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THE AFGHAN POLITICAL IMBROGLIO

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ABSTRACT

The thesis discusses the research question, how can the exclusion of sections of Afghan society bring about the Political Imbroglio? At the centre is the hypothesis that the genuine bottom-up approach instead of the top-down one that has been tried since the Taliban were chased out of power in 2001 that does not isolate any section of society from the political power can help solve the Afghan political imbroglio. It discusses the history and current situation of Afghanistan with special emphases upon the political instability that haunts the country. It analyses the reasons of political instability and gives some recommendations on how to overcome it. The bottom up approach has to be coupled with justice, equality, empowerment of civil society as well as not ignoring any section of Afghan society in the political process.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

Qualitative and secondary sources have been utilized, in which the articles of eminent scholars like Rodriguez, D.M, Wilde, A. & Mielke, K, Theros, M. & Kaldor, M. Tomsen P and Ruttig etc have been referred. Graps and maps have also been used to illustrate the facts. After introduction explaining the political imbroglio in Afghanistan, important facts and the utility of bottom up approach, the first chapter introduces the cultural features of Afghanistan, i.e. ethnic groups, tribes, women and media. In the second chapter, there is an overview of the Afghan history from the 18th century till present and shows the extent of foreign interference, from the Great Game, Great Britain and Russia through the Soviet occupation to the U.S intervention which has drawn to a close.

The following two chapters discuss selected aspects of contemporary Afghanistan. Chapter three deals with domestic Afghani politics, namely, the legitimate deficit of the government, the problems connected with the administration and the armed forces, the Taliban led insurgency. Chapter four turns the attention to foreign actors meddling into Afghanistan, namely regional powers (Pakistan and India), a super power (USA) and a transitional network (Al-Qaida).

Chapter five provides a diagnosis of the factors leading to Afghan prolonged instability and suggests ways to overcome these factors. The chapter is subdivided into sections dealing with domestic and, respectively, international factors. The domestic factors refer to political and legal injustice, the role of ethnic political allegiances and law and order deficits in view of a deficient institutional framework. The international factors are foreign interventions, incomplete representation of Afghan groups on the international forums, and the inflexible demands by the international financial institutions.

KEY WORDS: Afghanistan, bottom up approach, justice, political instability, foreign interventions.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|------|---|
| AMF | Afghan Militia Forces |
| ANA | Afghan National Army |
| ANSF | Afghan National Security Forces |
| BCE | Before the Common Era |
| CIA | Central Intelligence Agency |
| DDR | Disarmament, Demilitarization & Reintegration |
| GDP | Gross Domestic Product |
| HIG | Hezb-i-Islami of Gulbuddin (Hikmatyar) |
| IEA | Islamic Emirates of Afghanistan |
| IFI | International Financial Institutions |
| IMF | International Monetary Fund |
| ISAF | International Security Assistance Forces |
| NATO | North Atlantic Treaty Organization |
| PDPA | People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan |
| U.N | United Nations |
| U.S | United States |

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INTRODUCTION

Since, Taliban ousted from power in 2001 and the formulation of the new government headed by President Karzai, Taliban vehemently denied the writ of the government and launched several attacks for destroying and destabilizing the working of the government that had no Taliban share in power consequently, the Afghan Political imbroglio remained unchanged. The main argument is that how the exclusion of the sections of Afghan society brings about the Political Imbroglio? and how the genuine bottom-up approach instead of the top-down one that had been tried since Taliban were chased out of power in 2001 that does not isolate any section of the society from the political power can help solve the Afghan political imbroglio.

In the Presidency of George W Bush, the code named Operation Enduring Freedom and later Operation Freedom's Sentinel of the American longest war in Afghanistan, after the attack on World Trade Center on September 11, 2001 in the posh Area of Manhattan in the American major city New York. The U.S spent more than 2 trillion dollars and more than 2448 American service men laid their lives. Afghan casualties touched a huge number of 60,000 since, 2001. The war began by the U.S and NATO allies. As many as 140,000 troops were deployed at a time in Afghanistan. After a long war, in February 23, 2020, in Doha, the United States signed a deal with the Taliban in Afghanistan that set the stage to end America's longest war. (The Tragedy of Afghanistan, 2021)

In 2010, Francesc Vendrell, the former EU special representative for Afghanistan, made the following dire prediction.

"Having failed dismally to make the Afghan people our allies, we will inevitably abandon them to a combination of Taliban in the south and the warlords in the north and - having somehow redefined success - we will go home convinced that it is the Afghan people who failed us." (Theros Kaldor, 2011:7)

Now, 11 years later, Afghanistan is a source of instability threatening to spill over its regional neighbors. All this is a far cry from the high hopes that were raised immediately after the overthrow of the repressive Taliban regime back in 2001. The major area of inquiry is: What will happen to Afghanistan? Will it remain subject to stalemate and to unstable political situation? Will the conditions in Afghanistan improve? There are many points of inquiry in this regard. The historical factors of the country must be taken into account as well. Did foreign powers learn anything from the lessons given by Afghans to foreign invaders? What was the experience of the wars for the world powers in Afghanistan? Have their plans become successful during the war and after the end of the war? Bitter experiences of history and unsuccessful designs of plans must be properly scrutinized before drawing a new plan for Afghanistan to build up a strong political foundation of the country.

Doubts and panic are manifold after the exit of the U.S and NATO forces. For the Western Bloc, for Afghanistan's neighboring countries, for the entire region and for the whole world, the crucial question is: What will happen to Afghanistan after the completion of transition? What will be the internal situation of Afghanistan? How will the regional countries be able to position themselves? What would be Afghanistan's impact on the security of the West? To answer these questions, it is very important to analyze the regional and international dimensions of the topic. But there is no any easy answer to these questions. Drawing the future of Afghanistan is a very complicated task. There are multiple factors involved and there are many stakeholders in the country, including the national and the international stakeholders. Their alliance making and their serious concerns in the region are very important in this context. The absence of a clear and united vision for the political thought in the country makes these questions very difficult to answer.

What has gone wrong and what could still be done to turn Afghanistan away from its quagmire into a stable and peaceful country? The main assertion of this thesis is that the top-down approach to state-building in Afghanistan needs to be replaced by the bottom-up one. However, building the state bottom-up must not be done through empowering oppressive local elites. Rather, the bottom-up approach only works if it is combined with substantive justice and equality and inclusion of each and every member of society in power sharing and decision making.

Let us first examine the differences between these two possible approaches: The top-down approach asserts that high-level government institutions and political and military leaders have privileged access to resources and so exert influence from the centre. This approach is connected with a highly centralized system of government. In contrast, the bottom-up approach would allocate resources and attention to local leaders. It aims to provide power to the common masses in a way that no centralized hindrance would perturb them in their decision making process (Clukey, 2010: 2-3).

A good example of the top-down approach, even though she does not explicitly use that term, is Berman (2010). According to her, Afghanistan has to travel the same road that Early Modern Europe went. Just like the absolutist kings of France, any Afghan government that wants to be effective asserts its territorial monopoly of power, either by violently crushing local elites or by co-opting them on its own terms. Centralizing state power will be a long and painful process. Before it is completed, nation-building and democracy must take a back seat.

Leaving aside the issue of whether the experiences of late feudal France can easily be transferred to contemporary Afghanistan, one might argue that this approach has already been tried and failed. After all, the U.S. and the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) focused on creating a strong central government in Kabul since 2001 – with rather disappointing results. This is perhaps not surprising. In the top-down approach, bureaucratic red tapism would delay many positive developments in the area and the common man would not be able to have easy access to the justice. The influential people in the country would try to usurp the rights of the poor people. Nevertheless, this approach can be useful for countries such as Japan after World War II and Iraq since 2003, because these countries historically developed strong institutions, but this approach may not be useful for countries like Afghanistan (Jones, 2010: 122).

A forceful advocacy of the bottom-up approach has been made by Theros & Kaldor (2011), who considers the corrupt government as much, a source of instability as the insurgents. Theros and Kaldor emphasize the potential of Afghan civil society – tribal councils, religious networks, cultural institutions, youth and women organizations, or teachers and other intellectuals – which have so far been sidelined by both the government and the foreign donors. Empowering these

people, especially by protecting them from threats of violence, would be the best way forward.

Now we have a look at the criticisms of the bottom-up approach with regards to Afghanistan. Campbell (2011) argues that the bottom-up approach, which originally had a critical edge directed against the authoritarian character of many U.N.-led peace building missions, was later high jacked by international financial institutions (IFI) and certain aid agencies to give legitimacy for neo-liberal types of state building:

”Taking an even more skeptical view of neoliberal state-building in the post-conflict countries, Naomi Klein ... argues that it is precisely because of the crisis situation following internal wars that political and economic elites and IFI executives are able to push through a radical neoliberal agenda that would be otherwise resisted by a democratically enfranchised population. This process of peace building-cum-radical-liberalization, Klein continues, has in all cases resulted in the emergence of ‘a powerful ruling alliance between a few very large corporation and a class of mostly wealthy politicians’”(Campbell,2011: 51).

A different line of criticism has been advanced by Wilde and Mielke (2013), for whom the bottom-up approach works in favor of self-interested local elites rather than of the population at large:

“The resource flows provided by the political and military intervention in Afghanistan since 2001 have enabled the newly established elites to capture the western-planned state building agenda. In this manner state building overlaps with and perpetuates the existing social order, along with its inherent power structures and local world-views”(Wilde and Mielke, 2013 :365)

But what this criticism targets is not the genuine bottom-up approach. The genuine bottom-up approach empowers local people to select their representatives among themselves, who belong to their class and understand the problems more comprehensively. It avoids a situation in which the already established elites to come into power again and serve their vested interests. The bottom-up approach is useful because this approach can provide power to the people at the grass root

level. By this approach, the Afghan people would be able to freely impose their will. Nobody would be able to force them. The authority will be given at the local level and the people would be able to select their leaders among themselves.

The Afghan people faced a severe problem with the corrupt centralized government and with injustice, especially at the local level. In many areas, the writ of the government was so weak resultantly; the people had to move to the Taliban courts despite their ideological differences. Working at the grass root level would enable the international community to understand the genuine problems of Afghans. If there is any kind of miscommunication between the local Afghans and higher authorities it could be effectively figured out. Indeed, success in Afghanistan would remain a dream unrealized if the local aspirations are ignored. If the international community wants to win over Afghanistan, it must involve itself in all the sectors of the Afghan population. The ideas and advices of the Afghan people must be given serious considerations. There must be an open forum for the people to talk about their point of view.

The development of the institutions must be in accordance with the wishes of the people of Afghanistan. The reforms of the legal system, particularly at the local level, are not an easy task. The formal court system is badly affected by the corrupt stakeholders. The Afghans are going back to their traditional institutions to resolve their matters. The bottom-up approach can have a useful impact on the reform of the justice system in the country while considering the affiliations of Afghans with their traditions and customs. After all, the international community also has to realize its dire need. It can help govern the country in a better way. The law and order situation in the country can improve and the country can come out of its political crisis (Theros&Kaldor,2011:42-43).

In Afghanistan people are not satisfied with the justice system in the country and the bottom-up approach can be helpful for the people of the country to have an easy access to justice. The people would gain confidence. They would realize that their ideas and wishes have been well communicated and the legal institutions have been built in accordance to their desires, from where they can have easy access to justice. Thus, the powerful people would not be able to usurp their rights. In Afghanistan, without justice and equality peace cannot be secured. It is a matter of fact that if there is no justice in any part of the world, peace is not prevailing there.

We can take the examples of countries like Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Central African Republic, and Somalia etc. Examples can also be drawn from the history of the modern states. Unless they developed a just political system continuous political unrest remained in those countries. We can take the examples of France, Germany and even the USA and England. Justice and equality among the people of any nation are also very important to boost the morale of the nations. Winston Churchill pointed out the importance of justice during the time of the Second World War: A country cannot lose the war if the people have justice there. Afghanistan is severely facing the problem of unjust political system. Therefore, peacemaking in the country has become very difficult. The bottom-up approach can be very useful to provide justice to the Afghan people. This issue is interlinked with the law and order situation and the political instability in the country. My argument of promoting the bottom-up approach in its genuine way is that it can improve the situation in Afghanistan and the people would be able to live in peace. The genuine bottom-up approach will empower the majority of Afghan people and it can be very helpful to provide equal status to them. By following this approach, the country can come out of the political instability and the peace can be secured in the area.

We see that there is stalemate in Afghanistan. There is a clear segregation in the society; there are boundaries between the rich and the poor, powerful and weak. It is a multi-ethnic society. This country has been ruled by the powerful groups and is still being governed by those who are powerful warlords and elites. There are vast elements of armed and unarmed stakeholders. Civil society and poor Afghans are still far away from having their say in negotiations or in the decision-making process of the country. How can a democratic process be made successful if the grass root level involvement of the common man and various stakeholders are being ignored? Stalemate will prevail and no solution can be worked out, if the basic principles of democracy are ignored. In this situation, it is very difficult for the democratic institutions to function properly and the people will not be able to get justice. People will feel unsafe. As a result, Afghanistan will remain in stalemate.

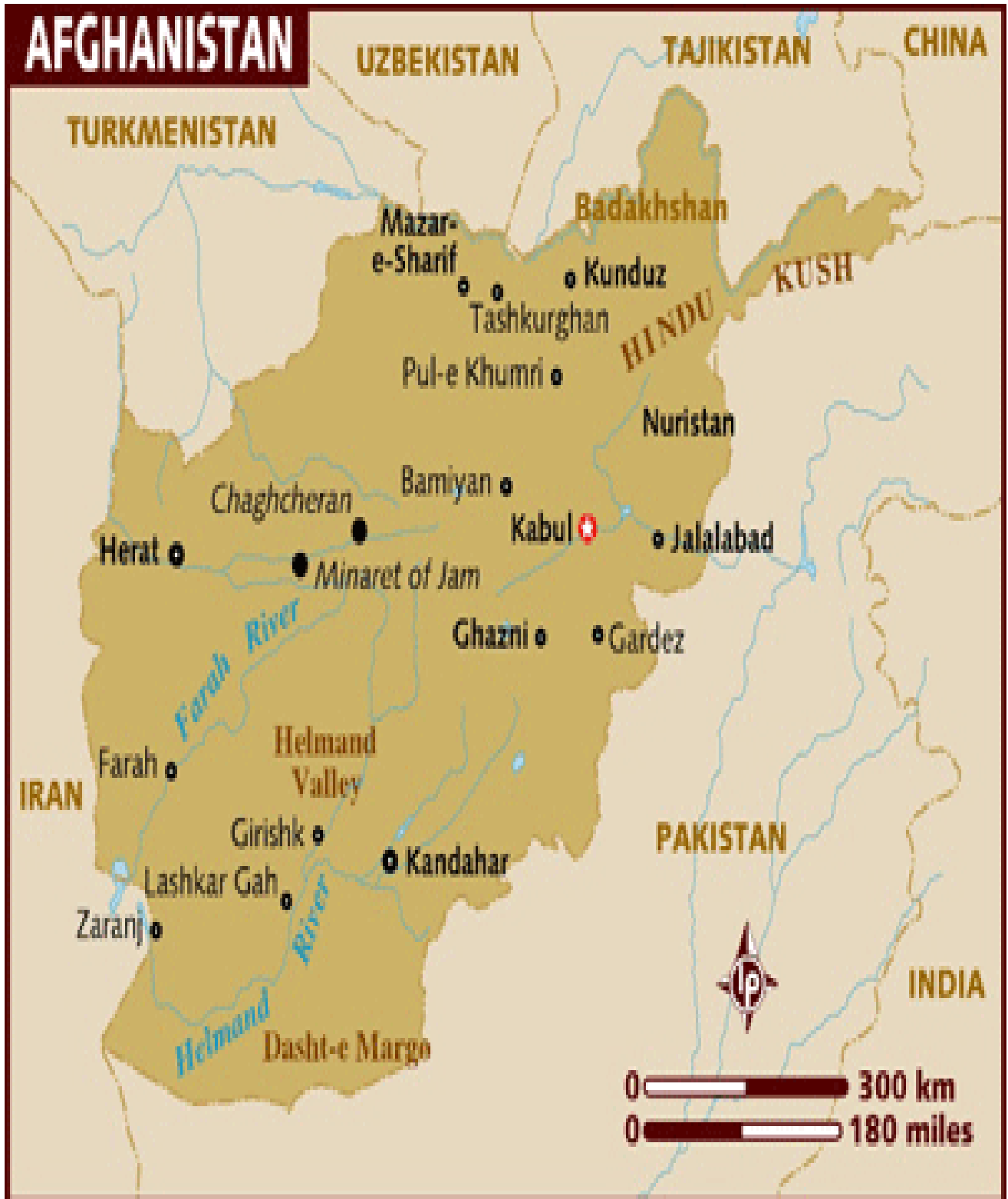
Due to the security risk in the country, the international powers are promising to give the positions to the warlords in the political order of the country. These warlords therefore are making a successful re-entry into the political structure of

the country. Their alleged crimes are being ignored. They are eligible to get positions like governors, legislators and ministers. Their previous criminal record is not a hurdle for them. The scholars and the international community are also not satisfied about this decision of allowing the criminals to enter into Afghan politics. The consequences of this decision are not satisfactory but, on the other hand, it is argued that it is the only peaceful way to disarm the warlords (Miller, 2011:58).

Afghanistan has become a quagmire of political instability. In any country the institutions of the state are very important for its governance. The legislature, the executive, and the judiciary are three important organs of the state. If they do not function independently, with harmony and with a system of checks and balance, political stability cannot be brought to any country. In Afghanistan, institutions of the state are not mature. They try to interfere into the domain of one another, they are not working harmoniously, and corruption is manifold. So, how can democracy prevail? There has been a continuous political deadlock due to the improper functioning of the institutions of the government. Therefore, Afghanistan is considered to be a quagmire of political instability.

Foreign interventions have made Afghanistan a fragile state. The law and order situation is completely disturbed. Many Afghans have become homeless. Many Afghans are still trying to migrate to other countries of the world. Foreign investors are not feeling comfortable to invest in the country. The economy of the country is badly suffering due to this reason. The people in Afghanistan are feeling themselves insecure; they are worried about their future. As a result, anti-state feelings are generating among the people.

Let us now have a closer look at the country and its problems in order to see how a bottom-up approach to state-building, combined with emphasis upon justice, and might successfully address these problems.



Graph 1: Map of Afghanistan

1. THE LAND AND THE PEOPLE

Afghanistan always gained world attention due to its geo-strategic position. Its area covers 652,000 km² (252,000 sq mi). It borders with Pakistan in the south and the east, Iran in the west, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan in the north and China in the far northeast. It is simultaneously located in the three world regions: Central Asia, South Asia and the Middle East. Afghanistan has been an ancient focal point of the Silk Road and of migration. It is a landlocked country.

1.1. Culture

The understanding of the Afghan culture and religious practices are also a prerequisite before drawing any political solution in the country. It is a matter of fact that Afghanistan has a rich culture and one of the biggest tribal based societies in the world. The religion of the country is Islam, with the majority adhering to the Sunni branch and a minority to the Shia branch. The independent nature of the Afghan people played a significant role against foreign occupations. Instead of ethnic tensions prevailing in the country, the Afghans became united against foreign enemies. But often the sectarian tensions arise in the country and its consequences on the political structure of the country are very severe.

Many aspects influenced the culture of Afghanistan. It remained the gateway to India and the Central Asian countries. Afghanistan remained a part of many culturally rich empires. The cultural history of Afghanistan has been greatly affected by the Greek, Persian and Indian cultures. Islam has especially affected the culture of Afghanistan; it influenced its architecture, art, music and poetry. Due to the continuous battles at the present time, the cultural wealth has been badly damaged in the country.

The Afghans are very skilled in calligraphy and fine arts. In Afghanistan, Buzkashi is an important game, and this is an ancient game. Buzkashi means the killing of a goat. It is the hunting of goats by the champions on horseback. The origin of this game goes back to the time of Ghangis Khan. When we talk about the eating habits of the Afghans, people take rich food infant and protein. Its food is made by the spices like garam masala, saffron, cinnamon and cloves.

When we discuss about the festivals in Afghanistan, we know that Afghanistan is an Islamic country. The most important festival in Afghanistan is Eid-ul-Fitr after the end of the holy month Ramzan. Moharram-ul-Haram is also a holy month, which is the memorial for the sacrifice and martyrdom of Hazrat Imam Hussain(R.A). Eid-ul-Adha is celebrated during the month of Zil-Haj.This is also the month of performing the Haj to Macca Moqarma in Saudi Arabia. Nau-roz is the first day of New Year of the spring season according to the solar calendar of Afghanistan.

When we talk about the ethnic groups, they follow different styles of living. They select their leaders as Khans and Begg. The Pashtuns, or Persian Afghans, are also known as Pathans are the largest group of Afghanistan. Internally, the relations of ethnic groups are very complicated. The government of Afghanistan has most of the time been controlled by people with Pashtun origins. The other ethnic groups tended to hold secondary positions in the government. This has been an important big factor for the ethnic tensions in the country (Culture of Afghanistan, 2021).

1.2. Ethnic Groups

The total population population of Afghanistan is 31 million. There are many ethnic groups among them,including Pashtuns,Tajiks, Hazara, Uzbek, Turkmen,

Aimek, Baloch, Nuristani, Arab, Brahui, Pamiri, Gujjar etc. (Afghanistan – Ethnicity and Languages, 2014; Barfield, 2011: 55-56). Let us discuss some of the major groups in some detail.

The Pashtuns

Among the many ethnic groups in Afghan population, the Pashtuns are the largest group. Their homes are mainly located in the south and the east. However, ethnic Pashtuns (in this case also known as Kuchis) are present in other areas of the country. Furthermore, Pashtuns also live in the western part of Pakistan. They are mostly farmers and nomads. According to their honor code, the Pashtunwali, they are supposed to be courageous, self-reliant and hospitable. They speak Pashto, an Indo-European language and one of the two official languages of Afghanistan. The Pashtuns are divided into five major tribal confederations, of which the two most important are the Durrani and the Ghilzais.

The Tajiks

The second biggest group in Afghanistan consists of the Tajiks. They are the inhabitants of the northern, north-eastern and western parts of the country and are also the main ethnic group in neighbouring Tajikistan. They are farmers, artisans and merchants. They speak the Dari language, another Indo-European language and (together with Pashto) the other official language of Afghanistan. Dari is more frequently spoken language than Pashto in many cities.

The Hazaras

They live in the central part of the country. Their ancestors came from Xingjiang, the region of northwest China. They are mostly farmers and sheep-herders. They are minority Shiites (the followers of Shia Islam) while the other ethnic groups are mostly Sunni Muslims. Since being brutally subjugated by the central government in the 1890s, the Hazaras were subject to various forms of discrimination but have improved their political and economic position since the 1980s.

The Uzbeks

The native land of the Uzbeks and Turkmen is the northern territory of Afghanistan but they are also the ethnic majority in neighbouring Uzbekistan. They speak a Turkic language and are predominantly farmers, although urban Uzbeks are also known as businessmen and artisans. Many Uzbeks trace their origins to migrants from Russia during the later 19th and earlier 20th centuries.

Other Groups

There is a wooded mountainous region known as Nuristan in the east, north of the Kabul river. The Nuristanis live there. They speak Indo-European dialects. The Balochis live in the far south of Afghanistan. Their Indo-European language is also spoken in the south-west of Pakistan and south-east in Iran. Near the Amu Darya, north of the Hindu Kush, several groups reside. These groups include the Turkmen, another Turkic group. The Kyrgyz live in the extreme northeast Vakhn corridor. All these groups are normally farmers, merchants and semi-nomadic shepherds. The Aimaq live in the western-central highlands of Afghanistan in the north of

Herat. They speak sub-dialects of the Persian language (Afghanistan – Ethnicity and Languages, 2021; Aimaq People, 2021; Lamer & Foster, 2011).

| Ethnic groups in Afghanistan | | |
|------------------------------|--|--|
| Ethnic group | <u>World Fact book / Library of Congress Country Studies (2004-present estimate)</u> | World Fact book / Library of Congress Country Studies (pre-2004 estimates) |
| <u>Pashtun</u> | 42% | 38-50% |
| <u>Tajik</u> | 27% | 25-26.3% (of this 1% is <u>Qizilbash</u>) |
| <u>Hazara</u> | 9% | 12-19% |
| <u>Uzbek</u> | 9% | 6-8% |
| <u>Aimak</u> | 4% | 500,000 to 800,000 individuals |
| <u>Turkmen</u> | 3% | 2.5% |

| | | |
|---|----|---------------------|
| <u>Baloch</u> | 2% | 100,000 individuals |
| Others (<u>Pashai</u> , <u>Nuristani</u> , <u>Arab</u> , <u>Brahui</u> , <u>Pamiri</u> , <u>Gujjar</u> , etc.) | 4% | 6.9% |

Graph 2: Ethnic Groups in Afghanistan (2021).

Principally, ethnicity is not the prime factor in shaping political alliances - the more so as shared location, marriage ties and political ideology frequently crosscut ethnic divisions. Nevertheless, we will see below that many of the conflicts ravaging Afghanistan had an ethnic component. Even then, however, it was not about which ethnic group would control which ethnically homogenous territory – as it happened, for example, in Bosnia – but, rather, which group would gain power over the state apparatus (Barfield, 2011: 56).

1.3. Tribes

A tribe is any aggregate of the people united by ties of descent from a common ancestor, community of customs and traditions, and adherence to the same leader. In Afghanistan, there is a tribal based society and the behavior of these tribes varies from area to area. For example, we find differences of the social and cultural practices in the Western Herat and Southern Kandahar provinces. The areas where the legal institutions of the state are virtually non-existing, the system of Shuras

and Jirgas (traditional way of decision-making) is popular; it is helping people in the decision-making process at the local level. Martine Van Bijleri, the former political advisor to the European Union's special representative in Afghanistan, observed that after 2001, the government institutions remained deficient in Afghanistan and the importance of the sub-tribe connections have been increased.

There are many other stakeholders to shape the social structure in the local areas, such as those groups who gained importance during the anti-Soviet struggle, groups which gained wealth from drugs trafficking and landlords etc. So, in this kind of situation, it is not easy to shape the local politics of the country. As a result, the law and order situation becomes weak. It is very important to understand these factors to counter terrorism in the country. Taliban and the other militia groups have developed their network through mutual interests and benefits and they are active especially in the local areas (Jones, 2010: 123-124).

Especially the Pashtuns are organized along kinship links into segments on different levels, from extended family through clan, sub-tribe and tribe to tribal confederations like the Durrani and Ghilzais. Common affairs within each unit are discussed by a Jirga (council). In case of intra-unit conflict, the Jirga tries to find a consensual solution; if this fails, the unit might be split. There is thus a continuous process of fission and fusion of units, which keeps the tribal structure fluid. Blood-feuds and raids are common patterns. A particularly wide-spread form of conflict is rivalry between cousins (tabarwali), frequently over inheritance rights to land. Sometimes, a whole tribe is divided into two antagonistic sections, known as spin (white) vs. tor (black) without formally breaking into two. However, if conflict is kept within bounds the individual tribesman can rely upon the solid support of the other members of the unit.

Pashtun tribal society is egalitarian and chiefs, known as Khan or Malik, are considered first among equals. They owe their position to a combination of wealth, courage, Islamic learning and/or prestigious ancestors; this position is inheritable but only if the son of a deceased chief proves himself capable. The leadership of a tribe originates from members of a specifically prestigious sub-tribe, the Khan Khel.

The tribal understanding of Islam is based more upon the Pashtunwali honor code than upon the Sharia and is permeated by mystic and superstitious elements. Particularly in times of crisis and instability, religious leaders known as mullahs tend to emerge. Originating from the less prestigious sections of the tribe, they do not infrequently eclipse the Khans and Maliks during such a period. This rivalry between chiefs and mullahs is a constant factor in Pashtun tribal society (Pashtun Tribal Dynamics, 2009: 1-9).

Since the 1980s, however, there has been a prolonged decline in importance for the Khans and Maliks. Many got killed by the communist regime and later the Taliban while others got upstaged by a new stratum of warlords who owe their position not to the traditional mix of prestige factors but to their guns and to drug money (Ruttig, 2009: 30). This development has favored the Mullahs, many of whom overlap with the Taliban (Alden, Thakur & Arnold, 2011: 147; Pashtun Tribal Dynamics, 2009: 5).

It has also been led to a general weakening of tribal identities. In any case, the tribal structures just described are mainly at work among rural Pashtuns while urban ones identify themselves with the city rather than with their tribe. Furthermore, tribal patterns are much less pronounced among other ethnic groups like the Tajiks, Hazara or Uzbeks (Jones, 2010: 123-124). Nevertheless, the

circulation of local elites in the north of Afghanistan resembles that of the Pashtun south. Before 1978, local communities were headed by elders whose prestige was based upon a combination of wealth, networks, Charisma and noble descent. These elders were systematically eliminated by the communist regime. By the 1990s, their place had been taken by Mujahedin leaders, whose position derived from their command over armed followers (Wilde & Mielke, 2013: 358-361).

There are multiple factors involved in the tribal engagement and their impact on the political and military situation is very important, so it has to be taken into consideration. The identification of the tribal operational tendencies can play a key role to resolve the Afghan conflict whereas the bottom-up approach can allocate resources for the local level. The bottom-up approach can incorporate District Development Teams (DDT), that can help in the economic and social development in the tribal parts of the country and can address the issue of the military needs at the local level to improve the law and order situation (Clukey,2010). As we will see below, however, care must be taken that addressing local military needs will not lead to the spread of new militias.

1.4. Women

The role of women is very important in nation-building. In Afghanistan, it is evident from the history that the women were even deprived of getting their basic rights. They had been marked as the second class citizens of the society. Now, it is important to know the present situation of women in Afghanistan. The analysis of the situation shows that they have taken part in elections, they are being educated, they are also playing a role in the media and other social sectors of the country. But

the condition of the majority of women in the country still leaves a lot to be desired.

The religion of the state is Islam and about half of the Afghan population consists of women. In Islam, men and women are equal before God. God has given women various rights, such as the right of heritage or the right to select their own life-partner. In a democratic state, they have the right to work and to vote. But when we discuss about the rights of women in Afghanistan, we see that these rights had not been given to many women in Afghanistan. When the Taliban were in power, the women were treated very badly. They were not allowed to work. They were forbidden to leave their houses without the company of a male member of their family. They were not allowed to get the medical treatment from male doctors. The covering of their bodies from head to toe remained a must.

After 2001, when Taliban were not in government, there were many people who were agreeing that the position of the women in Afghanistan had been improved. The recent constitution before Taliban take over in August, 2021 is giving equal rights and duties to women and men before the law. Due to these developments in the country, women were again allowed to go for work and they were not forced to wear the long coverings. They had been given important positions in the government (Plight of Afghan Women, 2019). Afghan civil society had improved the situation for women in the country. Efforts had been made to give rights to the women in the Presidential elections. Approximately one third of the voters were women. More than one quarter of the parliamentarians were women. For comparison, in the U.S Senate they were 20% and they are 18% in the U.S House of Representatives Furthermore, almost 40% children in the Afghan schools were female. The Afghan National Police Officers Academy included 51 women (Tomsen, 2014:53).

But there is still a long way to go. In the rural areas of the country, there are many families which are stopping women to take part in public life. They are still forced to marry without even having known their spouse. Education is still denied to many women. Many schools have been burnt and young women have been murdered because they dared to attend their schools (Plight of the Afghan Women, 2019).

1.5. Media

Media plays a vital role in nation-building. It is also considered the fourth pillar of the state together with the judiciary, the legislature and the executive. It has a very important role in educating people in the country. On the other hand, it can also play a negative role. It can pollute the minds of the young generation. In Afghanistan media is nowadays playing an active role in the country. It also exposed the rigging in the elections. Many political debates were being broadcasted by different TV channels which were good for the political knowledge of the people.

Before the fall of Taliban in 2001, there was virtually no media in the country. But since 2001, after the fall of Taliban, media was developed rapidly. The FM radio stations were about 175, the number of TV channels was about 75 and there was hundreds of print publications. Most of them had been launched by the support of the USA .Media has provided e Afghans not only entertainment but also useful information on different affairs, which has made them wise consumers. Nevertheless, many media ventures were dependent upon the U.S. and the Afghan government. Media people are also being threatened by their own government, by police and security forces, by warlords and by the Taliban (Cary, 2014).

According to USAID,

“A robust and independent broadcast media is an essential component of any democracy, and critical to the development of a strong civil society. USAID promotes media development in Afghanistan by building and supporting the capacity of local, state and independent broadcast media to operate across the nation. The project provides technical support, equipment upgrades, hands-on training in balanced and accurate reporting, the development of an Afghan media policy and regulatory framework, and future business development training as part of the network’s sustainability package.” (Building Independent Media in Afghanistan, 2019)

2. HISTORY

2.1. Early History

In 1966 Louis Dupree and others participated in excavations. Eight hundred stones were discovered along with a fragment of a Neanderthal bone, giving evidences that human existence in the area is 52,000 years old. Indo-Europeans came to Afghanistan from the north after the 20th century BCE. Their language survived in the form of Pashto and Dari. Zoroastrianism predominated as the religion of the region, other religions such as Buddhism and Hinduism flourished later.

Around 500 BCE, the area was under the Achaemenid Empire. Alexander the Great invaded Afghanistan in 330 BCE after conquering Persia in the battle of Gaugamela. Since then many empires established their capitals inside Afghanistan, include, the Greco-Bacterians, Mauryas, Kushans, Shahis, Saffarids, Samanids, Ghaznavids, Ghurids and Timurids. The Arab invasions deeply influenced the culture of Afghanistan. The elements of the Zoroastrianism, Macedonian and Buddhist past started declining. Turkic emperors like the Ghaznavids, Ghurids and Timurids gave this region great importance (History of Afghanistan, 2021).

These empires, most of which were under Persian or Turkish dynasties, only controlled the cities, trade routes and most productive agricultural lands of what is today Afghanistan by co-opting the local elites there. In contrast, the poorer mountainous and desert areas remained out of their reach (Barfield, 2011: 56).

2.2. The Hotaki and Durrani Dynasties

The first early modern Afghan polity was dominated by one of the two major Pashtun tribal confederations, the Ghilzais (Pashtun Tribal Dynamics, 2009: 10). Mirwais Hotaki, also considered as the George Washington of Afghanistan, obtained independence from Safavid Persia in 1709 and the Hotaki dynasty was founded. This happened due to the following events: The Safavid Shah Husyan had appointed Gurgin Khan for governing the easternmost region of his empire. Gurgin Khan suppressed the revolts and imprisoned many native Afghans. Mirwais, who belonged to an influential family in Kandahar, was also one of them. But soon he was released by the ruler and sent back to his native land. Under his leadership Gurgin Khan was defeated and after this Mirwais and his Afghan forces successfully defeated several large Persian armies. Southern Afghanistan became an independent Pashtun kingdom. Mirwais became the king of Kandahar and general of the troops; and Hotaki dynasty came into being. The Hotakis were beaten by Nadir Shah, the Iranian military commander and head of the Afsharids. The last Hotaki dynasty ruler was Shah Hussain who was defeated by the Abdalis (the other major Pashtun tribal confederation) and the Afsharids. (History of Afghanistan, 2021)

The next independent Afghan polity was headed by rulers who belonged to the Khan Khel (leading sub-tribe) of the Popalzai, one of the tribes belonging to the Abdali/Durrani confederation (Pashtun Tribal Dynamics, 2009: 3). Nadir Shah and his Afsharid Persian army arrived in Kandahar in 1738. They defeated Hussain Hotaki and absorbed his kingdom into their empire. Ahmad Khan, a young prisoner, joined his army in the invasion of India. In June 1747, Nadir Shah was assassinated by his Persian officers and the Afsharid empire came to an end. In those days, Ahmad Khan was 25 years old. The Afghans gathered near Kandahar in October

1747 and elected Ahmad Shah in a Loya Jirga (Grand Assembly). He was made the head of the state and became known as Ahmad Shah Durrani. The Abdali confederation also began to be called Durrani. Ahmad Shah Durrani represented the Durrani and also united all Pashtun tribes. In 1751, Ahmad Shah Durrani and his army occupied the entire area which is today Afghanistan, Pakistan, the Khorasan and Kohistan provinces of Iran along with Delhi in India. During the battle of Panipat, he defeated the Marathas in 1761. He died of a natural death when he retired to his home in 1772.

Timur Shah Durrani, the son of Ahmad Shah Durrani, took control of his empire. He transferred the capital from Kandahar to Kabul. He died in the year 1793 and his son Zaman Shah Durrani succeeded him. The Afghan control over the remote areas became weaker due to the differences among Zaman Shah and his brothers (History of Afghanistan, 2014). But even before that decline, Durrani rule had been as loose as that of the previous empires. Local governors had been given a large amount of autonomy (Barfield, 2011: 57).

2.3. The Barakzai Dynasty and the Great Game

In 1829, the Khan Khel of another Durrani tribe, the Barakzai, replaced the ruling dynasty (Pashtun Tribal Dynamics, 2009: 3). Under their rule, Afghanistan was repeatedly subjected to foreign invasions. In particular, the 19th century Anglo-Russian rivalry over influence in Central Asia, known as the 'Great Game', affected the country profoundly.

Under Ranjit Singh, the Sikhs advanced to the kingdom of Kabul. The Afghan army descended through Khyber pass on the Sikhs at Jamrud in 1837. The Sikhs were

supported by East India Company. Afterwards they were defeated by the British forces in the first and the second Anglo-Sikh wars.

In the 19th century, the Russians and the British were suspicious towards each other. The British had their serious concerns over the Russian advancement in the Central Asian regions and their influence in West Asia. The Persians were also trying to retake control over some areas of Afghanistan. In the First Anglo-Afghan war (1839-1842), the British army was faced with the heavy losses. The Second Anglo-Afghan war (1878-1880) was caused by the refusal of Amir Sher Ali of a British presence in Kabul. This clash brought Amir Abdul Rehman to power. During his time (1880-1901) the British and the Russians officially drew their boundaries around Afghanistan (History of Afghanistan, 2021).

Hand in hand with the erection of clear borders went the establishment of a state monopoly of power. Known as the 'Iron Amir', Abdul Rahman crushed numerous uprisings in a brutal way. By the 1890s, he had managed to concentrate power into his own hand while dispensing with local intermediaries. In ethnic terms, this meant that the Pashtuns were now clearly the dominant group in the country (Barfield, 2011: 57). However, these privileges had come at a price for them: In order to divide the Pashtun tribes, the Amir ordered many sections to resettle in the North, thereby displacing other ethnic groups and creating anti-Pashtun resentments (Pashtun Tribal Dynamics, 2009: 8-9). Day-to-day administration in Kabul was run by Tajik appointees. The leaders of the Uzbeks and of the other groups were removed while the Hazaras fared worst and became subject to direct oppression (Barfield, 2011: 57).

Arguably, the Iron Amir pursued a top-down strategy of state-building on the lines recommended by Berman. While spectacularly successful on the short run, this

strategy also created the seeds of ethnic discord that were later to haunt Afghanistan.

During World War I, Afghanistan was neutral due to the British influence over its foreign policy. But this policy of the ruler did not gain him popularity. In 1919, Amanullah, the grandson of Abdul Rehman, came to power. During this time, the Third Anglo-Afghan war fought and the Afghans also attacked India. The Afghans gained control over their foreign policy on August 20, 1919. This day is also celebrated as the Independence Day by the Afghans.

King Amanullah Khan tried to take his country out from the long isolation. During the time of the third Anglo-Afghan war he tried to establish diplomatic relations with the most important countries. In 1927, he visited Europe and Turkey. He fought for women's education. He tried to make elementary education compulsory, which was in accordance with the article 68th of the first constitution declared through a Loya Jirga. Reforms like the abolition of the Muslim women veil and the starting of the co-educational schools were strongly disliked by the tribal and religious leaders. He was overthrown in January 1929 and Habibullah Kalakani came to power (History of Afghanistan, 2014).

Habibullah Kalakani was a Tajik brigand. He was overthrown by Nadir Khan in the same year and later executed (Habibullah Kalakani of Afghanistan, 2014). This episode established a pattern that was to repeat itself several times later: Amanullah's fall was engineered by a conservative alliance of Tajiks and Pashtun tribesmen. However, once Kalakani made his bid for power, this alliance fractured along ethnic lines: His former Pashtun allies now rallied behind another member of the just-overthrown Pashtun ruling dynasty (Barfield, 2011: 58-59).

When Prince Nadir Khan, the cousin of Amanullah Khan, came to power he adopted a gradual approach towards modernization. In 1933, he was assassinated. Zahir Shah, the son of Nadir Khan remained in power from 1933 to 1973. His uncle Sardar Muhammad Hashim Khan became prime minister and acted upon the policies of Nadir Khan. Sardar Shah Muhammad Khan, another uncle of Zahir Shah, became prime minister in 1946. He tried to allow more political freedom but afterwards changed the policy when the results went farther than expected. In 1953, the cousin and brother-in-law of the king, Muhammad Daud Khan, became prime minister. He developed relations with the Soviet Union, but on the other hand, rifts with Pakistan brought economic crisis to the country. He was forced to resign in 1963. Zahir Khan tried to make a liberal constitution. A bi-cameral legislature was promulgated by Zahir in 1964. One third of the deputies had to be appointed by the king, the people could also elect one third and the remaining were indirectly selected by the provincial assemblies. But the reforms also brought about the development of unofficial extremist parties. This included the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA), which was in close relations with the Soviet Union (History of Afghanistan, 2021).

The Republic of Afghanistan was the name of the first Afghan republic which was initiated in 1973 by Muhammad Daud Khan. He dethroned his cousin, King Muhammad Zahir Shah. Daud Khan attempted to modernize Afghanistan with the help of both superpowers, i.e. USSR and USA. In 1978, the Saur revolution took place, incited by the communist PDPA. Daud Khan and his family were killed and Soviet influence increased (Republic of Afghanistan, 2014). Ironically, Daud's nemesis was the modernized national army which he himself had set up during his period as prime minister in the 1950s (Pashtun Tribal Dynamics, 2009: 13).

In retrospect, the period between 1929 and 1978 is remembered as a golden age in which state authority and local autonomy were carefully balanced (Theros & Kaldor, 2011: 10). The central government directly controlled the cities and the major roads but encouraged and supported local communities to look after their own security. This was done through local police-like forces known as the *Arbakai* (Barfield, 2010: 125-126). This finely attuned arrangement, which can be interpreted as a kind of bottom-up state-building, was destroyed by the following decades of civil war.

2.4. Civil Wars and Superpower Intervention

Already in 1967, the PDPA was divided into two rival factions namely, *Khalq* ('people') and *Parcham* ('banner'). The substantial leaders of *Khalq* faction were Nur Muhammad Taraki and Hafizullah Amin. This wing consisted of Pashtuns from a non-elite background, especially members of the Ghilzai confederation. *Khalq* had a hardline view of Marxism. In contrast, *Parcham* had the ideology of a gradual movement towards socialism. Their background tended to be Tajik or Durrani Pashtun. The *Parcham* people belonged to the middle and upper classes (Blank, 2011: 158; Soviet Occupation of Afghanistan, 2021).

In the beginning, the PDPA was united in the desire to overthrow the monarchy. But due to the ideological differences and rivalries, it split into the two hostile factions. At the same time, the resistance of the Islamist movement in Afghanistan to the new communist government brought about civil war. Taraki, the first Chairman of the governing Revolutionary Council, was killed. Hafizullah Amin assumed power for just 104 days and was also assassinated.

According to the Soviet-Afghan friendship treaty of December 1978, military support and advice could be given to Afghanistan upon request. In December 1979, the Soviet Union invoked the treaty. Soviet forces took control of Afghanistan and appointed Babrak Karmal, a former deputy Prime Minister and leader of the Parcham faction of the PDPA, as new head of the state. The United States had reservations about an apparent Soviet advancement towards the oil-rich Persian Gulf. The USA chalked out a plan and made an alliance with the Mujahideen to resist against the Soviet forces. The Mujahideen were trained by Pakistani intelligence. The United States delivered anti-aircraft missiles to the Mujahideen, which caused severe losses to the Soviet air force. In 1980, the US boycotted the Olympics in Moscow. Two years later, the United Nations General Assembly called for the withdrawal of the Soviet forces from Afghanistan.

In 1986 Karmal was replaced by Muhammad Najibullah due to his ineffectiveness. But Najibullah was also unable to defeat the Mujahideen. In April 1988, the United States and the Soviet Union signed the Geneva accords and the Soviet intervention ended. Pakistan and Afghanistan signed a treaty of non-interference in Afghanistan and determined a timeframe for the Soviet troops withdrawal from Afghanistan. The Soviet troops began to withdraw from Afghanistan in May 1988. In February 1989 they completely left Afghanistan. The Mujahideen continued fighting with Soviet-backed government of Najibullah. The ten years of civil war caused many Afghans to flee to its neighboring countries (Soviet Occupation in Afghanistan, 2021).

An ominous development under the Soviet occupation was the spread of militias. Originally set up as local self-defense units by the PDPA, they increasingly included ex-Mujahideen who had been bribed to change sides. The Najibullah regime became dependent upon these militias, which contained twice as many

fighters as the official army in 1990. The most prominent of these militia leaders was the Uzbek warlord Rashid Dostum. Once financial aid was no longer forthcoming due to the breakdown of the Soviet Union, Najibullah was no longer able to pay the militias, which consequently turned against him and joined the Mujahideen. In 1992, the ex-communist government was finally defeated (Alden, Thakur & Arnold, 2011: 128-130).

In some respects, the events of the 1980s and early 1990s were a more extensive replay of the events of 1929: Again, city-based would-be reformers of both Pashtun and Tajik background confronted rural conservatives, which also included Pashtuns and Tajiks. But once the progressive government was overthrown, a political realignment along ethnic lines and crosscutting ideological divisions took place. Except for the Uzbek leader Dostum, all faction leaders were Islamists. What divided them was ethnicity. Former members of the PDPA now joined those parties in which their respective ethnicity dominated. However, no ethnic groups was coherent but further divided between competing leaders. And just like 1929, the Pashtuns had temporarily lost control of the government: (Barfield, 2011: 58-60) The new President Rabbani (1992-1996) was a Tajik (Lamer & Foster, 2011: 4). More generally, the failure of the PDPA regime was also that of a particularly brutal attempt at top-down state-building.

The Peshawar Accord provided an agreement for a peaceful transitional power sharing and an interim government in Afghanistan. But since 1992, many forces prevailed in Afghanistan. These major forces were Hizb-i-Islami of Gulbuddin Hekmetyar, influenced by Pakistan; Hizb-i-Wahdat of Abdul Ali Mazari, supported by Iran; Saudi Arabia supported Ittehad-i-Islami of Abdul Rasul Savyaf; Uzbekistan supported Junbish-i-Milli of Abdul Rashid Dostum and Harkat-i-Islami of Husain Anwari and the Shura-i-Nazir, which was agreed as the regular Islamic

force under the ministry of defence of Ahamad Shah Masood in the Peshawar Accord. In 1993, the Taliban emerged and took over most of the country by 1998 (War in Afghanistan, 2021).

The core of the Taliban consisted of young men, frequently refugees, who had been educated at madrasas (religious schools) in Pakistan (Kaldor, 2012: 158). They owed their rise to power not only to their military successes but also to their skillful co-option of tribes (Jones, 2010: 124). Being predominantly Pashtun, the Taliban re-established the dominance of this ethnic group but also gained the hostility of the non-Pashtuns (Barfield, 2011: 60).

It has been argued that the Taliban conquest of Afghanistan was based upon a bottom-up strategy, i.e. temporary alliance of the Taliban with local warlords and tribal leaders (Jones, 2010: 124). However, this was hardly a genuine bottom-up strategy. A genuine bottom-up approach would empower the people rather than the warlords.

2.5. The Bonn Agreement

In September 11, 2001, the attacks on the World Trade Centre became the cause of another Afghan war. Then, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and Allied forces started their operation in the country. The United States and the United Kingdom launched the Operation Enduring Freedom on 7 October 2001. The aim was to dismantle the Taliban and the Al-Qaeda network. In December 2001, the United Nations established the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) (War in Afghanistan, 2021).

There was a need for an agreement on the provisional arrangements of Afghanistan pending the re-establishment of permanent government institutions. Such an agreement had to settle the basis for a series of subsequent agreements to establish the state of Afghanistan. Since 1979, there had been no government in Afghanistan made on the basis of national consensus. It was very important to have a transitional period before the establishment of a permanent government in the country. It was also very important for the national government to convene at least one Loya Jirga. But due to the bad law and order situation in the country urgent steps were required to be followed.

For this agreement, eminent Afghan leaders met in Bonn, Germany, in December 2001. The Afghan interim authority composed of 30 members led by a chairman was established. It was decided that the six months mandate of this authority would be followed by two years of transitional government. After that, elections would take place. One section of the Bonn agreement was about the establishment of the ISAF. Following United Nations resolution 1386, ISAF was established (Bonn Agreement Afghanistan, 2019).

The agreement set up a constitution for Afghanistan:

“Under the Bonn Agreement the Afghan Constitution Commission was established to draft a new constitution in consultation with the public. The Bonn Agreement called for a loya jirga to be convened within 18 months of the establishment of the Transitional Authority and for the use of the 1964 constitution as the basis for a new constitution. The constitution had been adopted by the loya Jirga on January 4, 2004.”(Bonn Agreement Afghanistan, 2021)

Likewise, the legal system was being dealt with:

“The Bonn Agreement calls for a judicial commission to rebuild the justice system in accordance with Islamic principles, international standards, the rule of law, and Afghan legal traditions. ... The Bonn Agreement called for the establishment of a Supreme Court of Afghanistan”.(Bonn Agreement Afghanistan, 2019).

In the Bonn conference Hamid Karzai was selected as the head of the interim administration of Afghanistan. In 2002, a Loya Jirga selected him the head of the transitional government of the country. In 2004 elections, he was elected as the President.

However, the Taliban took advantage of his corrupt Afghan government. The Haqanni network and Gulbuddin Hekmatyar continued guerrilla attacks. In May 2011, the United States forces killed Osama Bin Ladin. After this, an exit strategy was formulated for the NATO forces. (War in Afghanistan, 2021)

The Afghans were so much concerned about the peace in the country that they accepted the working of the flawed Afghan central government in 2001. After words they were not happy because of the bad law and order situation. Political legitimacy is a pre-requisite to solve the problem of Afghanistan. Otherwise, the Western efforts to stabilize Afghanistan cannot succeed (Barfield,2011:55).

The Bonn Agreement demonstrates how the United Nations planned to rebuild Afghanistan again after the Taliban fell down. It was admitted that there will be respect for human rights and that Afghanistan will be considered as a broad based multi-ethnic society. The Bonn conference was the guideline for the legitimate government of Afghanistan. The United Nation’s Assistance Mission in Afghanistan helped coordinate the international civilian assistance in Afghanistan. As the constitution was drafted in 2003, the draft protected religious freedom,

property rights, freedom of expression, and equal rights for women and individual liberty. Article 1 of the constitution declared Afghanistan to be an Islamic state. Islam as a state religion was declared in Article 2. According to Article 3, there must be no contradiction between the laws and the holy principles of Islam. And in Article 62 of the constitution, it was declared that the President and the two Vice-Presidents must be Muslims. The fact that modern laws and the traditional customs always had troubled co-existence in the country cannot be ignored. But this constitution-making was certainly an improvement over the Taliban's illegitimate government (Miller, 2011:54-55).

3. DOMESTIC ISSUES

3.1. Legitimate Deficits

According to opinion polls, in 2005 80% of the Afghans were still satisfied with the performance of the government. In 2008, the share had fallen to 49%. One possible explanation for this substantial drop in support is that there was initially high expectations which could not be fulfilled (Miller, 2011: 64). Be that as it may, the state apparatus in Afghanistan faces a number of problems, namely inefficient administration and armed forces, the comeback of the Taliban, and faulty elections. Before going into details, let us first have a look at the situation as a whole.

The terrorist groups are still operating in Afghanistan. The common masses could not develop trust in the law enforcement agencies. They still think that their security is in danger. The fear of the Taliban and the warlords has settled in their minds. This is the main reason that, when they wanted justice from the government, they become confused. They thought that the tussle between the Taliban and the law enforcement agencies of the government was not helpful at all, consequently they did not get an easy access to justice and that they were faced with more problematic situation. The government was unable to solve the problems of the masses while the militant groups attacked them because they wanted supremacy in the area.

Therefore, keeping in mind this situation of Afghanistan, trust building was an easy task after the U.S withdrawal. The immature Afghan National Security Forces faced a lot of difficulties because of the lack of trust by the people of Afghanistan in the government institutions and its law enforcement agencies. The main reason for the lack of trust, as it has been stated above, is the tussle between the terrorist groups and the warlords with the government's law enforcement agencies as well

as the internal strife between warlords and Taliban. The other reason was the huge corruption in the political system (Grare, 2014: 6).

As we know, Afghanistan has been listed as one of the most corrupt countries of the world. The Afghan government remained extremely corrupt. The country is also termed as a gangster state. The quality of governance in the country is poor. According to Transparency International, out of 180 countries of the world Afghanistan comes 179th. In this respect, it is better than only Somalia (Blackwill, 2011: 43).

The police of the country did not have a good reputation because it was also a part of the corrupt system. On the other hand, the attacks of terrorists on the law enforcement agencies had weakened their strength. Keeping in view all this, even if some of the U.S forces would had stayed in the country, it was not easy for them to train the local law enforcement agencies for handling this issue. Therefore, the residual forces as trainers of the local forces did not offer any kind of strong political solution.

These issues are all interlinked. When we discuss about the trust of the people of Afghanistan in their government's law enforcement agencies, they definitely have serious concerns about their government institutions. In the Bonn conference, the main concerns were shaping the future constitution of Afghanistan. The government had to pass through a transitional period, but when we talk about the reshaping the role of institutions of the government, this conference could not significantly define the prospects of those factors, which had to play a vital role in the political stability of Afghanistan.

In this context, we take the example of the institution building of the law enforcement agencies. As we know, these institutions were facing the problem of

corruption, lack of training, lack of resources and lack of confidence. The situation of the other state institutions was the same. If these issues would have been thought before, the problems might not be so much intense as of today. However, these weaknesses are a matter of great importance. The claims and hopes were high as we see that in various international summits. The gestures of the Afghan leadership were doubtful, but apparently they had claimed that they were hopeful to deal with this situation. NATO had also shown its confidence on the new government. But what were the real grounds of hopes? First invading a country and then leaving it into an insecure future while claiming hopes for the future stability of the region only makes a bad situation even more troublesome. Therefore, one cannot find any strong base for expecting the future stability of Afghanistan.

The unity among groups which have the same ideological beliefs is obvious. However, in the case of Afghanistan the world has witnessed that there has been clashes between groups even when they had the same ideological beliefs. To explain this factor we have to go into history. In the 1990s, Jamaat-i-Islami and Hezb-i-Islami, the two strongest militant groups, had the same ideological roots but they strongly opposed each other. On the other hand, the same ideological background helped the extremist organizations to come closer and to fight for the same agenda.

In this context, we have the example of Al-Qaeda. The same ideological beliefs with the Taliban helped it to operate from Afghanistan. The Taliban and the Al-Qaeda leaderships fought for the same cause and for the same ideology, and the world considered them extremists and fundamentalists. This factor also must be kept in mind in relation to the political stability of Afghanistan. Due to this confusing state of affairs, the U.S policy in the region is not decisive. On one hand, an ideology with the same beliefs is helping the militant groups to come closer. But

on the other hand, the ideology of believing in the same pattern does not provide any guarantee that these groups will not clash in the future (Grare, 2014: 6).

3.2. Administration

On the face of it, Afghanistan has gone quite a long way since the overthrow of the Taliban in 2001. Then, the Taliban government was able to collect only less than 1% of the country's GDP in revenue – as compared to 11% in South Asia and 26% worldwide (Miller, 2011: 53). Consequently, infrastructural services were extremely limited. Things changed with the coming of the Karzai government. Between 2001 and 2006, real GDP grew by an annual average of 15%, thereby bringing Afghanistan into the top league of high growth countries (Miller, 2011: 56). Likewise, if we may believe the official statistics, between 2001 and 2008, the share of paved roads among all roads increased from 13% to 33%. As for people with the access to the water, the corresponding rise was from 13% to 27% and for the access to the sanitation, from 12% to 45% (Miller, 2011: 57, 60).

Other statistics, however, put a question mark over this upbeat picture. According to a report by the NGO Water Aid of 2007, no less than 92% of the population lacks the access to both the clean water and the hygienic sanitation. This makes Afghanistan last among all countries measured (Campbell, 2011: 48). The discrepancy between these statistics obviously reflects different understandings of what should count as reasonably good for the clean water and the hygienic sanitation. It has also been argued that the economic growth went hand in hand with increasing income inequality (Campbell, 2011: 47).

The performance of Afghanistan's government was severely hampered by the lack of adequately trained and honest civil servants and legal staff (judges, prosecutors,

lawyers). This situation was more upsetting in view of the fact that the international community spent substantial amounts (about \$ 100 million per annum between 2001 and 2006 and over \$ 200 million P/A afterwards) in the aid for the governance and rule-of-law programmers. However, even this sum was below the needs of Afghanistan, and much of it went for preparing the Presidential and parliamentary elections (Miller, 2011: 62-64).

One of the reasons for the less than satisfactory performance of Afghanistan's post-2001 administration was that it was heavily permeated by the pre-Taliban warlords. Far from facing persecution of their previous behavior, they got positions as cabinet ministers, parliamentarians and provincial governors (Kaldor, 2012: 163; Miller, 2011: 58). According to Miller (2011: 58), this was unavoidable because leaving the warlords out in the cold would have created the risk of another round of violence. He argues that the very critics of this co-optation of the warlords also reject the only other possible alternative, i.e. strengthening the centre at the expense of local power holders.

In fact, both options mentioned by Miller are ultimately just different side of top-down state-building – by either co-opting or crushing local elites. However, Miller does not consider another alternative, i.e. genuine bottom-up state-building, which would empower Afghan civil society rather than either an over-centralized central government or repressive local power holders.

The co-optation of the warlords into the central government should not be misinterpreted as bottom-up strategy. On the contrary, the new Afghan constitution with its strong Presidential powers, downplaying of political parties and limits on regional autonomy, (Barfield, 2011: 62) had all the characteristics of a top-down approach. An unintended side-effect of this was the ethnicization of Afghan

politics. The post-Taliban regime was essentially a coalition of the non-Pashtun ethnic groups represented by the northern alliance and the anti-Taliban factions of the Pashtuns represented by Karzai (Alden, Thakur & Arnold, 2011: 131). Ministries and other positions were parceled out between different ethnic factions. The discouragement of the emergence of ideology-based political parties meant that parliamentary politics also took an ethnic turn, with a Pashtun bloc of deputies facing non-Pashtun one (Barfield, 2011: 61-62).

3.3. Armed Forces

Immediately after the fall of the Taliban in 2001, the new government had to rely upon the armed forces of the Northern Alliance. These militias, which remained under the effective control of their respective commanders, including the above-mentioned Rashid Dostum, were formally organized as Afghan Militia Forces (AMF) and put under the Ministry of Defense. This was only a temporary arrangement. In return for receiving governmental post for themselves and their mid-level commanders, the warlords accepted a DDR (disarmament, demobilization and reintegration) programmed. Running between 2003 and 2007, these disarmament efforts led to a substantial reduction of the militias (Alden, Thakur & Arnold, 2011: 131-135).

In their place, the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) was built up, consisting of army and police. In terms of pure numbers, their development had been impressive: By 2006, the international community had provided funds for the training of 36,000 soldiers and about the same number of policemen. These numbers were clearly inadequate to deal with the emerging insurgency (Miller, 2011: 58). Four years later, in 2010, the respective numbers of soldiers and

policemen had increased to 143,000 and 120, 000 (Rodriguez, 2011: 49). Again four years later, in 2014, the combined numbers of army and police had reached 340,000; by that time, they had taken over most of the combat operations while the U.S. and ISAF forces provided support (Tomsen, 2014: 48).

In terms of ethnic composition, recruitment to the ANSF seems to reflect the proportion of ethnic groups in the overall population of the country (Lamer & Foster, 2011: 7). However, very few recruits come from the Pashtun south, which is the centre of the insurrection. Also, Dari-speaking Tajik officers face problem in communicating with the local Pashtun population and are consequently dependent upon translators (Blackwill 2011: 43)..

In 2010, at the NATO summit in Lisbon, a timeframe was settled for the exit of the international forces and the strong statements were given about the strength and power of the military and the police force of Afghanistan. However, the actual situation was different. There was a lot of ambiguity about the real strength of ANSF. Looking at the performance of the ANSF, one has to conclude that in its performance, the Afghans were unable to get their target. They suffered heavy casualties and the law and order situation of the country remained disturbed. According to the estimates, the troops were decreased from 352,000 to 230,500. The deficiencies of the troops were a very serious aspect for the law and order situation of the country. Many recruits were quitting from the police and the military forces and the recruitment rate for the new trainees was also less than its target. Furthermore, there was a dire need for a strong institutional framework and the ability to train the new recruits for the better performance of the security forces of Afghanistan.

The ability of Afghan forces was not up to the standard. It had been affected by poor intelligence services and it did not have significant air and fire support. The police force was also involved in corruption. When the Western forces left the country, the situation became very dangerous because ANSF was not be able to get support directly from the Western advanced technology and its air intelligence. If we discuss about the competence of the Afghan National Force, it was even incapable of moving troops from one place to another. The main reason behind this was that the country could not develop and train its forces in time.

According to the Afghan Analysis Network, the capabilities of the Afghan forces had not been developed in time. There was already the fear that after the withdrawal of the foreign forces there would be a big gap of competence level that the Afghan National Forces would not be able to fill. The army itself was not following the ethical ways. It remained involved in stealing and corruption. The uniform of the Afghan army was not even up to the standard. The competence level and the operational capabilities of the Afghan army had not been exactly publically announced. There is was also a danger that disarmed former members of the forces would join the insurgent groups prevailing in the country.

To counter terrorism, it was very important to judge that how the remaining foreign forces would train the ANSF and how the latter had to deal with their trainers. This was a question of grave importance. Was fighting the war alone, without any support of their counterpart trainers, a realistic option for them? There was a fear that a big part of the Afghan territory would be out of the control of the Afghan government (Grare, 2014: 3). According to the U.S. Marine Corps General James Conway, the Afghan National Army (ANA) was unable to hold control in Afghanistan's Helmand and Kandahar province (Blackwill, 2011:43).Likewise; the police of the country did not have good reputation because it was also the part of

the corrupt system. As we have seen, the Afghan police was greatly increased in numbers but recruitment focused upon quantity rather than quality (Rodriquez, 2011:49).

Already, by 2007, it was realized that the Afghan forces were unable to counter the Taliban insurgency. The U.S military and also the Afghan government started to undertake various efforts into a new approach. The establishment of local community militias to be utilized against the Taliban was encouraged. These militias were supposed to be different from the previous ones, which included those of Hezb-i-Islami or of warlords and strongmen such as Ismael Khan and Abdul Rashid Dostum. The U.S took interest in the localized community militia and it was thought that they could be of good use to counter the Taliban insurgency as it was taking form in the rural areas. However, critics pointed out that whatever short-term goal these militias would attain, there was a danger that they could undermine the long-term prospects for stability (Alden,Thakur & Arnold, 2011: 136-145). The fate of the Najibullah regime, which sponsored militias which ultimately turned against it, could stand as a warning sign.

One leading supporter of the local militia approach was David Petraeus, who was appointed commander of the US forces in Afghanistan in 2010. During his previous tenure in Iraq, Petraeus had overseen the so-called Anbar Awakening, in which Sunni tribal leaders quitted the insurgency. Backed up by American resources, these ex-insurgents had set up militias that successfully fought their former Al-Qaeda allies. Petraeus hoped that the same trick could be done in Afghanistan (Kaplan, 2013: 84-86, 88-89).

However, several factors worked against a repetition of the - as we know now, short-term successful Iraqi model in Afghanistan: In the first place, the insurgency

in Iraq was predominantly supported by an ethnic minority, the Sunnis. In contrast, the Afghani insurgency is mainly based upon the largest ethnic group, the Pashtuns. Furthermore, the Anbar Awakening could take place because the local insurgents turned against the high-handed actions of Al-Qaeda; in the Afghanistan insurgency, Al-Qaeda is a minor factor. Finally, Iraqi tribal leaders exert a more powerful influence over the tribesmen than their Afghan counterparts (Blackwill, 2011: 50).

In belatedly discovering their enthusiasm for local militias, the American occupants of Afghanistan and the Karzai government followed the footsteps of their Soviet and PDPA predecessors. One might interpret the reliance on these militias as a kind of bottom-up approach to state-building. However, this would be a skewed version of the bottom-up approach, which should not focus on creating another stratum of local warlords but on justice, equality and the empowerment of civil society.

3.4. The Insurgency

During the first four years after the overthrow of the Taliban, the latter had largely disappeared from the stage and the country remained reasonably peaceful (Miller, 2011: 59). Under these circumstances, the new government and its American backers felt confident enough to reject the overtures of some Taliban groups who offered to lay down their arms for good in return for being included into the political process (Alden, Thakur & Arnold, 2011: 148-149; Kaldor, 2012: 168). But from 2005 onwards, the Taliban and their allies staged a violent comeback and managed to destabilize large parts of the country (Miller, 2011: 59). Using the method of asymmetrical warfare, they avoided large-scale battles with the coalition

forces. Instead, they relied upon guerilla warfare, intimidation of opponents among the local population and suicide attacks, thereby causing high numbers of civilian casualties (Kaldor, 2012: 170-172).

There are many factors that account for the insurgency in Afghanistan. First, during the early years after 2001, both the Afghan government and the American and ISAF forces were rather small in numbers and did not have overall presence in the country. This created a security vacuum, which enabled the insurgency to make headway from 2006 onwards. Second, after having enjoyed wide-spread initial acceptance, the Karzai government managed to alienate the large sectors of the Afghan population, especially in the Pashtun south. Karzai appointees and their fellow tribesmen monopolized government position and the economic opportunities that went with them. As a result, especially the Pashtuns got divided into pro- and anti-Karzai factions. Those tribes excluded from access to the government patronage got dissatisfied and many of them veered towards the insurgency.

But the most important factors include the anti-western feelings. There was resentment about the way how Karzai had been imposed as Head of State by the Bonn conference. This resentment increased once the coalition forces had to increase their presence all over the country after 2006. Those families who became victims of the war against terror and lost their loved ones turned against the western policies. Culturally insensitive house searches, arrests of the elders of the families, air strikes and high rate of civilian casualties are examples in this context (Ruttig 2009:6-9).

The insurgent groups in Afghanistan are mainly categorized into seven different segments. These are the Islamic movement of the Taliban, the network of the

Haqqani and Mansur families in the South-East, the Tora Bora Jihad Front led by Anwar-ul-Haq Mujahideen in Nangrahar in the Eastern region, Hezb-i-Islami of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar (HIG), small Salafi group in the Kunar and Nuristan provinces (Eastern region) and a number of not inter-related local ex-Mujahideen groups, whose historical leaders had been ousted from the power and who have started again the use of arms. When we discuss about the Mansur and Haqqani network in the South East and the Tora Bora Jihad front, they are the remnants of former mujahedin organizations historically preceding the Taliban movement. The Mansur structure stands in the tradition of Khuddam-ul-Furqan and afterward it became the Islamic Revolution Movement (Harakat-e-Enqelab-e Eslami). The Haqqani network and the Tora Bora Jihad Front are the descendants of the local branches of Hezb (Khales). The Haqqani and Mansur networks as well as the Tora Bora Jihad Front are affiliated to the Taliban and are sometimes treated as section of them; the other groups operate independently.

The Taliban and HIG are following a country-wide agenda. The Kandahari Taliban possesses the strongest fighting force in the local area as well as in the insurgency country-wide. They are deep rooted in the area and, with the help of local support; they have established the local guerilla cells. The Kandahari Taliban like the other insurgent groups was controlling partially or fully many districts. In 2007, they were the only force which openly challenged the Western forces and made attempts to take over the city of Kandahar. All seven structures of insurgent segments integrate and cooperate at different levels. The Haqqani network has its links with long-established Arab financial resources. Ethnically, it is very diverse. It is composed of Pashtun, Uzbek, and Chechen and Arab fighters. The HIG and the Taliban have their understanding at the local level. It becomes difficult to find out whether the operations have been carried out by the Taliban or the HIG. The

rivalry among the groups and competition for the territorial control and resources are also important factors of the insurgency (Ruttig, 2009: 10-12).

The typical recruits for the insurgency are over-proportionally poorer members of Pashtun tribes, many of them had stayed at madrasas (religious schools) in Pakistan (Kaldor, 2012: 164, 165-166). The Taliban movement is organized in a concentric way: The core is the leaders, together with their fellow tribesmen. The second layer is the former Madrasa students as well as foreign fighters. The outer layer consists of those tribes which support the Taliban (Ruttig, 2009: 14).

As we know, Afghanistan is a tribal and multi-ethnic society. The Taliban are the strongest force and the core of the insurgency. Ideologically the Taliban deny tribal and ethnic distinctions. According to Mullah Muhammad Omar in 2008: *"Our religion enjoins on us to avoid from indulging in any kind of activity involving prejudices based on ethnicity. The only bond, which binds us, is the bond of Islam."* (Ruttig, 2009: 12). In the time of the Emirate (the Taliban period in power), many Taliban leaders refused to talk about their tribal background. However, most of the Taliban cannot deny their tribal roots. Every Pashtun knows about his or her tribe and sub-tribe or clan. This affiliation cannot be avoided even by displacement and urbanization. Even the refugee camps and the neighboring surroundings are organized according to the structure of the Afghan tribes and to their ethnic affiliations.

We can see this aspect in the Taliban movement as well. The tribal affiliations cannot be overlooked in the recruitment policy and in their succession patterns. It clearly shows that the Taliban are deeply connected with their Pashtun tribal bonds. When their commanders are killed, they are mostly replaced by their brothers or close relatives. For example, when Mullah Dadullah was killed in May

2007, his younger brother, Mullah Mansur, succeeded him and he also added Dadullah to his name.

As the majority of the Taliban are Pashtun, the patterns of their ethnic affiliations that emerged during the civil wars between the late 1970s and 2001 can be seen in this context. That Taliban movement is predominantly a Pashtun movement does not mean that this movement is representing all the Pashtuns. They are only its one section, although the largest, of Afghanistan's many ethnic groups. To term the Taliban simply the Pashtun movement would overlook the segmental character of Pashtun society, its hierarchies and its political diversification. A significant number of Pashtuns support non-Taliban groups. Examples can be drawn from their support for Mujahideen groups like HIG or Herakat, the Nationalist Afghan Millet Party and even with their participation in successor organizations of the leftist PDPA.

Significant numbers of non-Pashtun groups can also be found among the Taliban. For example, in the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) period, the Tajik, the Uzbek and the Badakshan elements were also active and many of them sided with the Taliban. The Tajiks of Bamian and the Shia Hazara organization named Hezb-e-Wahdat led by Ustad Muhammad Akbari also allied with Taliban in the Emirate era. In the recent times, in Daykundi the local Shia commanders have re-established links with Taliban. When we discuss about the Ghizali Pashtuns, they look absent in many areas of Afghanistan. They feel prosecuted by the Durrani. The Durrani are considered to be the upholders of the Pashtun tribal aristocracy. They headed the Afghan kingdom during 1747 and 1973. Definitely there are a lot of Ghilazis and other non-Durrani Pashtuns present in the leadership of the Taliban. But there are also many Durrani present in the setup. One example is the brother-in-law of Mullah Omar, who is also his deputy and confidant. He is called Mulla Beradar, a

Popalzai(Durrani) Pashtun. His real name is Abdul Ghani. We can also see that in some parts of the southern provinces the Taliban are more successful in the tribal inclusiveness than the Kabul government and its local leaders.

The social factors contribute a lot to strengthen the Taliban but these factors did not get due attention. One aspect must be taken into account, i.e. that many segments of Pashtuns say that they are unaware about the families of Taliban. They are considered to be from the lower class of the society (Ruttig, 2009: 12-13). According to an analyst in 1996:

”The majority of Taliban comes from amongst the most disadvantaged in the Pashtun society [...] and not enjoy the prestige and the power that derives from the possession of land. [...] The very austere way of life in the madrassas radicalised the Taliban and mobilized them to seek their revenge. In this sense, the movement subscribed to a continuation of the social restructuring that occurred in Afghanistan during the war. It is a reaction of the disadvantaged social strata and the young against the khans and the territorial notables, a reaction of the periphery against the centre and of the rural areas against the cities which are considered as places of vice in which the traditional Pashtun values are in danger”.(Ruttig, 2012: 13).

In this context, it is very interesting to know that in Swat (a city of neighbouring Pakistan) in the Matta Tehsil, the Pakistani Taliban organized the landless against the landlords. These aspects must be considered very seriously while tackling the insurgency in the area. The tribal structure and specially the largest Pashtun tribal alignments must not be wrongly interpreted as something homogenous and static (Ruttig, 2009: 13-14).

The income of the Taliban consists of their types of sources. The first is the levying of 'taxes' in those areas under Taliban control or influence. In order to legitimize them, these contributions are given religious terms like 'ushr' or 'zakat' by the Taliban. The second source is the drug business, i.e. the cultivation of poppies and their refinement into opium, supplemented by ransom money for kidnapping as well as money-laundering activities going through the United Arab Emirates, where there is a large Pashtun diaspora. A third source are donations coming from private sympathizers in Pakistan and the Persian Gulf, in some case raised by so-called 'charities' (Kaldor, 2012: 174; Ruttig, 2009: 20-21).

The Taliban had been re-enforced under the leadership of Mulla Muhammad Omar. He was given the title Amir-ul-Mumineen, which means the leader of the faithful. This concept provided them cohesion and common identity and their political ideology became very simple: from throwing out the foreigners to re-establishing the Islamic emirate. As has been mentioned, the antipathy against western policies and culturally insensitive house arrests are important causes of the insurgency. However, it should also be taken into account that not every Afghan who gets angry at the Western policies joins the Taliban. The Hezb-e-Islami led by Gulbuddin Hekmetyar is also following strict religious practices. The common ideology of other various groups is borrowed from the followers of different kinds of political Islam (Ruting, 2009: 1-2).

There are protests in the defense of Islam, which try to show the world that a certain kind of propaganda that aims to demoralize Muslims must be stopped. The depiction of all Muslims as extremist, fundamentalist and unfriendly is wrong. This propaganda creates a lot of bitterness and antipathy to the West among otherwise bona fide Muslims. Therefore, it is also among the important causes for the disturbance of the law and order situation in the area. So, it can be said that factors

involved in the insurgency are far more diverse than they appear at the first look. The insurgency cannot be considered entirely in terms of terrorism in the country. The Taliban themselves are not simply a terrorist organization. Interestingly, the U.S., the U.K., the E.U. and the U.N. have not declared them as the terrorist organization (Rutting, 2009:9). The reason is that there is not an agreed upon and legally binding definition of terrorism. The frequent use and misuse of the term terrorism is ultimately based upon differences of opinion about what type of violence can be considered legitimate, and under what circumstances.

The use of force against force cannot be a feasible solution to end the insurgency in the country. A policy of reconciliation can be a useful strategy to counter the insurgency. A consistent strategy towards talks with the insurgent groups can be helpful in this context. The development of a mechanism that can sustainably absorb and integrate individuals can be very helpful to bring peace to Afghanistan. There must be the establishment of a forum and common positions for talks for the United Nations, the Western powers, the Afghan government and the insurgent group's leadership to talk on common interests and to remove differences. The international community can play a vital role to integrate with the local Afghans to talk about their miseries that created agony among them and made them resort to the use of force. The encouragement of the unarmed democratic process that can consult and inform political and social groups through democratic institutions of the country is also very useful in this context. Institution-building must be in accordance with the wishes of the common people of Afghanistan (Rutting, 2009:34).

The criminal justice system will also be very helpful for the people of Afghanistan in this way. This whole idea is linked with the bottom-up approach to the state building; it can be very helpful to counter terrorism in the country. People will gain

trust and interest in their government institutions and they will not move to the mobile courts of the Taliban to get their disputes decided. When the people will get justice from their state institutions, the insurgency will decrease and political stability will come to the country.

3.5. The Presidential Elections 2014 and 2019

The 2014 and 2019 elections trouble was another problem faced by Afghanistan. It clearly shows that in Afghanistan it is not easy for democratic structures to exist. The reason behind this is that there were allegations of rigging the elections. The videos prove how powerful political entities were involved in vote-rigging. In 2014 election time first round of the elections led to an undecided outcome and could not provide any solution. After the second round of the elections, a shared government was been established. This outcome was again creating doubts about the domain of authority between the President and the chief executive, which can mean trouble for the future decision-making process. The elections demonstrated again the political quagmire in the country. In the elections of 2019, the same mess of power was created.

During the elections time, Afghanistan was fighting on many fronts and the most important front was obviously the selection of a new President. There were many claims of frauds during the elections. The attacks of the Taliban were increasing and there was a dire need for an effective leadership. As we know, in Afghanistan two rounds of elections took place. Abdullah Abdullah, who also served as the foreign minister of the country and had been a firm resister and fighter against the Soviet invasion, During the first round of elections, he gained 45 percent of the votes and achieved a margin of 13 percentage of points over the ex-finance

minister, Ashraf Ghani. In the first round of elections, Ashraf Ghani achieved 31.6 percent of the total votes. The calculation of ballots was a very time-consuming procedure and, therefore, the danger of corruption and frauds materialized.

In the second round of the elections, Ashraf Ghani led with 56.44 percent of total votes. This was again a big development in the elections. The team of Ashraf Ghani showed videos to prove their claim of the involvement of Abdullah and his team in frauds during the 2014 elections. It has been evidenced that there had been the involvement of both of the parties during the 2014 elections. The Chief election commissioner Ahmad Yousuf Nouristani accepted this infringement and corruption during the election time.

The situation led to investigate the claims of fraud. Muhammad Mohaqed (the running mate of Abdullah) declared that he could not accept results before the recounting of the votes by discarding the fake votes. The Abdullah party claimed that among 2 million ballots there were approximately one third ballots which were fake.

The United Nations mediated the negotiations between the parties. The election review board with the involvement and help of the international community was to review the polls and it was decided that out of 23000 polling stations, 7000 would be reviewed. The demonstrations terminated after the promise of review of the elections. Abdullah has Pashtun and Tajik backgrounds. In the North, most of his supporters are the Tajik communities. Ashraf Ghani has a Pashtun background. He is very strong in the northern and Southern regions.

There is another noticeable situation here. The constitution barred Hamid Karzai from becoming President for a third term and Ashraf Ghani came out as his successor. For the international observers and for Afghans themselves, the result of

the elections was very important. There was a dire need for a strong president so that Karzai could leave his office. Karzai was very keen to maintain his influence. In the beginning, the results were below his expectations, which disappointed him. He neglected the support of the U.S. and its allies provided to Karzai during his first term as President. He was certain this time that the U.S. was no more in his support. Therefore, he focused on the in transparency of the elections. Amid Karzai was also annoyed of the U.S. because their involvement in negotiations with the Taliban without taking him into confidence. Karzai also did not sign the agreement according to which the U.S forces could prolong their stay in Afghanistan for the next two years to train the Afghan national forces and to counter terrorism. The most important factor after the elections was how the newly elected leadership deals with signing the new agreements.

These agreements were very important because the Taliban again increased their hostile activities in the country and these elections were based on the first democratic peaceful transition in the history of Afghanistan. The doubts about the fairness in the election process could harm badly the already weak political situation in the country. There was also the fear of civil war in the country. It is very important for Afghanistan whether their President Ashraf Ghani and the Chief executive Abdullah Abdullah show their statesmanship or not and whether they work for the betterment of their country (Afghanistan's Election Quagmire, 2014).

There seemed to be many hopes on Ashraf Ghani with his Co-Partner Abdullah. Ashraf Ghani impressed the observers by writing a book on failed states. But there must be the practical approach to be followed. The whole world knows that during the election process Afghanistan had been gone through a very bad situation. The videos of rigging in the elections have been made public and there is no certainty that the two power-sharing leaders will continue cooperation in the

future. The initial sessions of the combined meetings were delayed because of their misunderstandings. Now, concerning the future of the success of the government of the country, the backgrounds and the interests of the major political players have to be considered. Ex-President Hamid Karzai was forbidden a third term Presidentship. This time, he played the role of a Kingmaker to have the influence in the government. If all the politicians just want power and influence in the government, how can the political scene of the country change? If there is no sincerity in them, how will political stability come to the country and how will true democracy prevail? If everybody wants power and influence, then definitely, only the powerful and influential people will rule the country and the weak and the poor people will suffer. These aspects are very vital to understand and to formulate the future policy-making of the country (Grare, 2014).

3.6. Crime and Opium Cultivation

As we see, that there was many challenges for the government. It was not an easy task to run the state harmoniously. The main reason behind this was the organized criminal activities in the country. As we have seen earlier on, corruption is manifold in the country, which shows the lack of sincerity of the government officials. Drug trafficking and the involvement of the international mafia in the country are serious problems. The attachments of the corrupt officials with the criminal groups and the personal strifes to let down one's respective opponents are playing a role in the organized criminal activities.

Afghanistan is on the list of the poorest countries of the world. Those who are rich in the country are trying to become richer and those who are poor are becoming poorer. The rich people try to influence the political leadership of the country. The

links between the rich people and the influential leadership develop due to their economic gains; these links become the source of the organized criminal activities in the country. The warlords and the insurgent organizations prevailing in the country can be used for the organized crimes in the country.

Therefore, we see a country where we find strife among various groups, a country where we find the presence of warlords, a country where we find the biggest drug dealers of the world, a country where we find huge corruption and a country where we find insincere leadership so, definitely, organized crimes can be common in such a country. As a result, the political instability is obvious. Therefore, political stability is not possible if these matters have not been considered seriously (Grare, 2014).

Drug trading was crushed during the last years of Taliban in power. But it dramatically increased in 2001 and 2002 approximately ten times more than before. It increased from 20,000 acres to 183,000 acres (Miller, 2011: 53). The increase in the opium cultivation and its trading created a new class of elites and criminals. They are neither loyal to Kabul government nor with the international forces. The drug trade increased the corruption in the country. According to the figures of 2007 and 2008, the Poppy cultivation increased from 408,000 to 477,000 acres and Afghanistan produced 82% of poppies and 93% of heroin in the world. The drug sector has illegal assets worth \$4 billion. That is approximately half of the total GDP of the country. Afghanistan was going to become a corrupt drug producing state due to the lack of good governance and weak institutions in the country (Miller, 2011: 63)

Since, the Allied forces invasion in Afghanistan opium cultivation had been increased. If the forces tried to stop opium cultivation, they had the fear of losing

public support. Afghanistan has become the biggest opium producer of the world. Locals say that if they do not cultivate it, they would not be able to earn their livelihood. Drugs are being exported to the world and the international mafia is involved in its smuggling.

The Opium cultivation in Afghanistan has hits a new world records. The biggest challenge for the United Nations is to stop this drug trade that is helping the Taliban uprising. The increase in the cultivation of opium in Afghanistan is 70% per year, or 224,000 hectares, and the production in the year 2014 can reach 6,400 tones. The report s by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime says that the provinces in the Southern part of Afghanistan had been extremely affected due to the bad law and order situation in the country and this added 27% increase in the yields. In the Helmand province the British forces tried to eliminate the opium cultivation but still this part of the country is the biggest producer of opium. These reports also confirms that the efforts of the international community to reduce the opium cultivation remained\ futile.

There was a significant increase in the opium cultivation when Taliban came into power in 1996. In 2001, when Mullah Omar, the leader of the Taliban, declared it un Islamic, its cultivation decreased. But since 2001, after the fall of Taliban from power, the cultivation of opium has been immensely increased. The money coming from the illegal trade of opium is helpful for Taliban activities and operations and it is the big cause of the corruption of the Afghanistan government. The efforts to counter narcotics also could not work.

According to the statement of Jean-Luc Lemahieu, the director for policy analysis and public affairs at the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crimes, there was still hope under the recent government of Afghanistan. He further explained that the

economy of Afghanistan has to be free from the advantages of illegal ways of generating income and this is a big task for the present government. The political strife badly affected the economy of the country. The political instability and the unfair means of the economic activities are the main problems of Afghanistan. According to the recent report of the U.S. watchdog, the opium economy of Afghanistan employed 41,000 Afghans. The share of the poppy industry is 40% in the gross domestic product (GDP) of the country. President Ashraf Ghani has talked about a complete plan to deal with drugs in the country, while Lemahieu has talked about the punishment to the drug dealers and the cultivation of the other crops instead of opium.

President Ashraf Ghani, who is also the co-author of the book *How to Fix Failed States*, talked about the job opportunities for the Afghan people. The cultivation of cotton instead of opium can also be helpful and the West can help in this regard by providing easy tariff conditions for the textile industry of Afghanistan. These efforts can be useful to control the opium cultivation in the country. According to the viewpoint of the farmers, opium is more money-making than other crops. The failure of opium reduction campaigns have motivated some of the experts like the U.K. ambassador to Afghanistan Sir William Paety to approve legalization of narcotics (Jeong, 2014). *"If we cannot deal effectively with supply, then the only alternative would seem to be to try to limit the demand for illicit drugs by making a supply of them available from a legally regulated market,"* he said last year (Jeong, 2014).

Since the fall of Taliban \$7.6 billion, has been spent to counter narcotics. According to the U.S watchdog, the main reason for positioning the British forces in Afghanistan was to stop illegal drug selling, but still Afghanistan is adding 90% to the illegal drug trafficking of the world (Jeong, 2014).

4. FOREIGN ACTORS

4.1. Pakistan and India

When we discuss about regional politics and its dimensions, they also play a key role in Afghanistan. Historically, the geography and the demographics of Afghanistan have made this country open to influence from outside. Foreign powers played their role in the country for a long time. In respect to Pakistan, it must be kept in mind that it is the most important player in the region. Pakistan wants better relations with Afghanistan. India is also tried to hold its grip in the country. It is very important for Pakistan to develop good relations with Afghanistan to have an eye on India, but the biggest concern of Pakistan is the remote control of the Pakistani Taliban by the Indian intelligence or Afghans. Afghanistan knows that the War on Terror started on the Afghan soil.

Afghanistan and India are also aware of the situation of Pakistan and of the problem of the Pakistani government with the Tehrik-i-Taliban of Pakistan. It can be a useful edge for either India or Pakistan to start their proxy wars in Afghanistan. A power-sharing proposal envisages a de facto division of Afghanistan, in which the Southern and Eastern areas will go to the Taliban and the Western and Northern areas would be under the long- established warlords. This formula can cause again an increase of foreign influence. Iran would try to increase its influence in the Western areas whereas Uzbekistan and Tajikistan would likely be to create their influences over the areas near to their borders. These possibilities can be realized with or without the cooperation of the Taliban. Therefore, this scenario is very important to think over. Its possibilities may or

may not be able to secure the peace in the region. The situation can be very difficult for its neighboring country Pakistan.

The best case scenario of the future of Afghanistan is not clear. As for the regional players in the country, like Pakistan, the situation of Pakistan cannot give Afghanistan a free hand. Pakistan has played an important role of the frontline state in the War on Terror. The political instability and bad law and order situation in Afghanistan have badly disturbed the peace of its neighbor country. The merciless and brutal attacks have made the whole nation of Pakistan to think about their peace connected with Afghanistan. Since, the beginning of the War on Terror in 2001, Pakistan has sacrificed a lot. Taliban attacked the major cities of Pakistan like Lahore, Karachi and Islamabad. The city of Peshawar, which is located in the Khyber Pakhtoon Khwa province and which is near to the border of Afghanistan became victim of many terrorist attacks.

So, in this context Pakistan is very keen to draw out its future policies to help secure the peace of its people and, definitely, this must be based on a mutual understanding of counter terrorism. The apprehensions of those who say that Pakistan does not want peace in Afghanistan do not hold water because the peace of Afghanistan is linked with the peace of Pakistan. No country wants its people to be killed ruthlessly like it is happening in Pakistan.

If there is no guarantee to stop the slow erosion of the future law and order situation in Afghanistan, then there is another danger of proxy wars between Pakistan and India on the Afghan soil. India is very keen to develop strong relations with Afghanistan; up to an extent it has been successful in establishing its influence in the area. India and Afghanistan were trying to come closer. Their media was also playing an active role in this context. They were trying to utilize

the differences of the Pakistani Taliban with the Pakistani establishment. As we know, Pakistan supported the Allied forces in the War on Terror and Pakistan became a frontline state in the war. Therefore, the situation of Pakistan became very critical.

If India and Pakistan fight their proxy wars on Afghan soil, the political stability of Afghanistan will be further damaged and the country would be drawn out into another war. This would also have a drastic impact on both India and Pakistan because both are atomic powers. In this case the Central Asian states would also start exerting influence in the country, Iran would try to do likewise, and as a result these all possible impacts would cause serious consequences for Afghanistan (Grare, 2014).

It is widely alleged that Pakistan played a double game, on the one hand, officially supported the USA and the War on Terror and, on the other hand, provided covert support for the Taliban and other insurgent groups. In this way, Pakistan is said to aim to influence Afghanistan in order to gain 'strategic depth' in a potential conflict with India and at the same time to neutralize Afghan claims upon those Pakistani territories inhabited by Pashtuns and Baluchis (Ruttig, 2009: 9; Tomson, 2014: 50-52).

Leaving aside the fact that no definite proof had been offered for this alleged Pakistani involvement, it may be added that the tendency of many American and European analysts to blame Pakistan for the Afghan quagmire has the effect of drawing away attention of the previous role of the superpowers in wrecking Afghanistan. It was the Soviet Union and their PDPA allies which destroyed the social fabric in rural Afghanistan, thereby providing a power vacuum filled by the warlords. And it was US-American help which gladly utilized Pakistan as

transmission belt to channel support to Islamist Mujahedin and thereby provided the seed out of which the Taliban grew later on. In any case, today Pakistan is not a benefactor of the Afghan quagmire; on the contrary, Afghanistan's instability threatens to spread over to Pakistan. The new President, Ashraf Ghani, had revised the pro-Indian policy of his predecessor and taken steps to improve the relations between Afghanistan and India. While it was too early to analyze what the outcome of this potential realignment could be (Hope Springs, 2015).

4.2. The USA and the ISAF

Like Iraq, Afghanistan became a kind of laboratory in which the latest, cutting-edge war technologies were being exercised. Modern wars are different from traditional or conventional wars. There are many stakeholders in modern wars who fight for their interests. As we see in Afghanistan, the situation is not easy to understand. There was multiple forces present in the country. After the U.S. invasion of the country, not only U.S. forces but also those of Britain and other NATO countries took part in fighting against the common enemy. There are also evidences that the secret services of different countries, including the regional countries, are operating in Afghanistan to serve their interests.

The concept of long-distance wars has recently been developed, In the last years of the 20th century, the Americans have used this concept to avoid the American casualties. The initiation of this concept can be traced back to the Cold War period. The military capabilities of the great powers reflected the character of the potential wars. During the Cold War period, both the Soviets and the Americans tried to build up their military capabilities. They tried to compete with each other in technology and through their intelligence services. The period of World War II

was also a reminder for the world that the Americans tried to defend them self through superior technology. In short, we can say that the development of information technology as well as war technology have also become tools for the modern era wars (Kaldor,2012: 152-153).

Originally, the USA and their allies had what is called a 'light footprint' in Afghanistan. Until 2005, US forces numbers about 10,000. They were joined by another 10,000 soldiers under the umbrella of the International Security Assistance Forces (ISAF). The ISAF consisted of some more US troops but mainly of forces belonging to NATO countries and other US allies (Alden, Thakur & Arnold, 2011: 135). The mandate of the ISAF was restricted to Kabul but, once the insurgency took of, extended to the rest of the country Miller 2011: 59-60). The insurgency also led to an increase of the U.S. forces, which numbered about 40,000 by early 2009 (Tomsen, 2014: 50).

Once the President Obama took over the Presidency, he decided for a 'surge', i.e. massive increase of US troops in Afghanistan. However, the U.S. military was only given a short window of opportunity to pursue full-scale counterinsurgency measures. From mid-2011 onwards, the process of withdrawal was to begin (Kaplan, 2013: 86-87). By 2011, the number of US forces had reached 100,000 (Blackwill, 2011: 46; Tomsen, 2014: 50). Overall, the ISAF had increased to 150,000 troops. 30,000 more troops than the Soviet Union had deployed in the 1980 but it failed to stabilize the country.(Blackwill, 2011:42).

At 2 May 2012, Afghanistan and the United States signed an agreement, which was about the future role to be played by the USA in Afghanistan. It dealt with the conditions of social and economic development of the country, the building of the institutions and the conditions for the limited U.S. troops after 2014 in the area. It

was easy to understand that, if the international forces stayed in the country as a training force, this arrangement could be a cover for a dignified exit of the U.S. forces from the country. The exit of the U.S. troops without a significant solution of the problems in the country is the main reason of fears for the future of the country. This exit without a solution for Afghanistan has also damaged the credibility of the USA. The allies of the USA would not be happy with never-ending political instability in the country and its increasing tendencies of attracting international terrorism. As we know, once the USA started the War on Terror the NATO forces played an active role in the defeat of the Taliban. New civil wars in Afghanistan would again create a question mark on the credibility of the internationally strong institutions like NATO.

As for the international aid programs for Afghanistan, it seems that there is no definite assurance of continuous financial support by many European countries. They are already cutting down their budget for the aid programs of Afghanistan. The USA has been pressurized by its own public and the European states have also been pressurized due to their heavy involvement in the country. The future of Afghanistan will definitely affect the credibility of the West in a positive or negative way (Grare, 2014).

NATO leaders hoped at the summit in Warsaw after more than 13 years war to initiate the first democratic transfer of power. They confirmed the assurance of military and financial support even after the exit of the foreign military forces, The tension between their combat forces and the Afghan national forces in the country as well as the leadership vacuum had already undermined NATO's mission of political stability and progress in Afghanistan. The officials of NATO and the U.S. had acknowledged the complications of the political instability but also asserted that their mission must not be detracted. The U.S. showed its willingness to

cooperate on the condition that, if Afghans also work seriously with them, NATO would assure to remain committed even after the end of the mission of the ISAF forces. Training and support provided to the Afghan people would also encourage them. The Secretary-General of NATO, Anders Fogh Rasmussen, claimed that safe havens for terrorists have been banned and 350,000 Afghan national forces and police had been assembled. But it was good for nothing after Taliban take over again in August, 2021.

The Presidential elections remained very important for the basis of the future support for Afghanistan. There was a threat of the civil war due to the massive accusations of frauds in the country. Three important points remain very important to analyze the future prospects of Afghanistan. The first point is the presence of the foreign troops in the future; the second one is the aid dependency of Afghan government; the third important point is the budgeting of the salaries of the military and the police and their responsibility to counter terrorism and the Taliban.

Karzai had refused the agreement which was based on bilateral security. According to that agreement, approximately 10,000 American troops were to remain in Afghanistan for the next year, particularly as trainers and advisors. Both Presidential candidates had assured to sign the deal and the NATO officials welcomed the newly elected President at the summit. Maurits Jochem, the senior representative of NATO to Afghanistan, said that they were reaching a deadline and after that they had to take serious steps. Thus, there must be a legitimate basis for them to keep their troops in the country. An analyst from the American Enterprise Institute, Ahmad Majidiyar, said that it had been hoped the success in the elections would help the smooth transfer of power. However, the violence of Taliban in the country created many difficulties for NATO to achieve its goals. The donor countries and the U.S. many times declared that the aid programs were

dependent on the peaceful transfer of power. After toppling the Taliban rule in Afghanistan (Afghanistan's Election Stalemate, 2014).

4.3. Al-Qaeda

During its spell of power over Afghanistan in the 1990s, the Taliban developed a close working relationship with Al-Qaeda. The latter attracted a sizable number of volunteers, especially from Arab countries, who were willing to fight for their hosts. Nevertheless, the Taliban and Al-Qaeda always remained organizationally distinct and with a different stage for their activities – Afghanistan in the case of the Taliban and the whole world in the case of Al-Qaeda (Ruttig, 2009: 22-24). But it was ultimately its links with Al-Qaeda which brought about the downfall of the Taliban Emirate in 2001.

Concerning the impact of the U.S presence in Afghanistan, it can be helpful in the future to provide better intelligence services in the country and we can understand that the role of Al-Qaeda and other militant groups are not as strong as they were in the past. The allied forces attacked their camps and Osama bin Laden is also no longer alive but we cannot be sure about their re-emergence. Now, there are not enough residual forces to provide greater intelligence and to counter terrorism in the country. There can be a huge problem to deal with, i.e. the re-emergence of the terrorist organizations, and the international training forces are absent in their number to cooperate in the further development of the training camps in the country. These are the main issues of concern at the moment. It will not only be dangerous for the stability of Afghanistan, it will also seriously affect regional countries like Pakistan, the Central Asian states, Russia and Iran. And not only this, it would have a drastic impact all over the world. The terrorist attacks in Paris,

Spain and England are the reasons of believing that, if Afghanistan becomes again the hub of training and supply of international terrorism, all the previous efforts would have become futile and the peace of the whole world would be damaged. If the situation gets out of the control, what can happen is a matter of serious concern for the world. First, it will create anarchy in the country. Second, this anarchy can leave a long-lasting effect on the region and ultimately the whole world will be badly affected from this problematic situation in Afghanistan (Grare, 2014).

Having said all this, it is important to see the present danger of transnational terrorism in Afghanistan in perspective. According to the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), only 50 to 100 Al-Qaeda fighters were in Afghanistan in 2011; they might be joined by 300 more in Pakistan. The basic mission of the U.S. military had been achieved. But there was and is a fear of civil war after all the foreign forces withdrawn from Afghanistan and Taliban take over the country again (Blackwill, 2011: 46, 48).

5. ANALYSIS: POLITICAL INSTABILITY – CAUSES AND REMEDIES

5.1. Internal Factors

5.1.1. An Unjust Political System

Afghanistan is ruled by powerful elites. Therefore, rule of law is not truly being implemented in the country. The state institutions are unable to protect the rights of the general masses. People are not trusting in the institutions of the government. If the government is unable to protect the rights of the common man then it is obvious that people challenge the writ of the government and political instability occurs. The powerful political elites do not fear from the jurisdiction of the law. They do whatever they like to do. They have this belief that the law cannot catch them and that they can buy the law at any time. They are the corrupt entities. They freely abuse their powers. The common man desperately needs justice. The Afghan government remained unsuccessful to provide services in resolving the disputes of the people. Rule of law remained absent in the country and the state-building failed because of the insurgency in the country (Miller, 2011: 59-60).

Obviously, when we discuss about the true rule of law, no one can be considered immune from the law. Likewise, when we discuss about the true democracy, the common people have their say in the decision-making process. If any minister or any high-level government official breaks the law, he is accountable. The courts are neutral and they do not favor any particular group or any powerful elite. The public prosecutors do not behave immorally. The police is not corrupt and it protects the innocent people. The police officers do not fear that, if they do not protect the powerful elites, they can lose their jobs.

When we discuss about the political reforms in the country, it was not an easy task to perform. We have to keep in mind that the reforms were a threat to the political elites of the country. They knew that if the reforms were going to take place in, they would be ousted from the power and their supremacy was to be challenged. They would be no more able to usurp the rights of the people. Likewise, they would pay for their bad deeds. Their minds were perturbed by the prospect of reforms in the country. The powerful elites were taking help from the patronage system. There was no accountability for them; therefore, the abusers of human rights were continuing to hold their authority.

The former warlords had amnesty from the law. The faces at the top of the country's political system were not changing; the same people came to power again and again. The common man was far away from holding power and to do work for the betterment of his class. Therefore, there was a dire need for change in the system. Taliban took advantage of the situation. They tried to win the hearts of the people by providing them easy justice. The Taliban's mobile courts were again under the authority of local commanders and the people had to accept their harsh ways of implementing law.

The promises of changing the system were not true. The politicians were just serving their lip service to change the system. After analyzing these aspects we can say that Afghanistan is facing an unjust political system due to its unjust and corrupt powerful political elites. They are the big cause of anxiety for the common man in the country. As a result, Afghanistan has become a quagmire of political instability and peace is out of the reach of the people (Afghanistan's Injustice System, 2012).

Equality before law for every citizen of the nation is a pre-requisite to establish peace in the country. Every citizen of the nation whether he or she is rich or poor, politician or public servant must be treated equally before law. No nation can succeed if its people are mistreated before law. In a system where a powerful entity tries to usurp the rights of others, in a system where the political elite tries to impose its will, whether it is right or wrong, and feels no hesitation in breaking laws - how can a political system work properly? .As we know, Afghanistan is facing the big problem of unjust political system. Efforts must be made to revamp the system.

Obviously, there are many hurdles in changing the system. The biggest hurdle in changing this system is the powerful political elites by themselves. As we know, the powerful political elites were not serious to redress the miseries of their people. They are also involved in heinous crimes like drug trafficking, corruption and nepotism. A change of the system will hold them accountable. But their accountability must be done. If their accountability does not take place, the system will never be changed. The poor people will become poorer and the rich people will become richer. At the moment, it seems very difficult but it is possible with a lot of hard work and sincerity. It is very important to know what the basic troubles in changing this system are. Afghanistan is a multi-ethnic society and there are many stakeholders in the country. It is definitely not certain that all these stakeholders want a better justice system in Afghanistan and there can be possible relationships of the corrupt Afghan political elites with international stakeholders. These political elites are being strengthened by them.

It is definitely not in favor of the poor Afghans. Therefore, the system must be changed. So what can be done to stop this all unjust treatment in the country? There is a dire need in Afghanistan to change the system for the well-being of the

people. The Afghan people must think about it by themselves and get political education. They must be able to differentiate between the right and the wrong choices. They must not elect those people who are corrupt and lawbreakers. If the genuine and sincere leaders come to power, they can hold those corrupt politicians accountable, who played with the lives of the poor Afghans. In this effort the grass root involvement of the people in the elections is very important and the voters must be given freedom to choose their leaders. We know that peace of the Afghan people is bound with a just political system and a just political system is only possible when the common man comes to power. The people of Afghanistan must show courage to fight for their common cause. In this way the miseries of the downtrodden society can be redressed.

5.1.2. Ethnic Politics

Ethnic tensions are prevailing in Afghanistan and harmony among the ethnic groups has become the biggest challenge. Therefore, whether peace will prevail in Afghanistan or not has become a serious question. Conflict among the groups is destabilizing the political situation in Afghanistan. When we talk about the Pashtuns, they can also be found in neighboring countries like Pakistan. The Tajiks, the Uzbeks and the Turkmen have their connections to the Central Asian countries, which are stretched towards the north. Their shared history certainly distinguishes them from one another.

The altogether 35 million Pashtuns in Afghanistan and Pakistan are a very important factor if one wants to discuss the Afghan ethnic tensions. In Pakistan, we find the Khatak, Niazi, Yousufzai and Tarin segments of the Pashtuns. Their ethnic affiliation is more important than their national affinity. On the other hand; we

cannot find a large-scale collaboration among the ethnic groups in Afghanistan. It is true that they stood together for their common purpose to resist the Taliban but they are unsuccessful to share a common platform. The divisions of the PDPA are the best example in this context; together with the rise of the Uzbek Democratic Party. Many parties of Pashtun origin were reluctant to fight against the Taliban.

When we discuss about the Islamist Shia party, it is composed of Hazara people. The Hazara people know that their influence is limited. Therefore, they do not try to affect other parties. The harmony among the ethnic groups is the key to stabilize the political process of Afghanistan. Despite of the ethnicity in the country, if the national character is not established, peace is very difficult in Afghanistan. Injustice in the distribution of the national resources is adding fuel on fire for the ethnic tensions in the country (Saleh, 2012).

As we know, Afghanistan is a multi-ethnic society. This nation is composed of different ethnic groups like the Pashtuns, the Tajiks, the Hazaras, the Uzbeks and various other groups. Every group has its own stakes. Every group wants its presence in the decision-making process of the country. Every group wants to talk about its miseries. And every group wants itself to be considered important in the country. Political stability is only possible if every group is treated equally and is given its proportionate representation in the democratic institutions of the country.

At this point, it is very important to mention the Hazara community. This community has been ignored because it follows the Shia section of Islam and it only makes 9% of the total population. If this kind of discrimination happens in the future, this group will be disappointed again and it will lose its trust in the institutions of the government. The importance of participation in the political process for all the ethnic groups of Afghanistan is a key point to secure peace in

the country. Every group, whether it belongs to the Sunni or Shia branch of Islam or whether it has a Pashtun, Tajik, Uzbek or Balouch etc.background must be given equal chance to talk about its rights.

True democracy is not possible without providing opportunities to all these groups to have their say in the democratic institutions of the state. When we talk about a stable political system in the country, minorities must not be ignored. Their backgrounds and religious practices must not be the hurdles in the way of their rights. They must be given their proportionate representation in the democratic institutions of the state. If this does not happen, violence takes place in the country. The downtrodden and ignored people at one time try to raise their voice. If it is not given value, it converts into protests and these protests can change into the violent revolution. We can take examples from the history of Afghanistan. We see many civil wars and rebellious movement in Afghanistan due to this reason that tell the dismay story of an unstable political system of Afghanistan.

To stop it for future, proper and effective channels and platforms must be established to learn the miseries of the ignored ethnic groups prevailing in Afghanistan. This effort must be effective and practicable. The aggression of the majority group on the minority group must be strongly discouraged. This can be very useful for a peaceful political solution of Afghanistan. In short, we can say that all the ethnic groups of Afghanistan must be considered important and they must be included in the decision-making process of the country. This would build up their confidence in the institutions of the government. They would regain their trust and interest in them. They would be able to fight for their rights in a peaceful and effective manner and the political deadlock would break.

5.1.3. Lack of Law and Order

If bad law and order situation prevails in any country, definitely the agony among its people generates. It affects the country's economy very badly. The international investors lose their interest and trust to invest in the country. It not only directly concerns with those families affected by the terrorist activates but it also creates fear in all the public. In this context, Afghanistan is severely facing a bad law and order situation. There are many reasons for this bad security system. The first reason for this is that there are no free and fair elections in the country (Afghanistan: Ambiguity, 2012). After the ratification of the Afghan constitution, the international community funded the registration of voters. The Afghans voted for their first ever Presidential elections in October 2004. 6.4 million people voted for the national legislature in September 2005. Since 1973, it was the first elected Afghan legislature (Miller, 2011:55). But the corrupt military establishment is in the favor of its political allies and family members rather than respecting the constitution of Afghanistan.

The continuous attacks of the Taliban in the country, whether they were targeting the higher officials of the country or wanted to create horror among the common masses, was the biggest challenge for maintaining security. The government lacked an effective strategy to deal with the Taliban and remained unable to give protection to its citizens.

The other reason of the bad law and order situation in the country is that the government remained unsuccessful in creating strategic based relationships with its neighboring countries. The cross-border terrorism between Afghanistan and Pakistan is an example in this context. Both of these countries are facing severe security problems but the governments of these countries remained unable to

establish a strategy with mutual understanding to deal with these terrorist activities across the border.

The inability of Afghanistan's National Security Forces to deal with terrorism is also a big problem which has threatened the peace in the country. There has been a failure of the international community to train Afghan forces, to contain Taliban threats and to reform the system. The corruption of the police has been reported many times. The International Security Assistance Force remained unsuccessful to provide security to the majority of Afghans. During 2006 and 2010, the U.S. military presence in Afghanistan increased to 100,000 from 22,100 troops. It was the third largest military deployment of Washington after Vietnam. The allied nations also increased their troops deployment from approximately 21,500 in early 2007 to 35,800 troops by the end of 2010 (Miller,2011:58,60).On the other hand, warlords, criminals and the drug mafia are severely damaging the security of the country. Likewise, the affiliations of politicians and government officials with warlords, criminals and the drug mafia were not helping the Afghan people to get peace in their country. The government was more likely the representative of the interests of a group of powerful law breakers rather than serving the interests of its people. Therefore, the people were losing hope of getting protection by the government institutions and as a result anti-state feelings were generating in the country, which was a further threat to the peace and security situation. This all was happening because justice was not done to the people of Afghanistan (Afghanistan: Ambiguity, 2012).

When we discuss about the institutions of the state, there are three important organs of the state: the legislature, the executive and the judiciary. For the success of any government, it is very important that these institutions of the state must work properly and the constitution of the state protects their sanctity. Good

governance is not possible without proper functioning of the state institutions. They must work in their domain and they must not interfere into the domain of other institutions. Furthermore there must be a system of checks and balance on them. The donor countries of Afghanistan had ignored the governance programs. The funds given to the country could not meet its needs. Only a few hundred million dollars were left to train lawyers, judges, prosecutors and civil servants (Miller, 2011:62).

In Afghanistan there is a dire need for the development of a proper institutional framework. Due to corrupt government officials and politicians, its functioning has been badly affected. The legislature is trying to interfere into the matters of the executive and the executive is not enforcing the decisions of the legislature in a way it should do. On the other hand, powerful entities influence the judiciary in their own benefit and the whole system is badly disturbed. Now, what can we do here? We can develop a harmonious institutional system in Afghanistan in which people would be able to start trusting again their state institutions. A system of checks and balances must be established. The example of the checks and balance system can be drawn from the American constitutional system, where judicial review is an option to appraise and check the functioning of the institutions of the state. It is a very good idea to take advantage from the making of the constitutions of the successful countries of the world. They developed such a system which benefited their people so much and they have peace in their countries. But, of course, the suitability of the Afghan culture and traditions must also be taken into account before revamping the Afghan political system.

Afghans are definitely striving for such a system where all the institutions of the country obey orders and execute orders without any preference. This effort can redress the miseries of the people. The present situation in Afghanistan is telling

the dismay story of these institutions. The poor Afghans have lost their trust and interest in the government institutions because the latter could not protect the rights of its people. But all the ethnic groups must stand together to contribute in the making of strong institutional structure to serve their cultural demands and that would satisfactorily provide them justice.

5.2. External Factors

5.2.1. Foreign Interventions

Foreign intervention is a major cause of the conflict in Afghanistan because we cannot ignore the independent-minded nature of the Afghan people. Despite of the internal rifts and strifes between the ethnic groups, whenever foreign invaders tried to occupy Afghanistan, the Afghan people became united to fight against their common enemy. However, their fight against foreign invaders usually has by-effects afterwards damaging to the peace of the country afterwards. We can take examples from history. For example, when the British forces attacked Afghanistan they were repulsed but afterwards civil war took place in the country, which seriously damaged the peace. When the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan and then had to withdraw again, afterwards a lot of trouble took place in the country. The fight between the Soviets and the Mujahedeen made the country a battle place. Peace was far away from the country and the anarchic state culminated. As a result, a lot of Afghans migrated to other countries.

Now the question arises, if the foreign powers of today do not understand the independent nature of the Afghan people, can there be the same situation? We cannot underestimate the capability of the Afghans to work for their constitution.

They also elected their leaders by voting in their Loya Jirga. But when foreigners influenced over the indigenous politics of Afghanistan, the law and order situation was disturbed and the agony among the people increased.

The critics are saying that the USA has been defeated in Afghanistan. In other words, the peace mission in Afghanistan could not succeed. As a result, there is very serious consequences for its neighboring countries and ultimately for the whole world. It can be easily analyzed that Afghanistan does not want foreign occupation or influence. Its people want independence in a true sense. After all, not only Afghanistan but no county in the world wants its independent capacity to be challenged. No country wants foreign influence in its decision-making process, and the same applies to Afghanistan. Therefore, foreign intervention is a major cause of the Afghanistan conflict.

With respect to recommendations concerning external aspects, the most important factor to bring peace and stability in the country is that the foreign intervention in Afghanistan must be stopped. The lessons drawn from history must be taken into account. It must be seriously observed that foreign interventions not only disturbed the peace of the country but it also badly affected the law and order situation of its neighboring countries. It caused much causality and many Afghans lost their loved ones. As a result, some strongly retaliated by guerilla attacks. It has also been seen that, when the foreign groups left Afghanistan, the civil wars started and again the peace of the innocent Afghans was disturbed. These consequences must not be ignored in any case.

The independent nature of the Afghan people must be analyzed properly. Although the Afghan society is a multi-ethnic society, it does not mean that they can allow foreigners to rule over them. The Afghans want to get rid of the influence of the

international stakeholders in their country. The powerful class has its corrupt ambitions and their financial benefits are a big stimulus for them to support the foreign presence in their country. But by their nature Afghans are against the foreign rule and the foreign dictates. The sacrifices of the Afghans to fight for their dignity must not be forgotten. Afghanistan has its own culture. Its people want their own decisions and when the foreigners attacked them, it is evident from the history that they took serious action against them to stop their occupation.

Foreign intervention could not bring anything in the country except disturbing the law and order situation there. These interventions badly destroyed the infrastructure of the country. Every time when the wars took place in the country, the country went into an anarchic state. Peace and security to the Afghan people became a dream unrealized. The big powers must understand that their geostrategic gains in Afghanistan are less important than their precious lives. This kind of situation in Afghanistan is definitely very dangerous for the world. Once it has been realized that the war in Afghanistan has brought nothing but the defeat of the foreign troops, casualties and fear of another civil war in Afghanistan, then it would become easy to understand that people who say that table talks are the best solutions for solving matters rather than aggression and attacking countries are very right. The devastating impact of the human casualties during many wars including the First and Second World Wars must be seriously taken into consideration.

In short, we can say that foreign interventions caused much causality and disturbed the law and order situation of Afghanistan. It not only disturbed the peace of Afghanistan but also the peace of its neighboring countries like Pakistan. Afghans cannot accept foreign occupation in any case because they have their independent

nature. They want to live independently without any foreign presence. Therefore, foreign interventions in Afghanistan must be stopped completely.

5.2.2. Incomplete Representation in International Forums

The foreign powers wanted a peaceful solution for Afghanistan. Here the question arises whether any peaceful solution was possible if the major stakeholders were excluded from the discussions or negotiations. If the international community ignores big sections of the Afghan people on the international forums and if they are not given a chance to talk about their rights, peace in the country is not possible and any political solution would not work out in this way. For example, the Taliban had not been given opportunity to talk about what they wanted. What their stakes were, had not been communicated well. In reaction, they retaliated. In 2014, they attacked politicians. And not only this: They completely challenged the writ of the government. After that Taliban became the biggest threat for Afghanistan. The most important thing at the moment is that when the international forces left Afghanistan, the Taliban again took over the country and the civil war can start again. We should think in a broader perspective. Who are the Taliban and the other insurgents that have endangered the peace of the country? Are they not the citizens of Afghanistan, or they have been deprived of their basic rights of citizenship and freedom of speech? This aspect must be keenly observed.

After, the international community was thinking to include the Taliban on the international forums because the consequences of ignoring them were very severe. If all the stakeholders are invited to represent themselves, a peaceful solution is possible. Otherwise, the ignored community will feel dissatisfied and, as a result, it can disturb the law and order situation in the country. While discussing about

democracy and excluding major groups is also against the democratic values. In view of this, we can take examples from history. Let us go back to the 1930-32 round table conferences. Britain was keen for the political solution for India and invited the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League to the round table conferences. But sometimes the main leader of the Congress, Mahatma Gandhi, was missing and sometimes the main leader of the Muslim League, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, was missing. Later on, these leaders were invited but they did not come due to lack of trust and as a result all efforts of the round table conferences were wasted. In the case of Afghanistan, the main groups have been badly ignored and not been allowed to talk about their point of view. Certainly the situation in contemporary Afghanistan is different from that of colonial India, but the problem is the same. Afghanistan needs a political solution and all the representatives of the groups must be taken into confidence before making any plan for the future of the Afghan political system. Otherwise, it would remain a quagmire of political instability and the peace of the country will be disturbed.

On the international forums all the ethnic groups have to be given their chance to talk about their rights and to point out their opinions. We have seen the case of the exclusion of Taliban from the international agreements and talks. Ignoring this group resulted in serious consequences. Now the critics are in favor of the inclusion of the Taliban in the international agreements and talks. True, the War against Terrorism started against the Taliban and their government in Kabul was toppled in a very short time. After that, the Taliban have not been brought to the talking table at the right time to draw out a better political solution for the country. Not a single ethnic group can be ignored when it wants to talk about its rights. It must also be kept in mind that all the groups are given equal preferences on the basis of their strong ties with the world powers. As we know, Afghanistan is

passing through a very critical time. Using one or two political groups to serve the motives of the big powers of the world brought devastating effect to the country. If the world superpowers again repeat this mistake it can lead to the further devastation in the country. These factors must be wisely analyzed to secure peace and stability in the region.

From the above discussion we can easily say that every ethnic group is important in Afghanistan because it is living at the same land. When we talk about international forums and international conferences, they are the best place for any ethnic group living in the country to talk about its desires and to make the world community realized what its miseries are and what its preferences are. What kind of government it demands, what kind of shelter is missing for its community and how it wants to practice its religious teachings? In this way the world community would be able to understand the desires of the Afghan people and the establishment of stable political system would be made possible in the country.

If the Pashtuns are given preferences because of their 42% share in the population, this can cause distrust among the other ethnic groups. Therefore, despite of the significant relative majority of the Pashtuns in the country, the other groups would start agitating. It is very important that all the other groups who are not in majority must also be taken into confidence. Providing chance to the entire group would foster understanding among all the groups.

5.2.3. Conditionalities by the International Financial Institutions

The conditionalities of the international financial institutions are another hurdle in the way of peace-making in Afghanistan. The conditionalities of the international financial institutions also challenge the independent structure of the country. To

explain this point in further detail, we see this factor into greater detail. For example, when the states were formally declared independent like in the examples of Pakistan, India and Sri Lanka, they came under financial constraints and they became dependent on the foreign aid and support.

The conditionalities of the aiding countries and the international financial institutions affected them in their decision-making process. Here we take a very typical example: If the international financial institutions like IMF and World Bank give aid to Pakistan, they demand increase in the electricity and oil price. They can also demand that the subsidies given on the certain products would be decreased. In other words, these institutions are affecting the decision-making process of the country. The country itself is not deciding but these financial aid giving organization are deciding.

On the other hand, the aid providing countries also affect the foreign policy of the country in making relations with other countries. For example, the USA aided Afghanistan and Pakistan by giving both financial and military aid to train the Mujahedeen to fight against the Soviet Union. This tool has also been used to establish military bases in various parts of the world to keep influence globally. In this way financial aid affects the decision-making process of a country. In Afghanistan, as we see, many stakeholders and we all know that Afghanistan is also very important due to its geostrategic location. The regional players in the area like Pakistan, India, and the Central Asian states, Russia, China and Iran also want their influence over Afghanistan. The financial tool is a very important weapon for them to gain the influence. The rich and the powerful blocs of the world can very effectively and easily use these tools.

The major financial institutions of the world like the Britton Woods institutions, i.e. the IMF and the World Bank, are also under the control of the powerful blocs like G8, G7 and G5 of the world. Thus, the aid providing of these financial institutions is also dependent on the will of the powerful countries of the world. For example, after the fall of Shah of Iran, the country became isolated and its currency devalued because the government of Iran did not serve the interests of the big powers. The international financial institutions also did not help Iran to improve the value of its money. While considering these examples, Afghanistan is also heavily dependent on the financial aid of the world.

At the moment Afghanistan wants financial assistance to build up its infrastructure. It needs heavy amount to train and equip its law enforcement agencies. It is heavily dependent on the international financial support to spend on education, improve the conditions of healthcare and poverty reduction etc. While keeping these aspects into account, Afghanistan direly needs financial assistance. If severe conditionalities are imposed with the aid providing programs and the key interests of the big powers of the world are also served with financial assistance, consequently the results will not be suitable for the country. It would again threaten the independence of the country

It is very important for the people of Afghanistan that the international financial institutions are not pressurizing the country due to their aid giving programs. The economy of Afghanistan has been badly disturbed. The multi-national companies are losing their trust and interest due to the bad law and order situation in the country. As a result it is further damaging the economy of the country. The international financial institutions are helpful in this kind of situation but when these institutions set their own terms and conditions, the people of the country feel that they are no more independent.

The international financial assistance of these institutions must not be based on serving the interests of the powerful countries of the world. It can further create disturbance among the people of the poor country. In Afghanistan people are already very disturbed. The bad law and order situation has badly disturbed their psychology. Therefore, financial aid must not aim to influence Afghanistan politically. At present Afghanistan requires easy and relaxed policies of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank and the other financial institutions of the world. Afghanistan demands the support of the whole world to build up its economy and infrastructure. At this moment it is very critical to understand the fragile state of the economy in the country.

In short, we can say that the severe conditionalities of the aid providing countries and the international financial institutions can detract the peaceful political transition of the country. It is a matter of grave importance that the independence of the Afghan people must not be affected in any way because already, the foreign influence has made them anxious and aggressive.

CONCLUSION

The Thesis has tried to show that the bottom-up approach can help Afghanistan to come out of its political crisis and, consequently, justice would be brought to the people of Afghanistan. The bottom-up approach can provide power to the common man and no centralized hindrance would be able to make difficulties for the people of Afghanistan. In contrast, a highly centralized structure of the government in which power flows from the centre (top-down approach) remained unsuccessful to overcome the political crisis of the country.

“I was the fourth president to preside over an American presence over an American troop presence in Afghanistan, two Republicans, and two Democrats. I would not, and will not, pass this war on to a fifth” He clearly remembers the consequences of Vietnam. This will not stop Taliban from winning. On April 6, 2021, he wanted all the troops out by September 11, 2021. The war had to end, it must be carefully thought and protect those who sacrificed everything for a better future. (The Tragedy of Afghanistan, 2021)

It is very difficult to analyze the situation in Afghanistan. The case of Afghanistan has become very complicated. On one hand, foreign troops left Afghans but on the other hand, it is very difficult to say anything about Taliban to handle the law and order situation in the country. If the law and order situation is out of the control, how can a political process be successful in the country? A weak law and order situation can lead Afghanistan into another civil war and this time the consequences can be more severe than ever before.

Would Afghanistan be in transition or in stalemate after 2021? It depends on the circumstances prevailing in Afghanistan. It has been declared that Afghanistan has been left to Afghans after training their national forces and significant aid and

support would be given to the country but Taliban took control of the country again in a very short span of time. Here the question arises whether this was enough for the country in its transitional period. Would Afghanistan be able to handle its internal issues? Would it be easy to handle issues like corruption, nepotism illiteracy and health, etc.? If these severe issues are not addressed through proper planning, the political government cannot be successful. As a result, an unjust and undemocratic system would prevail, the common masses would not be able to get their rights and the stalemate would not end in the country. The negotiations which are taking place are limited to disarm militant groups not significantly focusing on the ethnic tensions and corruption in the government institutions, which are the basic reasons of conflict in Afghanistan (cf. Schirch, 2014).

In view of all this, how can the political deadlock be avoided and long-lasting peace be made possible?

The political deadlock can be avoided if the grass root level involvement is made possible in the decision-making process of the country. If the common man is not able to have his say, he will not have trust in the government institutions. For building up trust of the common man in the government authorities, it is very important to develop a political system in which the common man would be able to explain his miseries. This can best be done through a bottom-up approach to state-building which would empower Afghanistan's civil society.

Education is a pre-requisite for the political understanding of the people. And not only this; it also plays an important role in the development of the nation. Uneducated people face a lot of problems to differentiate between their long-term benefits and losses. If they are educated, they can judge political leaders of their

country and they can analyze their previous performances. Education can bring a positive change to bring healthy competition. That can lead to a better political system and Afghanistan can come out of its political instability

For the success of any political system, it is very important for any government that it also provides health care facilities. In Afghanistan people have faced many health problems during the wartimes. There is no sufficient hospitals and health care units in the country. Victims of the terrorist attacks need proper facilities to heal their wounds. If the government becomes successful in this regard, it can win the hearts of its people; and this factor can bring political benefits to the government

There must not be any more foreign intervention in the country and the conditionalities of the international financial institutions (IFIs) must be stopped, if Afghanistan is to get back on the way of progress. These two factors have badly damaged the trust of the people. Afghans want independence in a true way. They have proved their unbeatable potential of fighting against the foreign rule. On the other hand, if the international community wants to gain trust of the people of the country, it must start working on the reduction of the conditionalities of the International Financial Institutions.

All the ethnic groups must be brought to the talks to address their adversaries. If any group is left out of the negotiations and the decision-making process, the political unrest cannot be stopped. Afghanistan is a multi-ethnic society and all the ethnic groups have their stakes. If any ethnic group is ignored it is possible or even likely that it would revolt against the government and the law and order situation can be badly affected. It is also the political right of any ethnic group that, if, it is

existing within the boundaries of the country, it must be brought to the table talk to make solutions. Otherwise, peace will be very difficult to take place in the country.

It should be added that a multi-ethnic society is not necessarily prone to ethnic conflicts. Rather, such ethnic conflicts break out as a result of the contingent political development. In Afghanistan, there were attempts at top-down state-building which resulted in the ethnic conflicts as an unintended consequence. First, the heavy-handed policies of the Iron Amir in the late 19th century, by sending Pashtun tribes people to the north and thereby playing those off against the other ethnic groups there, laid the seeds for the later conflict. Second, the PDPA's attempt to modernize the country through brutal methods led to the decline of much of the local elites. The vacuum thus created was filled by warlords with ethnic affiliations. The wars of the 1980s and 1990s further wrecked Afghanistan's state and society and thus increased the political vacuum. To get the jinn of ethnic conflicts back into the bottle, a bottom-up approach that focuses upon people as citizens rather than members of an ethnic group is urgently necessary

Finally, the institutions of the state must be made strong. The writ of the government must be in all parts of the country. If the institutions of the state are strong, they function smoothly and they do not interfere into the domain of one another, people will gain trust in them. Good governance can also be made possible in this way. However, strengthening state institutions should not be conflated with the top-down approach to the state-building. According to the Tony Blair Faith Foundation report, the governance system has to be revamped. There is a need for the decentralization of authority to local officials and the prevention of any potential comeback of corrupt officials in the government and security forces.

Ultimately, these goals are achievable, but not through the top-down approach to the state-building. This approach has been tried and has failed under the Karzai government. In contrast, the bottom-up approach offers a more promising venue – but only provided that it will not be hijacked by oppressive local elites. It is thus very important that the nascent civil society in Afghanistan will be empowered in order to provide genuine bottom-up support for a more just and equal society in the country.

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