghanistan* (United States of America: Praeger Publishers, 2003), 222.

Sher Ali fled the country and died in exile while British army occupied Kabul. Treaty of Gandamak was signed on May 26, 1879, that recognized Shir Ali son Yaqub khan as a new emir of Afghanistan. The new emir was loyal to British and agreed to receive British embassy at Kabul. He also agreed to conduct foreign relation with the wish and advice of British government. British influence short lived on September 3, 1879 when a British envoy Sir Louis Cavagnari was murdered in Kabul. British army once again entered Kabul and Yaqub abdicated the throne. Abdur Rahman, nephew of Shir Ali became emir in 1880. Abdur Rahman reign marked the history of Afghanistan. He maintained friendly relation with British that even British diplomat of Indian Civil Service, Sir Mortimer Durand assured him of British support against foreign power aggression.¹⁵ Similarly, Abdur Rahman reign marks the boundaries of Afghanistan were drawn by British and Russians.

Third Anglo-Afghan War 1919

The third Anglo-Afghan War was started in 1919, Habibullah Khan, the ruler of Afghanistan, due to his - non-involvement policies - was assassinated on February 20, 1919. His son Amanullah Khan became the emir. British at that time still exercised important influence on Afghanistan affairs. Amanullah Khan due to his anti-British views declared independence from Great Britain. It led to the third Anglo-Afghan war. There were skirmishes between Afghan army and British army. Month long war gained the Afghans the conduct of their own foreign affairs. A peace treaty signed in Rawalpindi on August 8, 1919 recognized the independence of Afghanistan was amended in 1921. Treaty contained five small articles that included on the restoration of peace between Afghanistan and British government. Treaty in a nutshell concluded

¹⁵Sir Mortimer Durand to Amir Abdurrahman, November 11, 1893, Azmat Hayat, "*The Durand Line, Its Geo-Strategic importance*," (Islamabad: PanGraphic, 2000), 260.

Anglo-Afghan Wars and declared Afghanistan as a sovereign state.¹⁶After the treaty Afghans signed a new treaty with Bolshevik regime in Soviet Union. Afghanistan thereby became the first government that recognized Soviet government.¹⁷

Sikh Kingdom and Afghanistan

Ranjit Singh founded Maharaja Sikh kingdom of Punjab in 1801-39. His kingdom was extended from Khyber Pass to the Sutlej River and to Thar (Great India) desert. During his reign he maintained sound relation with Afghan rulers. Ranjit Singh in 1813 joined Barakzai Afghan expedition into Kashmir. He was betrayed by Barakzai Afghan ruler by keeping Kashmir themselves. He had helped Afghan rulers time and again, Shah Shuja who fled from Barakzai was rescued by Ranjit Singh. He once pressurized Shah Shuja for the parting of Koh-I-Noor diamond. Next is Ranjit Singh signed a treaty with British viceroy in 1838 to restore Shah Shuja government. In the pursuance of that agreement British army entered Afghanistan from South, while his army went through the Khyber Pass and took part in the parade in Kabul.¹⁸

Great power rulers for their survival always favored either of the state. As during the First World War Anglo-Russian alliance limited Afghan policy and, therefore, it forced Habibullah, the king of Afghanistan, to become close to Britain. The pause of peace broke in 1919 when Habibullah was assassinated and King Amanullah assumed power.

¹⁶ Treat of Peace between the Illustrious British government and the Independent Afghan government, Concluded at Rawalpindi on the 8th August 1919, Corresponding to TE 11thZiqada 13 Hijra, From Azmat Hayat Khan book "*The Durand Line, Its Strategic Importance*,".

¹⁷ "Encyclopedia, Britannica," *Encyclopedia*, last modified October 15, 2021, accessed October 23, 2021, <http://www.britannica.com/event/Anglo-Afghan-Wars>.

¹⁸ "Encyclopedia, Britannica," *Encyclopedia*, last modified November 9, 2021, accessed November 14, 2021, <http://www.britannica.com/biography/Ranjit-Singh-Sikh-maharaja>.

Political Landscape

King Amanullah reign started from 1919 to 1928. He successfully ruled Afghanistan for nine years. He at the very first stage adopted anti-British view. He became suspicious to Northern neighbors and extended relation to other nations. King Amanullah Khan was a modernist and dreamed to make Afghanistan a modern State. Therefore, he proposed the policy of modernism. His strategy was to transform his kingdom into pre-modern, progressive and westernized state.¹⁹ In this parlance he established modern educational institutions in the different regions of Afghanistan. Apart from it he also established military academies for military long and short courses as well as for military advancement. He wanted to make a powerful standing army for the defense of Afghanistan. In his reign many privileges were given to clergy and he also promoted women education.²⁰

After much of conspiracies and allegations made against King Amanullah, when he feared of chaos, so, he went into self-exile and left for Delhi in 1929. Bacha-e-Saqao, a Tajik rose to power. With his rise to the power there became fracture in Pashtun tribe. Bacha-e-Saqao divided Pashtuns on the basis of Durrani and Khilji. After lots of struggle, Durrani held power and tension was escalated. Tension started from ethnic schism and led to 1979 Soviet invasion. As this study focuses the clash of great power in Afghanistan, therefore, in the historical background it is difficult to define in detail decades long wars and internal political turmoil, therefore, study will try to encapsulate some of them essential for the background.

Afghanistan has been through many ups and downs when it comes to the political turmoil. In these phases one another major incident was the fall of King Zahir Shah Government,

¹⁹ Jeffery, *The Origins Of Conflict In Afghanistan*, 222.

²⁰ Lue van de Goor and Mathijs van Leeuwen, "An Outline of the Conflict in Afghanistan," *Clingendael Institute*, (2000): 16.

who ruled Afghanistan for almost forty years. The unrest culminated in a military Coup led by Lt. General Muhammad Daoud Khan who overthrew King Zahir Shah Government in 1973. Coup proclaimed a republic and initiated reforms including land reform. General Muhammad Daoud Khan adopted very strict measures. He basically wanted to get rid of political opponents; the Islamist parties, whose leaders were beaten, imprisoned and after that they were forced to leave Afghanistan and fled to Pakistan.²¹

To understand the tense situation of Afghanistan, whether it is inter-political conflict, civil war or foreign invasion, it will be good to view it from inter-political standstill point of view. Ibn Khuldun, a Muslim Philosopher, has said that internal chaos has always contributed to external intervention. Therefore, to view the Afghanistan case from that lens it seems that internal division and political deadlock has hand in destabilization of Afghanistan and later on has created room for the Socialist and Islamist clashes. For this matter we see that when there was inter political turmoil, so, foreign countries without missing chance have invaded Afghanistan and made it as a battlefield for International and regional powers. Horse trading like situation was time and again exploited by these powers. Once it has also pushed the country to Civil war. We have very good example of 1989 Civil war brooked out after the withdrawal of Soviet foreign forces. On one hand the ruling Socialist group (the Installed government) was backed and promoted by Communist bloc. On the other hand the resisting group (Mujahedeen) the Islamists were backed and promoted by Capitalist bloc.²² In a nutshell someone can say that Afghanistan state formation went through different hard phases, sometime there was internal discord and sometime foreign countries invaded and provided a ground for commotion.

²¹ Lue van de Goor(2000) 17.

²² Ibid. 17

Formation of PDPA (Peoples Democratic Party of Afghanistan) Party

The Peoples Democratic Party of Afghanistan was born in January 1, 1965 in Kabul at Sher Shah Maina, the residency of Nur Mohammad Taraki. Taraki after doing lots of home work formulated the party and he thus became an obvious choice of peoples and was selected as first secretary general of the party. Since the party's name was in local language "*Jamiyat-i-Demokratiq-i-Khalq*", therefore, party first organ was published in 1966, it was called "*Khalq*".²³ Party was gaining attention and Taraki a prolific writer was writing in newspapers in the favor of the party. PDPA party became popular and in the time period of President Daoud when he was arresting opponents. So, he arrested Taraki and from that time tension aroused between Daoud and PDPA party members.

Saur Revolution 1978

Nevertheless, when PDPA (People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan) led by Nur Muhammad Taraki and king Daoud encamped in political confrontation and there created a political standstill, so, tension aroused and a bloody PDPA revolution with the name of Saur revolution in April 27, 1978 took place. On 7 p.m. Afghanistan Radio made an announcement in Pashto and Dari which informed the World that a successful coup took place and Sardar Daoud government was toppled. Afghanistan was putted on the path of socialist revolution.²⁴ PDPA party by defeating king Daoud came to power and brought several reforms. This eighteen-month power brought extensive violence. It costed 50000 to 100000 Afghan lives. In this violence most of the victims were either Durrani Pashtuns or educated Tajiks.²⁵

²³ Aziz-ul-Haque, *AFGHANISTAN Past, Present & Future* (Islamabad: Institute of Regional Studies, 1997), 131.

²⁴ Ibid, 125.

²⁵ Lue van de Goor(2000) 17.

Split in PDPA party

Nur Mohammad Taraki had always been doubt full of Karmal's royal connections and questioned his socialist credentials. To settle down the issue and to finish the differences between Karmal and Taraki, a central committee was launched. So, central committee held vote between them and Taraki remained successful. Karmal after his defeat resigned from central committee. Conciliatory efforts were doomed to failure so both leaders made their own factions and claimed that it is the real representation of the People of Afghanistan. These factions were known as *Parcham* (Banner) and other was *Khalq* (Masses).²⁶ Split in the party also happened when Karmal and his seven closest supporters and friends were removed from government on the basis of allegations that they wanted to seize power.²⁷

Khalq was strong because of Pashtun tribal background. They were middle class and warrior. Parcham faction was conciliatory they had support of Kabul intelligentsia and bureaucracy. The 1978 revolution that was led by Khalq remained successful and brought them into power. This Khalq faction as early indicated was leaded by President, Nur Muhammad Taraki and Hafizullah Amin. They killed most of citizens who were either Durrani or the supporters of Parcham. Khalq regime of terror once again stimulated Moscow to intervene and install Parcham government. So, when they were leaving Afghanistan, they Installed Najibullah government.²⁸

This violence and unrest created ground for other regional parties, rightists, leftists' parties, and tribal groups to publicly resist any government they disliked. In addition to this it

²⁶ Aziz-ul-Haque, *AFGHANISTAN Past, Present & Future* (Islamabad: Institute of Regional Studies, 1997), 141.

²⁷ Ibid, 162.

²⁸ Lue van de Goor(2000), 18.

also once again triggered great powers interests to intervene in Afghanistan internal matters. It can be fairly said that the nature of the conflicts always had a materialistic side.

Brezhnev Doctrine 1968

Soviet foreign policy in Cold war era was known as Brezhnev doctrine. This policy at the first was outlined by Sergei Kovalev and later on was reiterated in a speech by Leonid Brezhnev. He in the fifth Congress speech to polish United Workers Party stated that when forces that are hostile to socialism try to turn the development of a socialist country toward capitalism. It becomes very problematic to all of the concerned socialist countries. The doctrine basically proclaimed that threat to a socialist or allied State was threat to all of Central and Eastern socialist states. Therefore, it justified direct or indirect intervention of fellow socialist States. The policy limited independence of the Soviet satellites and forced them to sign numerous treaties, to ensure inter-state cooperation with Soviet Union.²⁹

Soviet Invasions 1979

Afghanistan despite rich in natural resources has been suffered from both exogenous and endogenous conflicts. Afghanistan has been considered home of conflicts. These conflicts have both internal and external stories. Such tense situation has affected people lives and has made the region destabilize. It has very badly affected Afghanistan's economy.

When it comes to the history of conflicts in Afghanistan so, it started from internal political division. Internal divisions can be divided into ethnic, linguistic and religious. The same can be said while analyzing the confused situation of Afghanistan. Conflict can be also viewed from international point of view. There are very good assessments about the conflict where some

²⁹ Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers* (USA: Random House, 1988), 515-529.

people are of the opinion that the prevailing situation in Afghanistan is just because of its strategic location and natural resources. To view it from strategic point of view, so, Afghanistan is situated at the crossroad of three regions, like, (Central Asia, South Asia and South West Asia). In cold war it was a high-priced trophy between Soviet Union and United States.³⁰ Secondly, the principles of the Brezhnev Doctrine were so broad that the Soviet even exploited it to justify their military intervention of Afghanistan in 1979.

Causes of Soviet Invasion

In 1978 Soviet signed an agreement with PDPA government to help them with economic and military assistance. When the situation was not coming to normal that is why in December 1979 Soviet troops invaded Afghanistan. There are three factors which show that why Soviets invaded Afghanistan. It shows that why they got involved in Afghanistan.

1. Soviet advisors in the time of internal political confrontation were stationed in Afghanistan because of fear of fundamentalist groups.
2. Soviet were distrustful of Hafizullah Amin. They wanted to replace him with Babrak Karmal.
3. Balance of power in South-west underwent of US security arrangements that resulted from Iran Islamic revolution.

United States Containment Policy

When the Russian forces invaded Afghanistan in 1979 so, Washington to contain the growing influence of Soviets owned containment policy. They for their defense buildup

³⁰ Lue van de Goor (2000), 13

withdrew the Salt II treaty; they canceled grain sales to Moscow.³¹ In addition to it, in Central Asia and South Asia they made alliances SEATO in 1954 and CENTO 1955. These alliances were made for the defense of South and Central Asia. Similarly, Washington became close ally of the neighboring countries of Afghanistan like Pakistan, Iran and India. Mujahedeen, the resisting group, to Soviet Union was supported financially. Pakistan as a main player helped Washington to reach to Mujahedeen and to help them in their fight against Soviet Russia.

Withdrawal of Soviet Forces

Soviet military intervention resulted in uniting Mujahedeen. After lots of resistance and pressure mounted from locals and international community, Soviet planned withdrawal of their forces from Afghanistan³² and Soviet invasion ended when Mikhail Gorbachev came to power in Soviet Union. So, Negotiation with the mediating rules of United Nation started in Geneva. It resulted with the leave of Soviet forces. An agreement was finally signed in 14 April 1988 and brought an end to foreign invasion. Later on, 115000 Soviet troops were withdrawn on 15 February 1989.³³ Soviet did many things they wanted to ensure safety of the communist government therefore; they wanted to replace Hafizullah Amin with Babrak Karmal. The same was done but when both leaders Hafizullah Amin and Babrak Karmal got involved in internal conflict, so, later on Babrak Karmal was replaced with Dr. Najibullah.³⁴ From here Mujahedeen movement gained popularity.

³¹ Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*, 529.

³² Ludwig, W. Adamec, *Afghan Wars, Revolutions and Insurgencies* (New Delhi: Manas Publications, 2006), 330.

³³ Lue van de Goor(2000), 18-19.

³⁴ Ibid.

Mujahedeen

Mujahedeen refers to all Afghan who were engaged in Jihad against Soviet foreign forces and PDPA government. Mujahedeen were Pashtuns and were supported by many International and regional powers like, US, Britain, Iran, Pakistan etc. There were almost eleven anti Soviet parties that had made a coalition and were fighting with Soviet led government of Dr. Najib. Leaders of Mujahedeen were Rabbani, Gulbadin Hikmatyar, and Ustaz Sayyaf etc...³⁵ Around this time Mujahedeen resistance gained popularity. It resulted in clashes with Najib government and Soviet troops based in Afghanistan. These clashes costed and effected lives of 9.5 million people where 6 million innocent Afghans flee to Pakistan and Iran. They became refugees in these countries. Clashes between Mujahedeen and Najib government destroyed country's economy and ruined its infrastructure. Various ethnic groups living in Afghanistan were also affected. This conflict was exploited by several great powers like US, Russia, China, Iran and Pakistan. It was sugar coated as Afghan Jihad. Soviet who was backing Najib's government observed a huge loss of their forces.

The Great Game

Afghanistan in 19th century was a landlocked country between Russian empire and Great Britain. Both countries contended each other's in order to become a powerful country and to expand their influence over the world. The Anglo-Russian maneuvers over Afghanistan had been named as Great Game. This terminology was used by a junior British officer and was popularized by Rudyard Kipling, a famous British author of Kim.³⁶

³⁵ Ibid. 21.

³⁶Jagmohan Meher, *America's Afghanistan War: The Success That Failed* (India: Kalpaz Publications, 2004) 23-24

Taliban

The word “*Talib*” literary means student.³⁷ Taliban movement started with the leadership of a Ghilzai, a Pashtun *Mullah*, from Sangisar Afghanistan, named Mullah Muhammad Omar.³⁸ The Taliban group was not new; they are the products of decade’s long war. Taliban claim that they have great command over Islamic teachings. They are the religious leaders (*Ulema*) who stood against Soviet Invasion and gave verdicts (*Fatwas*) against Soviet forces in Afghanistan. Taliban rejects the concept of rationalism. They discourage thinking of reason to create innovation in Sharia.

Taliban Disagreement with Mujahedeen

Historically, in early 1990's a group of Madrassa teachers from Southern city of Qandahar formed militant movement known as “Taliban”. The aim was to end the continued factional competition of Mujahedeen. Mullah a religious leader is the commander of Taliban faction. Taliban disassociated themselves from Mujahedeen because they were disappointed from their repeatedly failure. They no longer trusted Mujahedeen leaders. They argued that Mujahedeen were morally and materially corrupt.

There have been lots of speculations about Taliban nature and extent. Some argue that they were backed by west other said that some South Asian countries backed Taliban.³⁹ Apart from these speculations Taliban original home is Qandahar.⁴⁰ Qandahar is the center where most of the time Taliban are holding their formal consultation known as Qandahar Shura. This Shura brings together the leading figure in the government council.

³⁷ William Maly, *The Afghanistan War*, 2nded.(New York: Palgrave Macmillan Press, 2009), 182.

³⁸ Ibid. 184.

³⁹ Lue van de Goor and Mathijs van Leeuwen,(2000) 23.

⁴⁰ Ibid. 24.

Rise of Taliban

Taliban resisted Dr. Najib government and announced Jihad against him. Taliban Lashkar when gained attention and people were recruited so they at the first entered Qandahar in 1994 after that they captured Herat so on as so forth.⁴¹ On 27 September 1997, when residents of Kabul woke up so they found two dead bodies hanging one was Dr. Najibullah and the other was his younger brother. By killing Dr. Najib Taliban roused to power. Mullah Muhammad Omar, leader of the Taliban became their president. He established presidential form of government. When they came to power, so, much of the country fell into their hand but only three areas were not in their control. One was North-east Afghanistan of Massoud's forces and the second was Hazarajat region, the third was Mazar-e-Sharif of Dostam.⁴²

Taliban who has strong affiliation with Deobandi school of thought and, therefore, they follow Hanafi Jurisprudence. They were very skeptical about Western diplomacy that is why they did struggle to implement Sharia in the country. They had not made constitution for Afghanistan but instructed people to follow Quran, Sunnah and Fiqe Hanafi in country matters.⁴³

Support of Taliban

Taliban were supported by various regional and global powers. Pakistan played key role because of 80000 to 100000 Pakistani were trained and they were fighting in Afghanistan during soviet invasion. Moreover, on 29th of October 1994 Pakistan Army sent a convoy of NLC (National Logistic Center) to deliver US weapons to Afghan Mujahedeen fighting against Najib

⁴¹ Roberts, *The Origins Of Conflict In Afghanistan*, 232.

⁴² William Maly, *The Afghanistan War*, 2nded.(New York: Palgrave Macmillan Press, 2009), 191.

⁴³ Ibid, 188.

government. The Afghan tribal leaders time and again condemned this favor but no one was ready to even highlight it.⁴⁴ In addition to it when Taliban came to power so Pakistan was the first country to recognize their government.⁴⁵ In the time of Soviet invasion some 30 trucks full of weapons crossed border every single day.⁴⁶

There are some accounts which claimed that US supported Taliban, they argue that even Clinton, former US president, administration spoke in the favor of them by saying that "Taliban are right people, they are Pashtuns from whose ranks Afghanistan's rulers must be drawn".⁴⁷

Downfall of Taliban

There are several reasons which have resulted as the downfall of Taliban regime. Three among them which were very rare and were the initial causes were the 1998 incident and the second was providing shelter of Osama bin Laden. The third was the radicalization of Taliban.

Osama bin Laden in Afghanistan

Osama bin Laden was born on 10th of March 1957 in Riyadh Saudi Arabia. He was son of a Yemeni who was constructor and his named was Muhammad Bin Laden. Osama bin Laden at the very first supported Soviet Jihad. He had great friendship and good ties with Gulbadin Hikmatyar and Ustaz Sayyaf. Saudi Arabian government banned his visit to Afghanistan. But he visited Afghanistan again in 1991 after lots of resistance. Saudi Arabia cancelled his citizenship in 1994. Osama was a trader and was a wealthy person. Taliban could

⁴⁴ Abdullah Malik, *Afghanistan Qadeem-o-Jadeed* [Afghanistan Ancient and Modern] (Lahore: Al-Faisal Nashran, 2012), 395.

⁴⁵ William Maly (2009) 185.

⁴⁶ Ibid. 188.

⁴⁷ Ibid. 191.

not capture him because of their internalized norms of Pashtunwali.⁴⁸ Next is Osama was also doing charity and he was distributing money in poor. Moreover, he also financially supported Afghan Jihad in the time period of Soviet Invasion.

A big and fatal mistake of Taliban was that they provided shelter to Saudi extremist Osama bin Laden.⁴⁹ His presence was perceived by US as matter of concern.⁵⁰ Problems became acute from August 1998 when on 7th of August a suicide car bomber blew up US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania. US blamed Bin Laden. Clinton ordered to hit terrorist training camps in Jalalabad with missiles. Almost seventy missiles were launched on their camps in Jalalabad and other areas. These missiles targeted Al Badar, Khalid bin Waleed etc. training camps of Al-Qaeda. When they targeted the camps, number of terrorists was killed, but Osama bin Laden remained safe. Taliban apologized from US for their given shelter to Osama. Clinton imposed unilateral sanctions on Taliban. She ordered freezing of their assets in US and banned their commercial ties. UN passed resolution and, in its chapter, 4 sanctions imposed by UN Security Council. They demanded Taliban to hand over Bin Laden to US. If they refused to cooperate so the resolution demanded other States not to allow their aircrafts that fly from Afghanistan. And it also demanded States to freeze Taliban accounts across the world.⁵¹ When the Taliban refused to US and UN demands, they furthered their sanctions on Taliban. This time sanctions roused from economic to military. Sanctions were imposed on supplies that were carried to them directly and indirectly from foreign countries. Ban was imposed on their weapons and aircrafts.

One another incident took place which also contributed in the downfall of Taliban. On 9 September 2001 an Arab Journalist carrying Belgian passport arrived in Khawaja Baha Uddin to

⁴⁸ Ibid. 211-213.

⁴⁹ Ibid. 207.

⁵⁰ Ibid. 208.

⁵¹ Ibid. 208.

interview Ahmed Shah Massoud. He putted some 15 questions typed in French. Two among them were; why could you call Bin Laden a terrorist or killer. Second was that if you take Kabul what would you do with him? Afghan Ambassador to India Masood Khalili noticed that Journalist has smile on his face. Boom hidden in camera exploded and Massoud was killed. Death announced on 15 September. Osama bin Laden was held responsible for it.⁵²

Radicalization of Taliban

Taliban had anti West views they were radical. They were against women rights and discourage women participation in government. In addition to it Taliban were giving exploiting religion. They had made very strict policies against sects those were in contrast to Hanafi sect. They in Mazar-e-Sharif in Fazalabad village killed 70 Hazara who were the followers of Shia sect. In Dasht-e-Lailay near Sherghan they had dig out 20 joint graves, and this was also in the notice of United Nation. Taliban were becoming radical with the passage of time that even the killed 200 war prisoners starving. They discouraged the concept of tolerance; therefore, they had ordered Shia Hazara tribe to either leave Afghanistan or to follow Hanafi sect.⁵³ Taliban facilitated Hijackers of Indian Airlines Flight 1C814. Which had taken off from Kathmandu on a flight to New Delhi and they brought it to Kandahar. Taliban had links with Al-Qaida. Taliban promoted global jihad. They had also provided safe heavens to global terrorists.⁵⁴

US policy for Afghanistan

Afghanistan had never been high priority area to US until and unless communism got invaded in. Similarly, Afghanistan was never written off by US global strategy. US strategic

⁵² Ibid. 210.

⁵³ Abdullah Malik, *Afghanistan Qadeem-o-Jadeed* [Afghanistan Ancient and Modern] (Lahore: Al-Faisal Nashran, 2012), 399.

⁵⁴ William Maly, *The Afghanistan War*, 2nded.(New York: Plagrave Macmillan Press, 2009), 214.

importance in Afghanistan is because they thought that Afghanistan is gate to India, a land, where Japanese and German dreamed of a “link-up point” for Axis powers. Therefore, America granted recognition to Afghanistan in 1934.⁵⁵ US started condemning Taliban government. They in a nutshell realized that Taliban will never unite Afghanistan. So, in 1997 US announced new policy regarding South and Central Asia. This new policy implicitly indicated US interest that was to secure oil pipelines in Central Asia. It featured India's growing economic importance and Kashmir conflict. Therefore, US made it clear that stability in Afghanistan is important for the interest of US and other regional countries.⁵⁶ US had always been very optimistic toward Taliban government and they hoped that everything will be okay with the passage of time, but when 9/11 incident happened it changed their policy toward Taliban government.

The Incident of 9/11

At 8:45Am on 11 September, American Airlines flight No 11, which left Boston’s Logan Airport for Los Angeles some time earlier, crashed North Tower of World Trade Center in New York. It was cloudiest day. Plane crashed into 78th floor of World Trade Center. Then another US Airline 175 crashed South Tower. Two planes did not reach the exact target. Another flight 77 crashed Pentagon Building; headquarter of US army and Department of defense. One plane was crashed near Pittsburgh Pennsylvania. According to reports there were 19 Al-Qaida hijackers. Total deaths reported were 2973.⁵⁷ From here onwards there become changes in US policy and they declare war against terrorist.

⁵⁵ Jagmohan Meher, *America's Afghanistan War: The Success That Failed* (India: Kalpaz Publications, 2004), 36.

⁵⁶ Lue van de Goor(2000) 28.

⁵⁷ William Maly (2009), 210-211.

New Great Game and War on Terror

Great game is not a fun anymore. It was used in nineteenth century by British because there was a competition between Britain and Russia. After the 9/11 attack once again the great game concept came into light. George. W. Bush was the president of United States of America at that time. His administration never showed strategic priority in Afghanistan region. But when the World Trade Center was attacked so, US thought to make more friends that they will assist her in New Great Game and War on Terror. Therefore, along the support of other global countries US institutionally assured that Pakistan will be an ally in this war against terror. Iran was an enemy and Iraq as a main threat. Hence, granting Pakistan a logistic support due to its intelligence. Moreover, the conspiracy theories of pressuring Pakistan are not true, as no state can be pressurized because it is a kind of suicidal. Pakistan security establishment saw US-Indian-Afghan alliance and Iranian-Russian alliance. Therefore, they realize that many regional and international countries want to undermine Pakistan influence in Afghanistan. India wants to de member Pakistan from atomic membership.⁵⁸

Support for War on Terror 2001

A memorial service in Washington DC few days after September 11 attack took place. At that time decision makers were President George W. Bush, secretary of defense Donald H. Rumsfeld, and secretary of state Colin L. Powell, with the chairman of joint Chief of Staff General Richard B. Meyers. They evaluated the process and despite knowing Soviet Invasion reached to the conclusion to oust the Taliban government. But it was impossible due to some strategic hindrance. So, they proposed two strategies; first, to assist states. Second was to take help from partners on the ground in Afghanistan and to highlight the hideouts of Taliban.

⁵⁸ Barnett R, Rubin and Ahmed Rashid, "From Great Game to Grand Bargain: Ending Chaos in Afghanistan and Pakistan," *Council on Foreign Relation*, 87, no. 6 (November/December 2008): 36.

Showing sympathy and due to US invoking of article 5 of April 1949 North Atlantic Treaty which clearly mentioned that "armed attack against one or more of them shall be considered an attack against them all". So, UK Prime Minister Tony Blair moved rapidly and stood by US and European allies followed UK Prime Minister footsteps. Hence NATO forces were ordered for preparation. Australian PM in Washington DC on 11 September pledged support to US.⁵⁹. Most important to US in this critical time was Pakistan. US needed Pakistan active role. US time and again demanded Pakistan to declare himself either friend or foe. So, Musharraf on 19 September addressed nation and supported US. Musharraf at the very first attempted to convince Taliban, he sends ISI Director General Lieutenant General Mahmood Ahmed to Kandahar to hand over Osama to US. But Taliban denied.⁶⁰ At the end of September isolationist policy was owned by some countries like Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Iran and India etc. These countries left Afghanistan alone. Along with NATO forces US also prepared its forces. Aircraft's carriers were deployed in Northern side and these forces reached Indian Ocean. On 5 October 1000 US troops flown into Khanabad Airbase in Uzbekistan on C-17 transport air craft.⁶¹ On 7 October fifteen land Based B-52 flown from Whiteman Air Force base near Kansas City and from island of Diego Garcia in Indian Ocean with 25 strikes aircraft. Some 12000 bombs had been dropped in Afghanistan on the safe heavens of Taliban. Some 50 Tomahawk cruise missiles were fired. In the start of 2001 Taliban and Al-Qaida safe havens were systematically targeted. When Taliban suffered and were unable to defend their government so, US deployed its forces. And Taliban were defeated and US get control on Afghanistan.⁶²

⁵⁹ William Maly (2009) 216.

⁶⁰ Ibid, 217.

⁶¹ Ibid, 219.

⁶² Ibid.

Bone Conference

Once Taliban government was ousted from Afghanistan and US invaded Afghanistan, they immediately convened a conference known as bone conference on 3 October 2001. The purpose was to draw a road map for re-establishment of civilian government. So, in 22 December, 2001 an interim administration was conveyed. Then Loya Jirga was formed it is the Supreme Court of Afghanistan. The purpose of formation of Loya Jirga and Bone conference was to transfer power.⁶³ So, after lots of efforts on 22 December 2001 a ceremony in which 2000 men and women including leaders like, Rabbani, Mojadiddi, Pir Gilani, General Tommy R. Franks, Dostam, and Ambassador Brahimi, foreign minister of Iran, India, and Pakistan joined. In this ceremony Hamid Karzai was sworn in by acting chief justice Ismail Khan and Rabbani signed a transfer of power certificate and described Afghanistan as "Thirsty for peace". Louis Mishaal said "I am sure that Mr. Massoud is proud of his nation today" so in this regard power was transferred to civilians.⁶⁴

Conclusion

Afghanistan is a small land locked country; situated in the strategic South West region of Asia. It has a very rich history in terms of ethno-linguistic diversity, internal political landscape and regional and international great powers intervention. It was suffered due to its natural resources and strategic location. Political setup has always aggravated the interest of foreign powers to interfere in the internal matters of the country. Political turmoil in Afghanistan has always foreign mission rather than their personal ambitions. The rise and fall of PDPA party, the Mujahedeen movement against Soviet foreign invasion, the Taliban movement and the resistance

⁶³ Ibid, 225.

⁶⁴ Ibid, 229.

of Ahmad Shah Masood was always backed by foreign power. This is the reason that great powers had always turned Afghanistan as a battle field for their material interests.

Chapter Two

Great Powers Interests in Afghanistan

Introduction

After the collapse of Soviet Union, Central Asian Countries went into the orbit of “New Great Game”. Different regional and International Powers participated in this game. In this game Islam as a religion particularly was exploited as a tool for the material gain of some regional and international countries. The center of the game for world powers was Afghanistan. Every regional and international power used Afghanistan soil and tried to secure their material interest. Major Regional powers participated in game were, India, Pakistan, Iran, China, and Russia. International powers included Russia, United States and Britain. It will be not wrong to say that from 1979 till 2020 Afghanistan was battlefield for all these above-mentioned States. Therefore, to explore rational causes behind this game, this Chapter explores the matter and try to answer the central questions, that why Afghanistan is the battlefield for these regional and international powers? What were the interests of these countries in Afghanistan? Hence to answer these questions, study look into the geo-economics, political as well as strategic interests of both regional and international countries.

Understanding the Concept of International Conflicts

Before analyzing the interest of the great powers, it is pertinent to know about the concept of international conflicts. Of all social processes, conflicts can be found in both individual as well as universal level. The basic definition of conflict is when two people, parties,

or countries' struggles to secure own interest or to protect own right.¹ In similar way conflict arises and becomes necessary when an individual, group or society respond to daily emotions, needs, expectations and ways of living.

Conflicts based on needs and expectations are divided into four main types.

- 1 Conflicts between states (Interstate conflicts).
- 2 Internationalized civil conflicts.
- 3 Militarized disputes.
- 4 Political incidents.

It is not necessary that conflicts should be between States but it can also take place between individuals or groups. It becomes dangerous when States gets involve in, they in order to gain their own interests jump into the ground of competition and fight hybrid or proxy wars.²

Afghanistan and India

India is located in the Southern part of Asia. It shares 106-km border with Afghanistan at Ladakh, Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (POK). Relationship between Afghanistan and India exists for millennia and has been maintained from decades. Both countries historically have a shared history of culture and trade. Panini, a *Pathan*, who simplified and resurrected *Sanskrit*, has mentioned relation between India and Afghanistan. He mentions that “*Kapisayana*” wine that was made in Kapisi a place in Afghanistan, and was exported to India.³ In this regard India's relation and its support for Afghan government has two dimensions. Firstly, India wants to

¹ Jacob Bercovitch and Richard Jackson, *International Conflict: A Chronological Encyclopedia of Conflicts and Their Management 1945-1995* (Washington D.C: Congressional Quarterly, 1997), 1-2.

² Ibid, 7.

³ K. Warikoo, *Afghanistan: The Challenge* (New Delhi: Pentagon Press, 2007), 163-64.

extend its trade to Central Asia via Afghanistan. Secondly, India strategically wants to maintain friendship with Afghanistan to counter Pakistan and China`s growing influence.

India`s Effort to Install a Stable Government in Afghanistan

Continuous civil wars and predatory activities in Afghanistan have attracted different International and regional powers. India being a neighbor and friendly country to Afghanistan has always favored stable government in center. It keeps good relations with Afghanistan from the very first. From King Zahir to General Dostam and to Hamid Karzai, India has always favored stable and united government in Afghanistan.

India`s Interest in Afghanistan

India has always maintained better relation with Afghanistan. Even after a successful coup of General Dawood who overthrew King Zahir Shah in 1973. India at that time still managed to maintain close relation with Afghanistan. India supported Afghan government for two reasons. First is economic, while the second is their foreign policy toward neighboring countries. Economic reason is very clear that India as a rising power in South Asia, wants to compete neighboring country China in trade market. For this reason, India wants access to energy rich Central Asian Countries (CARs).

Geo-Strategic Interest

India`s geo-strategic interest in Afghanistan can be viewed from their foreign policy point of view; they see some neighboring countries as their rivals. They basically want to prevent

the influence of these countries over Afghanistan.⁴ It is because they feel threat from these countries. To overcome of this fear, they supported Afghan self-government each time by providing military assistance and by training their security forces.

As far as India`s Central Asia strategic policy is concerned so they favors self-government in Afghanistan which will help and assist her in both present and future. For this matter it has recent acquisition of its first foreign military outpost at Ayni Tajikistan. In this airport it is stationing unite of military and has MiG2 29s. The purpose of Ayni airbase is that if there is instability in Afghanistan and if India possesses any threat from instability so, it will use these forces and aircrafts to effectively respond to the crises.

Pakistan a neighboring country of both India and Afghanistan is perceived as a rival state by India. Therefore, India all the time has endeavored to cut bilateral links between Pakistan and Afghanistan. While Pakistan, according to its foreign policy has always supported its favorite government in Afghanistan. In 1994 Pakistan was the first country that recognized Taliban government. Pakistan from the start was supporting Taliban and using them as a bargaining chip that once they become succeed in Afghanistan after that they will use them against India in Jammu and Kashmir.⁵ India feared that if Afghanistan falls into the hands of Taliban, firstly, they will not allow India to extend proposed gas pipelines from Central Asian Republics (CARs) to New Delhi. Secondly, they will destabilize Kashmir. Therefore, to counter Taliban they supported anti-Taliban group, under the supervision of General Rashid Dostam in

⁴Nishtha Kaushiki, "The New Great Game and India`s Connect Asia Policy: Strategic Perspectives and Challenges," *Institute of International Affairs, Graduates School of International Studies, Seoul National University*, Vol, 20, no, 2 (December 2013): 92, accessed June 23, 2021, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43107259>.

⁵ Jan Achakzai, Pakistan`s Risky Afghan Overtures, *The Frontier Post*, July 2, 2010.

North.⁶Historically, India had always supported anti-Taliban fiction and has encouraged attacks on Taliban from Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.⁷

Secondly, in war like situation with Pakistan, Indian thinks that both Afghanistan as a friendly state and Ayni airbase have the potentials to strike Pakistan in rear.⁸ In similar context, India`s geo-strategic interest in Afghanistan is because the people of Afghanistan follow moderate Islam. So, India is trying to curtail the influence of religion and want countries not to become under its influence.⁹

Economic Interest

Economic Interest has forced India to maintain bilateral relation with Afghanistan. Trade between Afghanistan and India had made people to people connections. India economic interest is based on three things, first is access to energy rich Central Asian Countries. Second is to counter China influence in Asian market. Third is access to world developed countries so that she can have trade with them.

Moreover, Central Asia gives huge untapped market to Indian consumers for Indian goods so that the consumers will decide between Western products, Chinese products or Indian products. Today Chinese products have already flooded Central Asian market. India tea and pharmaceutical Industries need stable and huge market. Therefore, to expand trade to Central Asian countries the good route which costs less for India goes through Afghanistan. Next is that

⁶ Hanif-ur-Rahman, "Pak Afghan Relations during 1996-2006" (PhD diss., Quaid-i-Azam University Islamabad, 2014), 127.

⁷ Ibid, 128.

⁸Kaushiki, "The New Great Game and India`s Connect Asia Policy," 7.

⁹ Ibid, 89.

there is great demand for Indian IT, banking services and construction in Asian market. So with the help of this India could facilitate both Central Asian as well as South Asian countries.¹⁰

When it comes to Chinese influence on Asian market, so, for India Afghanistan is potential route to Central Asian energy. They see Afghanistan as a base to counter China. Next is Afghanistan is potential market for Indian goods and business.¹¹

Furthermore, India signed an agreement in Petersburg with Iran and Russia on creating an International North-South transport corridor. This corridor will help India and will enable the neighboring countries to transport goods from Indian ports to Bandar-Abbas Port in Iran and then via rail and roads to Central Asia. So, if Afghanistan becomes a stable state, India will extend its trade with Central Asian Countries and will be benefited from it.

India`s Support for Afghanistan

In Boon conference India occupied place and supported Hamid Karzai. They did all this because they are and were seeking a border Pan-Asian influence and as a large regional player in the world.¹²

When it comes to foreign assistance India has spent US\$ 750 million on development. Moreover in 2002, in Tokyo conference they promised to spend 106.5 million dollars for several other projects. It has also offered help to rebuild Afghan national airline “Ariana”. In addition to it has provided 400 buses 200 minibuses, telecommunication. India support and presence is significance because of its geo-economic interest and next is India do not want the restoration of

¹⁰ Raghav Sharma, “India in Central Asia: The Road Ahead” *Institute of Peace and Conflicts Studies* (2009), 8-9, accessed June 23, 2021, <http://www.jstor.com/stable/resrep09384>.

¹¹ Afifa Kiran, “Indian Quest for Strategic Ingress in Afghanistan and Implications for Pakistan” *ISSRA Papers* (2009), 13.

¹² *Ibid*, 128-30.

resurgent's Taliban regime in Afghanistan. India wants good relation with Pashtun majority in Afghanistan. It endeavors to prevent anti-India militancy milieu.¹³

The International North-South project of Iran and India was the construction of Delaram Zaranj highway worth six hundred and two crore rupees and completion of two hundred- and two-kilometers electricity transmission line from Uzbekistan (Pul-e-Khumri) to Kabul.¹⁴ They constructed this route to promote trade between Iran, Afghanistan and India. Via this route access to Chabahar port of Iran is easy and costs less.

India has supported and is still supporting reconstruction effort in Afghanistan. She has provided financial, humanitarian and project assistance. According to estimations India's current commitment is over 650\$ million US dollars. In addition, India provides one million tons wheat as food assistance every year to Afghanistan.

On 28th of August 2005 Indian Prime minister Dr. Manmohan Singh visited Kabul and met President Karzai and they both talked on regional and international issues. Indian PM pledged of giving 50\$ million US dollars. More is 500 scholarships for Afghan students were announced 1000 sewing machines were gifted. India also announced that 100 villages in Afghanistan will be adopted that will promote rural development by introducing solar electrification and rainwater harvesting using technologies. India also announced its support for Afghanistan on joining SAARC.¹⁵

¹³ Ibid, 130-32.

¹⁴Kaushiki, "The New Great Game and India's Connect Asia Policy," 90.

¹⁵Warikoo, *Afghanistan*, 180-83.

Drug Trafficking and Weapon Proliferation

Central Asian Countries are under the influence of nuclear States like Russia, China, Pakistan and India. This part of the world is very rich in natural resources and has a rich land for cultivation. Therefore, in the case of Afghanistan much of the land is cultivated of opium. Opium is used in Afghanistan usually for making sedative drugs, whereas, these are later on smuggled to other countries. So, drug trafficking poses a serious threat to the neighboring regions. India for this purpose pay greater attention to drug trafficking because the money generated from this is used to fund extremists' groups.¹⁶

Pakistan Interest in Afghanistan

Pakistan is a neighbor country to Afghanistan and shares 2640-kilometer five crossing borders. Three of these borders are used for trade and travel purpose. While the rest are used for traveling that will facilitate both nations living in Pakistan and Afghanistan. Both countries have a complicated pessimistic history of neighborhood, where, they perceive each other both as neighbor and foe. The prevailing situation compels each other to interfere in internal matters. Since War on terror Pakistan has supported US and has encouraged attack on Taliban government. In contrary Pakistan from the very first was promoting Afghan Jihad in Afghanistan for its strategic depth policy.

Pakistan has five major interests in Afghanistan.

- 1 Strategic depth Policy
- 2 To permanently end Pakistan and Afghanistan border disputes.
- 3 To end Afghanistan support for Pashtunistan entity and Baloch separatists.

¹⁶ Raghav Sharma, "India in Central Asia: The Road Ahead" 8.

- 4 To show Pakistan's importance for Central Asia.
- 5 To provide Islamic venture to Pakistan on Islamic militants as means to basically divert their thought from other domestic problems.¹⁷

Geo-Political Interest

Pakistan being a neighbor country to Afghanistan has hosted millions of Afghan refugees. They, therefore, has wide range geo-political, strategic as well as economic interests in Afghanistan. Pakistan due to shared culture and geography has supported Afghan government several times due to its geo-political interest. These interests involve revival of Pashtunistan issue, Durand issue and strategic depth.

Pashtunistan Issue

Since the Durand line agreement till the fall of Hafizullah Amin both Pakistan and Afghanistan are facing Pashtunistan Issue. Pashtunistan issue is very controversial and complicated. Different scholars have different opinions about this issue. But according to Kabul's perception they want permanent annexation of the areas to Afghanistan that are inhabited by Pashtuns and are under the control of Pakistan. These areas include Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa and parts of Balochistan.¹⁸ The issue of Pashtunistan has its roots from the treaty of Gandamak and Durand Line Agreement. Therefore, it is most alarming and threatening issue for Pakistan if not resolved. Pakistan fears of reviving Pashtunistan Issue. Therefore, it focuses Afghan government and has always favored weak government in center. They in this regard support Taliban so that Taliban will create a trans-border ethnic enclave which will be run by

¹⁷ K. Warikoo, *The Afghanistan Crisis: Issues And Perspectives* (New Delhi: Bahavana Books & Prints 2002), 250.

¹⁸ Rahman, "Pak Afghan Relations during 1996-2006", 30.

Islamists and they will have little interest in Pashtun nationalism.¹⁹ Moreover, Pakistan wants weak political setup in Afghanistan which in future will not pose threat to them. Any unfriendly regime in Afghanistan can raise the issue of Pashtunistan. In addition to it Pakistan fears that if there comes any kind of stable and independent government in Afghanistan or if there becomes stability in Tribal Areas so it can pose threat to Pakistan.²⁰

Durand Line Agreement, 1893

In 1747, Ahmad Shah Abdali founded Afghan kingdom that was extended from Herat to Kashmir and Balkh to Sindh. Afghanistan was a buffer state between Russia and Britain. So, the Durand line dates back to 1893 when British were in confrontation with their rival Country Russia. Therefore, Amir Abdur Rahman in order to avoid any kind of direct confrontation with British wanted line of demarcation. He requested British government to send mission for demarcation and British sent Sir Mortimer Durand, he signed a treaty known as Durand line.

Durand Line forms a 2670 kilometer international border in South Asia between Pakistan and Afghanistan. The agreement was signed in Kabul at November 12, 1893. The purpose of the agreement was to fix the limits of respective regions and to improve friendly relation with British. Abdur Rehman being friend to British agreed that he will hand over districts to the north of Oxus that are held by him. In addition the districts lying to the south of the Oxus that are not in his possession will be handed to him in exchange.²¹ For this matter Durand left half of the Pashtun home land under British rule. North-West Frontier Province was created by British administration in 1901 on the British side of Durand Line. Although, the princely states of Swat,

¹⁹ Ibid, 110-11.

²⁰ Warikoo, *Afghanistan*, 158-59.

²¹ Relevant Sections of the Durand Agreement, Abdur Rahman-British India, November 12, 1893, Azmat Hayat, *"The Durand Line, Its Geo-Strategic Importance"*.

Chitral and Dir were allowed to maintain their autonomy under the term of maintaining friendly ties with British. Durand line agreement contains seven articles that include the commitment not to exercise interference beyond the Durand line.²²

Durand Issue

The Durand line divided ethnic Pashtuns. The agreement demarcated Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Gilgit-Baltistan and Balochistan of the northern and western Pakistan from the eastern, northern and southeastern provinces of Afghanistan. The tension aroused when in 1947 Pakistan became a sovereign State, Afghanistan rejected Durand on the basis of political, ethno-linguistic and economic grounds. They challenged it.²³ So, Pakistan by keeping in view the Durand situation has owned a policy where it wants to establish a subservient government in Afghanistan friendly to it. It wants militarily weak government in Afghanistan so that it will then not be able to question Durand Line or raise Pashtunistan issue.²⁴

Strategic-depth

The term Strategic–depth according to military literature means that distances between front lines/battle sectors and the fighters. It includes areas like capital cities, heartlands, and other centers of populations. The term was coined in August 25, 1988 by Pakistan former army chief Gen. Aslam Baig while addressing to soldiers he said that strategic-depth means that the hegemony of superpowers are over and the three countries like Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran will emerge free and will unite together to form the bastion of power for Muslim world.²⁵

²²Ibid.,

²³ Rahman, “Pak Afghan Relations during 1996-2006,” 42-44.

²⁴Warikoo, *Afghanistan*, 137-38.

²⁵Ishtiaq Ali Mehkri, “Whither strategic depth,” *The Express Tribune*, June 20, 2021, accessed June 21, 2021, <http://tribune.com.pk/story/2306354/whither-strategic-depth>.

Pakistan indo-centric policy is always determined by its search strategic-depth policy toward Afghanistan for their political as well as for their Strategic interest. In this parlance the Pakistani military chiefs have always supported Taliban in Afghanistan against foreign invaders and they call it strategic depth policy. The purpose of their support for Taliban is subservient government and to counter Iran and Indian hegemony in the region. It is because Pakistan and India are a hostile neighbor States. Both by coming close to Afghanistan fight mini great games and a proxy war in Afghanistan against each other.

Pakistan, therefore, prioritize this policy to curtail Indian influence in Afghanistan, because they fear that India will use the soil of Afghanistan and will destabilize their region as once on the 23rd April in camera meeting in Senate, Interior Minister Rehman Malik showed documentary proofs that India is involved in training terrorists in Afghanistan. He added that India wants to destabilize Fata and Balochistan. It is very much clear that India had 18th consulates in Afghanistan and used as a training camp for terrorists. These trained terrorists were supplied to Pakistan. Raw by using Pashtun identity is involved to tarnish the image of peace-loving Pashtuns.²⁶ So keeping in view these activities Pakistan favor Taliban to come in power and to cut off the links between Afghanistan and India.

Economic Interest

Pakistan in terms of economic interest also want an access to resource rich Central Asian Republics (CARs) for business and trade purposes.²⁷ Therefore, route to Car's countries for Pakistan is possible through Afghanistan. Access to CARs countries could fulfill Pakistan's industrial demand. In similar way huge reservoir of oil and gas has also increased Pakistan

²⁶Shumaila Raja, "India's covert operations" Dawn, August 29, 2009, accessed May 12, 2021, <http://www.dawn.com/news/487258/indiaaes-covert-operations>.

²⁷ Jagmohan, Meher, *America's Afghanistan War: The Success That Failed* (India: Kalpaz Publications, 2004), 203.

interest in Afghanistan because Afghanistan has potential routes to Central Asia. In addition, Gwadar a ray hope for Pakistan in future will be a deep port. Pakistan would facilitate oil and gas pipelines from CARs and will run through Afghan territory to Gwadar port.²⁸

China Interest in Afghanistan

China and Afghanistan also share a narrow border of 76-kilometer that begins at the tri-point of both countries with Pakistan administered Kashmir and ends with the tripoint of Tajikistan. China expect prominent role over Afghanistan by upgrading its economic and diplomatic engagement. It is chairing heart of Asia group and has hosted many conferences on ministerial level like in 2014 Waldman and Wright.²⁹ The purpose of this conference was to put an end to Afghanistan crisis. China always favors a stable Afghanistan because of their economic and strategic interest.

Economic Interests

China is in trade war with Western countries. It has both strategic and economic interests in Afghanistan. It wants to make more and more economic partners in South and Central Asia. China some companies according to their “going out” strategy want to explore world markets. These few companies were involved in exploring Aynak copper mine and oil exploration in Amu Darya. China is in dire need of energy for its industries. Therefore, they want to invest in Central Asia to have access to its market. They in similar way also want an access to natural gas and oil pipelines.³⁰ Access to energy rich countries like Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan, and Iran etc. is

²⁸ Rahman, “Pak Afghan Relations during 1996-2006” 114.

²⁹Kristain Berg, Harpviken, and ShahrbanouTadjbakhsh, *A Rock between Hard places: Afghanistan as an Arena of Regional Insecurity*, (London: Hurst and Company 2016), 42.

³⁰Kaushiki, “The New Great Game and India’s Connect Asia Policy,” 90.

possible through Afghanistan. Therefore, China always has supported a stable government in Afghanistan.

Strategic Interest

China is not a revisionist power in Afghanistan. If it is given a chance China will always prefer a stable central government in Afghanistan. China has witnessed the quagmire in Afghanistan in which the great powers like Soviet Union, Britain were entrapped. Therefore, China sees it as a grave yard of the empire. China in Afghanistan is in favor of self-ruled government because they perceive any foreign invasion threat to their territory. They strategically favor moderate religion in Afghanistan. Because if there is any kind of radicalization so it will affect China`s northwest Xinjiang Uighur region.

Geo-strategic interest of United States

The US intervention in Afghanistan was motivated by number of factors. Those were geo-political and commercial. The second is US foreign policy is governed by a doctrine named as “full-spectrum” means that US should control military, economic and political development all over the world.³¹

Afghanistan along with its potential had much significance for United State. Afghanistan borders Iran, and other Central Asian countries like Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Russia. Therefore, United States intervention was aimed to influence Central Asian energy rich countries. Along with access to these countries US also wanted an access to Pacific Ocean. As Pacific Ocean has an important rout for market and resources throughout to Eurasia.

³¹ K. T. Thomas, “The Economic Roots of US Intervention in Afghanistan,” *Indian History Congress*, 68, (2007), 1222, accessed September 20, 2021, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/44145636>.

With the rise of emerging powers of Eastern Eurasia US interest at once shifted from Atlantic to Indian Ocean and Pacific Ocean. Its interest turned from Europe to South and Central Asia. Alliance was made remade for geo-political interest like oil and other energy resources. US military presences give Central Asian states better alternative to Russia, China and Iran. US have always a history of not allowing its allies to emerge strong and to pose threat to the world. Next is its presence in Afghanistan was having importance of Central Asia in both production and fossil fuels.

Secondly, United States and China are competing with each other's; therefore, Middle East seaways are important routs for them than that of land routes.³² Thirdly, US strategically have major military bases in Central Asia. These are important for them to control the resources of the region. Therefore, the new "Great Game" started in 1990s after the collapse of Soviet Union and the emergence of hydrocarbon rich republics like Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. These regions were attractive to US and other E&P (Exploration and production) players.

United States intervention aimed to have an access to oil and gas rich countries like Armenia, Turkmenistan and Georgia. Oil and gas have advantage for US to the point that they remain out of control of OPEC.³³

Security Interest

At the very first Afghanistan was security concerned for world. With the rise of Osama Afghanistan got world attention. World leaders being concerned about the rising situation in

³²Helhe, Luras, Stale, Ulriksen and Vegard Valther Hansen, "The Strategic Significance of Afghanistan: A Note of Caution to the NATO Summit," *Norwegian Institute for International Affairs*, (2010), 2-4, accessed September 20, 2021, <http://www.jstor.com/stable/resrep08023>.

³³ Thomas, "The Economic Roots Of US Intervention in Afghanistan," 1216-17.

Afghanistan and other regional countries decided to obliterate terrorist's safe heavens and their organizations in Afghanistan. They demanded Taliban government to hand over Osama Bin Laden. When Taliban refused, therefore, they proposed war on terror. They named their intervention "War on Terror". When they attacked Afghanistan and ousted Taliban government and took charge of the country. The insurgents started counter attack on them and their installed government and in this parlance, insurgents in one of the attacks, targeted UN vehicle and workers. UN leader for Afghanistan Lakdar Brahimi said that he could not work until security situation in Afghanistan is not improved. Therefore, NATO took responsibility and its leaders assured their security by saying "Our first and immediate priority is to get Afghanistan right".³⁴

Economic Interest

Along with security and strategic interest, Central Asia is region that US has acknowledged its worth and important in 1999, when the Silk Road strategy Act was introduced and passed by Congress. US also wanted access to oil rich Central Asian States. US in Afghanistan soil after its invasion mostly controlled oil rich regions.³⁵ In addition to it US from the very start was much concerned about Persian Gulf countries. Because the flow of oil from Gulf to the rest of the world was in a vital interest of US and other western countries, therefore, historically speaking in 1980 President Carter warned that US would even use forces to protect their own interest. His doctrine declared that an attempt by any outside country to gain Central Asia and Gulf countries will be considered as attack on the interest of United States.³⁶

³⁴Warikoo, *Afghanistan*, 124-25.

³⁵ Musa Khan, Jalalzai, *Taliban and the Great Game in Afghanistan*, (Lahore: Vanguard Books, 1999), 245.

³⁶ Shahid M. Amin, *Pakistan's Foreign Policy: A Reappraisal*, (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2000), 84.

Iran Interest in Afghanistan

Iran is a neighboring country to Afghanistan lying in the Western side. Both countries share 582-mile (936-km) border along a plain in western Afghanistan. Afghanistan shared its provincial borders of Herat, Farah and Nimruz with Iran. Historically, Iran's interest and objectives in Afghanistan has been changing constantly. Presently, Iran wants a stable government in Afghanistan in order to establish good relation with it. Iran has a very long history of intervention in the internal matters of Afghanistan. In 1990s Iranian government helped sphere of resistance to counter Taliban famous and powerful resistance. Therefore, they supported Northern alliance and Shia resisting groups. Iran has some ideological connections with Afghanistan; therefore, it wants to empower Shia community. Iran next emotional attachment is that it created "political sphere of influence" by unifying Dari/Parsi speaking to assume power.

Today Iran is establishing economic sphere and is engage in the infrastructure of Afghanistan. By doing this, they basically want Afghan government to distance itself from Western Countries.³⁷ Most important here to note is that Iran policy toward Afghanistan was not what it did but what it actually did. That is Iran refused to become frontline State and to participate in war against Soviet. It played diplomatic role by covertly supporting the resisting groups against Soviet. Iran wants to make its border safe and wants to rebuild its shattered economy.³⁸

³⁷ Mohsen M. Milani, "Iran's Policy Toward Afghanistan," *Middle East Journal*, 60, no. 2, (Spring 2006), 235, accessed June 30, 2021, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4330248>.

³⁸ *Ibid*, 238-40

Economic Interest

Iran struggles to transform trade and Energy Bridge between Central Asia, Afghanistan and Persian Gulf.³⁹ Their outmost interest in Afghanistan is the goal of becoming a hub for transit of goods services between Persian Gulf, Afghanistan, Central Asia, China and India. Iran is also upgrading a tax-free zone route, linking Oman-based port of Chabahar to Southwestern border post of Malik in Afghanistan and to Kandahar and Kabul.⁴⁰

Iran has always been involved in the development process of Afghanistan. Its aim is to weaken Taliban and promote Afghanistan self-rule.⁴¹ Iran and India are involved in Joint development as they are making collaboratively Delaram-Zaranj highway. This highway will help Iran to transport its goods from Iran to Afghanistan.

Pipelines

Iran is a major transit route for Central Asian Republics commonly known as (CARs).⁴² Regions like China US, Pakistan, India has built oil pipelines and gas pipelines from Tajikistan, Uzbekistan etc. and it passes through the land of Afghanistan. Iran's other interest in Afghanistan is that if Afghanistan becomes stable, so, Iran will become main transit route for Gas in Central Asia.⁴³

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid, 151-52

⁴¹ Alireza Nader, Ali G. Scotten, Ahmed Idrees Rahmani, Robert Stewart and Leila Mahnad, "Iran and Other Powers in Afghanistan," *RAND Corporation*. P, 35, Accessed June 30, 2021, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7249/j.ctt1287mjf.9>.

⁴² Jalazai, *Taliban and the Great Game in Afghanistan*, 229.

⁴³ Alireza Nader, Ali G. Scotten, Ahmed Idrees Rahmani, Robert Stewart and Leila Mahnad, "Iran and Afghanistan: A Complicated Relationship," *RAND Corporation*, P, 56, accessed January 1, 2021, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/107249/j.ctt1287mjf.8>.

Iran's Political Interests in Afghanistan

Iran viewed Afghanistan important for its national security before 1979 revolution. It provided economic and military support to various Afghan parties aiming to curtail Communism. Historically Iran involvement in Afghanistan was increased after the departure of Soviet Union. Iran spends resources to amplify its influence in Afghanistan. It played diplomatic role somewhere by supporting Burhan Uddin Rabbani government in Center and in the same way it was providing assistance to Hezb-e-Wahdat that were in arm struggle in center with each other's.⁴⁴ To view Iran's interest in Afghanistan, it will be good to study Iran relation with US. The US and Iran had converging interest in Afghanistan. Both were against the rule of Taliban in Afghanistan. That is why both desired a stable central government. Iran problem was to block narcotics production border insecurity and refugees. For this purpose, they favored a stable and self-rule government in Afghanistan.⁴⁵

Cultural Interest

Iran wants to expand influence over Afghanistan culturally. Today most of TV channels use Iranian expression. In similar way most of the books are written in Dari language in Iran, and are supplied to Afghanistan's school's colleges and Universities. The purpose is to promote Dari language. Language has always very great bearing on society. Promotion of Dari/Farsi will have great effect on the future culture of Afghanistan.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Ibid, 8

⁴⁵ Ibid, 10

⁴⁶ Ibid, 13-14

Drug Smuggling Issue

Iran is one of world ranked country which uses drug. According to estimations almost two million Iranian are addicted to drugs, especially to heroin and opiates. So, Afghanistan is world's biggest opium producer. Therefore, the prime problem of Iran is drug smuggling. Therefore, Iran wants to restrict its border with Afghanistan and to strictly ban narcotic trade. Afghanistan has 936-kilometer porous border with Iran; hence drug is smuggled to Iran via border route.⁴⁷

Next is Iran was the first country that supported Islamic tendency in Central Asia. But its problem was Iran being a Shiite country most of the time it supported Shia group. Second was linguistic problem that Iran has always stood in the support of Dari (Farsi) (ref 183).

Iran and Saudi Rivalry in Afghanistan

Iran's support intervention in Afghanistan personal matter can also be understood in the context of rivalry with Saudi Arabia. Both countries are playing proxies in Afghanistan. One country is supporting Shia group while other is supporting Sunni group. Both countries compete each other to influence the region and to curtail the influence of other in the region. Iran attempts to use Iranian-Persian identity as an instrument of foreign policy. Iran most of the time is supporting Persian speaking groups.

⁴⁷ Ibid, 18-19

Russia Interests in Afghanistan

Russia as a great power had viewed power and influence in Afghanistan against its rivals such as Britain in 19th century.⁴⁸ Russian elite in similar way believe that International Relation is guided by geo-political percepts and therefore, the around Afghanistan in geopolitical term.

Strategic Interest

Russia being a neighboring country of Afghanistan is always in search of a stable government. It is because they both share much of borders with each other's. Russia is interested in making of defense capacity around Afghanistan with the collaboration of Pakistan. It is because she has her own strategic interest in the stable region, she wants to prevent the spread of unrest from the surrounding areas of Russia.⁴⁹

Political Interest

Russian leaders seek Afghan political stability so that the country shall not again become safe havens for the terrorists. In similar context Russia is not interested in the spread of particular ideology but instead Russian leaders show interest in Afghan stable politics.⁵⁰

Economic Interest

The primary interest of Russia in Afghanistan is that she wants to maintain economic ties with the world developed countries. Therefore, drug trafficking is a big issue for Russia. Drugs being made in Afghanistan are widely smuggled to Central Asian countries. In this regard Russia

⁴⁸Kaneshko Sangar, "Afghanistan's significance for Russia in the 21st Century: Interest, Perceptions and Perspectives," *Politics in Central Europe* 12, no. 1 (2016), 62.

⁴⁹ Tahir Amin, "Pakistan-Russia Relations and the Unfolding "New Great Game" in South Asia," *Verlag Barbara Budrich* (March 2016), 192, accessed May 12, 2021, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctvbkjzm0.13>.

⁵⁰ Kathryn Stoner, "Russia's 21st Century Interests in Afghanistan: Resetting the Bear Trap," Vol. 55, no, 2, (March/April 2015), 404.

has provided secure supply routes for US and has provided anti-narcotics training to the people of Afghanistan so, that they can curb the growth of puppy production.

Conclusion

Soviet Union withdrawal brought Central Asian Countries into the orbit of “New Great Game”. Regional and International Powers participated in this game. The center of the game for world powers was Afghanistan. Every regional and international power used Afghanistan soil and tried to secure their material interest. Major Regional powers participated in game were, India, Pakistan, Iran, China, and Russia. International powers included Russia, United States and Britain. It will be not wrong to say that from 1979 till 2020 Afghanistan in Central Asia was battlefield for all these above-mentioned States. Great powers want to maintain their hegemonic power therefore; they interfere and intervene in Afghanistan. Regional countries like India and Pakistan had and still they are having strategic as well as economic interests. They play proxies in order to counter each other. Similarly Iran wants to maintain its influence on Afghanistan by promoting Shia groups and supporting Dari language. In similar context, China, Russia and United States have strategic interests in Afghanistan. Every great power wants to directly or indirectly influence Afghanistan to have an access to Central Asian and South Asian energy rich countries.

Chapter Three

War on Terror; Impacts on Pakistan

Introduction

The 9/11 catastrophic event was basically a paradigm shift in the history of Pakistan. A choice putted forwarded by Bush administration “with us or against us” forced Pakistan to bring qualitative changes in its internal and external policies.¹ Pakistan by joining US led War on Terror made Taliban friendly regime annoyed. In addition, while playing its role as a front-line State, Pakistan was affected by several factors. It was confronted with different domestic, global and regional challenges. On domestic level, there was rise of militancy, sectarianism and violence. It created security hazards for Pakistan. On global level, Pakistan was depicted as a Terrorist State. Similarly on regional level it was confronted with proxy war fought on its soil.

Contrary to all these above-mentioned challenges, it would not be an exaggeration to say that Pakistan participated in War against Terror due to its economic compulsion. Economic pressure compelled Pakistan to join United State led War on Terror. They feared of declaring a bankrupt State. It was because US in 1990 had imposed military and economic sanctions under Pressler Amendment act.² These sanctions mounted great pressure and effected economy. Therefore, keeping in view these needs and the importance of its strategic location, Pakistan joined United States War on Terror and played its role as a front-line State.

¹Umbareen Javaid, *Pakistan Fights Extremism and Terrorism* (Lahore: Maktaba Jadeed Press, 2013), 21.

² Ibid, 22-23.

Domestic Challenges

By joining War on Terror and playing its role as a front-line state Pakistan was faced with different domestic problems. Due to vast population and class consciousness, it became favorite place for fundamentalists and terrorists. On domestic level different political parties' leaders became corrupt, and culture of nepotism was rooted. Social norms of the society were challenged. People got involved in various cultural taboos. Education, a curing treatment for all social and cultural evils was challenged. Law and order like situation was observed in different cities.

Many other major issues faced by Pakistan due to its participation in War on Terror included corruption, poor governance, religious diversity, sectarianism, extremism, intolerance and violence. These problems started damaging Pakistan internally and made it vulnerable for terrorist to take over.³

Domestic, Social and Political Landscape

So many challenges created an atmosphere of fear and unrest. The Repercussions were very great that Pure Land was confronted with plethora of Social and political problems. Fundamental crisis aroused socially, politically and economically. A process of rapid decline was underway. Institutions got effected due to invalid policies of bureaucracy. Bureaucracy by not solving government issues became a toothless institution. Public representatives became dishonest and were demanding bribe to sort out public problems. Ruling elites were divided into groups, and some were affected by religious sectarianism. Religious strife aroused and reached

³ Ibid, 39.

to its climax.⁴ The root cause of this instability was Taliban infiltration and using Pakistan as a safe heaven. Taliban after settling down in Pakistan gave rise to extremism, sectarianism and militarism.

Taliban Infiltration

Pakistan and Afghanistan are having a long porous transit border with each other. It was considered as a gate of entrance for Taliban and their leaders. When United States after capturing Afghanistan started Anaconda operation against Taliban on the bordering North and South areas of Pakistan, so, number of the Taliban leaders fled to Pakistan and settled here. Lethal and devastating attacks compelled Taliban to settle in Pakistan provinces, like Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtun Khwa. Mullah Umar, leader of Taliban, is said to have settled in Quetta; the capital of Balochistan, and from here he organized Taliban army.⁵

The image of Pakistan on global level was negatively portrayed.⁶ Pakistan denied Taliban presence but Security forces supported US troops in capturing Al-Qaeda leaders like in March 28, 2002 Abu Zubaydah, who belonged to *Lashkar-e-Tayibbah* was captured from Faisalabad.⁷

Pakistan as a Safe Haven

Pakistan with the permeation became a safe haven for Afghani Taliban and their leaders. Their presence brought very great impacts on Pakistan. It brought regional instabilities in the region. Regional instabilities effected Pakistan's internal situation it added extra burden on

⁴ Ibid,24.

⁵Hina Bahadar, "Pak-Afghan Relations from 2001 to 2014" (M. Phil thesis, Quaid-i-Azam University, 2018), 42-43.

⁶Mussa Khan, Jalalzai, *The Holy Terror* (Lahore: Dua Publication, 2002), 24.

⁷ John Kiriakou, *The Reluctant Spy: My Secret Life in the CIA's War on Terror* (New York: Random House, 2009), 106-122.

already weak economy of Pakistan. Tribal areas of Pakistan became safe havens for terrorist organizations.

Pakistan to combat terrorists launched deadly attacks on their hideouts. For the very first time Pakistani military entered tribal belt for operation. Pakistani military launched operations in North and South Waziristan.⁸ Military operation was basically launched due to two reasons, the first was due to created instable environment and the second was due to the pressure, mounted by US that they felt that Taliban safe heavens are located in North and South Waziristan. Therefore, they demanded Pakistan to take step and to launch operation for the eradication of terrorist organizations. US showed concern that Afghanistan situation is fluid. Taliban attack NATO forces in Afghanistan and then crosses porous border where they find shelter in Pakistan.⁹ Their presence in Pakistan had also affected its domestic life.

Pakistan Paid for War on Terror

Pakistan was the first country in 1996 that recognized Taliban regime. Both countries were maintaining good friendly relation and were having bilateral interest in each other. Afghanistan was having value for Pakistan due to its strategic depth policy. United States led War on Terror deteriorated relation between Taliban and Pakistan. The repercussions were immediately observed after the fall of Kabul under Taliban rule.

It will be not wrong to say that war in first was going to be fought in Afghanistan but unfortunately, after the fall of Kabul it drifted toward the tribal belts of Pakistan. It made society temperamental, where the fire was brought to home, and regular strikes by the terrorist organizations started on daily basis. Two factors contributed to terrorism was participation in

⁸ Javaid, *Pakistan Fights Extremism and Terrorism*, 39.

⁹ Ibid, 38.

War against Terror and Red Mosque operation. These above mentions were excuses for extremists and made a ground for *Tehrik Taliban Pakistan* (TTP). These militants expanded their influence and launched attacks at cities, public places and buildings.¹⁰ Al-Qaeda re-grouped with Pakistani Taliban and started operating from tribal areas.

Musharraf, the president of Pakistan at that time remained conscious of the situation. He in order to sustain and handle the situation urged political leadership to act in a responsible way and realized to them that a strong, stable and democratic Pakistan is not only in the interest of us but it has global interest. He urged to stabilize North-West Frontier region and to curtail the influence of extremism.¹¹ Therefore, military operations were launched into the region. Pakistan due to rise in militancy suffered both economically and internationally. It suffered 40 billion dollars loss, whereas, in return they got Kerry Lugar assistance of 1.2 billion dollars per year from US was announced. It delayed truncated payments of coalition support fund. Markets in Pakistan were flooded with smuggled American goods. There became resource gap in addition widening budget and current account was reached heavy loss. It left Pakistan with no choice but to go to International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Religious Institutions

Madrassas are religious institutions, providing Islamic education and are facilitating their students free of cost. Students studying in Madrassas are known as “Taliban”. “Taliban” is a plural word and is generally used for the student’s studying theology in Madrassa. Since they are studying theology, therefore, they have fewer grips on modern scientific knowledge. In this parlance they don’t have flexible views.

¹⁰ Ibid, 53.

¹¹ Pervez Musharraf, *In the Line of Fire: A Memoir* (UK: Simon & Schuster, 2006), 335.

Pakistan by joining War on Terror was faced with immense criticism from religious institutions (Madrassas) and some affiliated right and left wing political parties. Musharraf was president of Pakistan at that time, he feared of campaigns, demonstrations, and angry protests from parties. He thought that if such anger mob is out in streets for demonstrations so, it will cause decline of his regime. Meanwhile, seeking political legitimacy, he favored right wing parties. They were given representation in government. Religious leaders who were affiliated with right wing political parties applauded Musharraf government and Pakistan participation in War against Terror.

Rise in Extremism

Extremism is State of mind while on the other hand terrorism is tool of violent expression for extremism. Extremism takes place when unconducive environment takes place. Until 2013 Pakistani respondents said that there was no such violence in Pakistan, they were not justifying extremism but were denying due to the soft image of Pakistan. Later on, Pakistan paid heavy price of extremism and terrorism. Pakistan was faced with threats, like ethnicity problems, political turmoil, Talibanization and economic instability. These were fundamental variables of extremism. It gave rise to internal chaos and posed security threat to Pakistan.¹²Extremism a serious issue further contributed to issues like militancy, terrorism, ethnic strife, sectarianism and made society radical.

Pakistan as key ally of US in its War against Terror observed the spread of Islamic militancy, the militant groups in first stage limited their attacks to tribal and other adjoining areas, whereas, later on they carried out attacks on security forces and public areas of Pakistan.

¹²Mussa Khan, Jalalzai, *The Taliban Insurgency in Pakistan and Afghanistan* (Lahore: Sang-e-Meel Publication, 2008), 134.

The safe heavens of these militants were federally administered Tribal (FATA) areas. Terrorism becomes imminent after extremism and it has no specific boundary. It can be simply germinated and seeded by social inequality, economic deprivation absence of rule of law and lack of equality or equal opportunities.¹³

When General Musharraf back in 2005 observed the prevailing situation so, he changed the parameters of Pakistan internal policy and banned Islamic groups, those who supported Taliban covertly were arrested. Financial assists of Taliban were ceased.¹⁴ Pakistan military and security agencies in response launched counter attacks on Taliban. Their hideouts places were exposed and were raided. It further escalated violence because the innocent civilian got affected.¹⁵

Genesis of Extremism

Current confrontation between Islam and West played on global level. The reality is that center for gravity lied in Pakistan and Afghanistan.¹⁶ After 9/11 when American forces disintegrated Taliban government, they settled in Pakistan. Here in Pakistan their religious leaders started operating in cities. These people after sometime tried to enforce their version of Islam and for that matter tried to take control of Provincial cities. Mullah Fazalullah, the leader of Pakistani Taliban, took Swat in control and started enforcing Sharia law here. He was crashed by security forces and the areas operating under his leadership were taken back.¹⁷

¹³ Javaid, *Pakistan Fights Extremism and Terrorism*, 84-89.

¹⁴ Ibid, 96.

¹⁵ Ibid, 92.

¹⁶ Ayesha Jalal, *Partisans of Allah: Jihad in South Asia* (Lahore: Sang-e-Meel Publications, 2008), 312.

¹⁷ Javaid, *Pakistan Fights Extremism and Terrorism*, 128.

Sectarianism

Pakistan is the second largest Muslim country in the world. It has been through a serious bloody Shia-Sunni sectarian violence from the past two decades. Seventy seven percent 77% of population is Sunni, while 20% is Shia. According to officially released data of past two decades above than 3000 people died due to sectarianism. Foreign countries like Saudi Arabia, Iran and Libya are supporting and sustaining sectarian groups. Sectarian violence was a cyclical revenge taking place between both Sunni and Shia fiction. Each one killing other considered the killing as revenge.¹⁸

Regional and International backed extremists are well-armed, well-trained and well-financed. Sectarianism was also boosted up when Islamabad announced cutting their support for Kashmiri militants.¹⁹

Bann on Sectarian Groups

Musharraf responding to sectarianism banned two groups like, *Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan* (SSP), and *Tehreek-e-Jafria Pakistan* (TJP). After six months two another sectarian outfits of Sunni fiction with the name of *Sipah-e-Mohammad Pakistan* (SMP) and *Lashkar-e-Jangavi* (LeJ) were banned. It is because both SSP and TJP groups were involved in spreading hater against each other's. SSP group is said to be an offshoot of *Jamiat-e-Ulema-e-Islam* (JUI), a leading political and religious party. Most of the intelligence agencies believe that JUI had link with Sunni sect. They were the promoters of *Tehrik-Nifaz-e-Fiqah-e-Hanafia*.²⁰ The pattern and scale of ongoing violence indicated key features. The said groups were well trained and had the

¹⁸ Amir Mir, *Talibanization of Pakistan from 9/11 To 26/11* (New Delhi: Pentagon Security International, 2009), 307-309.

¹⁹ Ibid, 309.

²⁰ Ibid, 310-311.

ability to fight law enforcement agencies. They were supported financially by Iran and Saudi Arabia. It will be not wrong to say that that it was a proxy war being fought on the Pakistan soil.²¹ Pro-Taliban group which had affiliation with Deoband targeted Shia community in Karachi, Quetta and Peshawar. While on the other hand anti-Taliban fiction Shia group were taking revenge in Quetta, Karachi and Punjab.

Extremism threatened Northern part of Pakistan that even killing and kidnapping of diplomats in Khyber Pakhtun Khwa was started.²²It was a critical juncture in the history of Pakistan and was a concern of matter for the government of Pakistan. Therefore, Pakistan tried to strike back these groups hence security forces launched attacks and led the process of detaining their leaders. Their assets and properties were confiscated.

Madrassa and World

After September 9/11 incident, Madrassas in Pakistan got international attention. World media and policy makers suspected that Madrassas could pose security threat to the World. Historically, Madrassas in Pakistan had actively participated in War against Soviet in 1979. Similarly, they produced Jihadist fighters for Afghanistan liberation from United States. There are two types of Madrassas who have always encouraged Jihad, one is *Jamiaat-e-Islami* and the other is *Jamiat-e-Ulema-e-Islam (JUI)*.

When General Musharraf came to power, he made polices for Madrassas that were much different from the previous governments. After September 9/11 both US and UN Security Council's passed resolution 1373 and pressurized Musharraf to take action against extremism in Pakistan produced by Madrassas. Resistance was showed to them by locals and even government

²¹ Ibid.

²² Javaid, *Pakistan Fights Extremism and Terrorism*, 144.

military and intelligence groups were not willing to eradicate these groups due to Kashmir policy.²³

Initially, Musharraf took action against Madrassas that were organizing terrorist activities and were actively playing role in Kashmir and Afghanistan. Their activists were arrested and jailed. Government by justifying their role stated that most notorious events have taken place in North West Frontier region. Girls' schools were either burned or exploded with heavy bombs by terrorists. Terrorists playing their active role have brought fire to home.

Counter terrorism operation by Pakistani government and US army drone strikes had serious blow back effects. It escalated terrorist activities. Militants carried out suicide attacks. Situation went for bad to worst where civilian casualties and target killings like situation took place. They started using sophisticated weapons and extended their actions to the mountains of FATA.

It is said that military operations and drone strikes increased the number of militant recruits. It was because militants' instigated family members and drone strike victims; therefore, to take revenge from government they joined militant groups. The process of recruitments was not confined to illiterate class but well-educated people of victimized family also got recruited. Baithullah Mehsud himself once said that "each drone attack brought him three or four more suicide bombers".²⁴

²³ Ishrat Afshan Abbasi, "War against Terrorism and its Impacts upon Human Security: The case of Pakistan" (M. Phil thesis, Quaid-i-Azam University Islamabad, 2012), 70.

²⁴ Zahid Hussain, *The Scorpion's Tail: The Relentless Rise of Islamic Militants in Pakistan-And How it Threatens America* (New York: Free Press, 2010), 5-6.

Red Mosque Operation

Talibanization process escalated in Pakistan due to 2007 incident; when General Musharraf ordered military operation against Red Mosque. Abdul Rashid Ghazi openly announced its support for Taliban and Al-Qaeda. Students studying in Red Mosque belonged to various communities were inspired from Taliban leaders. These students by challenging the writ of the State were imposing their strict version of Islam. Male and Female students were seen on main roads of capital city and they were carrying out activities against State laws.²⁵ Their activities had bad impact on the peaceful environment of Islamabad, it internationally projected bad image of Pakistan. Many national and international media highlighted the situation and put pressure on Pakistan.

Talibanization of Society

Talibanization process in Pakistan managed to hold grip in country and stood strong enough by directly challenging the writ of the State. Taliban infiltration process was started with the incidents like War on Terror and Red Mosque operation. The former President of Pakistan Pervez Musharraf decided to launch military operation in Mosque to finish all local and foreign terrorists those who had taken hold of the Mosque. Red Mosque operation created chaotic situation and gave rise to TTP (*Tehrik Taliban of Pakistan*). Operation triggered the anger of masses consequently, a wave of counter suicide attacks on government security forces were carried out by Taliban. Pakistani government argued that anti Pakistan forces were involved in attacks. Their acts were observed as a struggle to declare Pakistan a failed State. It created an atmosphere of fear among the masses. An already shattered economy was further affected.

²⁵ Javaid, *Pakistan Fights Extremism and Terrorism*, 156-58.

Foreign investors congested investing in Pakistan. Foreign companies due to fear of loss clogged operating here. Their branches were shifted to Dubai and other countries.²⁶

Secondly, when US launched attacks on Taliban so, hundreds of thousands of Al-Qaeda fighters fled to Pakistan while escaping US bombardment of Tora Bora. In December 2001 more than 1000 Al-Qaeda members entered Pakistan via mountain trails and were dispersed in Tribal Areas.²⁷ With their settlement in tribal areas, government of Pakistan was confronted with adversary risk and they were not able to bring it to heel. Many of extremist group became independent and self-sufficient. Number of groups joined hands with Al-Qaeda. These groups wanted to expand their role and wanted to promote their strict version of Islam. For that purpose, they carried out attacks on government and publics.

Impacts on FATA

The main Pakistani Taliban element and their religious leaders got settled in Tribal belt of Pakistan known as FATA (Federally Administered Tribal Areas). This region comprised seven agencies and was governed by Federal government. Each agency was under the control of a political agent. A Jirga system acts as link between government and tribes.

FATA is near to Afghanistan; therefore, many Taliban leaders infiltrated into the region and took refuge in FATA. Difficult mountains carried out terrorist activities inside and outside of Pakistan.²⁸ They carried bomb blast and suicide attacks in cities that even every day or even at a time there were three to four attacks. They made life miserable for the inhabitants living inside Pakistan. When military operations by Pakistani forces against militants were carried out so, a

²⁶ Ibid, 91.

²⁷ Zahid Hussain, *Frontline Pakistan, The Struggle with Militant Islam* (Lahore: Vanguard Book, 2007), 120.

²⁸ Javaid, *Pakistan Fights Extremism and Terrorism*, 129.

large number of terrorists' left FATA region and dispersed in KPK, Punjab and even Karachi. With their settlement in other areas the situation went from bad to worst. Foreign tourists were attacked; tourist's places became their hideout. Consequently, tourists denied visiting Pakistan.

Next is that Pakistani tribal areas are strategically important for Al-Qaeda. This part of the country has natural fortress which make it defensive and offensive. There are secret tunnels which provide safe retreats for deadly attacks. In addition to it militants group found it easy to enter Afghanistan due to porous border between Pakistan and Afghanistan. Militant group strategy is that they find local friends it boosts ups their activities. Those tribal leaders who oppose their strict version are threatened and killed.

Presence of these terrorist brought bad name to Pakistan.²⁹The worst aspect was that Taliban and Al-Qaeda joined hands together made a volatile and complicated situation. These militants targeted educational institutions, women, children, and even Mosques. They banned girl's education in the region those who denied were attacked, targeted and tortured. Malala Yusafzai, girls' education activist, who was gun downed by militants in Swat is a very sound example. Growing situation posed strong challenge to army. Many security forces posts were also attacked. Taliban settled in Pashtun's belt of North West Frontier because they share common and same linguistic and ethnic ties.

Military Operations in Tribal Areas

Pakistani government in order to achieve a development scheme aiming to encourage the locals to stay strong and to re-build their lives affected by extremism launched large scale military operation in Swat in 2009. Observers of the operations are of the opinion, that military

²⁹ Ibid, 182-83.

operation took place in targeted areas. The security forces had gained knowledge of the present status of militants that is why militant's camps were destroyed and their leaders either were killed or were forced to flee to neighboring countries. Washington helping Pakistan in their fight for counter terrorism played its role in terms of drone attacks in North Waziristan. They demanded Pakistan "do more" in combating terrorism.³⁰

Solution for religious extremism is when world leaders provide education to local people, when they give them permission to participate in politics.

South and North Waziristan

South and North Waziristan became first sanctuaries for Taliban and Al-Qaeda. They settled here and carried attacks inside Afghanistan through free trans-border.³¹ Pakistan was pressurized by Western countries and was urged to launch operation against them. United State financially supported Pakistan in its operation against terrorism in FATA and adjacent areas. Pakistan was given over 2 billion dollars per year. This amount was given for security assistance. In addition; Pakistan was given coalition fund and aid for military trainings. On this basis US admin was expecting Pakistan for more and more Positive results.³²

Destabilization of South Waziristan

South Waziristan region was destabilized with the emergence of Taliban group. Baitullah Mahsud, leader of TTP succeeded his predecessor Nek Mohammad in South Waziristan. He in order to control this region tried to maintained peace in South Waziristan. For this matter he signed deal with Pakistani leadership in 2005. The peace deal did not last long when a planned

³⁰ Ibid, 94.

³¹ Abbasi, "War against Terrorism and its Impacts upon Human Security", 52.

³² C. Christan Fair and Seth G. Jones "Pakistan's war within, survival: Global politics and Strategy," 51, no, 6 (December, 2009-January, 2010), 161-162.

suicide bombing started in Pakistan. Pakistan army sent eight thousand troops in South Waziristan. A deadlock occurred between Mahsud tribe and army. Army later on cordoned off whole FATA. Army replaced political agents and ignored their cultural and tribal system.

Drone Strikes

Drone strikes carried by United State basically guided Pakistan military forces in their ground operation. Drones were justified that they are identifying main targets of militants. On the other hand, drone strikes have also provoked the anger of tribal people. These strikes targeted not only militants but innocent civilians as well. It added fuel to the fire. These strikes have never been officially acknowledged by United States until the public became aware on January 1, 2003, when a drone crashed after taking off. Pakistan by saying they are unaware of drone operations, they added that drone attacks are carried out without their consent and knowledge.³³

Drone operations were widely condemned in 2006; when an attack was carried out in search of Ayman-Al-Zawahiri. This attack targeted three houses and killed more than twenty peoples. Government of Pakistan by hiding their face once again denied CIA role in Pakistan but public protest compelled government to accept reality and to put ban on US drone attacks.³⁴ American drones attacks were perceived as violation of their own country's sovereignty. Drone attacks by disregarding civilians gave rise to anti-State sentiments.³⁵

Suicide Attacks

In the aftermath of September 9/11, suicide bombing culture was developed. Suicide bombing usually takes place when a terrorist organization wants to achieve their claimed rights.

³³ Abbasi, "War against Terrorism and its Impacts upon Human Security" 76.

³⁴ Ibid, 77.

³⁵ Javaid, *Pakistan Fights Extremism and Terrorism*, 94.

They by this mean resist government policies and impose casualties. Suicides bombing usually are targeting civilians, passengers and Military forces. Terrorists intend to kill the targeted people. The horrible means, used for this act include vehicles filled with explosives and individuals wearing vests filled with explosives.³⁶ Militants have upgraded suicide bombing and have increased the quality and quantity of suicide since 2001.

Initially, suicide bombers targeted security forces and governmental institutions. Currently, they are targeting and exploding themselves in public areas, like shopping malls, Mosques and educational institutions. It has been estimated that suicide bombers are young boys between the age of twelve and eighteen. The reason is that young children comparatively are less suspicious and unnoticed. They can be easily brainwashed and exploited in the name of rights. Extremists exploit them for their own sectarian and fundamentalist greed; they turn them into Jihadi fighters.³⁷ These extremists then use them for their own means. So, in a nutshell suicide bombing culture roused after Pakistan participation in War against Terror and Red Mosque operation.

Benazir Bhutto Assassination

An atmosphere of fear was created; neither a military personal nor a politician was safe. Many of the politicians were threatened and attacked. Among them was Benazir Bhutto, Pakistan People's Party Chairman, she was threatened by Al-Qaeda commanders inside Pakistan because of her remarks against Al-Qaeda. She urged US troops to catch Osama inside Pakistan.³⁸ In 2007 when she returned to Pakistan was attacked. Two bombs blasted in her campaign against

³⁶ S. Alam, *Suicide Bomber: Phenomenon, Strategy and Future* (Delhi: Summit Enterprises, 2008), 49.

³⁷ Abbasi, "War against Terrorism and its Impacts upon Human Security", 80.

³⁸ Hussain, *The Scorpions Tail*, 138-139.

Musharraf regime. She survived while 140 people including some security guards and police were killed.

Another attack took place on December 27, 2007, when she was addressing to an election campaign at Liaqat Bagh in Rawalpindi. After the campaign when she was leaving the garden and waving hands to the people who participated in the rally, an unknown person putted pistol on her and she was gun downed. She died on the spot. Shooting was followed by a massive explosion. Government accused TTP for her assassination. Baitullah Mahsud group took the responsibility of her assassination.³⁹

Displacements

Pakistan military in order to effectively respond to militants carried operations in FATA, Dir, Buner, Swat, South and North Waziristan. Operation forced number of people to migrate from their areas. People were very badly affected as their homes and business were destroyed; they suffered due to scarcity of food and medicine. Their life ruined.

According to reports from 2008 to 2010, two million people were displaced. Statistics show that in 2007 when Zalzal operation was launched in North Waziristan so 80,000 people were displaced. In 2008 up to 200,000 people from South Waziristan were displaced. Similarly, Sher-Dil operation displaced 35,000 people of Bajur Agency. Mohmand Agency people who were displaced by an operation were roundabout 200,000-300,000. Moreover, 100,000 people of Khyber Agency were displaced. These people were given shelters in D-I Khan and Tanks. Camps were established for the displaced people. NGO's along with government tried to

³⁹ Ibid, 141.

facilitate IDPs people.⁴⁰ Displacement exposed the vulnerability of both Male and Female. Sexual harassment, assassinations and injuries on a large scale were daily observed. Children were also displaced and were exempted from education. Displacement brought great pressure on Pakistan's economy.

Crime Rate Increased

Another social problem Pakistan faced was increase in crime rates. It has been said that crime rates were increased due to large scale and easy availability of smuggled and unauthorized weapons. There are few factors seems to have contributed in the increase of supplied smuggled weapons. Firstly, Taliban leaders who fled to Pakistan and got settled here, they brought heavy weapons and animations. Secondly, when the tribal belt destabilized so, arms manufacturers increased production in order to gain sufficient profit. Continuous arms flooded market. Peoples of the adjacent areas got quick and easy access to arms as a result it created social problems.⁴¹

Impact on Economy

When law and order like situation was created so, physically State was overwhelmed by widespread corruption. Economic pressure was built and it led to the creation of class system. High mortality and unemployment were raised to a great an extent. Much signs of political weakness were observed in society. The pressures caused economic decline and banned foreign investment. Prices hiked and an alarming situation was created.

Pakistan at this stage ranked number twelve on the "Fail State index in 2011". The report showed that current economic crisis and situation in Pakistan turned its own people against own

⁴⁰ Abbasi, "War against Terrorism and its Impacts upon Human Security", 81.

⁴¹ Mehruunisa Ali, *Readings in Pakistan Foreign Policy 1971-1998* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2001), 336.

military and government. This tense situation aggravated the emotions of the people where they blamed military and security agencies for the crisis. They argued that agencies have cultivated militant factors in order to counter India and to use Afghanistan for their strategic depth policy.⁴²

Failed State

The term “Failed State” was recommended by some neighboring countries. A State can be declared failed when the terrorists take control of the state assets and institutions and when a state falls into their hands. But the “Failed State” concept has been condemned by policy makers, researchers for being scandalous, illogical and subjective. According to some authors like William Easterly and Laura Freshi the term is designed for the Western countries as to give them a chance to intervene in the personal matters of other countries. They argue that the failed state concept is relatively pronounced and produced ever.⁴³

Responding to the term and its suitability on Pakistan, someone can argue that Pakistan at that stage and was not reached to the status of failed state. Failed state has its own conditions which were subjectively applied to a sovereign state.

Balochistan Problem

It has been said that since Pakistan started operations against terrorism in FATA, it weakened Pakistan concentration on other areas like Balochistan. Balochistan is agriculturally unproductive but it is rich in natural resources. People of Balochistan are living below the poverty level. Insurgents in Balochistan from the very first were promoting the nationalists against Punjab’s hegemony. They struggle for the liberation of Balochistan working under

⁴² Abbasi, “War against Terrorism and its Impacts upon Human Security”, 91.

⁴³ Ibid, 90.

different organizations. These organizations have worked and helped TTP in their attacks against government. Terrorist were given safety in Balochistan like Quetta and other areas. Insurgents killed several Chinese engineers at Gwadar Port. They have also exploded gas pipelines, telephones exchanges and electricity pylons.

Musharraf in 2005 was targeted by Baluch Liberation Army (BLA) in a rally in Mari area. When he observed the situation so, he ordered major operation against BLA. During operation number of BLA militants including Nawab Akbar Bugti was killed.⁴⁴ Several regional countries were giving air to Balochistan issue. They were trying to destabilize the region but this formula didn't work.

Pakistan Image on International level

Western countries when observed the situation became very much conscious. They subjectively depicted the image of Pakistan in their concerned countries. Foreigners for this reason denied investing and visiting Pakistan. Similarly, Western capitalist bloc treated Pakistani forces as mercenaries. In the same way, on international level, Pakistan's nationals were denied US visas. Those who were given permission were humiliated at American airports through special search and screening. Pakistan was depicted as a terrorist state.

Worse situation contributed in giving air to anti-Pakistan and pro-India slogans. Several extremist organizations were supported by regional and international countries to lit fire to their own interests. Creation of organizations gave hope to terrorists they, therefore, endeavored to destabilize environment by blasting bombs and carrying out suicide attacks. Attacks were mostly carried on security forces and their installations. Worse situation effected public places that even

⁴⁴ Ahmed Rasheed, *Descent into Chaos* (London: Penguin Books, 2008), 282-287.

holy Mosques were not safe. Unfortunately, this situation led to large numbers of casualties of innocent civilians.⁴⁵ Western countries when observed the situation they restricted their borders for Pakistan passport holders. Foreign commercial flights denied visiting Pakistan. Orientals considered Pakistan as a horrible country and was denied participation in international conferences.

War on Terror damaged the prestige of Pakistan

Joining War on Terror also damaged the prestige of Pakistan. Three incidents that took place led to the lowest ebb in relation between Pakistan and America. These incidents were against the sovereignty of Pakistan.

Remand Davis Case

The first was US citizen Remand Davis case of July 27, 2011, when he shot down two Pakistani nationals in Lahore in broad day light. While he was running from the scene police arrested him. He for this miscreant act remained in police custody for some time. He had diplomatic immunity that is why his case became a bit complicated for Pakistani courts. He was a diplomatic staff and under Vienna convention and enjoyed immunity. Therefore, this put an immense pressure on Pakistan and after paying *Ddiyyat* to victim's family he was sent back to America.⁴⁶

US Abbottabad Operation

The second incident that damaged the sovereignty of Pakistan was May 2, 2011 Abbottabad operation by United State Forces. US suspected Osama, Al-Qaeda leader hiding in

⁴⁵ Javaid, *Pakistan Fights Extremism and Terrorism*, 59-60.

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, 188.

Abbottabad, therefore, some US helicopters at night time landed in Abbottabad for his arrest. US claimed the killing of Osama in Abbottabad and claimed of a successful covert operation. This brought significant impact on Pakistan sovereignty that US officials and Indian media questioned that whether Osama was hiding in Abbottabad and whether Pakistan knew it or not.⁴⁷

Salala Check Post

On November 26, 2011 Salala Check post of Pakistani military forces was attacked by NATO helicopters an AC-130 and few unknown jet fighters. These attacks resulted in killing of twenty-six Pakistani military personals. In the aftermath of this attack thirty soldiers were injured.⁴⁸ Meanwhile, Pakistan did not respond at the exact time but later on showed strong reaction. A strong reaction in response was shown to US by both political and military leadership of Pakistan. They gave an ultimatum to US for vacating of Shamsi Air Base of US located in Balochistan. Secondly, Pakistan boycotted Bonn conference; about future of Afghanistan in protest to these attacks. So, in a nutshell relations between United States and Pakistan deteriorated.

Conclusion

Pakistan by joining United State led War on Terror was faced with plethora of domestic, regional and international problems. It paid heavy price while playing its role as a front-line State. Extremism and Sectarianism as a proxy war by some regional countries was start on its soil. Taliban penetrated and settled in tribal areas like FATA and Balochistan. Their presence gave rise to terrorism and made ground for suicide attacks and bombing. Educational institutions and public places were exploded. Politicians were threatened and targeted. Security check posts

⁴⁷ Ibid, 189.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

were targeted. US while helping Pakistan in its operations against terrorism violated the sovereignty of Pakistan by carrying out drone attacks and by attacking security check posts. Internationally Pakistan image was very badly portrayed and it brought huge impacts on already weak economy. Pakistan to combat led security operations and after heavy loss they were succeeded in rooting out extremism, sectarianism and terrorism.

Chapter Four

Great Powers Interests and Searching for Peace in Afghanistan

Introduction

The assumption, that coalition of military operation will induce the insurgents to negotiation table failed. So far, the evidence suggested that military was not a solution for the settlement of the conflict, but expanded it geographically. The numbers of insurgents were increasing with the passage of time. Regional and international powers after observed the complicated situation searched of peace in Afghanistan while prioritizing their material interests. Donald Trump, former President of United States of America after lots of effort convinced the resisting group and brought them to the negotiation table. The agreement was signed between Taliban, the resisting group and United State for a purpose to settle down the dust.

Taliban after Doha agreement abandoned attacking US and its allied forces. They were problematic to US installed government and named it as a puppet government. Resisting Ashraf Ghani government, Taliban, on August 15, 2021 swept to Kabul and dismantled his government. They took certain level of legitimacy that encouraged them to settle issues and to establish trust worthy government. To internationally recognize government, Taliban endeavor to present reformed image in front of the world.

Taliban victory gained international attention in previous months. Regional and International powers are optimistic about Taliban takeover. Taliban in the initial stage took control of major provinces of Afghanistan that neighbored regional powers like Pakistan, Russia, Iran, China and India. They took control of certain areas bordered with the above-mentioned

States. Therefore, World leaders after United State withdrawal are thinking that how will they engage with the Taliban? How they could establish bilateral relation with Taliban?

Taliban leadership after the victory is very conscious and therefore, they endeavor not to repeat previous blunders of 1996 that caused their downfall. By taking a look into their past history, when the Soviet forces in 1988-89 withdrew their forces and when Taliban took control of Afghanistan so they tried to implement their strict version of Islam. They violated human rights by giving them harsh punishment. Their strict laws put ban on girl's education and denied women participation in government. Western leaders by keeping in view their past history are threatening Taliban with sanctions. Western media has made Taliban government the core of their debates. Both International and regional countries are thinking how to deal with Afghanistan's new game? They are in search of peace in Afghanistan. They want to stabilize the region while keeping in view that if this part of the world becomes unstable so it can make trouble for other regions as well. It can be also said that world power search for peace in Afghanistan is a paradigm shift and will add a new chapter in the history of Afghanistan. It basically started with Doha peace talks in Qatar.

Doha Agreement

United States in order to end twenty-year war in Afghanistan called for peace talks. They thought that military was not a solution to Afghanistan conflict. Both United States and Taliban delegations met in Qatar, Doha for negotiations. The agreement basically consisted two parts.

Following points were discussed in agreement

1. Guarantee and enforcement of the mechanism that the soil of Afghanistan will not be used against United States and its allies.

2. Withdrawal of all foreign forces from Afghanistan.
3. Guarantee of the mechanism in the presence of foreign witnesses that intra-Afghan negotiations will start between Taliban and Afghan government on March 10, 2020.
4. Permanent ceasefire will be the first priority of intra-Afghan peace talks.¹

Part One

In the first stage of the agreement, it was decided that United States and its allies will withdraw their forces from Afghanistan. Withdrawal process included non-diplomatic civilians, security contractors, trainers and advisors. They announced that these forces including their partners will leave Afghanistan within fourteen months after the announcement of this agreement.

Procedure for Withdrawal

1. United States and its allies will reduce the number of forces to eight thousand and six hundred.
2. United States and its allies will conclude their mission within in hundred and thirty-five days.
3. United States and its allies will have to withdraw their forces from five military bases.²

Taliban not recognized by United States convinced US to withdraw its forces from the remaining places within nine and half months.

¹ Treaty for Bringing Peace to Afghanistan between the Islamic Emirate which is not recognized by the United States as a state and is known as the Taliban and the United States of America, US-Taliban, February 29, 2020, *UST*.

² *Ibid*, 2.

Prisoners of War

In Doha agreement it was also negotiated that United States and Ashraf Ghani government will release five thousand Taliban political prisoners by March 10, 2020 on the start of intra-Afghan negotiations. US committed to complete this goal and added that these prisoners will not pose threat to US and its allied security forces based in Afghanistan.

Sanctions against Taliban

Sanctions on the Taliban were also negotiated and it was conformed that with the start of intra-Afghan negotiation US will review sanctions list against Taliban. US were committed to remove sanctions by August 27, 2020. Similarly, US will start diplomatic engagement with United Nations Security Council to remove Taliban from their sanctions list by March 29, 2020.

Part Two

In the second part of the agreement, it was decided that Taliban Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan not recognized by US will not allow groups or individuals to use the soil of Afghanistan against United States and its allies. Taliban in similar way will send clear message that those who pose security threat to US and its allied forces in Afghanistan will have no place in Afghanistan. They will also send message to groups not to cooperate with individuals or groups threatening US and its allies.

Taliban will prevent themselves form recruiting and training for these groups. They will not raise funds for the groups threatening US and its ally's security in Afghanistan. Diplomats or foreign activist seeking asylum in Afghanistan according to international law will not be threatened but will be protected. Taliban if come to power will not provide visas, passports and

travel permits to those who pose threat to the foreign forces of US and its allies to enter Afghanistan.

Lastly

United States will request United Nations Security Council for the approval of this agreement. Taliban and United States will seek positive relations and intra-Afghan dialogue will be positive. US will seek economic cooperation for post settlement and will facilitate intra-Afghan dialogue.

Doha agreement was signed in Qatar on February 29, 2020. Duplicate is available in Pashto, Dari and English.³

Collapse of Ghani Government

Doha agreement also suggested date for intra-Afghan peace process but it was delayed in the first stage due to some reasons. Intra-Afghan dialogue when commenced was faced with lots of challenges. Taliban at first were not prepared for dialogue, they were resisting Ashraf Ghani government and dismantled it on August 15, 2021.

Afghanistan after US Withdrawal

After the withdrawal of United States and its allied forces Afghanistan fell into the hands of Taliban. Taliban are the stake holders of Afghanistan. Afghanistan always burns in the fire of either foreign invasion or internal chaos. There is always some kind of chaos to Afghan government from one side or another. Presently, Taliban themselves faces rivals from local

³ Ibid, 4.

branches; like the so-called Islamic State militant group (IS-Khorasan or ISK), Hazara militias, Panjshiri forces and Urban Women group from Panjshir and Kabul.

ISK militant group was formed by Taliban defectors who felt that Taliban leader Akhtar Muhammad Mansour was not fit for the post to led Jihad against foreign occupiers. Now as Taliban advanced to Kabul and they captured whole Afghanistan so Taliban think that there is no room left for ISK to exist.

Panjshiri group was formed by previous Mujahedeen, operated from the northern areas known as Panjshir. The founder of this group was Ahmad Shah Mahsud. Under his leadership this group in 90's was resisting Taliban government; still, it is a big challenge for Taliban. The resistance could become sever if Taliban commits mistakes in Punjshir province.

Shia Hazara militias backed by Iran are the rival of Taliban and will likely resist Taliban in future. Iran is backing this group for the purpose to fight in Iraq and Afghanistan against Sunni Muslims. Iran support for Hazara fiction could pose a great threat to Taliban and Taliban could face resistance in Hazarajat region.

Taliban has formulated a formula and are of the view that this time there will be no discrimination. Girl's education will be facilitated, and education will be segregated by gender. They have also insured that they will not ban secular education but will only remove elements in the curriculum they believe clash with their faith. They have also assured international community about the protection of human rights.

So, to brush the chaos and to settle down the dust both international and regional stake holders by observing the situation are in search of peace for them. They want to promote a prosperous and sound Afghanistan, empty of corruption, discrimination and instability. Regional

powers include China, Pakistan, India, Iran, Russia and Central Asian countries. International powers include United States, China and Russia.

Pakistan Interest and Search for Peace in Afghanistan

Pakistan being a neighbor country of Afghanistan struggle to bring peace in Afghanistan due to its economic, strategic as well as political interests. They have been helping Afghanistan from past decades. Pakistan has always played positive role in the peace process of Afghanistan. History witnesses that in 1996 when Taliban took control of the Afghanistan after the withdrawal of Soviet forces so, Pakistan was the first country who recognized Taliban government. They helped them in making government. With the passage of time when the Taliban government gave shelter to terrorists and when they took the attention of world powers so Pakistan abandoned their help and left supporting Taliban government.

Presently, as the Taliban have dismantled Ghani government Pakistan as other regional countries is playing its role for bringing peace to the country. They are covertly helping Taliban in making their government. Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi assured visiting delegation of the former Afghan government during intra-afghan peace process that Pakistan will continue to play role for sustaining peace in Afghanistan.⁴

Unfortunately, things changed overnight and Taliban came into power unexpectedly. Pakistan has not yet recognized Taliban government. They during initial days evacuated many Afghans diplomatic personals. Though their rivalry with India therefore, Taliban victory is seen as a defeat of pro-India and Afghan groups.

⁴Aljazeera, "How world reacted to Taliban takeover of Kabul" *Aljazeera news*, August 16, 2021, accessed October 13, 2021, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/8/16/how-the-world-reacted-to-taliban-takeover-of-kabul>.

Pakistani establishment is worried about future security of the region. Re-emergence of Taliban rule could spoil militant and other sectarian groups. Therefore, in search of peace Pakistan push for political settlement that allows Taliban to include non-Pashtun Afghan groups.⁵

Pakistani Political Parties Role in Peace process

The withdrawal process has left key issues unsettled like, the fate of Afghanistan democratic system, women rights, and educational problems. The role of Pakistani political parties is important for Afghanistan because of their long-term multilayered ties with political actors in Afghanistan. Pakistani politicians even view their ties with Afghanistan in the light of arrival of Islam in the region. Secondly, there are political similarities between Pakistan and Afghanistan political parties which suggest contextually relevant and realistic goals for democracy in Afghanistan. Parties that can play role includes *Awami National Party* (ANP), the *Qawmi Watan Party* (QWP), the *Pakhtunkhwa Milli Awami Party* (PKMAP), the *Jamiyat Islami Party of Samiulhaq* (JUI-S) and the *Jamiyat Ulema Islam Party of Fazal-ur-Rehman* (JUIF). These parties with collaboration could work out for the furtherance of Afghanistan. They can convince Taliban not to violate women rights. It will present positive image of Pakistan and country could broaden its involvement in Afghanistan.⁶

⁵ Gavin Helf, Ph.D, Donald N, Jensen Ph.D, Garrett Nada, Tamanna Salikuddin, Andrew Scobell Ph.D, “How the Region is Reacting to the Taliban Takeover: After the fall of Kabul, Afghanistan’s neighbors seek stability above all else,” *United States Institute of Peace*, August 19, 2021, accessed September 20, 2021, <https://www.usip.org/publications/2021/08/how-region-reacting-taliban-takeover>.

⁶Fizza Batool, “Peace through democracy: The role of Pakistani Political Parties in Afghanistan’s future,” *Stimson Center* (2021): 2-7, accessed October 12, 2021, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep30827>.

China Interest in Afghanistan and Search for Peace

China is a neighbor country of Afghanistan and shares a narrow border known as Wakhan corridor. Wakhan corridor due to its high altitude is difficult to cross. China endeavors to bring peace to Afghanistan due to its material interests. Violence in Afghanistan could easily pose threat to China's Xinjiang province. China a rising power is in trade war with United States therefore, they are doing utmost effort to make Afghanistan a stable State and to have access to Central Asian market.

Historically, in 1996 when Taliban took over Afghanistan so China changed its policy for years. They suspended diplomatic relations with Taliban and refused to recognize radical group. They kept their embassy shut for years. From some time, Beijing showed flexibility and showed signs for gradually recognizing Taliban. They basically accepted that Taliban have positive in Afghanistan and they are the stakeholder in Afghanistan domestic politics.

During peace process China urged Taliban to join Afghan peace process as early as possible. When they observed Taliban the situation so, they realized that Taliban returning back to power is inevitable. On August 15, 2021 as Taliban took control of Afghanistan and returned to power after twenty years. China alike other countries struggle to figure out how to respond to radical change and how to work out for sustaining peace in Afghanistan. They as usual are always in search of peace in Afghanistan and therefore, after the fall of Kabul, China expressed that they hope Taliban will go through peaceful power transition process. Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Hua Chunying noted that China respects the sovereignty of Afghanistan and the

will of all factions present in the country. He added that we hope that Taliban will form solidarity with all Afghan ethnic groups.⁷

Beijing Outreach to Taliban-led Afghanistan

China as a pragmatic global player always priorities own economic, security and strategic interest in its decision.

Security Interest

Peace in Afghanistan is important for China and other Central Asian countries. It is worth to mention here that if this part of the world destabilizes so then there will be chaos everywhere. It can affect neighboring countries. For Beijing spread of violence could spill over to Xingjian province. Beijing fears of extremism and think that there is possibility that extremism could impact separatists in Xinjiang. Thus, rather than recognition, Beijing is less willing to intervene in Afghanistan to ensure security. Taliban are under international scrutiny and faces pressure. Meanwhile, Beijing could take it as an opportunity and could establish good relation with Taliban only if they can provide security and if they can establish peace.

Wakhan corridor is overriding security concern for China. Afghanistan in this case has the potential of regrouping of Uyghur-dominated East Turkestan Islamic movement (ETIM). China blames Afghanistan for the attacks in Xinjiang proving. China argues that nine Chinese targeted in Pakistan in Kohistan-Dasu Hydropower Project attack was also carried out by ETIM with the help of TTP.⁸

⁷ Foreign Ministry Spokesperson, Hua Chunying's, "The situation in Afghanistan is developing rapidly. How does China evaluate the current situation?" Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, August 16, 2021, accessed September 21, 2021, <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa-eng/xwfw-665399/s2510/t1899785.shtml>.

⁸ParidaParakkal, "China's reluctant Taliban Embrace," *East Asia Forum*, September 25, 2021, accessed October 4, 2021, <http://www.eastasiaforum.org/2021/09/25/chinas-reluctants-taliban-embrace/>.

Economic Interest

Stable Afghanistan is good for China because stability in Kabul is equally important for China as stability in Islamabad. China views Kabul an important variable for its economic interests. Kabul could be an important partner for China in its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) projects. Stability in Afghanistan is a key to protect BRI projects in neighbor country Pakistan. It will facilitate China with overland route to Indian Ocean. China in past has invested in number of projects in Afghanistan including Aynak Copper Mine projects have made little progress. China along with working on sustaining peace in Afghanistan is working for nation building. For that purpose, Taliban expressed that they welcome Chinese investment in Afghanistan reconstruction.

China wants to determine geo-strategic foothold in New Taliban-led Afghanistan. Their incursion in Afghanistan is based on Afghanistan mining, power and oil fields. For now, Taliban takeover presents both opportunities as well as threats for Beijing.

Strategic Interest

China views itself as a global power, so outreach to Taliban will help them. China unlikely in 1996 commend USD 14.7\$ trillion economies. US with 14 trillion failed in nation building process of Afghanistan. Many scholars and analysts are of the view that it is golden opportunity for China to assume leadership. After US withdrawal China could emerge as a sole international player actively engaging Afghanistan. In this regard they have started mediating role among regional and international powers. To bring peace in Afghanistan China has started

taking advises from regional and international powers like Pakistan, Russia and United States. They are also observing Afghanistan situation.⁹

After the fall of Kabul to Taliban Beijing responded to a journalist question that whether China embassy will open in Kabul or not? Foreign ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying responded that embassy will remain open in Kabul and expressed willingness to support country's reconstruction. He showed concerned that Beijing would recognize Taliban new government and Beijing respect the choice of Afghan people. They also noted that Taliban have promised to negotiate the establishment of inclusive Islamic government to ensure the safety of both Afghans and foreigners.¹⁰ Strategically, Taliban rapid advancement in Afghanistan gave access to China to control strategic borders crossing with Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Iran and Pakistan.

China as Dependable Friend

To establish relation with Taliban it will give China an access to safeguard the Wakhan borders and will shape China's engagement to seek bigger role for Shanghai Cooperation organization (SCO).¹¹

Most important and defendable friend of Taliban is China. It is because internationally Taliban government is treated as Pariah. They, therefore, are looking for China as a pillar of financial and diplomatic support. Same is the case with China, they also want to help and favor

⁹ Dr. Chulanee Attanayake& Zheng Haiqi, "Understanding China in Taliban-led Afghanistan," *Journal of Indo-Pacific Affairs* (August 25, 2021), accessed September 14, 2021, <http://www.airuniversity.af.edu/JIPA/Display/Article/2746135/understanding-china-in-taliban-led-afghanistan/>.

¹⁰ Aljazeera, "How world reacted to Taliban takeover of Kabul" *Aljazeera news*, August 16, 2021, accessed October 13, 2021, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/8/16/how-the-world-reacted-to-taliban-takeover-of-kabul>.

¹¹ Parakkal, "China's reluctant Taliban Embrace,".

them in search of establishing internal peace. Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi's address to the 2021 G20 foreign minister meeting called for lifting unilateral sanctions against Afghanistan.

Furthermore, geopolitically, it is important for China that they are in a much better position today than they were in the late 90's. They, after the withdrawal of US forces, could play a role as a game changer. They endeavor to fill the power vacuum to serve its myriad strategic interests. China needs support of the Taliban for their BRI projects. While Zabiullah Mujahid recently clarified that his government wants to join one of the BRI projects, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. Next is China with determining Afghanistan's strategic landscape will play its card with caution and resistance to manage and sustain friendly ties with stakeholders like Iran and Moscow without undermining their key interests.¹²

Iran's Interest and Search for Peace in Afghanistan

Iran is a neighboring country of Afghanistan and shares a 572-mile narrow border. After the US withdrawal, Iran speeded up its struggle to bring peace in Afghanistan and to secure its material interests. The chaotic situation and the takeover of the Taliban undermined Iran's interest. Iran, due to a large flow of migrants and refugees, is in search of peace in Afghanistan. They are also pretty much concerned about narcotic smuggling. Similarly, Iran has very keen interests that include water resources and wants to secure its borders to ensure safety.

During the Taliban attack, Iran already took precautions and reduced staff at its embassy in Kabul. They evacuated their staff, only guards and local workers remained in Jalalabad, Kandahar, and Mazar-e-Sharif. They were closely monitoring the situation. As the United States

¹² BM Jain, "China's geostrategic engagement in a new Afghanistan" Opinionator (blog), *East Asia Forum*, October 8, 2021, accessed October 19, 2021, <http://www.eastasiaforum.org/2021/10/08/chinas-geostrategic-engagement-in-a-new-afghanistan/>.

President Jo Biden announced the withdrawal schedule, Iran after that increased contacts with Taliban and Ghani government. They struggled and hosted peace talks. After US withdrawal Iran's President Ebrahim Raisi stated "an opportunity to restore life, security and stable peace". He encouraged groups to reach mutual agreement.¹³

Central Asian States Interests and Search for Peace in Afghanistan

Central Asian States are in search of peace in Afghanistan due to security, trade and transit purposes. Central Asian States lived with the Taliban in 90s were not motivated and satisfied from the corrupt government of Kabul. Afghanistan in 1996 after the Taliban takeover was engulfed by Civil war and that did not secure the interest of Central Asian countries. Civil war at that time destabilized entire region and blocked economic progress into South and Central Asia.

Presently, Taliban are trying to present their positive image in front of the world. They are willing as per promises to abolish transitional violent and extremist group such as al-Qaeda. They want to secure borders to provide safe passage of goods and trade to South and Central Asian States. They have promised to eradicate drug trafficking.¹⁴ They want to make trust and want to attract countries so that they can cooperate with Taliban government.

Turkey Role and Search for Peace in Afghanistan

Afghanistan is faced with plethora of problems from the start of War on Terror. Regional actors like China, Pakistan, Iran and Turkey have come to realization that they cannot remain

¹³ Gavin Helf, Ph.D., Donald N, Jensen Ph.D., Garrett Nada, Tamanna Salikuddin, Andrew Scobell Ph.D., "How the Region is Reacting to the Taliban Takeover: After the fall of Kabul, Afghanistan's neighbors seek stability above all else," *United States Institute of Peace*, August 19, 2021, accessed September 20, 2021, <https://www.usip.org/publications/2021/08/how-region-reacting-taliban-takeover>.

¹⁴ Ibid.

silent, nor they can depend on international community for maintaining peace in Afghanistan. They decided that it is high time for them to take ownership of the region. Turkey a Muslim country played pivotal role in maintaining peace in Afghanistan. In the Ashraf Ghani time period Turkey hosted peace conference. Additionally, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Turkey trilateral agreement were signed to fill the gap between Pakistan and Afghanistan, whose relation has been strained to say the least.

Similarly, Turkey announced that they are seeking Pakistan and Hungary involvement to protect Kabul airport after US withdrawal. The mechanism modality remained unclear and therefore, neither Pakistan nor Hungary responded to their offer. Taliban responded that we are capable to protect our airports and stated they will stand against such move.¹⁵

US in Search for Peace

Making foreign policy is a product of conceptual complexity. Therefore, the importance of personality in the realm of foreign policy making entails the ideas, motives and assumptions reflects the quality of leadership. In this case, Trump's leadership style, is equal to "conceptual understanding in transactional money first spectrum".¹⁶

Trump as a Program Organizer

The plutocratic view of Trump reflected US foreign policy that displayed an extreme kind of disparagement for multilateral agreements. Fitzsimmons has drawn a link between presidents their personalities, attributes and their inclination toward constraints. He marks

¹⁵ Panel Discussion, *Conversation on the Afghan Peace: Turkey's role in Afghanistan*: 2021 semi Annual Report (Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad, June 30, 2021), 2-6, accessed October 12, 2021, <http://issi.org.pk/report-panel-discussion-conversation-on-the-afghan-peace-process-turkeys-role-in-afghanistan/>.

¹⁶ Sidra Khan, "Paradigm Shift in the US foreign policy towards NATO during Trump administration" *Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad*, Vol 41, no, 3 (October 29, 2021): p 3.

distinctions among leaders based on their personality. He is of the view that leader with strong belief control events and more inclined to challenge the constraints as compared to those leaders with slightly lower believes in controlling events. Trump vision reflected his personality where he had prioritized America first. Robert Kagan in his article predicted the future of US and stated that “the US will be out from the world order business”.¹⁷ His prediction proved right when Trump started to break the fabric of liberal institutionalism and went for the peace talks with Taliban. He signed peace deal and worked for the furtherance of Afghanistan and United States.

Biden; Man of the Game

Trump tenure was not just turbulent for US domestic politics but had created challenges for its foreign policy. While the new administration of Jo Biden desire rest in America foreign policy. It desires to repair and re-assess alliances; it wants to rejoin abundant agreements. It is also focused on the protection of human rights in the world. Biden takes major decision as he announced the withdrawal process productive for Afghanistan and the rest of the world.¹⁸

Doha agreement signed between Trump administration and Taliban concluded two-decade long war. Agreement was signed for a purpose that United States and its allies NATO forces would withdraw from Afghanistan in a particular time period. The withdrawal mission was later on delayed by American President Jo Biden. He for withdrawal mission is credited as man of the mission. He decided to withdraw all combat troops from Afghanistan in very short piece of time. In his speech Biden announced that withdrawal of US forces was Trump

¹⁷Rober Kagan, “Trump Marks the world with Indispensable nation,” *Financial Times*, November 19, 2016, accessed June 11, 2021, <http://www.ft.com/content/782381b6-ad91-11e6-ba7d-76378e4fef24>.

¹⁸ CAMEA Panel Discussion, *Biden’s Foreign Policy Approach Towards Middle East: 2021 semiannual Report* (Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad, February 18, 2021), 2-5, accessed October 12, 2021, <http://issi.org.pk/report-panel-discussion-bidens-foreign-policy-approach-towards-middle-east/>.

administration binding commitment. Delaying it would enable Taliban to target remaining American forces.

Biden after Trump decided to pull out US forces from Afghanistan. The onus was shifted to Afghans. The four-month period he gave was a room for Taliban and Afghan government to demonstrate their willingness to compromise and to settle issues. But as expected thing was changed over-night. Violence in the last fourteen days of Ghani government elucidated internal corruption and later on contributed to the damage and thrown of Ghani government. Biden at the very first suggested that there is room to move diplomatically. He argued that military is not an option and it is not a solution for maintaining peace in Afghanistan. His early said statement was supported by General David Petraeus a CENTCOM Commanded and later on Commander of US and allied forces on the ground in Afghanistan. In his recent interview he said “we had-what I would argue- is a way of managing this that you cannot win in Afghanistan. We did accomplish quite a bit during that period of conditional forces we halted the momentum of Taliban. We rolled it back in key areas.”¹⁹

Russia Interest and Search for Peace in Afghanistan

After the withdrawal of United States forces from Afghanistan the real test has just begun. It is imperative that the Taliban will engage with regional stakeholders or not. It is a historic opportunity for Taliban to work for the betterment and future of Afghanistan. Despite previous differences, regional powers including Russia are coming out of woodwork to assume more substantive role in future of Afghanistan. The International and regional powers are in wait and see process. They observe the situation from nearby. The key challenges for regional powers

¹⁹ General David Petraeus, interview by Lester Holt, *NBC NEWS*, August 17, 2021, accessed September 11, 2021, <https://youtu.be/X54DUH-aM-Y>.

are inclusive political setup, illegal flow of arms and trade and elimination of transnational terrorist groups.²⁰

Western Imposed democracy has failed in Afghanistan. Russia a neighbor country is more valuable to Afghanistan. Russia is not interested in the disintegration of Afghanistan. Dr. Alexander A. Kornilov: head of region studies of Foreign Countries in a panel discussion argued Russian leadership has concern over criminal elements, drug trafficking and terrorists. He was of the opinion that Taliban could prove a reliable partner of Russia if they give assurance for the safety of political and ethnic groups, if they respect human and women rights.

Russia emerged as an important player in peace process. The China-Pakistan-Russia trilateral summit increased the role of Russia in the internal matters of Afghanistan. With the passage of time Russia expanded their struggle and included Central Asian States. Then later on it made effort through the format of Troika and included Pakistan in Troika-Plus format for consolidating all international powers to do effort for maintaining peace in Afghanistan. Similarly, Russia also hosted many meetings of different factions in Moscow.²¹

Kremlin envoy to Afghanistan announced that after dismantling Ghani government, Moscow has the right to decide for themselves whether to recognize Taliban or not. Zamir Kabulov told Ekho Moskvyy radio station that “no one is going to rush” the decision. The process of recognition and non-recognition depends on the behavior of Taliban government with their

²⁰ Panel Discussion, *Conversation on the Evolving Situation in Afghanistan: Russia's role in Afghanistan*: 2021 semiannual Report (Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad, September 7, 2021), 2-7 accessed October 12, 2021, <http://issi.org.pk/panel-discussion-conversations-on-the-evolving-situation-in-afghanistan-russias-role-in-afghanistan/>.

²¹ Ibid.

citizen while we will observe the situation from nearby. He added that recognition process authority only lies with new authorities.²²

Taliban take over was a surprise for Russia but they are satisfied that long military campaign of their major rivals failed. United State according to their perspective called the event “revenge of the history”. Many Scholars are of the opinion that Soviet withdrawal of 1988-89 was ended up in the same position as US is in twenty first Century. The great powers failed to impose their will on the country in both cases.

Strategic Interest

Strategically Afghanistan is important for Russia, because of sharing border with Russia on the Heart province. In similar way Afghanistan for Russia is a gate to South Asia as well. Of all concerns to Russia Islamic extremist factions operating in Northern and Eastern side of Afghanistan. This actually reflects that Russia’s key interest is to prevent the rise of Islamic militant in Afghanistan because it can pose danger to Russia and its allied countries. It can easily spread to adjacent central Asian Countries like Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan. Furthermore, on-going conflict risks substantial outflows of refugee across its borders. It can destabilize the region.

Tense situation in Afghanistan can give rise to Islamic militants they could start operating in Northern and Eastern countries. Russia fears that they could infiltrate into adjacent countries and could form unrest there.²³ So, Russia is presently focused on bolstering of it vulnerable

²²Ajazeera, “How world reacted to Taliban takeover of Kabul” *Al Jazeera and News Agencies*, August 16, 2021, accessed October 13, 2021, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/8/16/how-the-world-reacted-to-taliban-takeover-of-kabul>.

²³ Ian Hill, “Afghanistan: Russia faces its own risks and uncertainty,” *The Interpreter* (August 10, 2021), accessed September 12, 2021, <http://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/afghanistan-russia-faces-its-own-risks-and-uncertainty>.

Central Asian partners. Therefore, to settle the issue Moscow intensified diplomatic efforts to secure political settlement to promote stability in Afghanistan. Moscow is also engaged with other key players like China, Pakistan and United States.

Economic Interest

Russia along with strategic interests also wants to secure its economic interests. With a stable Afghanistan Moscow hopes planned construction of energy and transport in all Afghanistan. This route will open economic opportunities for Russia through Afghanistan to subcontinent and Indian Ocean.²⁴

Future for Afghanistan

Future of Afghanistan is in the hand of the people of Afghanistan. They themselves are going to decide the fate of Afghanistan. Current government of Taliban can get favor of the groups, individuals and masses by facilitating them and by including them into government making process. New government has to be more conscious about formulating women ministries and solving educational issues. There is a dire need to venture for the advancement of industrialized society. It will be more impressive if they provide Afghanistan measures of unity, security, peace and stability.²⁵ Doing so Taliban presently struggle to present reformed image by nominating their cabinet who are not Pashtun; there are three Tajiks one Uzbek out of 24 cabinet members. Such move could enhance the sympathy of the people and could encourage them to work for the future of Afghanistan.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Abdul Kader Sinno, "Afghanistan's Taliban-led future," *East Asia Forum* (October 16, 2021).

Conclusion

Doha agreement deal signed between Taliban and United State left many issues unsettled. The intra-afghan talks remained uncompleted when Taliban in August 15, 2021 dismantled Ashraf Ghani government. They became legitimate stake holders of Afghanistan and to internationally recognize their government they endeavor to present reformed image in front of the world. World leaders keeping in view the past history is observing Afghanistan situation and are in search of peace in Afghanistan while prioritizing their material and geopolitical interests. Regional and International powers are in search of peace and wants to maintain bilateral relation with Afghanistan.

Conclusion

This study has explored various factors that have turned Afghanistan into a battlefield for the great powers and regional powers for decades. Primarily its geo-strategic location, that connects South Asia to Central Asia and Europe, has a potential of interconnectivity of various major markets of the world. Secondly, its same strategic location and internal societal fragmentation have always proved to be one of the ideal locations for proxy wars among the great powers and other major powers of the world. The competing interests of its neighbors have also led the country towards its decay and have made it prone to foreign invasions. To understand this complicated clash of interests it would be better to look at them in intra-regional perspective of these powers, such as India-Pakistan, China-US/India, Iran-Pakistan/KSA, and US-Russia/Iran. These nations directly or indirectly have pursued their geo-strategic, economic, and political interests in Afghanistan.

For instance, India, as a regional country, all the time has endeavored for maintaining friendly relation, with Afghanistan because of two reasons First, India has greed for economic boost as it wants to compete China in Central Asian market and it also wants to establish bilateral relations with Central Asian Countries (CARs). In Asian market there is a greater demand of Indian IT, banking, and construction services. Second, India sought to develop friendly relations with the US and its allies to counter the growing influence of Pakistan and China in the region. In addition to it India also pursued to isolate Pakistan diplomatically around the world. By doing this, India was successful in signing a nuclear deal with the US in 2005. Similarly, India assisted Afghan government financially and militarily to make it strong and self-sufficient. The purpose was to have great alliance with Afghanistan and to form a bloc so that it can help and assist them in future.

Conversely, Pakistan's interest have been always determined by Indo-centric policy. Pakistan as a neighboring country to Afghanistan and rival country to India has its geo-political, economic, and strategic interests in Afghanistan. Pakistan in the same way favors friendly regime in Afghanistan for a purpose, to permanently end Afghanistan support for *Pashtunistan* movement, and to eradicate border dispute between Afghanistan and Pakistan. In terms of economic interests, it is certainly clear that Pakistan wants access to energy rich countries in Central Asia. In similar context Pakistan wants to counter Indian influence in Central Asian markets which can also harm Chinese interests.

China as a world rising power and neighbor to Afghanistan prioritizes their own interests in Afghanistan. China's primary objective is to maintain domestic stability particularly in China's Western Muslim majority province of Xinjiang, which can be threatened by extremist groups from bordering areas of Pakistan and Afghanistan. Therefore, China is in favor of a stable and self-sufficient government in Afghanistan. A stable government in Afghanistan can also help China in its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) that is going to be extended to Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan and other parts of Central Asia. It will work like a trade confederation for South and Central Asian countries. Subsequently, China is also aware of the United States' "containment policy" by encircling it through various alliances and security arrangements to limit China's role in global role. Therefore, China is supporting Pakistan to manage the Afghan problem in their favor. Chinese support to Pakistan is also a counterweight to Indo-US cooperation.

Since 9/11 the United States' main objective on the ground was to prevent terrorism against their country from Afghanistan and such other countries. However, due to their full-spectrum doctrine, the US invaded and occupied Afghanistan. Similarly, US wanted an access to

Pacific Ocean due to rising inspiration of China. Pacific Ocean could provide great routes for market and resources throughout Eurasia. Secondly, US military presence was aimed to keep an eye on China, Russia, and Iran, to be able to pursue their wide range interests and restrain other major countries' influence in the country and the region.

Russia is making defense capacity around Afghanistan for a purpose to prevent the spread of violence to the allied countries like Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan. Secondly, they promote self-government in Afghanistan for their political as well as economic interests. Opium is widely cultivated in Afghanistan and is smuggled to Iran, Russia and Russian allied countries. It is a great source of income for terrorists and extremists. So, Russia intention is to stop the illegal flow of arms and opium into Russia and its allied countries.

Iran interest in Afghanistan as the study has established is to have a friendly regime in Afghanistan. Iran is a Shia State, therefore, they support Shia group in Afghanistan and in the rest of the world. In similar context they want to promote Dari/Farsi language. Secondly, Iran is also in dire need of trade routes to Central Asian market. They want to transform trade and Energy Bridge between Central Asia, Afghanistan and Persian Gulf. Subsequently, Iran is upgrading tax-free zone routes linking Oman based port of Chabahar to South-western border post of Malik in Afghanistan and want to extend it to Kandahar. Therefore, they have always supported a friendly and weak government in Afghanistan.

Enormous interests of the great powers led to unending conflicts in Afghanistan. These conflicts, proxies and direct invasion had great bearing on Pakistan's internal security matrix. Pakistan despite having a friendly regime between 1996-1999, participated in War against Terror and played its role as a front-line State due to US policy of "with us or against us".

In a similar context, Pakistan was under the pressure of international powers and their sanctions. Pakistan secured enormous amounts of financial and military aid by participating in the War on Terror, however, the repercussions were greater than the achievements. War on Terror was meant to be fought in Afghanistan and unfortunately was dragged toward Pakistan.

The War on Terror in Afghanistan pushed Taliban into the tribal areas of Pakistan. Taliban's influence grew enormously as the influential religious leaders and political figures supported them. The Imams issued *Fatwas* in favor of Jihad against United State in Afghanistan. Pakistan already had faced similar situation during the Soviet invasion but this time the Law-and-order situation deteriorated, and Pakistan witnessed bomb blasts and suicide attacks all over the country. *Tehrik Taliban Pakistan* (TTP) was formed, and they launched attacks on military and political assets in tribal areas. South and North Waziristan were affected with wide range violence. Sectarianism and terrorism took roots and was funded by regional neighboring countries like India, Iran, and Saudi Arabia. Pakistan was subjectively considered as a failed state by some foreign analysts and authors.

In similar context drone strikes were carried out by the United States and were justified to guide Pakistani military forces in their ground field. Drone strikes aggravated the emotions of the people and the tribal belt got affected. Drone strikes helped terrorist organizations grow their strength. Suicide bombing culture was adopted to achieve the claimed rights and to take revenge of drone strikes.

Terrorism greatly affected Pakistan economy and market. Pakistan was signed number twelve in the Fail State Index in 2011. Economic crises turned own people against political and military leaders. Political blame game was played on national level. Pakistan launched operations

against terrorists into tribal areas of South and North Waziristan and into the adjacent areas. People were displaced and remained deprived of basic rights.

Similarly, War on Terror damaged the prestige of Pakistan. Three incidents like Remand Davis Case who shot Pakistan nationals in Lahore, US Abbottabad Operation against the hideouts of Osama without Pakistan permission. Similarly, Salala Check post attack carried out by NATO forces killed 26 military personals. These incidents affected bilateral and diplomatic relations between Pakistan and United State.

United States (US) when observed the long-lasting security situation of Afghanistan thought that the military was not a solution to the problem. The dust can be settled down with peaceful negotiation. They went for it and signed a peace deal with Taliban known as Doha Agreement. Afghan government was not included in because they wanted to have a unilateral diplomatic victory. After Doha agreement when the US started to withdraw its troops, the Taliban took over of Kabul and intra-Afghan peace talks remained unsuccessful. This proved failure of nation building in Afghanistan and Kabul once again fell into the hands of Taliban.

After the Fall of Kabul world leaders endeavored for maintaining peace in Afghanistan while keeping in view their material interest. Each power due to political, economic, and strategic interest pushes for political settlement. Pakistan in this case struggles to maintain peace in Afghanistan under the rule of Taliban. Pakistan's political parties such as *Awami National Party* (ANP) and *Pashtun Khwa Milli Awami Party* (PKMAP) and *Jimiyat-i-Ulama I Islam* (JUI) due to their shared historical and political similarities are playing their role and endeavoring for settlement of peace in Afghanistan as per their standards. They want to settle the disputes between Taliban and their rival groups like *Islamic State Khurasan* (ISK), Hazara Militia group

and the Panjshiri group. Pakistan emphasizes for the inclusion of non-Pashtun Afghans in Taliban government.

Similarly, China needs to endeavor for peace due to its geo-economic interests. It has hosted intra-Afghan peace and it still needs to further the quest for peace in Afghanistan. China fears that eruption of violence in Afghanistan could spoil over to Xingjian province. Secondly, peace in Kabul is equally important as Peace in Islamabad for China. It is because Kabul could be an important partner for China in its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Next is with peaceful Afghanistan, China could have a great grip on Wakhan border. It could safeguard Wakhan border that will shape China's bigger role for Shanghai Co-operation Organization (SCO).

Similarly, other major powers such as US, Russia, KSA, Iran and other powers also need to search for peace in Afghanistan and promote self-government. They all need to end the bloodshed and humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan once and for all.

Present study also suggests that people of Afghanistan can decide the fate of Afghanistan by themselves. They are the better observers and can settle the issue in a systematic way. Current government as they presently want to show reformed image in-front of the world can take former politicians into confidence and can collaboratively work for nation building in Afghanistan. They can shape a better Afghanistan if they respect human rights and give equal opportunities to the people living inside the country. Taliban and the upcoming governments can form a responsive government that can work for generosity, justice, freedom and can share empathy. Education as a gate way for progress needs to be promoted. There should be tolerance and respect of ideas in society. Enduring peace in Afghanistan is a lost cause but international power along with the Afghans can revive it.

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