

CHINA'S GROWING INFLUENCE IN AFGHANISTAN AND ITS IMPACTS ON PAKISTAN-(POST-2014)

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ABSTRACT

This research examines China's growing influence in Afghanistan (post-2014) in the context of the Chinese government's overall approach to Afghan peace and stability. The China growing influence in Afghanistan can be seen in three dynamics which are security, economic and geo-strategic and in the same area its impacts on Pakistan have also been explored. This study is based on mixed research approach mean Qualitative cum Quantitative. In the economic field it has been observed that the Chinese invested in Afghanistan more in the post 2014 as compare to pre-2014. In the security field the China diplomatic efforts can be seen in the form of treaties and agreements with Afghanistan under Ashraf Ghani's Afghan Unity Government AUG. These efforts are to eradicate terrorism and extremism from Afghanistan as China herself is facing the same issue in its western region. The China vision in Geo-strategic field and its strategy and policy towards Afghanistan is analysed. These three tier policies of China in Afghanistan have certain impacts on Pakistan and these impacts are explored under BRI particular part which is CPEC Post 2014. The important regional player China has also reassessed its policy towards Afghanistan. The changing nature of economic interests in South Asia and Central Asia, China has also initiated collective rapprochement towards Afghanistan, being gateway in the region. Attaining peace and stability in Afghanistan is possible through political reconciliation, supporting mutual economic and security cooperation through regional connectivity of trade, route, rail link, investment, energy projects and common marketing within the region. Chinese adopted a strong economic policy of involving Afghanistan in BRI (TACT- Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, Tajikistan and China Project) as well as formation of the Quadrilateral Coordination Group (QCG) is a clear manifestation of the Chinese growing influence in Afghanistan. Meanwhile, China has also initiated plan of bringing Islamabad and Kabul on peace table and also connecting the two countries through the mega project of CPEC. It has also repercussion for smooth implementation of the ongoing process of peace and economic stability in the two countries.

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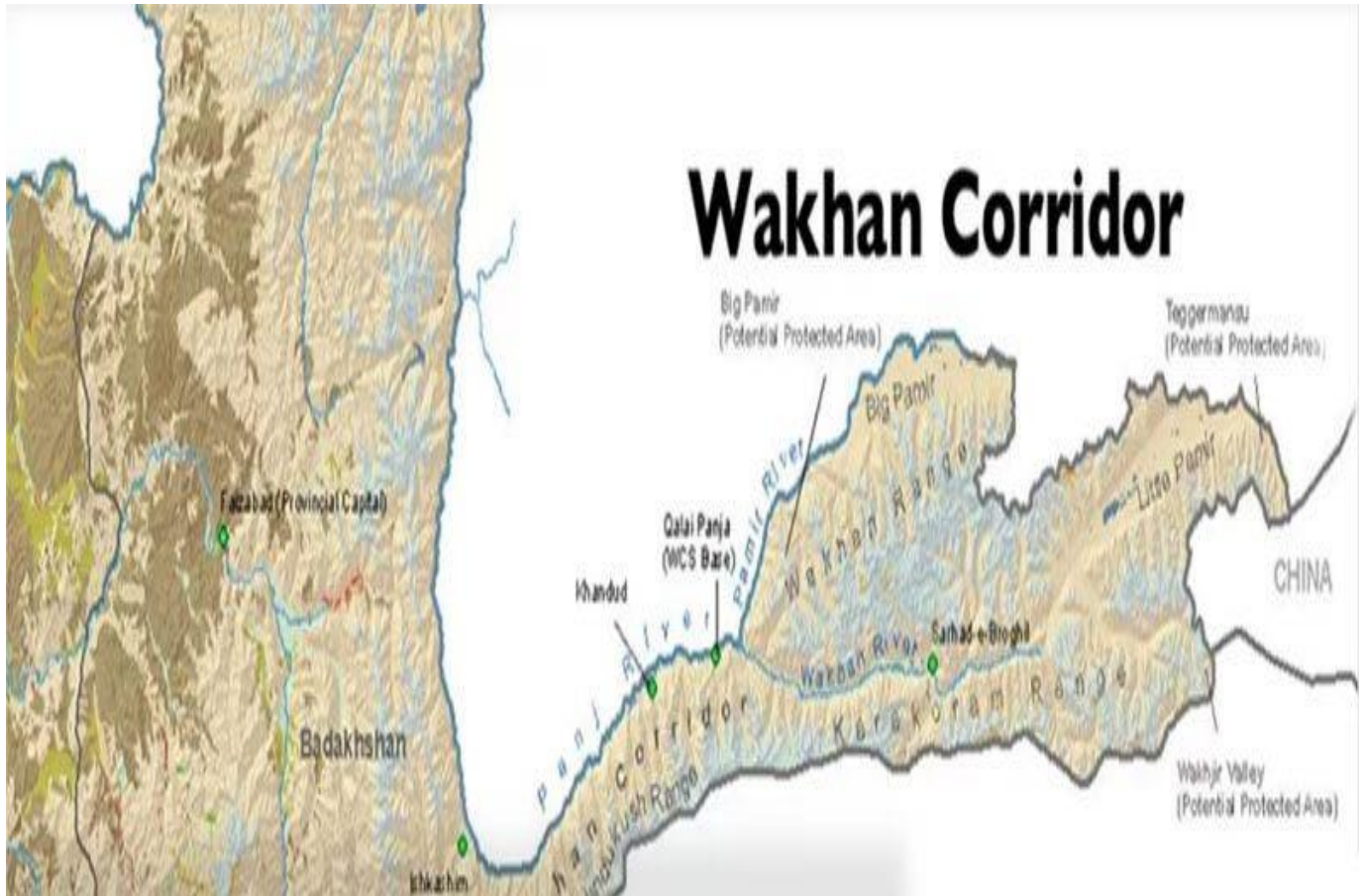
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List of Acronyms

ANA	Afghan National Army
APS	Army Public School
ANSF	Afghan National Security Forces
ATT	Afghan Transit Trade
ANUG	Afghanistan National Unity Government
BRI	Belt and Road Initiative
BSA	Bilateral Security Arrangement
CBMs	Confidence Building Measures
CPEC	China Pakistan Economic Corridor
CICIR	China Institute for Contemporary International Relations
COIN	Counter-Insurgency
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
ECO	Chief Executive Officer
EFO	Enduring Freedom Operation
ETIM	East Turkmenistan Islamic Movement
FATA	Federally Administered Tribal Areas
HAMC	Heart of Asia Ministerial Conference
IPP	Istanbul Peace Process
ISIL	Islamic State of Iraq and Levant

ISAF	International Security Assistance Forces
ISI	Inter Service Intelligence
JANAS	Jabhat al-Nusra li-Ahl al-Sham
JEC	Pak-Afghan Joint Economic Commission
LeT	Lashkar-e-Taiba
LeJ	Lashkar-e-Jhangvi
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NDS	National Directorate of Security
NSA	National Security Advisor
OIC	Organization of Islamic Cooperation
PDPA	People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan
PRGF	Poverty Reduction Growth Facility
QCG	Quadrilateral Coordination Group
RSCT	Regional Security Complex Theory
RATS	Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure
RSM	Resolute Support Mission
SAARC	South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation
SCO	Shanghai Cooperation Organization
SOFA	Status of Forces Agreement
UIFSA	United Islamic Front for the Salvation of Afghanistan
UNAMA	United Nation Assistance Mission in Afghanistan

UNHCR	United Nation High Commission for Refugees
UNSMIA	United Nation Special Mission to Afghanistan
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
WUC	World Uyghur Congress
XUAR	Xinyang Uighur Autonomous Region

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The Newly elected head of state Dr. Ashraf Ghani began his maiden official 04 days visit to Beijing after being sworn as the president in 2014. A new direction of Afghanistan's peace and stability led by China through a common political and economic strategy helpful for the future of entire region.¹ China has also activated more evolving and dynamic neighborhood policy to create an atmosphere that would favorable for advanced economic development of the region. Chinese neighborhood diplomacy is to serve the national transformation in Afghanistan and region because the region is under jeopardy of terrorism for many years. Expansions of social, political and economic prerequisites among neighbors were almost obstructed due to insecurity and instability in Afghanistan after the cold- war.

Many states in the neighborhood have been affected through different categories of threats by non-state actors and that is what all the regional states have acknowledged terrorism as common issue due to its transnational spill-over phenomenon in the twenty-first century's globalized world. In this regards concrete cooperation and commitments are in the common benefit for all stakeholders both in term of security and economic issues. China led soft-power security, economic and diplomatic engagements among neighboring countries, is desirable strategy which means actively participations to enhance regional and sub- regional effectiveness in assertive mechanism for strategic, economic and security issues to gain mutual trusts. Such remarkable mechanism should be based on economic, trade and commercial interests through cooperation and investment, which is the basic driver of

1. C. Raja Mohan, "Chinese takeaway: Beijing's Afghan Role," *Indian Express*, December 17, 2014. <http://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/chinese-takeaway-14/99/>

regional integration and connectivity. Basically Ashraf Ghani has also emphasized on regional connectivity through such mega projects, as road, rail links, trade, investment, and energy projects which China has already dream for that. Afghanistan being the heart of the Asia could play an important role in this regard.

China has geo-strategic and geo-economic interest in the region that changed its previous policy of neutrality by adoption of a pro-activist builder of Afghanistan's future.² A change in China's policy with respect to Pakistan and Afghanistan was started even before president Xing but during his communist Party government the process of reassessing its foreign policy increased dynamically for Afghanistan and Pakistan.³ Chinese economic interests are required to change in the foreign policy of Afghanistan, also in diplomacy and security policies. Such enduring partnership of China in Afghanistan is beneficial to Kabul that experienced a shift from military to economic development since 2014.

In the post 2014, China as an emerging global power can't afford instability in its immediate neighborhood after 2014. Second being traditionally ally of Pakistan and a partner in peaceful economic and strategic goals since announcement of the end of US War-on-terror mission in Afghanistan and third with new(Afghan Unity Government AUG) in Kabul after Afghanistan's historical election, China's interests have been heightened in Afghanistan as well as in Central Asian. China's overall objective to boost its comprehensive national trade, energy power and economic position in Asia is the involvement in Afghanistan that could see opportunity to China's access to mineral, energy resources and routs linkages through Afghanistan, which could also provide an important link for investment, trade and infrastructure development in Central and South Asia. China's interests in Afghanistan and region have grown into different dimensions. The geopolitical significance of the region increased calculation for realizing its Chinese grand strategy (Dream of New Silk Rout) and Afghanistan has become increasingly important in China's strategic calculation. One of the

2. Andrew Small, *The China-Pakistan Axis: Asia's New Geopolitics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 218.

3. Wang Xu, "China's Changing Policy towards Pakistan and Afghanistan under the New Leadership," Center for South Asian Studies, Peking University, China, December 23,2013, <https://rusi.org/commentary/chinas-changing-policy-towards-pakistan-and-afghanistan-under-new-leadership>

Chinese experts Ni Yunshuo analyses the importance of the Chinese outlook in the following words:

“A grand strategy requires defining a geostrategic focus, and China's geostrategic focus is Asia. When communication lines in Central Asia and South Asia were poor, China's development strategy and economic interests tilted toward its east coast and the Pacific Ocean. Today, East Asia is still of vital importance, but China should and will begin to pay more strategic attention to the west. The central government has been conducting the Grand Western Development Program in many western provinces and regions, notably Tibet and Xinyang, for more than a decade. It is now more actively initiating and participating in new development projects in Afghanistan, India, Pakistan, Central Asia, and throughout the Caspian Sea region, all the way to Europe. This new western outlook may reshape China's geostrategic vision as well as the Eurasian landscape.”⁴

Such a strategy would support China's overall aim to boost its comprehensive national power and economic position in Asia.⁵ The collective cooperation and commitments has the promise to durable ties among regional states and provide political and economic stability to Kabul for an enduring peace in Afghanistan and beyond.

After 2014 Afghanistan has emerged as a source of concern for many states especially for China where US led International Security Armed Forces (ISAF) ended their combat mission. However the political, economic and security challenges of Afghanistan and regional stability will remain precocious. This is no longer truth now. The complete removal of international troops would leave deep consequences and influence on the country economic and security management as experienced in USSR's withdrawal and American ignorance in post-1989 after the end of the cold war. That had created huge space for the ideology of Talibanization in the country and the region as well. Same experience has been detected in US invasion of Iraq in 2003 and the sudden withdrawal of forces from Iraq after death Saddam Hussain. That has produced a vicious militant group of (Islamic State of Iraq and Levant ISIL) in Iraq and Syria which is paradoxically the brainchild of Saudi led Wahhabism.⁶ Both circumstances of Taliban and ISIL were produced with co-existence of poor mechanism of withdrawals of US

4. Ni Yunshuo, “Corridor of Cooperation,” *Beijing Review*, March 30, 2006, 13.

http://www.bjreview.com/quotes/txt/2007-01/09/content_52531_2.htm

5. Gilbert Rozman, *Chinese Strategic Thought towards Asia* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 106.

6. Catherine Shakdam, “ISIS: The brainchild of Wahhabism”, *The Telegraph*, November 20, 2015.

forces from war-torn region.

Looking over to above case studies of Afghanistan and Iraq, some experts on security studies are agreed that China has diverted their policy toward Afghanistan after the announcement of American withdrawal from Afghanistan due to security and economic interests. As Elizabeth Wishnick in his research article in *Central Asian Affairs* noted that “with the announcement of the planned drawdown of U.S. and international forces in 2014, Chinese diplomacy has become more active in an effort to forestall developments that would be detrimental to China’s (Xinyang Uighur Autonomous Region XUAR) or to Chinese interests in Central Asia and Afghanistan. On June 8, 2012, China and Afghanistan upgraded their relationship to a strategic and cooperative partnership”.⁷

Geographically Afghanistan, being landlocked country has placed an important role for the entire region. Due to its geo-strategic location as “land Bridge” between West and Central Asia and also one of the energy rich countries in the region which has natural resources and mineral wealth of coppers, gas, Iron, cobalt, ore and other rare earth metals. Afghanistan has a salience in the region.

Politically, Afghanistan also has been placed at “cheeseboard” of geo-political interests of the regional and super powers from the British Empire to the cold war. During the ideological cold war of USSR and United States Afghanistan was overcome as a battlefield for proxies. Instability and terrorism are the consequences of those approaches of external interference of cold-war, civil war, and war-on-terror and sectarian violence in Afghanistan for decades. The problem of Afghanistan always was/is proxy wars imposed on Afghan people and being sponsored by external players to gain their own political and ideological interests. Such big powers rivals and its interference in Kabul has always placed Afghanistan’s future uncertain, reluctant and vulnerable not only for Afghanistan itself but for whole the region as well.

After a long war on terrorism, since (2001 to 2014), the regional states are recalibrating their policies to protect their national interests in post-2014’s Afghanistan. For instance China, which is the most important regional actor, is re- shaping its longstanding neutral policies for Afghanistan. China’s objectives in the current scenario are to rebuild Afghanistan after US

7. Elizabeth Wishnick, *Post-2014 Afghanistan Policy and the Limitations* (Brill UK: Central Asian Affairs), 133-152.

https://www.montclair.edu/profilepages/media/1008/user/Post_2014_Afghanistan_Policy_and_the_Limitations_of_China's_Global_Role.pdf

withdrawal. The collections of raw minerals and natural resources, commercial investment and preventing Uighur militants from establishing safe havens in Pak-Afghan porous border have increased China's interest for involvement in Afghanistan's issue.⁸

1.2 Chinese interests in the region

- Pressuring Pakistan, which is a traditional and closest ally in the region, to crack down on Uighur militant groups in its border areas and cooperate more with international efforts against terrorism in Afghanistan.⁹
- Facilitating and arranging direct talks for negotiation between Afghan government and Taliban groups to cool down prolonged war in Afghanistan for the security of its commercial investment in the region.
- Promoting regional approaches for Afghan won and led reconciliation process in Istanbul process and Pakistan facilitated Peace Talks between Afghan government and Taliban.
- Safeguarding SCO strategy for counter-terrorism in the region to increase multilateral cooperation and advance economic zone.
- Establishing Economic Corridor agreement with Pakistan (CPEC) to build a mega project of Silk Road which is one of the ancient Chinese dream for approaching to energy-rich West and Central Asia and to the European market that is link with stable and peaceful Afghanistan.

Describing a path towards development and peace a Chinese proverb says "No matter the distance between people, fate brings us together".¹⁰ In this regard China has initiated some programs for the realize the dream of the "New Silk Road" to open traditional trading routes and reconstructing infrastructural links between South Asia, Central Asia and to Europe. It

8. Daveed Gartenstein Ross, Daniel Trombly and Nathaniel Barr, *China's Post-2014 Role in Afghanistan*, Foundation for Defence of Democracies (Washington: October 2014): 4-25

9. Lou Chunhao and Zhang Mingling, "Key issues in South Asia and China's South Asia strategy, *Journal of Contemporary International Relations* 45, no.2 (2010):10.

10. Qu Xing, "Asia-Pacific Regional Connectivity and Integration," (Speech, Institute on International Studies Forum, Beijing, China, June 2014). <http://www.unescap.org/speeches/asia-pacific-regional-connectivity-and-integration>

would broaden economic integration and development within the regions and beyond. In this project China would open opportunities for Afghanistan and neighbors to expand their businesses, trades, investments abroad and domestically, create new jobs, state national revenues and last but not least establishment of Central Asia and South Asia market which could easily reach to European market that is steady steps to beneficial arrangement of the 21st emerging century Asia. In this project Obama administration has given moral support for intention of sustainable development of Afghan future and Central Asian States decreasing dependency on Russia.¹¹ In the context of U.S. rebalancing strategy in Asia, China Institute for Contemporary International Relations (CICIR) scholar Wang Shida writing to the Ministry of Public Security That in the post-2014, US reformed its policy to decreasing its troops from Afghanistan and initiatives to encourage New Chinese Silk Road. This shows USA taking political advantages in the region by China's cost. This is widely criticized in China as an effort by the United States to restrain China from legitimizing its role in Asia. Generally they sees these achievements as increased great power competition following announced withdrawal of international forces from neighborhood and efforts to integrate Afghanistan into infrastructure and energy networks which do work for entire region.¹²

Being an essential player in Afghan conflict, Pakistan is also suffering from the terrorist organizations like (Tehrik Taliban Pakistan TTP), based in its tribal areas FATA near Afghan border. Once which were trained, nurtured and allowed against Afghanistan for safeguarding strategic-depth and now became strategic threats to Pakistan's security and stability. A research study conducted by a group of international physicians" organizations shown that in War on Terror 80,000 Pakistanis Civilians including Journalists, Pakistani forces, Militants were killed in bomb blasts, drone strikes and military operation since 2004 to 2014.¹³

After catastrophic losses in the war on terror Islamabad has changed its policy against all militants in the country. In June 2014 Pakistan army launched Zarb-e-Azb military Operation in tribal areas. In response on 19 December 2014 TTP attacked a military led school in

11. Richard Weitz, "U.S. New Silk Road Initiative Needs Urgent Renewal", *The CACI Analyst*, April 3, 2015. <http://www.cacianalyst.org/publications/analytical-articles.html>

12. Wang Shida, "Meiguo quanmian tiaozheng Afuhan zhengce jiqi yingxiang," *Journal of CICIR*, no.6 (2012): 25-27.

13. Tribune: Report, "80,000 Pakistanis killed in US 'War on Terror'" (March 29, 2015). <http://tribune.com.pk/story/860790/80000-pakistanis-killed-in-us-war-on-terror-report/>

Peshawar and brought unprecedented barbarism, killing more than 140 innocent children and many injured which was not less than 9/11 for Pakistan where both government and Army united against all kind of terrorism and passed (National Action Plan NAC) in state's National Assembly for zero- tolerance for all kinds of militancy in state and established military courts for speedy trials of terrorists. Pakistan hoped for opening new chapter of relationship between Afghanistan and Pakistan base on cooperation, trust and mutual understanding to resolve issues regarding militancy and mistrust in their bilateral relations.

At present, there are several grey areas for both countries to rectify, for example cross border infiltrations of refugees, drug trafficking, entry of Afghan Taliban into Pakistan's Tribal belt, trust deficit between the two countries over counter terrorism policy and dialogue with the terrorists networks, Durand line issue, which have deteriorated the relations between the two neighbors in the past four decades.

Such growing positive changes in Afghanistan from transition of political and military powers, peace talks and commitment of regional states, regional trade and commerce, and as well as the Chinese fully development in Afghanistan are encouraging and optimistic communications for long-standing peace, prosperity and stability of Afghanistan and the region.

1.3 Limitation of Research

This research examines China's growing influence in Afghanistan (post-2014) in the context of the Chinese government's overall approach to Afghan peace and stability. The China growing influence in Afghanistan can be seen in three dynamics which are security, economic and geo-strategic and in the same area its impacts on Pakistan have also been explored.

The focus of this research is on the growing role of the China in Afghanistan after 2014, its implications on regional security stability and Pakistan. It examines China-Pakistan involvement in Afghanistan in the post-2014. The emerging political, economic and security dynamic of the region is almost going to change. Neighboring states of Afghanistan, especially Pakistan and China are reorienting and coordinating their foreign policies towards Afghanistan.

1.4 Statement of the Problem

Political, economic and military dynamics of Afghanistan are changing rapidly with growing convergence interest of the regional powers. The political transition of Afghanistan took place after peaceful election of 2014 and the new President Dr. Ashraf Ghani designed National Unity Government NUG in the country with Dr. Abdullah, Abdullah. The President being an economist and Ph.D. scholar discovered new realistic plan of action in his state's foreign policy with a focus on regional alignments for the Afghan problem of insurgency rather dependently the sole reliance on US-Afghan foreign policy. He has diversified regional player China for visit in 2014 and then Pakistan to be the second one and the same year to keep influential mandates in Afghan's permanent co-existence and stability.

China being emerging power also required such ensemble strategy with capricious neighbors to attain his future goals. One need of China is the peaceful settlement of its own Ughier Islamic militancy within state and second peaceful neighborhood to realize future's dream of Silk Rout. So in the post 2014, China have illustrated it policy in Afghanistan.

Pakistan being directly affected in menace of terrorism, once followed as state instrument against neighboring Afghanistan and India, has forced its foreign policy towards orientalism and kicked up full-fledged military operation in the country against terrorism of TTP and bound it-self with economic opportunities of China in the region.

1.5 Purpose of Research

The purpose of the research is to analyze the facts to bring possible stability in Afghanistan which is essential for development and progress of Afghanistan and Pakistan as well as for the entire region. The pertinent issue of terrorism and extremism in Afghanistan and Pakistan has taken a heavy toll of both civilians and military. Thousands have died on both sides of Durand Line for many years belonged to Afghanistan and Pakistan particular, and China and USA led-allies general during the Afghanistan war.

Mistrust between Pakistan and Afghanistan is one of the basic concerns in Afghan conflict and blame games and proxies against each other is repetitive story between two immediate neighbors. This can be eliminated through useful economic interdependence and investment and trade, instead of using states won proxies to gain strategic interests. How opportunity of economic interconnectivity in the region is best alternative for long lasting peace and development in Afghanistan and the region post-2014 and how regional states led by China can bring regional states including Afghanistan and Pakistan in this visionary roadmap of emerging Asian economy.

Although the topic of the research is new and not too much work has been done on it so it can filling gap in research. The other significance of the research is that China due to its own economic and strategic interests has initiated constructive role in Afghanistan and started efforts for peace talks with Taliban in order to promote economic and commercial investments in the Pak-Afghan region since 2014.

China has also initiated plan of bringing Islamabad and Kabul on peace table and also connecting the two countries through the mega project of CPEC.

1.6 Research Methodology

Though the topic is quite new and not much research has been done on this topic before so the research methodology is qualitative cum quantitative in nature. Mix method of data collection has been used in this research. For primary data collection some discussion has been done with security policy analysts in Islamabad institutions like SDPI, IPRI etc. Visited Afghanistan Embassy in order to find out the answer of the questions raised. The Secondary sources for data collection are books, magazines, newspapers and Journal articles.

1.7 Research Design

The conducted research is divided into following four Chapters, apart from conclusion and bibliography. The first chapter of this research explains detail account of introduction of the topic chosen for the research. It deals with research proposal and complete methodology and theoretical framework of the topic. Security of Afghanistan, which is directly or

indirectly affecting the security of the neighboring states for decades, is the basic concern of the regional states specially of China and Afghanistan its own. Uncertainty and instability of Afghanistan has been breeding ground of transnational terrorism and safe shelter abode of terrorist networks. Especially China and Pakistan are affected states of that nightmare in the region for decades. For instance China in Xinyang and Pakistan in Waziristan are equally affected at almost. The of Afghanistan conflict is viewed in perspective of Berry Buzan's Theory of "Regional Security Complex" in the context of regional security and Afghanistan an insulator in the region

Second chapter gives a detail account of history (pre-2014) of the Afghan conflict by highlighting tale great powers and regional powers interests in Afghanistan in different phases. Afghanistan, beginning from Cold war to the war-on-terror and after the announcement of withdrawal of US led military mission (post-2014). Afghanistan being the landlocked and insulator state has placed an important conduit for different states in various period of time. This chapter also examines and analyzes Afghanistan's socio-political division within society and also focuses on the question of the proxy wars by regional players and specially the two arch rivals India and Pakistan in Afghan soul and also gives detail account of Saudi-Iran proxy war on sectarian dissections which is the sole threat to peace disturbance in Afghanistan and the region.

Third chapter gives detail account of Chinese growing influence in Afghanistan pre and Post-2014 with title "Chines Growing Influence in Afghanistan (Pre and Post-2014)" in both political and military terms. The transfer of political power from Hamid Karzai Government to a new elected unity government which led by economist Ashraf Ghani and chief executive Dr. Abdullah, Abdullah after a peaceful historical election which shows the people of Afghanistan towards democracy by rejecting Taliban theocracy, transfer of military power from International Security Assistant Forces (ISAF) to Afghan National Army (ANA) post-2014 and it also discuss Obama's administration plan of withdrawal with leaving 8,600 force in Afghanistan till 2016.

In 2014 international troops completed their combat mission against international terrorism after for almost decades of war in Afghanistan and limited their focus to training and assistance of Afghan National Army. China being the emerging power in global politics is

now more proactive in Afghan-Pak politics driven by won national interest of trade, investment as well as to control Islamic militancy in Xingjian province. This chapter is futuristic in nature because this will be based on how China will implement its policy with respect to Afghanistan after the US withdrawal keeping in hand the peace deal with Afghan Taliban and pressurizing Pakistan to play its crucial role for peace deal formula with Afghan government and Taliban to end Afghan conflict through political reconciliation.

Fourth chapter gives detail of Chinese strong impacts on Pakistan with title as “Impacts on Pakistan”. It emphasizes over the crucial role of Pakistan and China being traditional allies and China being All-Weather friend of Pakistan always supporting, helping Pakistan in its social, economic, military and political affairs and China is the biggest economic investor in the region. Additionally both countries have common concerns and interests for India and such historically strong ties effects on each policy in Afghan issue and its implication for regional security.

1.8 Research Questions

- 1) Despite Afghanistan being a war torn country, why China has reoriented its policy towards Afghanistan?
- 2) What is the nature of Chinese economic and strategic interests in Afghanistan and its impacts on Pakistan in post-2014?
- 3) What are the major impediments to peace and stability in Afghanistan?

1.9 Literature Review

In a research article, published in journal of Poliski Instytute Spraw Miedzynarodowych on October 2014, Justyna has explained China’s upcoming role in Afghanistan after international troop’s withdrawal. China-Afghanistan being neighbors in their Wakhan border; it has now a concern for Chines policymaker to safe Afghanistan from international terrorism because Afghanistan is one of the notable sources of possible instability and uncertainty for the entire

region in the future.¹⁴ The presence of NATO forces in Afghanistan is significance for Beijing's interests in the framework of Talibanization ending in neighborhood albeit not for long term stay of US military forces. However, post-2014 pro-active approaches are to be supposed through "Chinese characteristics" slogan of political attempts not likely military.

For a political approach, the author has analyzed Chinese diplomatic actions in Afghanistan in the framework of cooperation by involving every country from the region, in different multilateral forum and mechanisms like CICA and the SCO, the Istanbul Process or Heart of Asia, trilateral dialogues, Murree Peace talk and Quadilateral Coordination Group QCG.

A prominent Chinese dream of "New Silk Road" concept is one of her clear confirmation that Beijing is willing to see free-Taliban Afghanistan in the future for long term interests. In this regard neighbor state of Afghanistan especially China can play significant roles in order to safeguard its own long term interests of political economy.

In a research article Gartenstein highlights Chinese economic and security interests in Afghanistan post-2014 where international troops have ended prolong combat strategic mission against Islamic militancy of Al-Qaeda. In the whole War on Terror" China remained a neutral state regardless it's prolong goals in the region and beyond but after some political and military transformation in Afghanistan, China has changed its position. In this article he says that China being exploiter of raw material and other natural resources and concern for their own

14. Justyna Szczudlik Tatar, "China's Evolving Stance on Afghanistan: Towards More Robust Diplomacy with Chinese Characteristics," *Poliski Institute Spraw Miedzynarodowych* 58, no.10 (October 2014): 22, 58.

Islamist separation insurgency in Xinxiang province may develop its relations with Kabul and China investment policy can be seen Judged as “product of the Go West and Silk Road programs.” Which is not much seen to be success and China have no alternative policy if it failed¹⁵ because in the whole history of Sino-Afghan relations it’s the first stab of China in Afghanistan.

Peter Thomson gives a detailed view of Afghan war from Cold-war to Civil war and War-on-Terrorism in his book *The Wars of Afghanistan* published in 2011. He also highlights the internal and external conflict in Afghanistan explicitly; the causes of insurgency, interference and failures of external to understand Afghans and he noted that America and its allies are mired in Afghanistan’s endless war. It is still possible to achieve an acceptable outcome, but only if our policies respect Afghan history and culture and we heed the lessons of past foreign interventions.

The involvement of Afghan people in the mainstream politics in their country is a need of hour. In the current issue of terrorism more Afghans should participate in the mainstream for their country politics because this strategy was successful during cold war. In cold war more than 20 million Afghans were involved to expel Soviet army in 1980’s.

“Unfortunately, after the Soviet withdrawal, the United States and its allies steadily moved their responsiveness away from Afghanistan and left it the non-states actor proxies of Saudi Arabia and Pakistan which ultimately transformed Afghanistan into terrorist Islamic state. United State did not grasp those actions of neighbors in Afghanistan which led to saw the catastrophic tragedy of 9/11.”¹⁶

Similarly, after 9/11 if Pakistan had joined the War on terror formally but apparently Pakistan army led by President Pervez Musharraf continued the support of Taliban and Haqqani network to wage war against American and NATO forces in Afghanistan and provided safe sanctuaries in Federally Administrative Tribal Areas (FATA) after topple Taliban in Afghanistan. After the killing of Al-Qaeeda leader Osama bin Laden, the terrorists and their

15. Daveed Gartenstein Ross, Daniel Trombly and Nathaniel Barr, “China’s post-2014 role in Afghanistan,” Foundation for Defence of Democracies, Washington, 4, 25, (October 2014).

16. Peter Thomson, *The War of Afghanistan: Messianic Terrorism, Tribal Conflicts and The Failure of Great Powers* (New York: Public Affairs, 2011), 8-11.

sympathizers still consider Afghanistan as Launchpad of terrorist attacks in anywhere in the world which one of the foremost concern for all. That is why I (Peter Thomson) wrote this book. My (Peter Thomson) motive sprang from concerns for our national interests and the desire of Afghans, Americans, and the broad international community to break the cycle of tragic wars in Afghanistan.

Another research article was published in *Small Wars Journal* by Lamar Alexander that has analyzed Chinese developing expansion of soft power in Afghanistan for the enlargement regional integration. China initiated efforts to focus on state policy in reverted to neighborhood and look beyond borders economic pursuits in Africa and South China Sea. In this regard the relationship of China with Afghanistan is almost including Sino-Pakistan and Sino-Indian interchanges. Though China is Pakistan's closest ally, but on Afghan issue with Pakistan, China had always distanced itself and neither support Pakistani stance in Afghanistan nor openly denied in the past. Looking Afghanistan in Indian eyes, Chinese with India almost prioritized same policy but now China carefully taking some decisions that are beneficial for both Afghanistan and Pakistan-India. China in this regard tries to bring Taliban and Afghanistan for peace talk which is need for its strategic goals and also keeps unspoken pressure on Pakistan to stop the support of Afghan Taliban's basic needs for survival of sheltering, financing and training, in the region.¹⁷ China sees if Taliban and other Islamic terror networks smashed, Afghanistan will be peaceful and stable country in the region that would be demolished that would be a profit for all regional state and the rout of investment and trade would be smooth in the region toward other regions of the world so needs to realize that peaceful reconciliation with the Taliban via Pakistan is necessary steps towards that dream. Ahmad Rashid Malik, A Ph.D. and research fellow at institute of strategic Studies Islamabad, elucidates Chinese geo-political interest in Afghanistan hoping for regional harmony and stability. China and Afghanistan geographically are bordering with each other at 76km porous belt of Afghanistan. Chines western border is very volatile region due Islamic militancy along Xinyang province.¹⁸ That is why a stable Afghanistan and Pakistan is now formerly in the interest of China's future national goals.

17. Lamar Alexander Farhad, "Promises and Pitfalls: Sino-Afghan Relations," *Small Wars Journal* 09, no. 2 (October 20, 2015): 233.

18. Ahmad Rashid Malik, "China in Afghanistan," Institute of strategic Studies Islamabad, (24 October, 2014). <http://issi.org.pk/?p=2249>

Afghanistan is abundantly a matter of concerns in Chinese policy of Asian fusion that is why to tackle the issue for a perpetual resolution; China has initiated different diplomatic efforts at regional and internal level for Afghan reconciliations.

Zahid Hussain gives a detailed view of political developments in Pakistan in his *Front Line Pakistan: The Struggle with Militant Islam* from the very day of its independence. He also focuses over the fact that there is a close link between Pakistan Army and Taliban's and other Islamic militant groups, because in 1979 the Mujahidin were created by Pakistan Army and still they have close ties. From 1947 till 2007 the Pakistan military intelligence continues to strengthen the alliance between Mullahs and Military.¹⁹ The work of Zahid Hussain covers a deep area of relations between Taliban's and Pakistan but he did not gives that what will be the policy of Pakistan after the US drawdown from Afghanistan and how Pakistan deals with its own non state actors TTP which will become a key factor in de-stabilizing security and sovereignty of Pakistan. The writer also in this book exposes how a military dictator decided to support War on Terror against the Taliban after 9/11, instead of its intelligence agency ISI supported to power the Taliban in Afghanistan through various source of power for example in funding, training and nurturing in mountainous Waziristan and other tribal areas since American invasion in Afghanistan after 9/11.

The Zubair Torwali in his newspaper article published by *Daily Times* Pakistan gives a detailed account on the spread of Deobandi school of thought in the state of Pakistan and finds it risky that the survival of Pakistan as a state is quite difficult if Pakistan continued begging in front of Taliban's for peace he drags the whole story of spreading the Wahhabi school of thought right from the time of General Zia ul Haq's regime in Pakistan to the present government.²⁰ He says that Pakistan should come out of state of denial and says that the counter narratives needs a holistic approach to such issues like Taliban's and he gives measure to focus on military operations negotiations in a holistic manner, but he did not gives any focus on the threat to internal security of Pakistan and also did not questions the face that why a sudden change is happened in Pakistan's policy with respect to Taliban's.

The retired Lieutenant General in Pakistan Army Talat Masood describes and suggests the

19. Zahid Hussain, *Frontline Pakistan the Struggle with Militant Islam* (Columbia University Press, 2008), 98.

20. Zubair Torwali, "Talibanization of Society and State of Denial" *Daily Times*, January 22, 2014.

measures, in his weekly article in Express tribune of Pakistan, which Pakistan government should take in order to make a comprehensive policy with respect to Afghanistan and to eradicate the mistrust between the two governments.²¹ The writer narrates that in Afghanistan there is a perception that Pakistan foreign policy is driven by its military and Pakistan Army should be engaged in peace negotiations with the Afghan Taliban's. Pakistan Army is of the view that Afghan Taliban's are the key elements for their interests in Afghanistan and they focus that Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif should continue its policy of negotiations with Hamid Karzai and not to pull out the Taliban's because these are the sole key components in promotion of national interest. The peace deal with Pakistan Taliban's will pave a smooth way for Pakistan to easily fill up the vacuum after the US withdrawal from Afghanistan which is not mentioned by the writer.

1.10 Theoretical Framework

To adding the central question of the study, this research is based on theoretical context to understand the above phenomenon of Afghanistan in an organized manner. To understand region of by applying Barry Buzan's Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT) in the view of security and to discuss regional connections and states behaviors in an anarchic global structure.

1.10.1 Regional Security Complex Theory

A new approach incorporate traditional and non-traditional features of security developed through the Copenhagen School. However work of Barry Buzan's, Weaver and De Wilde's in security, has moved the focus of International Relations discipline from purely state security

21. Talat Masood, "Building Bridges with Afghanistan", *Express Tribune*, December 18, 2013.

to human security.²² RSCT was defined by prominent American scholar of international politics Barry Buzan first in 1983 and later redefined it with joint study of Ole Weaver comprehensively in their book *Region and Politics* in 2003.²³ The RSCT was first represented and investigated by Barry Buzan in *People, state and fear* book but re-examined and operationalized collective work of Ole Weaver in security and other context. They distinguished region from global to units in different level of analysis. Before going to the regional theorization of the RSCT it is significant to define the region in his expressing that region “must be composed of geographically clustered sets of such units, and these clusters must be embedded in a larger system, which has a structure of its own. Regions have analytical, and even ontological, standing, but they do not have actor quality.”²⁴ On the other side, they also explained international system to be understood as interactions of units with in organized structure in different groups but interdepend on each other in term of political and military concerns.

“International system, refers to group of interdependence units states without system level above them, international system are group of units in an international distinguished from system by nature or interactions with or interdependence on each other, units are composed of groups and organizations, and at higher level states, sub-states are groups of individuals within units and individual are the basic level of analysis.”²⁵

They discuss these levels of analysis with basic historical prospective:

1. Modern Era (1500-1945)
2. The Cold War Era (Decolonization Era)
3. Post-Cold War Era (1990)

22. Helga Haftendorn, “The Theory Building and Discipline Building in International Security,” *International Studies Quarterly* 35, no. 1 (March 1991): 8.

23. Barry Buzan, and Ole Weaver, *Region and Power: The Structure of International Security* (Cambridge University Press, 2003), Preface.

24. *Ibid*, 27.

25. Barry Buzan, Ole Weaver and Jaap De Wilde, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* (Lynne Rienner UK: September 1, 1997), 5.

He analyses RSCT in the context of Post-Cold War era in three levels of analysis.²⁶

- National Level
- Regional level
- Global Level

To Contend with phenomenon of security that every region is placed in a security complex here Buzan define it as “ A security complex is defined as a set of states whose major security perception and concern are so interlinked that their national security problem can’t reasonably be analyzed or solved apart from one another”.²⁷ So the phenomenon of security directly or indirectly is affecting each other characteristically.

Here they explain it as

“Security complex are composed of two or more states which constitutes as geographical coherence grouping. The relationship among these states is marked by security interdependence either positive or negative. The pattern of security interdependence among the states of complex security is durable but permanent.”²⁸

Similarly, security complexes are complemented with downward sub-regional security complex neighborhoods and super complex globally immediate neighbors. These complexes are intermixing and affect each other in social and political contracts in boundaries and beyond. Borders are almost durable but permanent pattern as the basic one made among the neighbors and the only dynamic among them is relationships in anarchic, polarity and socially constructed system of politics exists among units. In the framework of that structure Buzan underlines four conditions or assumptions for regional security complex theory.²⁹

- A region must be composed definite boundary among units states geographically.
- There must be an anarchic system, no supreme authority to bind any one to do

26. Barry Buzan, Ole Weaver and Jaap De Wilde, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* (Lynne Rienner UK: September 1, 1997), 5.

27. Ibid.

28. Barry Buzan, and Ole Weaver, *Region and Power: The Structure of International Security* (Cambridge University Press, 2003), 40-64.

29. Ibid.

something.

- There must be polarity among units under the structure the constructed for balance of power.
- There must be amity and enmity among unites under social construction they developed.

One issue which was taken by Barry Buzan regarding RSCs is “insulator”. In this context he simplifies insulator states as situated in the neighborhood of indifference among Regional Security Complexes. Afghanistan is one of the insulators, situated among RSCs of South Asia, Central Asia and Middle East. Interestingly, insulator states are belonged no region but situated in the boundaries of neighborhood which Buzan distinguishes it as mini-complex, means the insulators are itself a complex but they have generally less power and scale comparatively with other RSCs around them and that is what weak states some time free space for Non-State Actors (NSAs) to play significant roles.³⁰

Afghanistan situated among Central Asia, South Asian and Middle Eastern regional security Complexes. By connecting its neighboring states in its northern, eastern and western fronts and keeping them apart but pulling on all fronts, but keeping them apart much more than pulling them composed in their complexes, Afghanistan always remained an insulator state or mini security complex even after war on terror of American led western powers. During communist led civil war in 1970s at state level or internal level complex that led soviet intervention, Afghanistan sustained as key boundary among other Asian complexes. External interventions in Afghanistan were all due to those internal unrest or rivalries in the country which has created mini-complex that reflects political division at sub-state level.³¹

According to Barry Buzan the basic factor of Afghan Mini-complex during civil and Taliban regime are:

- A Sunni sect of Islam, almost are Pashtun nation, organized Jihadist forces by Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, and after civil war Taliban created by external patronage of Pakistan and

30. Barry Buzan, and Ole Weaver, *Problems in applying regional security complex, Region and Power: The Structure of International Security* (Cambridge University Press, 2003), 485.

31. Barry Buzan, and Ole Weaver, *Region and Power: The Structure of International Security* (Cambridge University Press, 2003), 93, 105.

Wahhabi Saudi Arabia against pro-Afghan.

- Hezbe Tehrer, a Shia-Hazara force supported by Iran.
- A warlord Rashid Dostam led Militia supported by Uzbekistan.
- Tajikistan supported group led by Ahmad Shah Masood.

Taliban is one the most important factor in Afghanistan civil government to the war on terror which not only polarized afghan war internally in ethnic-religious bases but also regionally and externally with sheltering other Islamic organizations (Al-Qaeda, Islamic Movement of East Turkmenistan, Lashkar e Jhangvi etc.). Taliban has created a huge space for other extremist groups to join against their rival groups and countries for attacks which effectively putting the issue of Afghanistan in complex for all regional states and major powers. In this issue of Talibanization, Pakistan remained an important player which has sponsored, trained and sheltered them for his political and strategic goals with financial supports of Saudi Arabia. These turbulence and instability in Taliban's Afghanistan were spill-over to outside territories of neighbors via Islamic extremism, drug trafficking, refugee's crisis and human rights violation effectively. This transitional character of Afghan war in 1993 to 2001 delineated the boundary of Gulf rivalry between Shia Islam of Iran and Sunni Islam of Saudi Arabia and also between scholar and fundamentalist.

However, Buzan also has explained other four key assumptions about the functional insulator character Afghanistan in given RSCs that "First, the resistance power in Afghanistan against Soviet invasion worryingly blocked the out sider state to directly established hegemony or kept interests over Taliban's tyrannical regime in Afghanistan and Second, at that time many regional states were directing concerns by their directions eventfully. Third, the existing paralyzed statecraft or no central government at that time could not establish diplomatic links with neighbors via any goals except terrorism. Fourth, with topple of Taliban from the regime, it departed from fear of Islamic terrorist's safe sanctuary and being functionalized now state reassessing its policy on balance based national interests with other states."

Chapter 2

AFGHANISTAN'S POSITION IN REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL POLITICS (PRE AND POST-2014)

2.1 Pre-2014 Era

In the wake of 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks in America the eminence of Afghanistan was first disgracefully renewed which was appealed by Bin Laden led Al-Qaeeda and as well as during the resultant invasions of Afghanistan to collapse down Taliban from Islamic autocratic regime in retaliation. Taliban, who had provided shelters to Al-Qaeeda through which they could launch similar asymmetric war-fare against their adversaries in the world, were the by-products of proxy war during cold-war. The Islamic guerrilla groups wage and design The notion of asymmetric warfare against their adversaries through irregularity which can be described as “a means of fighting through which a weaker power can offset or neutralize the strengths of a more powerful opponent by applying what strengths it has to its opponent’s weaknesses”.³² Afghan wars are the same phenomenal of asymmetric war tactic in the cold war to war-on-terror with different names and brands which is sometime as religious insurgency, militancy and holy terror and continue different historical contexts.

From the breakdown of Saur revolutionary regime in Afghanistan in 1979 through bloody intervention of USSR and the bleeding civil war and to Taliban Islamic regime in 1996, all had left the country of Afghans in tyrannical chaos. It gave rise ultimately to the formation of Taliban and other Jihadist networks and sanctuaries in Afghanistan and Pakistan which not only affected concerned states but consequently the flame of terrorism scorched China in its western province of Xinyang too. In 2014, around half millions of people worldwide had lost their lives linked to this curse of so-called terrorism.³³ In December 16, only in a single day

32. Martin Ewans, *Conflict in Afghanistan: Studies in Asymmetric Warfare* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 30.

33. Michael Safi, “The New Jihadism: A Global Snapshot, Jihadi attacks – the data behind November’s 5,000 deaths,” *The Guardian*, December 8, 2014.

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/dec/11/jihadi-attacks-killed-more-than-5000-people-in-november-the-vast-majority-of-them-muslims>.

more than 140 children aged between five and sixteen in an attack on a military run Army public school in Pakistan were killed by terrorists. Similarly, 2014 was said to be the worst year for Afghanistan in the terms of violent attacks after 14 years of war against terrorism. In French capital, Paris, three gunmen affiliated with so-called Islamic State (ISIS) gunned down more than seventeen people, including eight staff members of a press magazine. In Middle East, especially in Syria and Iraq, hundreds died on daily bases by the same process of terror campaign since 2003. Same violent acts were done by Boko Haram in Nigeria, and also in Somalia for many years now.

First to define the word “terrorism” it is a strategic term which means systematic use of violent act by a group against other states, a state’s oppression of its own citizens and for still others, aggressive acts of states against other states for political ends. In the context of state’s terrorism in order to achieve its long term political interests, states sponsor, train and shelter proxy against other states. The “proxy war” tactic devised during Cold War when the United States led allies treated local warriors as pawns against USSR. In 1970s, Afghanistan was the chessboard of geopolitics between two superpowers. Similarly a number of guerrilla wars were launched in Latin America, Angola, Chad, and in Vietnam. Such wars turn into de facto conflicts between the Soviet Union and the United States till collapse of USSR.³⁴

In our theoretical framework modern international system is analyzed on the principles of realism, balance of power acquisition and strategies planned to influence others by all means of power or rebalance of power towards other competitor. The motivation of conflict in this real politic among states is self-interest which is primarily the foundation of clashes among states but with the highly advanced innovations in military technologies for the past years, the results of growing a military conflict has become highly expensive to all competitors. However, a part of these latest innovations in technical weapons many states avoid direct military confrontation so they employ proxies to achieve military or quasi-military goals.³⁵

“Proxy wars are the indirect engagement in a conflict by third party wishing to influence its strategic outcome. They are constitutive of a relationship

34. Lionel Boehner, “How Proxy Wars Work.” *Foreign Affairs*, November 12, 2015.
<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2015-11-12/how-proxy-wars-work>

35. Bar Siman Tov, “The Strategy of War by Proxy,” *Cooperation and Conflict* 19, no. 4 (January, 2015): 263–273.

between a benefactor, who is a state or non- state actor external to the dynamic of an existing conflict, and their chosen proxies who are the conduit for weapons, training and funding from the benefactor. Such arm's- length interventions are undertaken ostensibly for reasons of maximizing interest, while at the same time minimizing risk. In short, proxy wars are the logical replacement for states seeking to further their own strategic goals yet at the same time avoid engaging in direct, costly and bloody warfare.”³⁶

Proxy wars also have tendency to be fought in weak centralized governmental or failing state with fragile neighborhood and porous borders among them. These states always lack the strong military power to put down those non-state actors without external assistance and support. Similarly the non-state actors or in other words proxy group also cannot convincingly challenge concerned state without outside financial and operational support and safe shelters.

This strategy of state support or sponsorship of an insurgency or interference in other countries as an instrument of foreign policy was common during the Cold War. The United States and its western allies developed that approach against arch rival USSR in third world countries like Nicaraguan contras, the Afghan Mujahedin, Tibetan Buddhist fighters, and other insurgent groups as part of its policy to check Russian led communism. Those trends of proxy war are not limited to US-Russian global struggle but it was/is also continued among regional opponents like Saudi-Iran in Middle East, Israel-Arab in Middle East, Pakistan-India in Afghanistan and Kashmir. So States frequently support insurgent groups to increase global, regional, or local influence, particularly along their borders as a means of applying pressure on a rival state to admit its political or strategic agenda.

The complexity of Afghanistan’s conflict is also folded in proxy war of external players to support internal insurgents for political, military and ideological goals. The USSR invasion in 1979 and US attack in 2001 indicates the strategic importance of this country. These external wars imposed on Afghanistan brought the country to face several high challenges. The cold war events, terrorism and Taliban insurgency, warlord’s politics and drug trafficking is

36. Andrew Mumford, *What is proxy War: Proxy Warfare* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2013), 11.

suffering Afghanistan for many years now. On the other hand neighboring countries have unstable relations with each other that also create security dilemma in Afghanistan and in the whole Asian region. Afghan envoy Mahmoud Saikal to UNCHR noted his remarks in UN General Assembly during special debates on Afghanistan that external support to the Taliban and other terrorist groups is the primarily driven by regional states rivalry such proxy policy used in Afghanistan for political objectives to create mistrust and suspension among neighboring countries.³⁷

For the achievement of their goals thus global and regional powers have been utilizing local groups in Afghanistan since the cold war. When Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan in 1970's, it was the America who used an insurgent group called "mujahedeen" with help of Pakistan against the USSR and communist regime in Afghanistan for its own ideological and political interests. On the regional level Pakistan sought that opportunity to address its perceived strategic threats of Durand line border and Pakhtunistan issues with Afghanistan. Pakistan support to US led western bloc is not limited to these issues but also its considerable military strength against its traditional foe India and for political goal to install friendly Pakistan government in Kabul to reduce Indian influence in Afghan politics. Thus Pakistan gave technical supports to Afghan mujahedeen in recruiting, training and sheltering with financial support of Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states. Arabian states support in Afghan conflict are unfolded with spreading out of Saudi-Wahhabism ideology to contain Iranian Shiaism in the Muslim world and getting western led bloc's political favor in global politics.

After the end of the cold war and the external backed mujahedin resistance against the last communist government of Dr. Najeebullah in 1990 had plunged into Afghanistan's backyard. The struggle of power was started among the Mujahedeen on the bases of ethnicity and religious sectarianism. As a new government formed by 7 alliance parties of mujahedeen, they repeatedly denounced every foreign intervention in Afghan political affairs. These new multi-national insurgent groups formed the alliances for government in Kabul in 1992, the Peshawar seven and Tehran Eight. These groups were patronized, supported and financed in the course

37. <http://www.pajhwok.com/en/2015/12/01/pakistan-accused-violating-afghanistan%E2%80%99s-sovereignty>

of the proxy war by Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Iran in religious madrassas to fight against USSR. These internal conflicts among mujahedeen had harvested the new brand of Islamic Jihadism in Afghanistan against every form of government in Kabul Jihad was installed by a new group called Taliban from Kandahar through military provision of Pakistan.³⁸ Taliban took power by defeating other groups and installed a vicious regime in Kabul which never had been seen in Afghan history and brought new barbaric model considered as “Sharia Law” in Afghanistan. In that laws they had imposed Jazya, Islamic tax, strict rules on men and women and deprived the whole society from their rights in a modern state model.³⁹ It was only the Saudi Arabia and Pakistan which recognized Taliban government in 1996. So the conflict of Afghanistan is explored in the following chronological contexts.

Following the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001 in America by Islamic terrorist group Al-Qaeeda which killed almost 3000 people and lost \$10 billion in properties and infrastructures, US led NATO forces launched global war on terror with direct military strikes in Afghanistan and toppled Taliban regime because Taliban had provided safe havens to world terrorist organization Al-Qaeeda which is responsible for attacks against USA. During the war on Terror US has alerted to neighboring countries of Afghanistan including Pakistan, which was the strong supporter of Taliban, whither they are with us or against us. Pakistan which was led by military dictator General Musharraf formally accepted that demand to give his support to US led mission in Afghanistan but according to an American journalist in Afghanistan Carlota Galla in her book *The Wrong Enemy* that Pakistani army’s is playing double game in the war on terror with international community and afghan government despite committed to partnership to US alliance. She argued that Pakistan publicly supports that of war of terror with international community but covertly its intelligence agency Inter-Services Intelligence ISI and military constantly support, shelter and handle the Taliban against Afghanistan and ISAF.⁴⁰ After removal of Taliban regime new setup of democratic institutions were established and Afghanistan started its new journey toward statesmanship.

38. Carlota Galla W, “*The Wrong Enemy: American in Afghanistan 2001-2014*” (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Boston: New York 2014), 67.

39. A report by Physician for Human Right, *The Taliban’s war on Women: A Health and Human Right Crisis in Afghan*, Boston and Washington DC, 1998.

40. Carlota Galla W, *The Wrong Enemy: American in Afghanistan 2001-2014* (New York 2014), 90.

2.2 Cold-War in Afghanistan 1979-89

In July 17, 1973, Sardar Muhammad Daud, the former Premier, dethroned his cousin King Zahir from Kabul palace in a successful coup and become state executive for second time with additional support of “pro-soviet People’s Democratic Party of Afghanistan” (PDPA). PDPA found in 1965 with Moscow led Marxist ideology but divided into two factions after two years by internal difference among leaderships. One faction led by Babrak Karmal called Parcham (flag) and other faction led by Noor Muhammad Tarkai called Khalq (People). The coup was carried out by Daud, Parcham leader, military officers with cooperation of Soviet intelligence agency KGB. KGB trained officers in a special Armored Brigade in Pul-i-Chakhi prison for that coup against Zahir Shah Government in a night operation. Daud was most nationalist than Parcham. His long goal was to reintegration of Pashtun land in Pakistan and never recognized Durand Line as border between Pakistan and Afghanistan. Pakistan was very reluctant on his Pakhtunistan question. In 1975 he dismissed Parcham member from cabinet and abandoned Soviet support with cut down Soviet military advisers and following policy of neutrality and also reconciled his ties with America and his allied Pakistan. By lowering Afghanistan dependence on Soviet Union, Khalq and Parcham were reunited by KGB to overthrow Dawood and on the other side young Muslim rebellion group who fled to Pakistan after his coup were also created in Pakistan by its intelligence agency ISI to topple him.⁴¹

In April 27, 1978, Afghan communist launched a military operation on presidential palace and killed Dawood with his guards and family member and declared Saur Inqalab (Saur is Afghani calendar’s month in Pashto) or red revolution, borrowed from Lenin communist coup, in Afghanistan and Khalq faction’s leader Tarkai became the Prime Minister and Fazalullah Amin the Deputy Prime Minister. Communist led coup carried socialist reforms in the country and completely ascended to Soviet power. After these reforms, especially land and gender reform and depressive agendas against foes, outraged had been provoked in the country. Islamic radicalized tribal society had opposed these reforms. The hostility between the government and these groups based in neighboring abruptly erupted with armed struggle

41. Peter Tomsen, *Red Sunrise, and The War of Afghanistan: Messianic Terrorism, Tribal Conflicts and The Failure of Great Powers* chapter 5 (New York: Public Affairs.2011).

and Amin and Taraki went to Moscow to sign an agreement with Soviet Union which included a legitimized direct Soviet military backing to Afghanistan to resist Islamic insurgency which has threaten communist regime. In other words this chaos in the country has invited Soviet direct military intervention.⁴²

It was also Soviet's assertion of foreign policy or so called Brezhnev doctrine during Cold War "right and duty of USSR" to go intervene in foreign countries "if and when an existing socialist regime was threatened." And such foreign intervention and assist were given in Nicaragua, Angola, Ethiopia, Mozambique and Yemen etc. during their wars of so-called liberation in the first confrontation of cold war between two superpowers.⁴³ On December 27, 1979, the Soviets invaded in Afghanistan with 100,000 troops to fight opposition groups of mujahedeen Holy Warriors and also killed the Marxist head of state which opposed their mission and declined and installed Babrak Karmal as the head of Afghan Government.

The proxy war began between the superpowers in the backyard of the third world country when Islamic revolt in Afghanistan against the Soviet invited world radical Islamists. The CIA led programs for supporting the "soldiers of God" had finally attract not only financial and advisory services from such "strange-bedfellows" as China, France and Great Britain but also manpower supports from Iran, Pakistan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates. Pakistan was a key factor and become one of the truly strategic allies of US during Soviet war in Afghanistan. The USSR 1979 incursion in Kabul, U.S has taken anti-communists external policy to halt the increasing influence of Soviet in Asia and approach to Persian Gulf would jeopardize oil supply to United States. U.S interest congregated with Pakistan's interests in Afghanistan and used mujahedeen factor to avoid security risk from communist bloc in Afghanistan and keep friendly government in Kabul to calm down Pakhtunistan issue. Pakistan attracts U.S because of its strategic position and the adjacent areas which have linkage with Afghanistan. On the other side, India with her favor of Soviet Union invasion in Afghanistan with Pakistan angle could get influence. In Operation Cyclone against USSR, Pakistan played a vital role with the consent of USA in Afghanistan. USA provided a bulk to

42. Peter Tomsen, *Red Sunrise, and The War of Afghanistan: Messianic Terrorism, Tribal Conflicts and The Failure of Great Powers* chapter 5 (New York: Public Affair.2011).

43. Scott McMichael et.al, eds., *The Soviet-Afghan War, in the Military History of the Soviet Union* (New York: Palgrave, 2002), 259.

funding Pakistan to recruit and train Islamic warriors to fight against Soviet Union forces. The mujahedeen, whose leadership were also relatively well controlled and coordinated by Pakistan ISI during their seven Islamic parties alliance in early 1989 in Peshawar-based on was and also Iran's eight mujahedeen Group which fled to both Iran and Pakistan during early days of war with a mass population migration with approximately three millions. At Peshawar Seventh party conference:

“Afghan Interim Government (AIG) The seven party leaders and their parties were Mohammad Nabi Mohammadi Islamic Revolutionary Movement of Afghanistan; Sibghatullah Mojaddedi Afghan National Liberation Front; Gulbuddin Hikmatyar Hezb-i-Islam – Gulbuddin, Islamic Party of Gulbuddin; Burhanuddin Rabbani Jamiat Islami, Islamic Society; Yunus Khalis Hezb- i- Islam; Abd-i-Rab Rasul Sayyaf IttihadIslami, Islamic Union for the Liberation of Afghanistan; and Pir Gaylani National Islamic Front.”⁴⁴

In this war another neighbor of Afghanistan, Iran's also engaged in the struggle to remove occupation from Afghanistan despite its deteriorating relationship with United States on the removal of Shah of Iran and American diplomatic hostages in November 1979. Iran was supporting Shia's Wahdat Unity or “Tehran Eight” mujahidin group's alliance which mostly Hazara ethnicity: “Afghan Hezbullah - led by Karim Agmadi Yak Daste, Nasr Party- led by Muhammad Hussein Sadiqi, Abdul Ali Mazari and Shaykh Shafak, Corps of Islamic Revolution Guardians of Afghanistan led by Sheikh Akbari, Mokhsem Rezai and Sapake Pasdar, The Islamic Movement of Afghanistan movement - led by Muhammad Asif Muhsini and Shaykh Sadeq IMO, a member of the Tehran Eight, joined the Hezb-e Wahdat, which was intended as a united Shiite political front, Committee of Islamic Agreement, also known as Shura party -led by Sayeed Ali Beheshti and Sayeed Djagran, Islamic Revolution Movement led by Nasrullah Mansur, Union of Islamic Fighters - led by Mosbah Sade, Hazara leader of Bamian, Raad "thunder" party led by Abdul Jaffar Nadiri, Muhammad Hazai Sayeed Ismail Balkhee.”⁴⁵

These external funding, assistance and facilitation in the war against Soviet Union had

44. Shibil Siddiqi, “ Afghanistan-Pakistan Relations: History and Geopolitics in a Regional and International Context “Final Report, Walter and Duncan Gordon Foundation, p.13, http://gordonfoundation.ca/sites/default/files/.../siddiqi_final%20

45. Shibil Siddiqi, “ Afghanistan-Pakistan Relations: History and Geopolitics in a Regional and International Context “Final Report, Walter and Duncan Gordon Foundation, p.13, http://gordonfoundation.ca/sites/default/files/.../siddiqi_final%20

attracted millions of Islamic militant networks to Afghanistan. One of these was the billionaire Sheikh Osama bin Laden's of Al-Qaeda to here in Afghanistan with other Arab and non-Arab Muslim fighters. Many charity organizations were run by Pakistan, Saudi Arabian and American intelligence agencies.

The mujahedeens were finally able to demoralize all Soviet powers in Afghanistan in and the end, the mujahedeen triumphed in the war and forced whole withdrawal of the Soviet Army from Afghanistan under Geneva Accord signed between the Pakistan, Afghanistan, United States and Soviet Union in 1988 and Parties to treaty in Geneva were agreed to withdraw Soviet troops, non-interference and non-intervention in Afghan affairs. It was estimated about 14,500 Soviet Union and one million Afghan lives were lost and millions were migrated to Iran and Pakistan. The Afghan mujahedeen had not been party to the Geneva Accord and they rejected the agreement to accept Dr. Najeebullah government which had been installed by under the agreement. So in February 15, 1989 Soviet withdrawal was completed and Dr. Najeebullah the president of Afghanistan. He stepped down 1992 from presidency because of continues resistance struggle of Mujahedeen. After him new civil war among mujahedeen fictions engulfed Afghanistan for another decade of uncertainty.

2.3 Civil War and Taliban Regime in Afghanistan 1990-1996

When president Najeebullah regime failed to control the anarchical situation of the state and also failed to win popular support of the conflicted parties, he finally stepped down. Different mujahedeen's factions and warlords were running for power sharing for Afghan palace and entering to Kabul from different corners of the country with different ambitions and internal-external patronages to assume control. Pakistan and Saudi were pushing the above mentioned seven-Sunni alliances rule to achieve the mission of bringing Afghanistan into "Pakistan's sphere of influence under Wahhabi Islam and Iran with eight-Shia groups" alliance. Pakistan had a delusion of Afghanistan to be its fifth province after cold-war. Pakistani general elections of October 1993, Nawaz Sharif led Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PMLN) party frequently criticized its rival, Benazir Bhutto's Pakistan People Party (PPP), by

using the slogan "you gave up Dhaka, we took Kabul".⁴⁶

However in April 1992, Mujahedeen leaders pursued to establish an interim leadership council for six month to rule until Afghan Loya Jirga Grand Council of Afghans representatives could be assembled to elect an acting administration to hold authority for national election in the country. Burhanuddin Rabbani, Mujahedeen leader, became the president in May 1992 and unsuccessful to exert his power from Kabul to other parts of the country because no faction was agree on to run the country due to their internal ethnic and intra- religious quarrels. In reaction to this lawlessness, external interference and warlord's monopolized control, Afghanistan quickly went again into a bloody civil war. Now this fight was not against any external occupiers or communist government but was among the Warriors of God themselves for the sharing of power, once they were at the same page during cold war. Gulbaddin Hikmatyar and Ahmad Shah Masood were leading their groups against each other. Hikmatyar's Hezb-e Islami group was under direct patronage of Pakistan intelligence agency ISI who rejected Rabbani and Masood because Islamabad did not possibly expect the new Islamic government leadership, especially Masood to fulfil their own national interests in order to realize its regional agendas in Afghanistan. Hence the Pakistan's intelligence agency ISI continued full support to Hekmatyar to topple Rabbani from government but failed due weak supports.

Eventually during that failed attempt of power sharing among Mujahedeen, another power thirsty movement upraised from the Kandahar province of Afghanistan bordering Pakistan. That power was called Taliban Madrassa's Students led by village cleric Mullah Muhammad Umar who belonged from poor family of Panjwai District, Kandahar. He had been commander for a very short-time during Soviet Jihad of 1979-89. It was also during Mullah Omar's authority where the destiny of the Taliban came to the end after 9/11 for sheltering al-Qaeda's leader Osama Bin Laden, Who had abandoned his base in Sudan to Afghanistan. Bin Laden brought the US-led international campaign against terrorism to Afghanistan due to its involvement in 9/11 Attacks in US. In October 2001 they completely overthrew the Taliban's

46. Dawood Azami, "*Afghans are wary of Nawaz Sharif - but should they be?*" BBC World Service, (18 May 2013).

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-22551129>

brutal regime from Kabul and installed Karzai led interim government.⁴⁷

Taliban were basically Sunni Islamic guerrilla student's group educated in Saudi-Pakistani led madrassas in Pak-Afghan border areas. These religious schools were built during Soviet Jihad by US consent and Saudi funding under Pakistan's supervision in 1980s. Curriculum of these madrassas was based on Wahhabism, fundamental Sunni ideas, to radicalize Muslim youths reaching from far-flung areas of the world. Saudi Wahhabism was the persistent source of supporting global jihad to contain Shia Islam by spreading Saudi led Sunni influence in the Muslim world.⁴⁸ So this was Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates who recognized the Taliban government in Afghanistan and connected their diplomatic ties with Kabul. The madrassas had produced, recruited, trained and armed a number of Al-Qaeda and the Taliban members from local to foreign countries of the world. They had provided safe sanctuaries to Uzbek, Chechen, Tajik and Arab rebels in mountainous Pak-Afghan border belt and were trained to devote not only to radical Islamism at home but also ISIL in Syria and Iraq. The US and its allies Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, France, Britain etc. in Afghan Jihad did not predict about this extremist groups at that time that one day they could carry violence back to their beloved home-lands as Al-Qaeda affiliates. Today it has been able to spread to the Middle East, the Balkans, the Caucasus, Central Asia, South Asia and Chinese Xinyang.⁴⁹

Under the establishment of Islamic Sharia Laws in Afghanistan led by Mullah Muhammad Umar, Afghans throughout in their history had never seen before such heartless, vicious and wicked regime in Afghanistan likely. Masood's Northern Alliance was the only power remained to fight against the Taliban but in December 9, 2011 he was also assassinated by Taliban's suicide bomber in his home.⁵⁰ Taliban provided sanctuary to Osama bin Laden and Egyptian Islamic Jihadist Aiman al-Zawahiri, who both was the most wanted person of US after the killing of western civilians in different attacks in worldwide including December 9,

47. South Asia, BBC Top Story, "*Profile: Mullah Mohammed Omar*," (19 July, 2015).

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-south-asia-13501233>

48. Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia* (Yale University Press: 2 edition London, 2010), 51- 55.

49. Carol E. B. Choksy and Jamsheed K. Choksy, "The Saudi Connection: Wahhabism and Global Jihad," *World Affairs*, (May/June 2015). <http://www.worldaffairsjournal.org/article/saudi-connection-wahhabism-and-global-jihad>

50. Amin Saikal, *Mujahedeen Islamic Rule, Taliban Extremism, US Intervention, Modern Afghanistan: A History of Struggle and Survival*, I.B.Tauris & Co Ltd, (New York: 2004), 221-32.

2001 attacks in New York and Washington which evoked military response against such atrocity and terrorism.

2.4 War on Terrorism in Afghanistan Post-2001

Following 9/11 in New York and the Pentagon tragic attacks in December 11, 2001 killing more than 3000 people, which was claimed by Islamic terrorist organization of Al-Qaeda, US had launched so-called international military campaign “War- on-Terror” against terrorism in Afghanistan and its bordering area because the Taliban regime in Kabul obviously had denied Washington’s demand to banish Al-Qaeda’s leader Osama Bin Laden to US. Mullah Umar led Taliban’s regime had not only provided shelters to Al- Qaeda but also implemented cruel rules on Afghans under their self-styled so-called Islamic Sharia law and both Taliban and Al-Qaeda were determined to triumph over other region by their trained militants with religious radicalism and extremism. The organization had more than hundreds and thousands of Arabs, Chechens, Pakistanis, Uzbeks, Uyghur’s IMU, Kashmiris, Chinese, and Philippians radicalized memberships ready to launch similar terrorist attacks in their respective country for expansion of the Islamic laws.⁵¹

This military campaign against Taliban was considered as a hope of beginning of the new era in Afghan history to rebuild Afghanistan which was destroyed and totally paralyzed. The people of Afghanistan were calling for liberation from that brutality of Taliban for decades due to Taliban’s severe Sharia laws, strange to afghan society. When Bush administration had promised to dismantle all the terrorist networks and sanctuaries from Afghanistan and establish democracy, institutions, rebuild infrastructures and protect human rights etc. The people of Afghanistan had welcomed this announcement of intervention of US for the hope of peace and prosperity in the country.⁵²

After overthrow the Taliban from power, United States involved international community

51. Steve Coll, *Ghost Wars: The Secret History of the CIA, Afghanistan and Bin Laden, from the Soviet Invasion to September 10, 2001* (New York: Penguin Press, 2004), 287.

52. Steve Coll, *Ghost Wars: The Secret History of the CIA, Afghanistan and Bin Laden, from the Soviet Invasion to September 10, 2001* (New York: Penguin Press, 2004), 287.

including United Nations to support and sustain her political and military movement called Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) to eradicate terrorism, establish a reliable governing system, and rebuild Afghanistan's military, economic and political infrastructures. During November 27 to December 5, 2001 a meeting was organized among different groups of Afghanistan's representatives including ex-king Zahir Shah in Bonn, Germany, to decide the Afghanistan's fate and soon an agreement was signed to structure Afghan political setup.

They established an interim administration for six month to form Loya Jirga to draft new constitution of the country and hold presidential election. They selected former Mujahid, Hamid Karzai as the head of the country till Transitional Authority under which constitution and election must be formed. Under the proposal of Bonn Agreement, United Nations Council for security has established an (ISAF) International Security Assistance Force which contained soldiers from twenty-six members of NATO soldiers and fifteen non-NATO members to support Afghanistan government to achieve its political and military missions.

After completions of constitutional amendments in January 2004 with approval of human rights, minority and religious rights, citizenship rights etc., the Transitional Authority hold first presidential election of Afghanistan in September 18, 2005 and Hamid Karzai was elected as the new president of Afghanistan for five years. With restoration of Karzai government, International governmental and non-governmental organizations had diverted their full assistance and development project to Afghanistan for improvement of Afghanistan's future.⁵³

ISAF had task to recruit, train and finance Afghan National Army and Police to protect its country from outside and inside threats after international troop's withdrawal which were reached today to 1500000 and security task were totally handed over to them after 2014. Despite these efforts, US led international coalition and Afghanistan's own regular army was unable to dismantle Taliban's threats and protect Afghanistan territorial boundaries.

During American military operations against Taliban after 2001, many terrorists groups including Al-Qaeeda had moved to western tribal areas of the country and also to the other

53. Hafizullah Emadi, *Dynamics of Political Development in Afghanistan: The British, Russian, and American Invasions* (Palgrave Macmillan New York: 2010), 15-205.

side of Durand Line border to Pakistan's Federally Administrated Tribal Area (FATA) for launching Terrorist attacks against Afghan government and ISAF. These safe sanctuaries in Pakistan had brought strained ties between Kabul and Islamabad during Karzai's government due to Pakistan historical linkages with Taliban in 1990s. According to US congressional legislation commission reports after 9/11 attacks that Pakistan's intelligence agency ISI is involved to facilitate Al-Qaeeda chief Osama Bin to Afghanistan banished from Sudan in 1996.⁵⁴

Under the supervision of ISI, Islamic militants were used as proxies and were trained and equipped in Bin Laden's camps to send them to Kashmir Jihad against India and also back to Afghanistan for Pakistan's military doctrine of "Strategic Depth" against arch rival India in Afghanistan and "turning Afghanistan into a client or subservient state that would be beholden to Pakistani security establishment".⁵⁵ On the other side Pakistan had also joint and supported Enduring Freedom Operation (EFO) in Afghanistan despite its many objections by permitting NATO's transit routes via continuers across its territory to Afghanistan and also accompanied to joint covert military operations in its territory with tolerated American Drone missile attacks against Taliban and Al-Qaeeda targets in Pakistan's porous border regions across Durand Line. Since joining retaliation war of 9/11, Pakistan has also become a victim of terrorism on daily bases via its own TTP with extreme violence, suicide bombings, kidnappings, assassination, sectarianism and extremism. The TTP has declared Pakistan as traitor for supporting with post-9/11 U.S led war in Afghanistan, opposed democratic system and seek Islamic revolution based on Sharia in Pakistan too. Pakistani Taliban groups are the splinter factions of Afghan Taliban who had been based in tribal after 2001 and Pakistani establishment has lost their control over some Taliban. A parallel group TTP was emerged to bite Pakistan now which is called bad Taliban. Afghani Taliban are those which don't target Pakistan but they stage cross border attacks against US led international troops and Afghan security forces in Afghanistan which is called good Taliban but primarily there are no difference between their support bases, networks and sanctuaries. Both groups had accepted

54. Reports of the President George W. Bush administration's approved independent commission in 2002 on Terrorist Attacks of 9/11 (also known as the 9-11 Commission), <http://govinfo.library.unt.edu/911/report/index.htm>.

55. Annand Arni and Abhimanyu Tendon, "The Genesis of Pakistan's Strategic Depth in Afghanistan", Fair Observer, (June 2, 2014). http://www.fairobserver.com/region/central_south_asia/the-genesis-of-pakistans-strategic-depth-in-afghanistan-88910/.

Mullah Umar as their leader and both want Islamic Sharia and both were affiliated and trained with Al-Qaeeda camps near Afghan-Pak border. Both U.S and Afghan governments accused Pakistan for ignoring Afghan Taliban's largest leadership complex in its Baluchistan province called "Quetta Shura" where they supposed planning's for insurgency in Afghanistan continued.

On the other side, Pakistan prevised suffering by its TTP. A vast number of Pakistanis, both security personals and civilians have lost their lives in such attacks since 2001 including ex-Prime Minister of Pakistan Benazir Bhutto in 2007 and other provincial ministers. Its north-western tribal belts, populated by Pashtun Nation, turned into international hub of terrorist sanctuaries. The People of those areas, especially of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa KPK and FATA, have become the most affected by these terrorist networks, thousands have lost their lives and innumerable were wounded. More than 1200 Masherans tribal leaders were assassinated in targeted killings when they opposed these local and foreigner terrorists in their areas. The prominent peaceful basic tribal structure of that society was destroyed.⁵⁶ Their social, political, economic, religious norms were smoothly shattered and many were internally displaced from their homes in Swat, Waziristan and other FATA areas due to more psychological oppressions and military operations since war-on-terror till now. According to recent survey of Boston University "Costs of War Project" about War on Terror in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iraq, Only more than 150,000 soldiers and civilians have been dead since 2001 in both Afghanistan and Pakistan.⁵⁷

From these lawless areas of Pakistan, TTP has launched series of attacks on Pakistan military and other governmental high profile installations in major cities including "Federal Investigation Agency" Lahore office, Dera Ismail Khan and Bannu jail breakage, The College of Naval War in Lahore, The Marriott Hotel in Islamabad, The Pakistan ordinance Factory in Wah Cantt, The Sri Lankan cricket team attacks in Lahore, Sardar Bahadur Khan Women University Quetta, Army Public School Peshawar, a police training school, Pakistan army military's General head quarter in Rawalpindi and the Navy's Mehran head quarter in Karachi.

56. Farhat Taj, *Taliban and Anti-Taliban*, Cambridge Scholars (Tyne: 2011), 33, 81.

57. Crawford, co-director of the Costs of Wars Programme and a professor of Political science at Boston University, (June, 2015). <http://costsofwar.org/>

According to Steve Coll *Ghost Wars in Afghanistan* and other prominent experts on Afghan issue that Pakistan overriding interests in Afghanistan is doubled over into two reflections. First to get full influence among the Pashtuns that are divided by the disputed border between Pakistan and Afghanistan which Kabul consider it illegal “Durand Line” and Pakistan quests to recognize it as International border.

Second Islamabad views to reduce Indian influence in Afghanistan where India had close relationship with Hamid Karzai government even India is considered as the second most important aid donor after United States in Afghanistan. India has many construction projects through infrastructure assist works as reconstruction of roads; schools, hospitals and recently India have built Afghan parliament’s building in Kabul. India’s soft power image toward Afghanistan has shaped confidence public opinions of Afghanistan. During Karzai’s administration, India, after reopening its diplomatic mission with Afghanistan, to establish its four new consulates in Kandahar, Herat, Jalalabad and Mazar-e-Sharif. India seeks peaceful and stable Afghanistan to develop long-term economic resources and routs toward energy rich Central Asia and also to reduce anti-Indian elements in Afghanistan.⁵⁸ Pakistan perceives New Delhi’s rapid attachment with Kabul to weaken Pakistan by both political and of material supports that are strategic lose to Islamabad and Pakistan also assumes these threats to its own volatile Baluchistan province where India could back Baloch insurgency via Afghanistan and re-materialized Pakhtunistan issue in Pashtuns dominated Pakistani belt.

So, Pakistan always emphasizes on its alliance with Islamic groups to keep India away from Afghan chessboard. Pakistan has deliberated Taliban as its strategic assets for the accomplishment above goals. In the interview with a TV channel, Pakistan ex-army chief General Pervez Musharraf admitted this fact that Pakistan supported Taliban insurgency in Afghanistan to undermine ex-president Karzai in Kabul for the protection of our own interests because Karzai had cordial relations with India and "India stab Pakistan in the back".⁵⁹

58. Brigadier Vinod Annand (Ret.), “Stability in Afghanistan and Implications for India,” *Journal of United Service Institution of India* 137, no. 567 (January-March 2007).

59. Musharraf interview published by *The Guardian* and *DAWN News* reported it, (February 13, 2015). <http://www.dawn.com/news/1163376>

2.5 Political and Security Trends in Afghanistan Post-2014 Era

The recent nexus in Afghanistan has been making an effort to normalize Afghanistan's relations primarily with all these neighboring countries which formerly at a delusion or disillusioned during Hamid Karzai's period due to mistrust in critical issues. Unlike its predecessor it is observed that the current government in Afghanistan has resorted to a different approach pertinent to its foreign policy. Ghani confronted with the formidable task of working on the balancing of ties with its neighboring countries as well as the international community. After coming to power the new government has signed different agreements ranging from the Bilateral Security Agreement (BSA) to the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA). The first one is signed with the United States of America whereas the second one is signed with North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Compared to the previous government of Hamid Karzai such an initiative was missing.

Ghani's administration is making an effort to work on their ties with Pakistan which else was missing in the Karzai government. There are positive signs that the strained relationship between Afghanistan and Pakistan over the years seems to be heading towards a better start. The underlined message being that peace in the region is possible if the two countries cooperate with each other. Since Ghani has come into office he has visited Pakistan and his visits reflect that Afghanistan wants to emphasize on boosting their economic relations as well as on bilateral trade. The current political trends give a positive sense that the Ghani's administration wants not only to strengthen their bilateral ties with Pakistan aforementioned but also to work on the security ties. The security ties include matters pertaining to the border management issues as well as on training matters. The present government realizes that without Pakistan's help it will not be successful in the talks with Taliban thus to avoid instability in any way Afghanistan is making an initiative to work with Pakistan on this issue among others. Boosting of economic ties is the foremost priority on the agenda of the administration of Ghani. Since coming into power Ghani administration has paid visits to number of countries namely China, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia and attended the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) summit in Nepal. Afghanistan's main agenda attending SAARC summit was to talk on its security region wise, geo-politics and its peace process. It has been observed that visiting Pakistan and other countries shows a different considered political approach of the new government in Afghanistan unlike their predecessor

Karzai in resolving the problem of the Taliban. Ghani and his administration paid a visit to China. Their strategy is to put weightage on Pakistan to bring Taliban's to the negotiations table.

In this regard there had been accusations pitched every time on Pakistan previously by the Karzai government that it supported the Taliban who has been waging a war against the government in Kabul. Pakistan never wants strong and stable Afghanistan to be stand on his feet in the line of international community. Afghanistan's accusation were that the reason Pakistan supports the Taliban government is to counter the Indian threats in Afghanistan and pro-Pakistan government in Kabul to accomplish its military doctrine of "Strategic Depth" goals in Afghanistan. However such claims have been denied by Pakistan. In response Pakistan also blamed Karzai's NDS to support anti-Pakistan elements in their soul. So such blame game against each other has detained the ties of the two in grim situation.

After 2014, Ghani's administration stresses on a foreign policy to be more centered upon neighboring countries especially upon China and Pakistan. Since Ghani's government is in the lime light of his policies, many analysts have observed that the present foreign policy of the Afghanistan government has a different approaches compared to the previous one. There are changes in the foreign policy. First the adjustments being that Ghani want to pave and start afresh relations with all the regional and international players. Second is to work on maintaining a balance in ties.

To bringing the Taliban into the mainstream of current Afghan political setup, Dr. Ashraf Ghani has enhanced the process of reconciliation with Taliban to integrate them into the administrative landscape of the country under the equal acceptance of Afghan Constitution. Peace talks is however in the high agenda of Doctor Ghani which previously remained in broken momentum of Qatar office issue in Doha but now Ghani's re-rapprochement with Taliban's talk is slightly different because he wants an comprehensive framework of reconciliations with Taliban where Pakistan should force the Taliban to negotiation table and United States and China would be as observers or guarantors in that peace talks among Pakistan, Taliban and Afghanistan. This peace talk of negotiation is also called QCG. Though on his programme for reconciliations, both China and Pakistan showed positive attitude during his visits to these country at the end of 2014. It also showed a new optimism in both

Afghanistan and Pakistan for the settlement of long menace of terrorism.⁶⁰

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi publicized that China is playing its productive role for the achievement of long-term peace and stability in Afghanistan and the region and that talk must be “Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace reconciliation process”. The face to face direct meeting of senior members of the Afghan team that had taken part in the first ever face-to-face meeting of QCG held among Afghan senior official delegation led by Deputy Foreign Minister Khalil Hekmat Karzai, Taliban members, Pakistani officials and the representatives of China and US in Murree, a Pakistani popular tourist station, in July 2015 but it was scuttled after revealed of the death Taliban’s chief Mullah Omar by Afghan intelligence which had paid high cost of hesitation for the next steps of peace process. Afghan government in Kabul has publicly announced that Mullah Omar had “died suspiciously” in the Pakistani city of Karachi in 2013 and the talk with Taliban is unworkable and Pakistan is not serious with Afghanistan peace process and continuously playing its double game with Afghanistan and USA by secreted Mullah Omar’s death while on other side taking along puppets Taliban for peace talk with Afghanistan. Murree process was once again postponed and Taliban were also divided over their next supreme leader because some member of the leadership had nominated Mullah Akhtar Mansoor as a successor of Mullah Omar while Mullah Omar family refused to accept Mansoor’s nomination.⁶¹

The division among the Taliban into two groups had disrupted negotiation process. The groups who support Mansoor as their new leader are in favor of talk with Afghan government while other group led by Mullah Rasool wanted conditional negotiations with Afghan government. Mansoor had directly negated the talks and affirmed to continue Jihad as the only way to Sharia law in Afghanistan through fighting. In late December 2015, Taliban moved into the strategically important areas, the Northern Afghan city of Kunduz and seized it once again and hanged their white flag on the pole of Chowk Square after 14 years. Later pitched street fighting with Afghan National Army, they were fled and Afghan government resized their control. Again the worst news of Kunduz drew the attentions of international community

60. James and Carter, “Time to Negotiate in Afghanistan: How to Talk to the Taliban,” *Foreign Affairs*, June 16, 2015. <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/afghanistan/2015-06-16/time-negotiateafghanistan>.

61. “Mullah Mansour, pragmatic heir to Taliban leadership,” *Express Tribune*, July 31, 2015. <http://tribune.com.pk/story/929878/mullah-mansour-pragmatic-heir-to-taliban-leadership/>

toward Afghan conflict and many western and Afghan experts were questioning both Kabul and Islamabad for faults in the Taliban insurgency. CNN's prominent expert of current international issues Fareed Zakaria said in his article that Pakistan is the key puzzle of Afghan end game and US must recognize this fact that

“The insurgency against that government is shaped, aided and armed from across the border by one of the world's most powerful armies. Periodically, inside or outside the U.S. government points this out. Yet no one knows quite what to do, so it is swept under the carpet and policy stays the same. But this is not an incidental fact. It is fundamental, and unless it is confronted, the Taliban will never be defeated. It is an old adage that no counterinsurgency has ever succeeded when the rebels have had a haven. In this case, the rebels have a nuclear-armed sponsor.”⁶²

Afghan President Dr. Ashraf Ghani also took responsible Pakistan on Kunduz on his remarks in tribal meeting that Pakistan waged his undeclared war on Afghanistan since 2014 and we most deal first with Pakistan before Taliban. Similarly Chief Executive of Afghanistan Dr. Abdullah Abdullah alleged in UN General Assembly meeting in Washington that Taliban attacker in Kunduz city were facilitated and infiltrated from Pakistan side of border for trouble in Afghanistan but Pakistan foreign ministry rejected those allegations. The Foreign Secretary Aizaz Ahmed Chaudhry said that “Afghanistan is being run by a democratically elected and legitimate government and occupation of its territory by any group is unacceptable.”⁶³ The fall of that to Taliban had not only disrupted nascent peace process among Taliban and AUG but it has also strained the relationship between Afghanistan and Pakistan after Ghani's new reforms of his state's policy towards Islamabad after taking his office in Kabul. If those blames on Pakistan are ever correct, supporting Taliban, then the also question aroused on Pakistan's full commitment in his 20 points National Action Plans (NAP) against all kinds of terrorist networks and sanctuaries in its soil after APS school

62. Fareed Zakaria, “The key to solving the puzzle of Afghanistan is Pakistan,” *Washington Post*, October 8, 2015. https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/the-key-to-solving-the-puzzle-of-afghanistan/2015/10/08/1ebfa63a-6df1-11e5-aa5b-f78a98956699_story.html.

63. DAWN News Report, “Pakistan says Taliban occupation of Kunduz unacceptable,” October 10, 2015. <http://www.dawn.com/news/1210155>

incident. The existence of Afghan Taliban, Good Taliban, would be possibly unaffordable for Pakistan any more if Pakistan ready for position to play as facilitator between talk process in presence US and China.

After all these drawbacks in peace process and harsh situations between the two countries, a delegation of Pakistani Pashtun senior political leaders from Pakhtunkhwa Mili Awami Party PMAP and ANP went to Kabul on the invitation of Ashraf Ghani in November 2015. According to news reports in both, the delegation convinced Doctor Ashraf Ghani to meet with Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif in upcoming Paris meeting on Climate Change in December 2015 to back strained relationship between the two countries on track so the two leaders met at last in Paris.

Mahmood Khan Achakzai, leader of PMAP who is part of delegation to Kabul, told during his meeting with Ashraf Ghani and Abdullah Abdullah, both leaders have put the question on Pakistan that is Pakistan ready to assure recognition of sovereign Afghan state with its legitimate government and constitution Afghan? If yes, they must clear out their previous Afghan policy of “Strategic Depth” to credible partnership and Kabul would reciprocally guarantee Islamabad. In the process of my research interview a research officer from Afghan Embassy told me that “Afghanistan wants just peaceful coexistence with Pakistan and considers Pakistan brotherly country in the region so Pakistan we should replace the geo-strategic with geo- economic. Last time, the chaos in Afghanistan had led to the rise of terrorism. God forbid, if repeated, it can turn Afghanistan into a source of ethnic earthquakes in the region. It goes without saying that earthquakes move around without visa and passport.”

Ghani’s re-arrangement of ties with Pakistan was resumed in December 8, 2015 in the Heart of Asia–Istanbul Process conference in Islamabad and Ghani gave once more chance to Afghan peace process and both states picked broken ties up where it was left off due to mistrust. The process of QCG meeting restarted for the hope future peace in Afghanistan, Pakistan and the region

2.6 The Emerging Shadow of ISIS in Afghanistan and the Region

The attentions of the global media were quickly brought in June 2014 when second most oil-

rich city of Iraqi's Mosul was captured by Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) Arabic acronym DAESH (Dawlae Aslymia Iraq and Sham). The collapse of Mosul to ISIS has publicized that an equally dramatic conversion of Islamic extremism from Al-Qaida to ISIS consequently had been taking place since 9/11 and the second most significant diversion the world media rapidly averted to ISIS in November 2015 Paris attack on editorial staff of a magazine killing seventeen people, including eight members of the press. The ISIS's continuous victory at any organized crime is being shown by social and mainstream media abruptly which galvanize aspirant of joining extremism in Iraq and Syria. Thousands of young men and women were encouraged via their speedy propaganda videos from around the Islamic world. From Afghanistan, Pakistan, India and even China's Uyghur to Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Algeria and even West, Muslim youth both male and female pledged their allegiance to the ISIS, considering Abu Baker al-Baghdadi their leader and ISIS their enlightened organization.

The foundation ISIS is simultaneously derived from the two spectacles in Middle East first invasion of Iraq, in response Zarqawi's Al-Qaida in Iraq and later on Al-Qaeeda in Arab's Peninsula, and second Arab uprisings. However ISIS's switch to Syria was the fasting triumph of Jabhat-al-Nusra li-Ahul al-Sham' the Front for Protection of the Levant, against Syrian president Basharul Assad. Within few years the organization has fortified its strength to both physical and ideological resources across the Middle East and world. The resources it has captured in Iraq and Syria are included the oilfields with well-paid allied smuggling networks, strategic points on both inhabitant areas and border crossing routs. On ideological front, ISIS has attracted Sunni Muslim groups across already primed transnational sectarian clutch in Middle East, on the bases Saudi led Wahhabism and Iranian led Shiaism through their proxy war. The encouraging effects of the emerging ISIS were also felt elsewhere in Afghan-Pak region since 2014. What is worried about entire situation is that disgruntled factions within the Taliban outfits and those against Mullah Mansur might just turn towards ISIL or ISIS. This organization's presence has been the talk of the twin as to speak metaphorically. They are growing fast in the regions around Pakistan and Afghanistan and within Afghanistan too which has become the source of concern for the countries in the region. The raising black flag of ISIS over the rocky mountainous regions of Afghanistan and Pakistan has appeared as a new threat to the war-ravaged countries that are already in battle field with Taliban since 2001. The brand name in this region they used is "Wilayat Khorasan" the ancient name ISIS

has chosen for the region made up of Afghanistan, Pakistan and parts of neighboring countries.⁶⁴

In Afghanistan, some belligerent group of Taliban shared alliance to rebuild the ancient Khorasan state into ISIS the so-called "caliphate" of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi instead of own Amir of Taliban. The group has rejected new leader Mullah Mansoor after Mullah Umar and affiliated themselves with Baghdadi. This ISIS group in had appealed to local section of Taliban to their group for recruitments and some foreign fighters also managed to work for it specially Pakistani Taliban and East Turkmenistan Islamic Movement (ETIM). According to Pakistan intelligence report TTP, which was displaced from Waziristan after Pakistan military operation "Zarb-e-Azb" since June 2014, announced their alliance with ISIS and getting training camps for joining fight in Syrian and Iraq. In Afghanistan ISIS had rejected Taliban and both were infighting for power even in early 2015 ISIS hanged down many Taliban in Nuristan province of Afghanistan. They also have managed to uproot Ashraf Ghani government but despite its rapid emergent in Afghanistan, ISIS is not in position to some extent it's opportune in both public and Taliban due to its vicious sectarian attacks, targeting of minorities, such as the Shia Hazara's. Although in the happening phenomena of ISIS in Afghanistan, many high figures politicians had denounced and rejected the any group of ISIS in Afghan soul including former president Hamid Karzai and former NDS chief Amrullah Saleh via their twitter accounts.

Looking way to Pakistan, The ISIS, assumes it the true heir of ancient Islamic Khilafat after same claim of al-Qaeeda's founder Osama Bin Laden before his death in 2001, has been attracting excited youths from Muslim world especially some ex- Al-Qaeeda affiliated of jihadist organizations. These Salafist jihadist organization members in Pakistan are also easily accessible to their recruitments under Anti-Shia agenda such Lashkar- e-Taiba (LeT), TTP, Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ) and other sectarian networks. Because, after the loss of Sunni led Al-Qaeeda leader Sheikh Osama Bin Laden, these groups might found a new inspiration in the ISIS. Though, man groups and individual followers have pledged their loyalty to ISIS leader,

64. Jamie Doran, "Making ISIL and the Taliban," Al-Jazeera News filmed, (November 01, 2015). <http://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/specialseries/2015/11/islamic-state-isil-taliban-afghanistan-151101074041755.html>.

Abu Baker al-Baghdadi since 2014. Definitely, from the past two years, it is been reported that ISIS has revealed a steady increasing ways in metropolitan cities of Pakistan's Karachi, Islamabad, Lahore, Multan, Peshawar and elsewhere.⁶⁵

Another female student from BZU Multan associating herself with IS was also reported for distribution of ISIS linked pamphlets and somewhere wall-chalking's news bulletins were reported in local media in Lahore and Karachi in 2015. But government had denied about the movements of ISIS in Pakistan and declared no ISIS as an existential threat to the state. Afghanistan and Pakistan are not exceptional IS replication of attachments but many other Muslim-majority states and areas in Asia also overcame this menace and complexity. Islamic State is undoubtedly the most significant new terrorist threat to China in its majority-Muslim's Xinyang province. China's special representative, Wu Sike, to Middle East Affairs said that "about 100 Xinyang Islamic militants had travelled to the Middle East for training and that some had remained to join the fighting there in Syria and Iraq". Another key figure of in Xinxiang's Communist Party Zhang Chunxian expressed his reservation on IS's inspiration in China's western volatile province that "The risk is real, [that some will flee to join Islamic State Xinyang cannot stay out of the [global fight against Islamic State]. We are also affected".⁶⁶

According to Andrew Small, the writer of the book *The China-Pakistan Axis: Asia's New Geopolitics* views on IS phenomena on China's position that ISIS is very clear as they exploit Uighur cause or East Turkistan Movement in China where the group is as more in numbers situated in Turkey, nearest Syrian border, as easily to recruit for joining fight in China and Syria. So, the new emerging group of ISIS is certainly, a huge concern for the future of People Republic of China. So for China, Afghanistan is one of the most security concerns after withdrawal. China problem in Afghanistan is folded up in three different fronts. First free Afghanistan from becoming a safe sanctuary for Uighur militants. The second concern is about instability in border areas of Pakistan which could be easily spill over into Xinyang province bordered with Pakistan. The third most important security concern of Afghanistan

65. Farhan Zahid, "Growing Evidence of Islamic State in Pakistan," *Jamestown Foundation Terrorism Monitor* 14, no. 3 (February 04, 2015).

66. SCMP News report, "Muslim militants who joined Islamic State in Middle East arrested in Xinjiang," (March 10, 2015). <http://www.scmp.com/news/china/article/1734203/islamic-state-members-arrested-xinjiang-says-Chinese-government-official>.

for China is the risk to Silk Routs long term goals to Central Asia for the future economic ambitions.⁶⁷

Democracy in Afghanistan is one of the good options for the settlement of peace, development and stability in the country and region. Democracy, development and peace, accomplishing all these three in Afghanistan might be unbelievable victory in history which the Afghans have attained from the past half and decades after a tyrannical regime of Taliban. The seeds of these harvests since planted, the journey towards equality, prosperity and progress has been actually started. After 2014, one time more the future of Afghanistan and the region were nearing another crossroads regarding additional optimism or pessimism.⁶⁸

Afghanistan historically had remained the focus of interests of internal and external players from many years and the people of Afghanistan deprived from the human basic rights and developments. The consequences of decade's wars, interference, ethnic conflicts and inter-religious conflicts had alienated the inhabitants of Afghanistan and isolated it from the global political affairs. Every kind of governance system has been experienced and tested but failed to address the basic issues and problems due to many reasons and response. Beside democracy or other reforms in the country, governing political arrangements in Afghanistan always were been hijacked by internal and external powers from Alexander to the Taliban self-made Islamic rules. But after 9/11 tragic event change, the fate of Afghanistan and the people optimized themselves towards their own led-system of modern democracy and little more. Today the war ravaged nations had regained its sense of determination and self-confidence to run the affairs of the state by their own hands and hoped for peace and stability within and outside the country. So in the 2014 elections the country has showed the world for positive change and out-come by participated more than expected to cast their basic democratic right of votes for the hopefulness of a new chapter of its bright history at home and abroad. After three decades of deadly wars and loses the people has advantageously participates in all developments preparedness of the country as usher in a stable, democratic and development of Afghanistan since 2001.

67. Andrew Small, "ISIS is really, a huge concern for China," interview with Sadiq Naqvi from Delhi based *Hard news media*, (December 8, 2015). <http://www.hardnewsmedia.com/2015/12/isis-really-huge-concern-china-%E2%80%93andrew-small>

68. Annina Aalto, "Looking Forward in Afghanistan: Prospects for Peace, Democracy and Development", Seminar's Summary, the Finnish Institute of International Affairs, (July 14, 2012). http://www.fii.fi/en/event/476/looking_forward_in_afghanistanprospects_for_peace_democracy_and_development/

Since the year 2001, Afghanistan has witnessed a considerable amount of progress in terms of development. With respect to the growth in the economy has reached almost a 9% despite a few setbacks over the years. The wage rates as well as the expenditures pertaining to the house hold states that the population of Afghanistan has to some extent benefitted. The post-1990's era has witnessed the containment of inflation to some extent. This containment has led to the stabilization in the currency of Afghanistan as well as the management of macroeconomic. Moreover with respect to the infra-structure sectors, the roads, telecommunication sectors have improved considerably. These successions owe their reality to the Bonn agreement which were established in the 2001 December to roadmap the future of Afghanistan.⁶⁹ The demise of the Taliban government in Afghanistan post 2001 has brought a new light to its darkness situation. In the eyes of the international community Afghanistan has regained its respect. The large amounts of financial aid have been given to Afghanistan to provide for its reconstruction and its developments at the numerous conferences worldwide as well as those held within Afghanistan. The post-Taliban period saw a bright future of Afghanistan which was reflected in the Bonn process. Basically the Bonn agreement outlined a few principles ranging from giving powers to the interim government, new constitutional drafting which be approved by the upper house of Afghanistan namely the loyal Jirga.⁷⁰ Women obsessively took parts to select their future president for their progressive future.⁷¹ The forthcoming challenges to the NUG of Ashraf Ghani and Dr. Abdullah Abdullah were very tough for a constant major security and development transition over the next five years. Full responsibility for security handed over to the Afghan National Security Forces by the end of 2014 with continues drawdown of most international military forces over the coming several years, reconciliation with Taliban, signing of BSA with United States, Economic improving external policies with neighborhoods, declination of economic cooperation to Afghan, budgetary and other political development beyond 2014 were the challenges Ghani and Abdullah led government confronting till now. Finally in the year 2014 Afghanistan has witnessed a new era of politics. A peaceful transition of power from Karzai to Ashraf Ghani and Mr. Abdullah Abdullah came into being and more which are given in the

69. William A Boyd, "Afghanistan: nurturing political space for developments", (May 2014)

70. "Afghanistan's uncertain future: A review from Afghan perspective". (Report)

71. Malik Achakzai, "A new chapter for Afghanistan," *Daily Times*, April 30, 2014.

following details.

2.7 Transfer of Political Power from Karzai to Ashraf Ghani and Abdullah's Unity Government in 2014's Election

Afghanistan is quite often referred to as the empire of graveyards and for such a country to undergo transition would not be an easy process or transition in its case. It did take some time gradually moving to slow pace and then finally regained its position in the transition phase. Thus in September 2014 when Dr. Ghani and Abdullah Abdullah formed a new government which is known as the unitary government sowed the seeds of a change in the region as well as in the violent political climate of Afghanistan.

The 2014 presidential and provincial council elections had opened in drizzling summer morning time despite expected terrorist warned threats to voters. Thousands of young, old men and women had queued at polling stations enthusiastically to take part in the process to elect their future president. According to the independent election commission of Afghanistan that there were 1 crore, 20 lac registered voters where 7 million people casted their votes in 400 polling stations around the country including 35% women had casted and the turn-out of the votes was more than 60%. Such huge turn-out in polling shows vibrant anti-wars reactions in the war-exhausted masses of Afghanistan.⁷² The ex-president Hamid Karzai, who stepped down in the election, also gave his remarks after casting his vote in the polling day as an ordinary citizen of Afghanistan that "Today is an important day for our future, the future of our country. I urge the Afghan nation to go to the polling station despite the rain, cold weather and enemy threats... and to take the country another step towards success."⁷³

So it was the first historical transition of power in the country where the people showed that they were optimistic about the future in that response the international community praised the people of Afghanistan for holding the election to law and in safe environment. The legal framework for election in Afghanistan has improved comparing to previous once which is the symbol of improvement of Afghan Society to step forward for protecting real democracy, the

72. Doucet Lyse, "Afghan election: Run-off vote held amid violence", BBC World News, Asia, Chief international correspondent, (June 14, 2014). <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia27844674>.

73. Michael Edwards, "Afghan security on high alert for presidential election," ABC News, (05 April 2014). <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-04-05/an-afghan-presidential-election/5369538>.

rule of law and rights of the people. History is witness to the fact that transitions having a political nature have never been serene in Afghanistan. However this political transition which occurred in September 2014 may well referred to as a peaceful political transition of the history of Afghanistan. Prior to this new government Hamid Karzai hogged the political platform. However, his name will go down in history as the only political leader in Afghanistan to peacefully handover his presidential seat.

September 2014 is marked the beginning of a relationship between Ashraf Ghani and Mr. Abdullah Abdullah who signed an agreement mandating that Dr Ghani be the president and Mr. Abdullah Abdullah be the chief executive officer. Such a peaceful transition echoed a statement that Afghanistan may just be establishing its strong footing in the electoral platform as well as achieving some form of political stability as elections is the ones that now determine who gets to power in Afghanistan and not assassinations. In the new NUG initiated “Realizing Self-Reliance” reforms strategy promised to put in place the building blocks needed to motivate security and special support regional diplomacy; begin the process to make Afghanistan’s public finances sustainable, improve governance, trigger growth and employment creation to ensure that the fundamental rights of the Afghan citizenry to participate in and benefit from development are realized.⁷⁴

The political transition in Afghanistan has set a pace for the economic, security, military transitions in Afghanistan while many within the international forum were concerned with the USA withdrawal of the foreign troops from Afghanistan. It was concerned with the political transition. A development that might just seem very minute for some is in reality a big milestone for the people of Afghanistan as it was decided that the future of their country as well as the future of the electoral politics.

Moving forward, it is imperative to give a little insight on the power sharing between Dr. Ashraf Ghani and Abdullah Abdullah which would not have been possible without the help of US in this regard. The inauguration of Ghani in September 2014 led to a few developments

74. Unity Government official Report, “Afghanistan’s Road Self-reliance: First Mile Progress Report,” Embassy Kabul, Afghanistan, (September 05, 2015).
<http://www.embassyofafghanistan.org/sites/default/files/documents/Afghanistan's%20Road%20to%20Self-Reliance%20Report.pdf>.

which placed Afghanistan under the microscopic lens of the US. Two rounds of elections took place. The first took place in April 2014 whereby leading Dr. Ghani to emerge as the winner. However what needs to be understood here is that both Dr. Ghani and Mr. Abdullah represent a large chunk of the ethnic identities. The two most important identities which have dominated the factions in Afghanistan are the Hazara's and the Tajiks. Thus when Ghani emerged as the winner there was the looming threat of those factions who were loyal to Mr. Abdullah to take over the government by force.

To curb the threat of the forced take over, John Kerry, secretary of state of US visited Afghanistan as negotiator to make a deal between the two candidates. What led to the solution between the two candidates defines the electoral politics of Afghanistan. It was decided that the candidate that loses between the two aforementioned would be given the Office of the CEO. Thus finally the Unitary Government was formed with the winning of Dr. Ghani as the president whereas the latter, Mr. Abdullah was deemed as the Chief Executive Officer. In this way the US became the savior of the "democracy" in Afghanistan. What is interesting of this government is that although the constitution mandates full powers to the president, Ashraf Ghani will be constrained by a few factors.

The security transition in Afghanistan was quite interesting because the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) mandated that during the year 2014 there will be a reduction in the forces present in Afghanistan. Moreover, the US government has reached an agreement between Afghanistan and itself of retaining the military presence in Afghanistan till the year 2024.⁷⁵

2.8 Transfer of Military Power from ISAF to Afghan National Army

The process of the decision of the handover of military power from US led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) to Afghan National Army (ANA) was decided in Afghanistan at Washington, the Kabul and Lisbon Conferences in 2010 to 2013. This process has been started during Hamid Karzai government that ISAF would consecutively transfer their full responsibility of military power to the Afghan National Security Forces by

75. Khalid Koser, "Transition, crisis and Mobility in Afghanistan: Reality and Rhetoric," International Organization for Migration Report, Geneva, Switzerland, (January 2014).
<https://www.iom.int/files/live/sites/iom/files/Country/docs/Transition-Crisisand-Mobility-in-Afghanistan-2014.pdf>

the end of 2014 and ISAF would only partial sustain to train, finance and assist Afghan National Army. So the process of drawdown was initiated in 2014.

The Afghan forces main branch is known as the afghan national army ANA. With the advent of the Ghani's government the main challenge apart from many have been to grapple with the problem of the military power transfer from ISAF to ANA. Given the current volatile situation in Afghanistan which is most of the times engulfed in terrorism, extremism and insurgency? The current priority of the Afghanistan is to work towards the safeguarding of its military objectives, territorial integrity, defeats the insurgents and establishing the rule of law in Afghanistan.

Since there is the presence of the international forces on the soil of Afghanistan their only apprehension is from the manifestation of the internal issues which have time and again threatened the future of the current situation of Afghanistan. Both the internal and the external threats that have always posed a threat to the security situation of Afghanistan are from the rogue outfits such as the Al-Qaeda and the Taliban's, a few others which Afghanistan claims poses a threat from across the borders and into the military strategy of the afghan and drug trafficking as well as the opium cultivation also poses a threat to the security and stability of the country at large.

By far the main objective of the ANA is twofold. The first one is to possess the capability of carrying out the independent operations and second one is to carry out the operations jointly with the ISAF's the members of the coalition forces against Taliban and Al-Qaeda. Initially the objective was to establish the development of a military capability of Afghanistan by the year 2010. However with the passage of time and all the hurdles that has posed as impediment in the growth of the ANA the goal has been changed now. Currently, it has been decided that by the year 2014 almost roughly the man power of the military should amount to something like a 122,000 strong military presence in Afghanistan.

The quest and the challenge that the ANA supposed to face is keeping in mind Al-Qaeda and Taliban's threats and is also the major concern of the international community and the current unitary government that it should be ready to face the challenges at hand of these terrorist networks in Afghanistan. The ANA should be so undoubting in its approach that it should

militarily possess in terms of every capability and strength that the terror's outfits should not be able to eradicate them or overpower them.

Recruiting the persons within this ANA has been based on voluntary basis given the current situation of Afghanistan which has seen its share of a volatile political climate. Moreover with respect to the constitution of Afghanistan and the command and control of the military has been placed in the hands of the president of the country. The main purpose is to back the ANA and to provide its stature the place that it has a presence nationally as well as to provide the central government a legitimate power across the country the access that would give it an extra leverage in terms of the military capability that is very much held in Afghanistan as of now.

The day an Afghanistan free of Taliban was envisioned was the day the idea of the ANA was conceived. This took place during the Bonn conference in Germany in 2001. The plan was envisioned by the coalition partners and the US. They all wanted the establishment of an interim government in Afghanistan and so an agreement was agreed between the US, Afghanistan and the coalition partners. They basically mandated that there was a dire need of an afghan army to be created and established so as to face the crucial challenge of the war torn country.

Every country was given the responsibility of assuming different tasks. US was given the responsibly of building the ANA. Initially it was decided that the ANA was to be built from the scratch or if not then the second option would be from the already developed afghan army. Then finally with the consent of all those involved such as the interim government of Afghanistan and the US finally came to a conclusion and agreed upon establishing the ANA from a scratch. Although the transfer of the military power from ISAF to the ANA has been a slow process but with the passage of time it has been overcome and presenting it is on track and will be reaching its goals. However after having said this there are however a few hurdles in such a creation and that is from paying the salaries of the army Personnel to recruiting them in the Pashtun areas have been very difficult keeping in mind that the geography of Afghanistan has always posed a problem and has proved to be of a cumbersome process. After finalizing 13-years-long direct military campaign against Al-Qaeeda and Taliban, Afghanistan has signed BSA formally with United States formally in 30 September, 2014 which was postponed by Hamid Karzai due to trust deficiency. This agreement has allowed

9,800 American and at least 2,000 ISAF military forces to stay in Afghanistan in the post 2014 to 2024 for training and financing assistants to Afghan forces.⁷⁶ Similarly another fact, called Resolute Support Mission (RSM), was signed with NATO in December 2014 with approval of the Afghan Parliament and United Nations Security Council which has allowed NATO member troops in Afghanistan to train, advice and support Afghan security forces and institutions post-2014.⁷⁷ During Ghani's Unity government Afghanistan has demonstrated great interests of economic, military and political not only with re-approaching US led western partners but also Neighboring China and Pakistan. Ghani's re-approaches to these countries has paved the way of more stable and peaceful Afghanistan due their good response in the renewal of Afghanistan ties after 2014.

2.9 Reformation of Foreign Policy towards Neighbors especially With Respect to Pakistan and China

In the international world affairs how a state is located geographically is very much important. Afghanistan is known for its geography among the carious mapped out on the world map within the global affairs. It is commonly referred to as the country which is landlocked. Moreover, it is the only country which shares borders with countries like Pakistan, Iran, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan and China.

Unfortunately or fortunately Afghanistan is placed location wise in an advantageous place. Advantageous because it is situated within both the south Asian and the central Asian states as well as the region. It is at the center of the world affairs, to put it simply, it is at the helm of all world affairs. Disadvantageous because it will have to be very careful in the way it will and has drafted it's for foreign policy towards the rest of the countries. Previously, under the leadership of Hamid Karzai the foreign policy of Afghanistan towards Pakistan has always seen the highs and lows. The Afghanistan government has never witnessed any firefly relations towards Pakistan, their neighbor over the years due prolong mistrust. However only with the advent of the current unitary government in Kabul, there has been a phase of cordial and friendly ties with between Pakistan and Afghanistan.

76. Declan Wailsh and Azam Ahmed, "Mending Alliance, U.S. and Afghanistan Sign Long Term Security Agreement," *New York Times*, September 30, 2014, http://www.nytimes.com/2014/10/01/world/asia/afghanistan-and-us-sign-bilateral-security-agreement.html?_r=0.

77. NATO official "Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan," http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_113694.htm

When Ashraf Ghani was elected as the president and his ceremony was to be held, Pakistani president Mr. Mamnoon Hussain visited Kabul to break the ice between the two countries. This was indeed an ice breaker between the two countries and which ultimately led to a favorable change of events. This step Pakistan brought Afghanistan closer towards it and even the international community were happy that both countries would develop cordial relations with one another after decades of mistrust.⁷⁸

This was further strengthened when Dr. Ashraf Ghani visited Pakistan as the first country to mark his tour in November 2014. His statement echoed in the official statements emphasizing on the eagerness of Afghanistan to work with Pakistan to resolve the issues between both the countries which pose as a hurdle between the two states for years.

Dr. Ghani went to Pakistan's top military head quarter to see General Raheel Sharif as well and appreciated the sacrifices made by Pakistan in the war on terror. Moreover, both the sides signed agreements between the two countries namely the ranging from the improvisation of transportation to trade and ties pertaining to the economic nature. A number of issues were discussed such as the matters pertaining to intelligence sharing and border issues which were agreed between the two countries to share the information with one another regarding common issue of terrorism which both states suffered for years.

The first important thing about this visit to Afghanistan was that to Pakistan it gave a clear cut message to the international community as well that both the countries sharing a common border are willing to resolve the differences between the two. The second interesting thing about the visit was that Dr. Ghani chose to visit Pakistan first rather than India or any other country. This gave a silent message to India that Pakistan and Afghanistan are willing to cozy with each other and that Afghanistan is willing to take the first step towards cordial relations between the two countries. In November 2014 Dr. Ghani termed Pakistan as a pillar in the foreign policy of Afghanistan and that too it being very important. He stressed the importance of the bilateral agreements between the two countries to be initiated namely Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) and the Central Asia South Asia regional energy and trade that would help in linking both Afghanistan and Pakistan. Moreover, president Ghani

78. Bushra Malik, "Post Ashraf Ghani Pakistan-Afghanistan relations," *PKH*, September 3, 2015. <http://www.pakistankakhudahafiz.com/articles/exclusive/post-ashraf-ghani-afghan-pakistan-relations/>

expressed his eagerness towards the visit of our prime minister Nawaz Sharif in this regard.⁷⁹

A number of initiatives were undertaken by Ghani which gave a new face to the relationship of both the countries. For instance he helped Pakistan in apprehending the terrorist attacks in Peshawar in the army public school where a number of innocent school going children were massacred. The terrorists attack was apparently led by the terrorist outfits namely the TTP. Afghanistan accepted the offer of Pakistan whereby allowing the army cadets of Afghanistan to train in Pakistan and side by side froze the request of Karzai who had requested the military weapons from India. Such a move speaks volumes of the cordial relations between the two countries. Such a move by the current government stated in bold letters that it was in reality swaying from the previous foreign policy of the previous government headed by Hamid Karzai which always included India in the equation.⁸⁰

After Pakistan, Ghani also paid a visit to China. This was a large spinning in the foreign policy of Afghanistan which was previously not followed as much by Karzai administration to focus on regional players for Afghan peace settlement. Karzai was quite ardently inclined towards the west, specifically to USA and India rather China and Pakistan. However it showed that there was a wind of change in that distance as the political climate of Afghanistan was about to changing in the post-2014.

Dr. Ashraf Ghani has laid his administrative career on the different line than former President Hamid Karzai by making efforts to put an end to the long conflict in his country Afghanistan affecting the region by starting direct peace talks with the Taliban via his neighbors. To accomplish this plan, Ghani has been trying his efforts both internally and externally, particularly from Afghanistan's neighbors to help him. Domestically, President Ghani has been contributory in his Unity Government in pursuing national consent and full-support for the peace process by accessing to different segments of the political, religious, ethnic, political, and tribal groups individually in different local meeting and as well as through the official High Peace Council.⁸¹ On the international level, Dr. Ashraf Ghani has extended his above peace process via his visits and diplomatic mechanism to the international community in

79. "Ghani dubs Pakistan important pillar of Afghanistan," (DAWN. November 15, 2014).

80. Ahmad Shayeq Qassem, "Afghanistan-Pakistan ties: Aligning policy with reality," *The Dawn*, February 21st, 2015.

81. Shas hank Bengali and Ali M. Latifi, "Afghan president pursues peace with Taliban his way," *LA Times*, March 22, 2015,

different conferences, specifically Pakistan, China and the USA to back him in establishing peace talks with the Taliban for the future of Afghanistan.

In October 2014, Ghani visited China and along with both the country's high delegation a number of issues was discussed. The issues were of different natures. They ranged from education, trade, economics, security, political matters pertaining to terrorism, fundamentalism and the issues having both an international and regional nature and finally putting a stop to the impending threats of terrorism.

Since Karzai's foreign policy was more inclined towards India he was indeed shocked when he got to know that the current unitary government was sending the army of Afghanistan cadets to Pakistan for training. His view was that Afghanistan should not send their troops to the country's neighboring Pakistan since they sent the suicide bombers in return.⁸²

Since Karzai was openly inclined towards India rather than Pakistan this earned him the title of being pro-India. However this tradition was broken by the current government which wants inclined towards India as their foreign policy took a U-turn and visited the neighboring countries. They visited Pakistan and China to break the ice between the two countries as both previously did not enjoy cordial relations between the two.

Another surprise that Ghani send his new government gave to the international community and more specifically to the US was that the new foreign policy goals outlined by the current unitary government under the leadership of Dr. Ghani. Initially as history is witness to the fact that during the 19th century all global eyes were frozen on Afghanistan it was at the center of attention. This is because the great game where Afghanistan was at the center of the great powers like Britain and Russia etc. Till date US has established its strong footing on the land of Afghanistan to curb away the threat of Taliban who are present in Afghanistan too.

However with the advent of the Ghani's government the US dream of being an important country to Afghanistan must have burst into a million tiny pieces. This is because currently as can be gauged from the recent visit of Ghani to China and then to Pakistan it seems that the US is not really in the first important priority of Afghanistan since it is given importance to its neighboring countries like China and Pakistan.

82. Jon Boone, "Hamid Karzai: Afghanistan in danger of sliding under thumb of Pakistan," The Guardian, March 9, 2015.

Thus with the advent of the Ghani's government in the political platform of Afghanistan it seemed that US is being stood up by Afghanistan and US just might be left standing in the dark while Afghanistan takes the lead by normalizing its relations with China and Pakistan. It seems that Afghanistan has realized that they need to work towards the betterment of relationship with its neighbors which are very important rather than depending upon the US.

What actually was quite alarming for India was that Afghanistan stressed and expressed its happiness in allowing China to be a link between Afghanistan and Pakistan plus Dr. Ghani also thanked China in working with Afghanistan in bringing stability and peace in its country.

Moreover, the astonishing fact was that within the time period during which he was elected as the president of Afghanistan, Dr. Ghani visited China. He declared that China was a partner of Afghanistan in the long as well as the short term and China in turn replied to such a comment by stating that Afghanistan was an old friend of its country. Therefore the outcome of such a visit was related in the happy statements and in the ideals that were made between the two countries. Both China and Afghanistan made a promise to further strengthen their relations by taking it to the next level of cooperation with respect to the economic sector.

Afghanistan left China very contentedly as it got Beijing to commit to an end and that too the economic aid of almost two billion yuan for Afghanistan through the year of 2014. Ghani's this visit proved to be very fruitful for China since even during the great game China was benefiting from its investments in Afghanistan which roughly amounted up to four billion dollars' worth of a contract in Kabul. Having a strong presence in Afghanistan has been very much disliked by India in this matter.

Analyzing the foreign policy of Afghanistan under the leadership of Ghani it seems to be complicated since it has sawed from the previous government. Hamid Karzai was not aligning that strongly towards the US or India for that matter. Balancing a country's regional policy can be a tough task for Afghanistan's new government.

It was quite surprising for the international community when Dr. Ghani tried to balance Afghanistan between India and Pakistan whose enmity is not really a hidden relationship between the two. Thus when Ghani paid a visit to Pakistan first rather than following the leadership of Karzai his foreign raised quite a few eye brows within the realm of the international affairs. Some were of the view that the incline of Afghanistan towards Pakistan

as because of the possession of nuclear giving it an edge whereas others were of the view that Afghanistan was giving India a cold shoulder and giving it a chance to reconsider the dimension of its strategic relationship with Afghanistan. However, in any case it did put India into a corner that was quite taken aback by Afghanistan at such a move towards Pakistan.

However when Ashraf Ghani was elected as the president, he knew he had two options to choose from. One-either to resort to the same foreign policy that Karzai was following which was basically to align towards the west and India and have better relations with its neighboring countries viz-a-viz Pakistan or resort to the other option and that was to work towards the bettering of the cordial relations with it by offering the cooperation that was needed to Pakistan. This is what the current unitary government did. They resorted to the friendly relations with Pakistan.⁸³

2.10 Process of Reconciliations with Taliban

The new government namely the National Unity Government headed by Dr. Ghani and Mr. Abdullah in Afghanistan as of year 2014 are aware that they will have to grapple with a number of hurdles.

They are aware that Afghanistan being a war torn country have need to face a number of challenges ranging from resetting the relations with neighbors of Afghanistan to curbing poverty, corruption. The most prominent beige was and has been is to grapple with the problem of the Taliban. Basically to work towards a process of reconciliations with the Taliban.

Unlike their predecessor Hamid Karzai, Ghani has adopted a different approach with respect to the foreign policy of Afghanistan. They have taken a U-turn in Afghanistan's foreign policy towards the west specifically USA. During the time of Karzai the population of Afghanistan was pretty much against the US. But with the advent of the current government this trend has been changed, Dr. Ghani has adopted a different approach from that of former president Mr. Karzai. He has wasted no time in working towards the resetting of Afghanistan's relationship with the US. This earned him brownie points from the west who

83. Hamid M. Saboory, "President Ghani: Stuck between India and Pakistan," *Foreign Policy*, March 12, 2015, <http://.foreignpolicy.com/2015/03/12/president-ghani-stuck-between-india-and-pakistan/>

welcomed his stance. Ghani's support of appreciating the efforts of the US soldiers whose lives have been slain in this process was reflected in his speech in a press conference which was held jointly with Barak Obama in March in the US.⁸⁴

Such a policy and a rhetoric adopted by the Ghani government were much appreciated by the west and the international community. The reason his government resorted to such a stance was because they wanted to work towards the reconciliation with the Taliban. Moreover the afghan government wanted to work towards all those goals outlined in the framework namely the Tokyo mutual accountability framework which was adopted in the year 2012. This program basically deals with the curbing of the threat of the corruption and for improving the governance matters.

Reconciliation with the Taliban has been and always will be an important priority of the unitary government namely the Ghani government, he understands that the reconciliation process with the Taliban is a daunting process and also because it wants his government to be elected for the second term if his government proves to be successful in reaching a conclusion with such talks. Thirdly he knows that the talks are very important for the survivability of his country, Afghanistan given the dire situation there. Initially he wanted that in order to arrange of peace talks with the Taliban they should agree to a few of his demands such as embracing the peace politics and secondly to uphold the rights of women a right given to them in the constitution of Afghanistan.

Even the US in this regard has adopted a position towards the Taliban talks matters agreeing to all those points outlining that US countering terrorism operations is no longer against the Taliban in Afghanistan. They view the group of Taliban as an important partner for the restoration of peace and stability in Afghanistan.⁸⁵

In Afghanistan unfortunately a group of insurgents such as the extremist outfits like the Taliban have gained a considerable large chunky of territory in terms of gaining the physical ground. It is no secret that the Taliban's have been successful in making their presence known to Afghanistan and to the international community at large. Almost in terms of stats there are

84. Jed Over, "is it Ghani's time to shine," *Foreign Policy*, August 31st, 2015.
<http://foreignpolicy.com/2015/08/31/is-it-ghanis-time-to-shine/>

85 Iqbal Anwar, "US Sees Taliban as Reconciliation Partners; pentagon," *The Dawn*, November 6, 2015.
[http://www.dawn.com/news/1217770/us-sees-taliban-as-reconciliation-partners-pentagon?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+dawn-news+\(Dawn+News\)](http://www.dawn.com/news/1217770/us-sees-taliban-as-reconciliation-partners-pentagon?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+dawn-news+(Dawn+News)).

72% of the presence is what the Taliban's have established itself in Afghanistan soil , an ugly truth that both the US and Afghanistan have to face, no matter what strategies they try to employ at hand or try to outline to counter the threat of Afghanistan. Given such a presence it is going to be very difficult for the leaders of Afghanistan to live in an illusion which like the bubble might just burst. This is because their presence is quite evident on the soil of Afghanistan.⁸⁶

As is analyzed above thing which is importance for the current government in Afghanistan is to initiate talks with the Taliban as it is having a bad effect on the economy of Afghanistan. Their economy is being disrupted plus the image of Afghanistan is being tainted in this process as well as in the realm of the international affairs. If the problem of the Taliban is resolved it would be a blessing for the people of Afghanistan who have been sacrificing their lives for a long time due to the menace of the Taliban.

After the demise of Mullah Omer who was the leading leader of the Taliban the current government in Afghanistan expected to see a glimmer of hope that their country would just be left in peace and on their own. However the death of Mullah Omer might have just jeopardized the plans of Afghanistan. This is because of Afghanistan relations with its neighbors have gone down. It has taken a plunge for the worse due to the confirmation of the demise of mullah Omar has brought about a rift between the afghan government and Pakistan. Moreover, the talks between Taliban and Afghanistan have been delayed.

When Ghani was elected as the president the first few works that he undertook was to reset the relations of Afghanistan with Pakistan. He was hoping that the neighbors would have cordial relations with its neighbor as well as it would play a part in holding talks with the Taliban. However, with the demise of mullah Omar the entire political climate of Afghanistan has changed.

During the Karzai's government it was understood that talks with the Taliban are very important inroad to bring peace in the region of Afghanistan. The primary importance was the inclusion of Pakistan in this peace process without which peace and stability could not sustain in Afghanistan, a nation that was finally understood by the international community and the

86. Tellis Ashley J, *Reconciling with the Taliban Towards an alternative grand strategy in Afghanistan* (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2009), 67.

http://carnegieendowment.org/files/reconciling_with_taliban.pdf

west much refuted by India in this regard.

In the above mentioned context the role of Pakistan has been damned of prime importance. It has with the advent of the Ghani government in Afghanistan which has launched a number of operations countries wide after the massacre of the innocent children in the army public school of Peshawar whose responsibility was taken up by the TTP. The Pakistan government resorted to the operations which were carried out by the Pakistani government against the anti-Islamic militancy. It is not a very surprising fact that when a leader of a powerful terrorist organization dies the question which arises is as to who will be the next in line to take the reins of the organization? Who will rule? Thus by far it is very important and seems to be a daunting task at present. This is exactly the same case that has prevailed over the Taliban situation right now. A power struggle has ensued between the sons of Mullah Omar and Mullah Mansur.

2.11 Interests and Prospects of China in Afghan Conflict

Due to the existence of many problems in Afghanistan, terrorism is one of the common problems for the regional states in afghan soil for two decades. War in Afghanistan could not be won by modesty military mean rather than ignoring negotiations of peace settlement among conflicted group and neighboring states. This has been accepted now by many global and regional powers. This reality has been accepted at large now. As American president viewed that not only military option is suitable but political one is open decisively for longest peace and stability in Afghanistan. Similarly, China and Pakistan also emphasized for the same views of cooperation and stability for Pakistan and the region in post-2014. All the states of the region need to realize its own interests in Afghanistan due to its geo- strategic location. Helford J.M in his International Relations theory predicts that political settlement of Afghan conflict is not only related to Afghanistan but to the entire region for economic and growth.⁸⁷ Bring stability and peace in Afghanistan; generally it has been challenging for many states of the region but particularly for China. Most importantly the neighboring states of Afghanistan have more concern for their interests and prospects in the post- 2014 Afghanistan.

87. John Foster's lecture on Pipelines: "The New Great Game," Available on www.youtube.com (upload at 11/28/2010 2:31pm)

2.12 China's Economic and Diplomatic Interests and Efforts

China has rough border with Afghanistan via Wakhan narrow mountainous strip in the north of the Hindukush. The border between the two states is also called Wakhan Corridor which closed for past hundred years due unsettled areas. During the Afghan jihad in the 1980s, China did not participated directly against Russia despite its deteriorated ties with Russia but she took trade of large quantities of arms and ammunitions cluding assault rifles, stringer-missiles, rocket-launchers and tanks with Afghan mujahidin through Pakistan intelligence agency ISI and the American CIA.⁸⁸ After withdrawal of Soviets army from Afghanistan in 1979, Chinese are almost absent due to uncertain situation of Afghanistan but after 2001, Sino-Afghan relations were developed again and limited to economic term not to military one because Chinese interests in Afghanistan are economic rather than political due to her entrance to energy resources of Afghanistan and central Asia for domestic industries. China militarily prefers Afghanistan for bring peace in its destabilized western region of Xinyang.⁸⁹ In this regard Chinese interests for peaceful Afghanistan are economic and diplomatic in nature. Chinese Interests are as following:

- The first long long-term interest in peaceful Afghanistan is to attain future energy requirements this called in other words “Economic Opportunities”.
- Second long term interest of China in peaceful Afghanistan is to stop spill-over effect of terrorism in its backyard that is called in other words “Containment of religious extremism”.
- The general interests of China in Afghanistan are to see sovereign and moderate government in Kabul which is acceptable for all Afghans and neighbors, limited role of the regional and global players in Afghanistan internal affairs, withdrawal of USA troops from Afghanistan with effective accomplishment of USA led western war-on terror mission in its backyard which is an existing threats to China's future security.

China has limited and neutral policy toward Afghanistan. Chinese diplomatic priority for Afghanistan has been low due to many reasons. During Cold-war Afghanistan was in the sphere of Soviet Union, Chinese were almost remained far away in both Soviet-Mujahedeen

88. Hong Zhao, “China's Afghanistan policy: The forming of "March West" Strategy,” Institute for National Security Strategy 27, no. 2 (Fall/Winter 2013), 1-29. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23722399>

89. Ibid.

war, civil war in Afghanistan of 1980s but after the end of the civil war China had not only completely avoided from keeping diplomatic ties with Taliban's in Afghanistan but also from recognition of the regime. After 2001 When the Afghan war was broke out, the America and its allies just entered the country and had the overall prominent influence on Afghanistan issues, ranging from political and military build-up to economic reconstruction.⁹⁰ China has entirely recognized Karzai led government with diplomatic ties and also supported its reconstruction process via economic engagement. China has extended the membership of it Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) to Afghanistan in 2004 despite its cautious direct involvement and concerns in US war on terror in Afghanistan. In 2007, China has participated in the massive investment of \$3.5 billion Afghanistan's Aynak copper field which was one of the biggest direct investments of China in his diplomatic past with Afghanistan.

In the post-2014, a Chinese interest has been rapidly changing form cultivated disinterest to developing engagement or in other words from neutrality to pro-activism in Afghanistan to perpetual re-adjustments in Afghanistan and the region. Despite Washington's grasp counter-terrorism efforts to terminate terrorism in the backyard of China since half and decade, Beijing has never absolutely considered the presence of US led NATO's military forces in its neighbor as favorable to China because Chinese policymakers were suspicious about US's curious geo-political objectives to encircle China and to control energy routs of the region. But after US announcement of the withdrawal of military forces from Afghanistan and with some constructive developments in Afghanistan, Chinese perceptions regarding post-war Afghanistan is continuously being transformed due to its economic expansion in the region and rheostat its volatile Xinyang province from Uighur Islamic militancy.

The year 2014 is also called the second turning point year of Afghan history after 2001 when maximum number of US led International force were going to withdrawal to transferring military task to ANA and Police. Dr. Ashraf Ghani has sworn in as the country's new president bringing an end to Hamid Karzai's government after an peaceful election in April 2014. Hamid Karzai has been the president of Afghanistan since topple of the Taliban regime in 2001. Ashraf Ghani began his first official four-day visit to China in October and opened new direction for Afghanistan's peace and stability led by China through a common political

90. Hong Zhao, "China's Afghanistan policy: The forming of "March West" Strategy," Institute for National Security Strategy 27, no. 2 (Fall/Winter 2013), 1-29. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23722399>

and economic strategy helpful for the future of Afghanistan and the entire region. China has also activated more advancing and proactive neighborhood policy to create an atmosphere that would be favorable for advanced economic development of the region. Chinese Minister of Public Security Guo Shengkun has visited Afghanistan for the first time in November 2014 after 2001 to announce Chinese security disposition of cooperation with Afghan government to tackle the menace of terrorism from Afghanistan. He expressed his full desire to build heightened law enforcement and security cooperation strategies with Afghanistan to create an environment of peace and stability in the region which would be free of Taliban and East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM). The year 2015 was the year of the establishment of Afghan-China diplomatic relationship where both heads of the state, President Ashraf Ghani and President Xi Jinping had telephoned with each other in January to congratulate the sixtieth anniversary of the relations between the two countries with named 2015 as year of China-Afghanistan friendship and cooperation.⁹¹

Earlier in the year 2015, the first time China facilitated talks among the Afghan government and the Taliban's in Pakistan to demonstrate Beijing's increased interest in shaping security outcomes in Afghanistan. China went as far as to host Taliban representatives on its own soil. In July 2014, China announced that Sun Yuxi, an expert Chinese diplomat, would serve as the first Chinese special envoy for Afghanistan. China has additionally consulted with the U.S at a high level on the issue of their bilateral cooperation in Afghanistan.⁹²

In November 3, 2015, China's Vice President Li Yuanchao arrived in Kabul signing three agreements on security, reconstruction, and education cooperation, according to Afghan Pajhwok news. Li and Ghani praised the state of bilateral ties between China and Afghanistan and pledged to continue the expansion of their relationship. They outlined the nature of the three agreements. "The first agreement is about physical security of our people. The security system on Kabul gates will ensure that traffic entering Kabul are checked and investigated". Second agreement Li additionally committed (500 million Yuan approximately \$79 million) in Chinese capital to support the construction of 10,000 apartments for the families of the Afghan NSF and police who had died in service. According to the Afghan Ministry of Urban

91. Shi Zhiqin, and Ly Yang, "How China and Regional Forums Can Help Afghanistan Recover" Carnegie.singhua.org, (December 31, 2015). <http://carnegiesinghua.org/2015/12/31/how-china-and-regional-forums-can-help-afghanistan-recover/iogy>

92. Shannon Tiezzi, "China hosted Afghan Taliban for talks: Report," *The Diplomat*, January 07, 2015. <http://thediplomat.com/2015/01/china-hosted-afghan-taliban-for-talks-report/>

Development (AMUD), the 500 million yuan represents the first tranche of a total of 2 billion Yuan for the construction of the apartments. Following the distribution of these new apartments to the families of deceased Afghan security and police personnel, the remaining units will be given to government officers. Third agreement additionally, China has offered 1,500 scholarships for Afghan students in Chinese Universities.⁹³ Li also reaffirmed China's commitment to the peace and reconciliation process between the Afghan government and the Taliban. In the long run, the benefits of Chinese engagement and influence in rebuilding a stable and peaceful Afghanistan far outweigh the costs. China can exert its diplomatic prestige in Afghan case designed for bring parties to the negotiating table and use its powerful economy to support mutually beneficial development programs in Afghanistan. A stable and peaceful Afghanistan can be a reliable partner for China and Pakistan to bring desirable harmony of stability and prolong reconciliation into the region. Instability in a country breeds instability in the entire region, and China cannot afford such a liability for its future dreams.⁹⁴ China will have to engage in Afghanistan for its own future national security and economic reservation.

93. Tolo News, "Afghanistan, China sign cooperation accords", Kabul, (Nov 03, 2015) http://www.pajhwok.com/en/2015/11/03/afghanistan-china-sign-cooperation-accords?utm_source=Sailthru&utm_medium=email&utm_term=New%20Campaign&utm_term=%2AAfPaik%20Daily%20Brief

94. Tamim Asey, "China: Afghanistan's New Hope," *Foreign Policy*, April 8, 2015. <HTTP://FOREIGNPOLICY.COM/2015/04/08/CHINA-AFGHANISTSANS-NEW-HOPE/>

Chapter 3

CHINESE INFLUENCE IN AFGHANISTAN (PRE AND POST-2014)

3.1 Introduction

China does not have influence in Afghanistan due to its low strategic, economic and political and cultural interests. The strategic importance of Afghanistan between the gateway of Asia East, West and Central Asia or in the other words as being an insulator in the Asia and a country of proxy war between the two super powers in cold war. During cold war's period China had remained on the capitalist side instead of communist USSR. China was supporting Afghan mujahedeen materially in weaponries and other logistical backings because China itself felt vulnerability due to Soviet intervention in Afghanistan in 1979. In the existing Afghan Civil War, China remained neutral but during Taliban period China become concerned about Islamic extremism in its own western region of Xinyang, autonomous province from ethnic Yun group, Muslim separatist minority group demanding East Turkistan State. After 9/11, China was remained in dual nature delayed policy for Afghanistan, not wanted US in the region and nor terrorism in the region.

After the establishment of new Afghan government in Kabul, Beijing extended its diplomatic ties with Karzai led government after 1993 withdrawal of its diplomats when Taliban had resumed power. With reopening of its effective diplomatic in February 2002, China cooperatively provided economic support, funds and restarted its trade and investment in Afghanistan.⁹⁵ China funded different reconstruction projects, such as irrigation complex at Parowan province and hospital in Kabul of worth \$10 million. China signed an agreement of Economic and Technical Cooperation (ETC) with Afghanistan government in May 2003,

95. Official Documents, "China and Afghanistan," Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, (Aug. 25, 2003). <http://www.mfa.gov.cn/eng/wjb/zzjg/yzs/gjlb/2676/t15822.htm>

which had provided \$15 million in grants.⁹⁶

In the extent of US withdrawal from Afghanistan in post-2014, there are various indications suggesting that China is now vigorously active to carry on its role in Afghanistan. The central part of the Chinese role in Afghanistan is economic and political rather than direct military interventions. Despite, an emerging power, China has been facing the same of terrorism for many decades in Xinyang by Muslim Uyghur terrorists which were known to be centered in Xinyang and in unstable neighboring territories of Pakistan, Afghanistan, and in Central Asia. Chinese people suffered in several cities bordering this area. After 2001 such a terrorist attacks by Uyghur militant group have been spreading out of Xinyang to Beijing due to their ethnic and religious identity. For example, Central Asian's The East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM), Pak-Afghan Taliban and other mobilized fronts of Al-Qaeeda and now Daesh Islamic State of Iraq and Syria as well as World Uyghur Congress (WUC) Chinese officials have alleged their "all-weather friend" Pakistan on Uighur militants connection with Pakistan based groups in Waziristan which could put strains on the relationships between Beijing and Islamabad being the most important regional ally.

To end Xinyang problem, China was almost compelled to launch direct military campaign against Uyghur militancy at home. Considerations of wider implications of mistrust from Muslim World and allegation of subjugations from the west world restrained China. As experienced during pre-emptive measure, once taken against these terrorist, before the Olympic games of 2008, China had been accused often of minority repression.⁹⁷

3.2 Tension between China and the Uyghur

Xinyang is China's autonomous Province which is the largest and endowed significantly with natural resources. Xinyang is the boundary of China's strategic into Pakistan, Afghanistan and Central Asia, 90 per-cent borders is inhabited by these minorities, which has strategic effects for cross-border influence. Xinyang has borders with Mongolia, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan and India. It is inhabited by "Uyghur" and the "Han" ethnic groups. Uyghur are Muslim, speaking a language correlated to Turkish and they

96. Official Documents, "China and Afghanistan," Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, (Aug. 25, 2003). <http://www.mfa.gov.cn/eng/wjzjg/yzs/gjlb/2676/t15822.htm>

97. Ambrish Dhaka, "Factoring Central Asia into China's Afghanistan policy," *Journal of Eurasian Studies* 2, no. 5(2014): 97-106.

consider themselves as ethnically, traditionally and genealogically close to Turkish origins of central Asian's Turkmenistan and Turkey. Han is the predominant ethnic group of China who had migrated to Xinyang from other areas of China from many years ago. The province is now inhabited by more than eight million Han Chinese and 10 million Uyghur.

The region has had intermittent autonomy and occasional independence, but what is now known as Xinyang came under communist Chinese rule in the 18th Century. In 1949, the region now called Xinyang province of China declared an independence state "East Turkistan" and since then reclaimed by China as autonomous province Xinyang. Today the migrated Han Chinese have rule over the province with taking most of the official jobs in all the key fields, especially in security forces and in administration. Uyghur complain about Han of discrimination and harsh action by security forces, notwithstanding constitutional assurances of equality, rights, religious and ethnic harmony. A senior expert at La Trobe University of Australia professor Ausr James Leibold expressed in CNN interview "There are concerns amongst many Uyghur about the use of their language as a medium of instruction in school, to practice a constitutionally protected right to freedom of religion, to wear clothing that they deem to be part of their ethnic culture such as the headscarf, to pray at mosques, to observe Ramadan".⁹⁸ Such political, religious and social disparities are the root causes of complexity between China and Uyghur. The sporadic tension between the two groups has been provoked by such tense actions toward each other. Uyghur demand independence from China in reaction to repressive ethno-religious policies of Chinese Han. Uyghur have found sympathies from other fellow Muslim's separatist groups of Al-Qaeda, Taliban and ETM in Central Asia, Afghanistan, Pakistan and the Arab world. They have launched insurgent fight against Chinese state with wide-ranging assistance from these Muslim militant groups in their respective areas. This subjugation on Uyghur has wider impact beyond Xinyang into Central Asia due to minority question linked to the religious identity.

The attention of the global terrorist organizations like Taliban, Al-Qaeda and now ISIS were surely focused toward China. After 9/11, Waziristan became the basic sanctuary, where Uyghur get training, planning and helping, for the ETIM which is the major mobilizing insurgent group for the Uyghur militant group. Their targets of terror were Chinese officials,

98. CNN Report Edition, "Who are the Uyghur's?" (December 2, 2015).
<http://edition.cnn.com/2015/12/02/asia/china-xinjiang-uyghurs/>

security forces, government buildings and military installations in all over its territory and beyond but in the recent years the nature of violence abruptly changed towards big cities and civil sectors.⁹⁹

3.3 Uyghur Linkage with Taliban

The religious and ethnic ties of China's Uyghur with neighboring states are consistent vital means and the supplementary source for active extremism. Xinyang militants have solid linkages with terrorist networks of Taliban and Al-Qaeeda across the border in Afghanistan and Pakistan. This connection of radicalization goes back to US and Soviet cold war in Afghanistan in 1970s where many Uyghur have been trained and armed as mujahedeen in both Afghanistan and Pakistan against Soviet Union.¹⁰⁰ These fundamentalist Uighurs who fought alongside the mujahedeen in Afghanistan after return to Xinyang later have joined the nationalist movement for complete independence state of Uyghur.

The root cause of the Xinyang problem is the consequences of independent movements of Central Asian States after Russian disintegration in 1990s. Similarly anti- regime danger is provoked in China's Xinyang province and driven by religious persuasions rather nationalist ones. China refers this "splittism" greatest threat to state's stability which is sustained by Islamic belligerency across central Asia borders. So to hold this vulnerability along religious lines, Chinese communist party has placed some sanctions on religious convictions including the control of worship places and clerics. But it has triggered anti-China mottos across Muslim world. For this repression of religion and ethnicity, Chinese always have been criticized in the Western society for intolerance and fuelling radicalization and fanaticism within China and beyond.¹⁰¹ This ethno-religious enthusiasm for Xingjian independence has attracted many Islamic militants from ETIM, Taliban, and Al-Qaeeda and also from emerging ISIS.

99. Marc Julienne, Moritz Rudolf, & Johannes Buckow, "Beyond Doubt: The Changing Face of Terrorism in China," *The Diplomat*, May 28, 2015. <http://thediplomat.com/2015/05/beyond-doubt-the-changing-face-of-terrorism-in-china/>

100. John Cooley, *Unholy Wars: Afghanistan, America and International Terrorism* (Sterling, Va.: Pluto Press, 2002), 65-68, 76.

101. Paul George, "Islamic Unrest In the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region," Canadian Security intelligence Service, Commentary, no.73, <http://www.fas.org/irp/world/para/docs/com73e.htm>

In condemning with 9/11 terrorist attacks in USA, China also has supposedly supported international campaign against terrorism due to its own security interests because the Uyghur Islamic terrorists group routinely linked with abroad terrorist networks such as Al-Qaeeda and Taliban. According to the Chinese official reports that Osama Bin Laden offered large amounts of financial assistance to Uyghur militant for Islamic state and thousands of Uyghur fighters were trained, sheltered, financed by Al-Qaeeda to carry out Xinyang campaign.¹⁰²

China has also explored its important strategic partner Pakistan several time to crack-down against Uyghur in Pakistan but the menace has not been eliminated. Ties between the two partners are at times strained due to uncertainty when Xinyang local government openly points to Pakistan. Even once China completely closed down border's links with Pakistan via Karakorum Highway, which is now the primary economic passage of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project, for pressuring Pakistan take steady steps against terrorists.¹⁰³ Ahmad Faruqi in *Asian Times* discusses this forcing step of China "The Chinese closed the highway because they wanted to send a strong signal to the government of Pakistan that China would not hesitate to freeze the close ties between the two neighbors if Pakistan did not stop its backing for Islamic militants."¹⁰⁴

In December 2003, more than seven hundred Pakistani businessmen were barred for entering Xinyang and also restricted Visas for Pakistan and Afghanistan due to security influx into China. The local government of Xinyang always blamed Pakistan for terrorists using Pakistan soil while attacking in Chines cities or getting shelter in Pakistan but the central government has never directly fingered at Pakistan although diplomatically insisting Pakistan to curb militancy in the region. Although, Pakistan always has rejected allegations of backing Uyghur and pledged China for full support to take strict actions against all anti-China activities in its soil. Since 2004 in many military operations against terrorists in North and South Waziristan and other areas, Pakistan army had killed, arrested and extradited many Uyghur terrorist to China.

102. Joshua Kurlantzick, "The Unsettled West: China's Long War on Xinjiang," *Foreign Affairs* 83, no. 4 (Jul- Aug., 2004): 136-143.

103. Peter Lee, Taliban Force a China Switch, *Asia Times*, 9 March, 2009.

104. Ahmad Faruqi, "China Card Could Yet Triumph Musharraf", *Asia Times Online*, April 5, 2003.

With the changing nature of economic interests in South Asia and Central Asia China has also initiated rapprochement towards Afghanistan, being gateway in the region. According to Lemar Alexander, China has taken four-point approaches with engaging regional likability: “safeguarding security and stability, developing the economy, political reconciliation, allowing Afghans to choose their model of governance, and lastly enhancing international cooperation”.¹⁰⁵ When it comes to Afghanistan, China prioritizes regional mechanism for Afghan issue by inviting all neighboring countries to equally share their constructive role in rebuilding Afghanistan. Attaining peace and stability in Afghanistan is possible through political reconciliation, supporting mutual economic and security cooperation and last but not least prominent regional connectivity through trade, routes, rail links, investment, energy projects and common marketing within the region to establish progressive societies achieving these goals in Afghanistan and the region, President of People Republic of China (PRC) Xi Jinping administration has reassessed China’s policy from neutrality to pro- activism in Afghanistan post-2014. According to Chinese experts China’s big dream of economic “Silk Routs” or “Silk Road Economic Belt the Belt of the Belt and Road” could be disrupted only by instability in Afghanistan.¹⁰⁶ China is much worried about the future of Afghanistan and fairly sees peace and prosperous Afghanistan is essential for success of its economic policies in the region. Afghan President Dr. Ashraf Ghani’s hallmark has first foreign visit to China in October 2014 also gives reciprocal Afghan objective for peace and stability.

3.4 Chinese Security, Economic and Geo-Strategic Approaches for Afghan Peace

The above mentioned transitions in Afghanistan, the states in the region such as China, Pakistan, India, Iran and other Central Asian states have become more active to address in Afghan’s problem of instability and insecurity through bilateral and multilateral dimensional frameworks and approaches such as SCO, the Istanbul Peace Process or Heart of Asia

¹⁰⁵ Lemar Alexander, “Promises and Pitfalls: Sino-Afghan Relations.” *Small War Journal* 6, no. 2 (Oct 20, 2015): 57-211

¹⁰⁶ Raffaello Pantucci, “How China’s Power Runs Through a Peaceful Afghanistan”, *RUSI Research Org.* <https://rusi.org/commentary/china-power-runs-through-peaceful-afghanistan>

Conferences, Confidence Building Measures (CBM), Quadrilateral Coordination Group (QCG). Particularly, China has expanded its economic, political and diplomatic capabilities in the region to settle down a prolonged historical Islamic terrorism and extremism in Afghanistan and the region.¹⁰⁷

3.4.1 Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)

SCO is one of the available platforms for China and other regional players to bring successful peace and stability in Afghanistan in the war on terrorism and extremism for regional stability and economic development. SCO is an intergovernmental organization since formed in 2001 by continues efforts of five regional states including Russia and China in 1996 for addressing border disputes and borders demilitarization. The aims of the organization are today extended to terminating terrorism, separatism and extremism and broadening regional economic integration like as “China-led Silk Rout Economic Belt” and “the Russia-led Eurasian Economic Union”. As some experts of international relations also consider the formative aims of SCO as directed against American hegemony and unipolarity in the regional and international system.

Some SCO member countries like Uzbekistan and Tajikistan not only condemned 9/11 terrorist attack but also extended their full support via airbases and services to US intervention in Afghanistan in 2001. Despite their reluctance about US presence in the region, China and Russia had assisted to establish comprehensive Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) in 2004 against terrorism in the region. Stability and security of the region were placed at the priority bases in the agendas of the organization that was what in 2008 in Dushanbe conference SCO members considered the procedure of observers to permanent members which was approved in Tashkent summit in 2010. All the member states had agreed to cooperate against weapon smugglings, illegal migration and other transnational crimes in the region. According to this regional forum mutual cooperation development, economic, trade, investment, finance, telecommunications, agriculture, technical support and other

107. Shi Zhiqin, Lu Yang, “How China and Regional Forums Can Help Afghanistan Recover”, Carnegietsinghua.org, (December 31, 2015), <http://carnegietsinghua.org/2015/12/31/how-china-and-regional-forums-can-help-afghanistan-recover/iog>

innovations among members states should be extended among member states.¹⁰⁸

Russia, China and other Central Asian states realized that insecurity and instability in Afghanistan, being neighbor state with some SCO members, could disturb the region. In 2005 protocol was signed to recognize an SCO-Afghanistan Contact Group for mutual cooperation in the termination terrorism, drug-trafficking and enhance development in Afghanistan.

Since that Afghanistan has been regularly invited to SCO annual summit. Afghan government led by Hamid Karzai assured the conference in Bishkek in 2007 that Afghanistan prepared to work together with SCO to boost its cooperation to remove the threats of terrorism, drug trafficking and other transnational crime from its soil.¹⁰⁹ Bilaterally, all the members of SCO had been helping and assisting Afghanistan but SCO had not engaged directly in combined military and financial supports to reduce the menace of threats from Afghanistan due to lack of strong political and economic determinations.

Post-2014, Russia and China have demanded to engage SCO to eradicate terrorism and Islamic radicalism from Afghanistan after withdrawal of NATO forces from the country. In 15th SCO leaderships' meeting in Ufa, Russia, July 2015, Afghan president Dr. Ashraf Ghani said that "A significant number of terrorists are coming from your countries to Afghanistan and use the Afghan soil to destabilize your countries and operate against the regional and other countries".¹¹⁰ He further emphasized on the common threats of terrorism, extremism and narcotic where the heads of member states Russia, China, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Iran India, Pakistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan had participated in this SCO summit. He said that terrorism was not remained only Afghan issue because it is now a transnational phenomenon which could shake other regional states too and without collective efforts, understanding and strategy such issues couldn't be easily removed from the region and "without the complete understanding of the terrorism phenomenon, it would be difficult to eliminate it from the region".¹¹¹

108. Raj Kumar Sharma, "SCO's Role in Afghanistan: Prospects and Challenges", *Mainstream Weekly* 3 no. 24 New Delhi (June 6, 2015). <http://www.mainstreamweekly.net/article5721.html>

109. Online URL: http://www.afghanemb-canada.net/public-affairs-afghanistan-embassy-canada-ottawa/daily-news-bulletin-afghanistan-embassy-canada-ottawa/2007/news_articles/august/08172007.html

110. Khamma Press Report on president Ghani's speech at SCO summit, "Ghani to SCO: Significant number of terrorists coming from your countries", (July 12 2015). / <http://www.khaama.com/ghani-to-sco-significant-number-of-terrorists-coming-from-your-countries-1273>

111. Ibid.

3.4.2 Heart of Asia Conferences or Istanbul Peace Process of Afghanistan

The Heart of Asia Conferences is a part of the Istanbul Process, which arranges platform for regional countries to discuss an agenda of regional peace and cooperation with Afghanistan and region as whole. It was firstly initiated jointly by Afghanistan and Turkey in Istanbul in November 2011 to boost regional involvement of peace and stability in Afghanistan through their positive and mutual encouragement for a prosperous and secure region.¹¹² The basic aim of the process is to establish regional dialogue to resolve problems of instability in Afghanistan.

In this process fourteen regional countries have participated including sixteen other countries and twelve organizations that supported the process. These member states are: Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, China, India, Iran, Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Pakistan, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan and the UAE and the supporting state and organizations are The United States, Japan, Egypt, the United Kingdom, France and Germany are among the supporting countries, while the UN, NATO, SAARC, SCO and OIC.

The logic behind the launching of this process is basically found the concerns of withdrawal of US led international troops from Afghanistan, the future of Afghanistan and maintenance of peace in post 2014 and integration of Afghanistan into regional economy. In the first conference, which has been held in Istanbul Turkey in 2011 where it's named Istanbul peace Process, the parties have agreed on the following main agendas.

- 1) Political consultation involving Afghanistan and its near and extended neighbors.
- 2) A sustained incremental approach to implementation of the CBMs identified in the Istanbul Peace Process document.
- 3) Seeking to contribute and bring greater coherence to the work of various regional

112. Shoaib A. Rahim, "Heart of Asia Conference- An Approach to Heal the Regional Hear", Pajhwok News, December 12, 2015. <http://www.pajhwok.com/en/opinions/heart-asia-conference-approach-heal-regional-heart>

processes and organizations, particularly as they relate to Afghanistan.”¹¹³

4) In 2012, the next meeting held in Kabul, Afghanistan and the third one in Almaty, Kazakhstan in 2013 where they had extended creditable initiatives. From ministerial conferences to senior officials meetings, ambassador level meetings to other regional technical group meetings were held in different regional states. The fourth ministerial conference was held in Beijing, China on 31 October where it was the first official visit of the newly elected President of Afghanistan Dr. Ashraf Ghani to China to pledge his own strategy of regional connectivity and harmony among the states. He displayed the importance of Afghanistan in two positions, one Afghanistan as the regional trade and transit hub and second as rich natural resource state which firmly could become the pivot of Asia and to achieve these goals of development in the region, a durable peace and mutual trust and cooperation are the fundamental requirements “Geography has placed us at the heart of Asia and history has made us a pivotal intersection of contending powers and ideas”.¹¹⁴

5) In the opening notes in Senior Official Meeting of ‘Heart of Asia’, Vice Minister of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China Wang Yi, also stated that “Peace, stability and long term security of Afghanistan are not only in the fundamental interests of Afghanistan and its people, but also beneficial to peace and stability of the region and the world.”¹¹⁵ He also expressed that “The achievement of these goals would not be possible without the long-term support and strong assistance of the regional countries and international society.”¹¹⁶ About future stance of China in Afghanistan after 2014, he also urged “in the future, China will continue to work with other regional countries and the international community to make due contributions to help advance Afghanistan’s peace and reconstruction and smooth transition, and promote regional peace, stability and development”.¹¹⁷ President Xi Jinping also said by covering his foreign policy agenda in the context of regional and national issue that China is strongly supporting “Afghan-led, Afghan- owned” reconciliation talks with Taliban

113. Raj Kumar Sharma, “SCO’s Role in Afghanistan: Prospects and Challenges,” *Mainstream Weekly* 3, no. 6 (2015): 9.

114. Office of the President of Afghanistan “Online Statement by President Ghani at the 4th Ministerial Conference of the Istanbul Process on Afghanistan,” (October 24, 2014). <http://president.gov.af/en/news/statement-by-president-ghani-at-heart-of-asia-istanbul-process-4th-ministerial-conference>

115. Summary of the Meeting “Senior Official Meeting of ‘Heart of Asia’- Istanbul Process,” Beijing, (July 10, 2014). <http://www.heartofasia-istanbulprocess.af/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/Summary-10-July-Beijing.pdf>

116. Ibid.

117. Ibid.

and other groups and seeking all regional and international assistance in the reconstruction and development of Afghanistan.¹¹⁸

6) Similarly, the fifth ministerial conference of “Heart of Asia” and “Istanbul Process” jointly was hosted by Pakistan and Afghanistan in Islamabad on December 09, 2015. The president of Afghanistan Ashraf Ghani was welcomed with high protocol reception by Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and other officials during his arrival at Islamabad airport for participating in the ‘Heart of Asia’ Conference in his country. Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif opened his inaugurating speech in the conference by expressing the great philosopher Poet Allama Muhammad Iqbal’s verse about Afghanistan as:

-- “Asia is like a human body. Afghanistan is its heart. If there is instability in Afghanistan, Asia will remain unstable.

And if there is peace and prosperity in Afghanistan, the whole of Asia will prosper.”¹¹⁹

In that conference it was abundantly accepted that Afghanistan is the heart of Asia if there is any problem in Afghanistan the entire region will be affected due to its political and geographical position. So in response to PM Nawaz Sharif quote about Afghanistan, Afghan president Dr. Ashraf Ghani also said that “As the Prime Minister earlier said Asia is a body of water on earth, of which the Afghan nation is the heart; from the discord of the heart, Asia’s disorder; from the concord of the heart, Asia’s accord”.¹²⁰

The all the participants of the conference also agreed on comprehensive framework of cooperation to bring peace and stability in Afghanistan and the region and that is quietly possible through political dialogue, economic linkages, reconciliation and strong commitments of all concern states in the region and beyond. All the neighboring states were reaffirmed to respect each other's independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity, unity under international norms and don't interfere in the internal and political affairs of other states. Last but not least they agreed to establish a forum of four nations group Afghanistan-Pakistan- US-

118. Pakistan Observer’s Report, “China Backs Istanbul Process for peace in Afghanistan: Xi,” (April 29, 2016), <http://pakobserver.net/2016/04/29/china-backs-istanbul-process-for-peace-in-afghanistan-xi/>.

119. Ashraf Ghani and MP Nawaz speeches at the Ministerial Conference of Heart of Asia - Istanbul Process (December 09, 2015), <http://www.heartofasia-istanbulprocess.af/>

120. Ibid.

China QCG for the resumption of reconciliation process between the Afghan government and Taliban. These Talibans were suspended after death news of Taliban leader Mullah Umar¹²¹ QCG first meeting was organized at the side-line of Istanbul conference in Islamabad.

3.4.3 Afghanistan-Pakistan-US-China-QCG

QCG is a group of fourth states, US, China, Pakistan and Afghanistan. The group was established during the 5th Heart of Asia Ministerial Conference (HAMC) in Islamabad on December 9, 2015, aimed to promote Afghan peace process via reconciliation with Taliban. During HAMC meeting, all the representative of the participants including Pakistani PM Mohammad Nawaz Sharif, Afghan President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi and US Deputy Secretary of State Antony J.Blinken had promised “to facilitate an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace and reconciliation process with a view to achieving lasting peace and stability in Afghanistan and the region”.¹²² Quadrilateral group’s framework was plugged during Ashraf Ghani short visit to GHQ to meet Pakistan Army Chief Rahil Sharif in side-line of Heart of Asia conference where both were agreed for urgency of reconciliation process with Taliban. Which was once broke after Mullah Umar death’s announcement. After army chief meeting Ghani remarked that “It is clear to everyone that there is a narrow window of opportunity and sincerity is required to get the warring factions on the table and take the process forward”.¹²³

In the last of 2015, Rahil Sharif made his daylong visit to Kabul for discussion of reconciliation, border management and security and met with high level representatives of Afghan stakeholders including President Ghani, CEO Dr. Abdullah Abdullah and US led NATO forces commanders of in Afghanistan. In this visit they had announce the first roadmap and scheduled of the QCG meeting. In January 11, 2016 the first meeting of QCG

121. Dawn News report “Breakthrough at Heart of Asia: Kabul agrees to restart dialogue with reconcilable Taliban”, Islamabad (December 10, 2015) <http://www.dawn.com/news/1225401>

122. “Statement from the Quadrilateral Meeting in Islamabad, Pakistan,” The Embassy of Afghanistan, Washington DC, December 9, 2015, January 12, 2016. <http://www.embassyofafghanistan.org/article/statementfrom-the-quadrilateral-meeting-in-islamabad-pakistan>

123. Baqir Sajjad Syed, Dawn News, “Islamabad, Kabul agree upon steps for Taliban talks”. <http://www.dawn.com/news/1229136/islamabad-kabul-agree-upon-steps-for-taliban-talks>

was held in Islamabad where deputy foreign minister of Afghanistan Mr. Hekmat Khalil Karzai, Pakistan foreign secretary Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry, Chinese ambassador to Afghanistan Mr. Deng Xijun and US special representative to Pakistan and Afghanistan Mr. Richard G. Olson participated in that meeting. During this first meeting they had discussed the reopening of peace talks with Afghan Taliban, which were withdrawn after the death of Mullah Umar. Pakistan was made committed to bring Taliban by his influence. They expressed joint press statement of the first QCG meeting that “the need for immediate resumption of direct talks between the Afghan government and Taliban”.¹²⁴ All the representatives of the meeting have decided to give precise chance to pursue the reconciliation between Afghan government and Taliban” The talks focused on adopting a “clear and realistic assessment of the opportunities for peace and reconciliation. It also stressed on the “hurdles involved and plausible measures to be taken to generate result-oriented environment for the resumption of talks.”¹²⁵

The establishment of QCG is a worthy and qualitative step by the members because it is one of the first group for Afghan peace talk, where China and US had jointly support Afghan peace in signal room and interestingly the two suspected states Pakistan and Afghanistan are in due course to bring peace and normality in their fragile relationships after decades mistrust on Taliban issue. At least Pakistan was made to compromise to show its positive role to bring the Afghan Taliban at the table. In an interview with Indian newspaper ex-president of Afghanistan Hamid Karzai were very hopeful about QCG’s determination to bring Taliban to peace table with Afghan government in Pakistan but declared it the last optimism for peace “We have no other hope for peace. This is what forces us to accept a condition we are unhappy with on the venue for talks in Pakistan. Of course, we aren’t happy that these talks aren’t being held in Afghanistan”.¹²⁶

The third meeting of QCG was about to held in Islamabad in April 20 but Afghan representative has cancelled their visit to Islamabad after deadly attack on Afghan security

124. “Statement from the Quadrilateral Meeting in Islamabad, Pakistan,” The Embassy of Afghanistan, Washington DC, December 9, 2015, January 12, 2016. <http://www.embassyofafghanistan.org/article/statementfrom-the-quadrilateral-meeting-in-islamabad-pakistan>

125. Ibid.

126. Khaama Press Afghanistan, “Karzai says QCG talks Afghanistan’s only hope for peace as Taliban reject talks,” (March 06, 2016). <http://www.khaama.com/karzai-says-qcg-talks-afghanistans-only-hope-for-peace-as-taliban-reject-talks>

agency headquarters in Kabul by killing dozens civilians in bloodbath. They had again accused Pakistan for hypocritical and unserious steps against Afghan Taliban and Haqqani network freely moving in Pakistani soil. Afghan President Ashraf Ghani for the first time had given his critical remarks about Pakistan for being no longer stayed as confident friend of Afghanistan “Pakistan had promised to aid peace talks but we no longer expect Islamabad to bring Afghan Taliban to the negotiating table and want Pakistan to honor its commitment and take military action against the Afghan Taliban. We want them to handover the Taliban to the Afghan government so we can try them in Sharia courts”.¹²⁷

But Islamabad had yet rejected all allegations as fall and continued its rhetorical assurance to assist reconciliation talks between Taliban and Afghan government through its effective measures. The atmosphere of such talk was likely again converted into interruption. American unmanned aircraft drone targeted the leader of Afghan Taliban Mullah Akhtar Mansur. He carried Pakistani passport and identity card. He was targeted in the area of Afghan border Noshki, and Dalbanden of Balochistan. He was found in Pakistani car rented company in 21 May 2016.¹²⁸ Mansur was the successor of Taliban after Mullah Umar death in July 2015 and US foreign secretary John Kerry said that the strike was directly approved by US president Barak Obama which was killed by US accurate air strike near Pak-Afghan border area on Saturday. According to John Kerry that Mansur was a threat to Americans, its allies, Afghan civilians and forces. He had openly opposed peace talks with Afghan government after he became Taliban leader in July 2015. The death of the Taliban leader Mullah Akhtar Mansoor was once came about at highly crucial times where four nations QCG efforts for reconciliation was going on. Now it depends on the new leader Mullah Hibatullah Akhundzada whether to indulge in peace talks or not.

The currently elected government of Afghanistan started agreements on bilateral level. Dr Ghani while seeking meaningful aid from Beijing in order to rescue his administration for its budgetary deficit, using country strategic location for business and the hidden natural

127. Express Tribune report by Tahir Khan, “Will no longer seek Pakistan’s help in peace talks: Afghan president,” (April 25, 2016). <http://tribune.com.pk/story/1091321/will-no-longer-seek-pakistans-help-in-peace-talks-says-afghan-president/>

128. Qadeer Tanoli and Fayaz Khan, “Mullah Mansour or Muhammad Wali: Fake name but genuine credentials on CNIC,” *Express Tribune*, May 24, 2016. <http://tribune.com.pk/story/1109001/mullah-mansoor-muhammad-wali-fake-name-genuine-credentials-cnlic/>

reserves. Meanwhile, he has also signed a security agreement that ensures Kabul staunch support to Beijing over the terrorist organisation ETIM operating in the Xinyang province of China.

It is also reported by NYT that “Afghanistan’s main intelligence agency, the National Directorate of Security, has stubbornly flagged to Beijing each and every one of the dozens of Uighurs who it says were caught by Afghan forces fighting inside the country and prepared records for Chinese officials.”¹²⁹ Furthermore the recent government also supporting Beijing “one-China policy,” and standing on Chinese stance in the issues over Taiwan and Tibet.

The above manifestation on behalf of Kabul administration made them enable to catch a greater aid from Beijing almost 325.22 million USD in the year 2017 as compared to the 240 million USD fund given by China since 2001. Subsequently the Chinese government also promised Kabul for support in the nontraditional security areas including health, food, and education. Chinese Premier Li Keqiang while in his address to gathering also expressed high comments over the emerging era of “Kabul-Beijing strategic Partnership”.

Despite of Chinese determination and efforts for establishment of Afghans holds certain limits. The “Aunak copper mine” project recently launched still holds no better instant relief in terms of finance for Kabul regime. Provided with the requisite demands in terms of infrastructure and security it will still pending for certain period. However the Chinese government is trying for gradual replacement of aid with the investment in Afghanistan and also aligning it with Silk Road and Economic Belt Initiative. Here Kabul does not seem qualified for this scheme. Meanwhile, Primarily US, the Chinese assistance is only an extra input support for Afghanistan by others for more involved players, and Afghanistan’s this support is most likely to come in bilateral contact.

Before 2014 we can only see visible US security role in Afghanistan during Karzai’s time period. After 2014 Chinese influence grow in security domain after announcement of withdrawal of International troops from Afghanistan. In post-2014 China is solving the existing extremist terrorist group in Afghanistan which are not only problem for Afghanistan but as well as for Chinese geo-Strategic position in the region, and it cannot be solved by

129. Matthew, Rosenberg, “China’s Uighur Unrest Is Opportunity for Afghans,” *The New York Times*, November 5, 2014. <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/11/06/world/asia/chinas-uighur-unrest-is-opportunity-for-afghans.html?ref=world&r=1>

military interventions but the strong economic connectivity through trade routes for long term relations. Chinese contributions in post 2014 regarding security are as following:

1) Chinese government signed Bilateral Security Agreements BSA to the Status of Forces Agreement SOFA in 2014. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) said on Tuesday bilateral security agreement (BSA) with the US and the proposed Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) with NATO would be inked over the next two months. MoFA spokesman Shakeeb Mustaghni said the BSA had already been endorsed by the Loya Jirga, but President Karzai linked its signing to peace in the country. He said the proposed Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) with NATO was about to be finalized. Deputy Foreign Minister Ershad Ahamd had assured NATO foreign ministers during their meeting in Brussels last month that both the Afghan presidential candidates were willing to sign the bilateral security pact. Final results from the presidential runoff elections are expected on July 22 and the Presidential Palace has announced to hold swearing-in ceremony for the new president on August 2. Mustaghni said the deputy foreign minister had informed the Brussels meeting that Kabul government wanted extension in the stay of NATO forces in Afghanistan. He said the NATO secretary general had re-assured the international community's commitments toward Afghanistan after 2014. ¹³⁰

2) In 2018 China, Pakistan, Afghanistan, signed MoU on Anti-terrorism cooperation to Conduct Joint military exercises. The MoU was signed by Pakistan's foreign minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi and his Chinese and Afghan counterparts Wang Yi and Salahuddin Rabbani. The signing of the document was witnessed by Afghan President Ashraf Ghani. Speaking at the trilateral dialogue, Rabbani said collective efforts were required to address the common challenge of terrorism. "We desire to strengthen our relations with Pakistan," he said and also appreciated the Chinese One Belt One Road initiative. Qureshi, during a joint press conference, called for a joint strategy to eradicate terrorism from the region. He said he was visiting Kabul to bridge the trust deficit between the two countries, the Express Tribune reported. ¹³¹

130. "BSA, SOFA to be signed in 2 months: MoFA." *Pajhwok news*, Jul 01, 2014 - 17:12, <https://www.pajhwok.com/en/2014/07/01/bsa-sofa-be-signed-2-months-mofa>

131. "Pakistan, China, Afghanistan sign MoU on anti-terrorism cooperation," *Indo Asian News*, Dec 15, 2018-16:52 IST.

3) In 2015 launched the (Quadrilateral Coordination and Cooperation Mechanism QCCM) with Afghanistan Pakistan and Tajikistan. To counter instability in Afghanistan, China has also stepped up its involvement in peace talks to end the war. Since 2015, it has been involved in a number of multilateral initiatives, including the Quadrilateral Coordination Group and, more recently, the Moscow Format. Beijing has cultivated good ties with the Taliban, meeting them several times in 2018 alone.¹³²

4) In 2017, Chinese foreign minister Wang Yi started shuttle diplomacy among Pakistan and Afghanistan. This shuttle diplomacy is an extension of the role as a facilitator in the Afghan peace process that it adopted in 2014. There is a danger that its shuttle diplomacy could also run aground if Beijing remains reluctant to use its enormous leverage over Pakistan to persuade it to halt support for terror attacks in Afghanistan. Hitherto, China has only used its leverage to get Pakistan to act against groups with links to Uighur nationalists and militants. China's preoccupation with its own security and interests rather than the larger goal of building peace in the region has undermined its efforts so far. Its selective approach to dealing with terrorism could undermine China's credibility as peacemaker.¹³³

5) December 2017, China created a 'Mountain Brigade'. In September 2018, Afghanistan's Ambassador to China, Janan Mosazai, announced that China will train Afghan soldiers in China to strengthen military relations among two diplomatic states.¹³⁴

China funded different reconstruction projects, such as irrigation complex at Parowan province and hospital in Kabul of worth \$10 million. China signed an agreement of Economic and Technical Cooperation (ETC) with Afghanistan government in May 2003, which had provided \$15 million in grants.¹³⁵ Chinese assistance and economic development is significantly increased in post-2014 era. China did huge investments in various developmental projects of Afghanistan to boost up economy of Afghanistan. Bilateral trade is enhanced on both sides. Trade volume is

132. Rupert Stone, "Slowly but surely China is moving in Afghanistan," *TRT World*, February 18, 2019. <https://www.trtworld.com/magazine/slowly-but-surely-china-is-moving-into-afghanistan-24276>

133. Sudha Ramachandran, "China's peacemaking between Pakistan and Afghanistan," *The CACI Analyst*, September 7, 2017. <https://www.cacianalyst.org/publications/analytical-articles/item/13468-chinas-peacemaking-between-pakistan-and-afghanistan.html>

134. "China to create mountain brigade for Afghan army in Badakhsan," *Ariana News*, Last Updated On: December 29, 2017, <https://ariananews.af/china-to-create-mountain-brigade-for-afghan-army-in-badakhshan/>

135. Official Documents, "China and Afghanistan," Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, (Aug. 25, 2003). <http://www.mfa.gov.cn/eng/wjw/zjg/yzs/gjlb/2676/t15822.htm>

increased according to world banks and IMF reports. The basic reason behind Chinese assistance to Afghanistan is BRI and its different projects to promote the concept of globalization.

Post-2014 Chinese economic developments in Afghanistan are following:

- Chinese Government has trained more than 2,300 Afghan professionals in different fields.
- In 2015 Sino-Afghan trade was made duty free to rapid increase the trade among two countries. According to Chinese sources, in 2016, this change affected around 97 percent of Afghan exports to China, while the countries engaged in bilateral trade worth almost \$1 billion. China is now Afghanistan's third-largest trading partner, surpassing the EU. China also claims to be the largest source of investment in Afghanistan, pointing to a \$3 billion lease of the Aynak copper mine by a consortium of Chinese state-owned companies, announced in 2008, and investments by the China National Petroleum Corporation there, which include interests in oilfield exploration. However, these projects have so far failed due to security issues and disagreements over their terms. As a result, China has refrained from further large-scale investments in Afghanistan.¹³⁶
- China has so far contributed in the way of development assistance, investment projects, and in its more recent and less typical contribution to peace talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban. China increased its contributions to Afghanistan's development significantly in the last two to three years: it provided roughly \$240 million in development assistance and aid between 2001 and 2013, and around \$80 million in 2014 alone. During the visit of Abdullah Abdullah (the government's chief executive) to China in May, both countries signed an agreement on technical cooperation (worth around \$76 million) and on non-emergency humanitarian aid. China's contribution may still be small compared to that of the US or Europe, and far from that of the largest donor of Afghanistan in the region – India, which has provided roughly \$2 billion to date -, yet its increase signifies China's will to stay in the country for good.¹³⁷

136. Angela Stanzel. "Fear and loathing on the New Silk Road: Chinese security in Afghanistan and beyond," *ECFR* 264, July 2018.

https://www.ecfr.eu/publications/summary/new_silk_road_chinese_security_in_afghanistan_beyond

137. Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Ministry of Finance, Donor Financial Review, Report 1388, November 2019, 38.
<http://undp.org.af/Publications/KeyDocuments/Donor'sFinancialReview%20ReportNov2009.pdf>.

- In 2016 Two countries signed bilateral trade agreement worth \$1 billion. ¹³⁸
- Afghan-Chinese trade has developed rapidly since becoming duty free in 2015. According to Chinese sources, in 2016, this change affected around 97 percent of Afghan exports to China, while the countries engaged in bilateral trade worth almost \$1 billion. China is now Afghanistan's third-largest trading partner, surpassing the EU. China also claims to be the largest source of investment in Afghanistan, pointing to a \$3 billion lease of the Aynak copper mine by a consortium of Chinese state-owned companies, announced in 2008, and investments by the China National Petroleum Corporation there, which include interests in oilfield exploration. However, these projects have so far failed due to security issues and disagreements over their terms. As a result, China has refrained from further large-scale investments in Afghanistan. ¹³⁹
- Direct flights between Kabul and Urumqi, Xinyang's capital, resumed in July 2016, while the first cargo train journey from China's Nantong to Afghanistan's Hairatan took place in September 2016. ¹⁴⁰
- In January 2020 ANSO announced 500 fully funded Masters to PhD level scholarships for Afghan students in the University of Chinese Academy of Science. ¹⁴¹
- As of June 2018, China is Afghanistan's biggest foreign investor today. It is interested mainly in resource extraction and infrastructure building. It has started extracting oil from the Amu Darya basin in northern Afghanistan. In the telecommunications sector, China's role has grown from supplying Afghanistan with telecom equipment in 2007 to the construction of fiber-optic links in 2017. While China maintained close ties with the Afghan government. It signed the Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Good Neighborly Relations with Kabul in 2016. Two years later, Chinese companies won a \$3 billion contract to extract copper from the Mes Aynak mines in Logar province. ¹⁴²

138. Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Ministry of Finance, Donor Financial Review, Report 1388, November 2019, 38. <http://undp.org.af/Publications/KeyDocuments/Donor'sFinancialReview%20ReportNov2009.pdf>.

139. Angela Stanzel. "Fear and loathing on the New Silk Road: Chinese security in Afghanistan and beyond," *ECFR* 264, July 2018.

140. Ibid.

141. <https://afghanistan24.com/anso-scholarship-for-young-talents-international-students-in-china-2020/>

142. Sudha Ramachandran, "Is China Bringing peace to Afghanistan," *The Diplomat*, June 20, 2018, <https://thediplomat.com/2018/06/is-china-bringing-peace-to-afghanistan/>

- China announced in December 2017 that it would be willing to extend CPEC to Afghanistan. Foreign ministers from China, Pakistan and Afghanistan agreed to discuss ways to extend the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) to Afghanistan.

"In the long run, through Afghanistan, we will gradually connect the CPEC with the China-Central and Western Asia Economic Corridor," Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi told reporters after China-Afghanistan-Pakistan foreign ministers' meeting in Beijing.¹⁴³

Future developments projects include resources, joint Sino-Indian schools and hospitals in Afghanistan, and a multitude of smaller bilateral relations.¹⁴⁴

Chinese President Xi Jinping launched the One Road, One Belt Initiative in October 2013. It promotes connectivity between China and Eurasia by integrating the region into a cohesive economic area through new infrastructure, increased cultural exchange and broadened trade.

- In 2016 memorandum of understanding (MOU) both countries signed to promote cooperation under the BRI. Afghanistan and China have started a few projects, such as the Digital Silk Road, the Sino-Afghanistan Special Railway Transportation Project, the Five Nations Railway Project within Afghanistan and a Kabul–Urumqi air corridor.¹⁴⁵
- The one of primary example Sino-Afghan Cooperation is Fiber Optic Agreement signed in April 2017. The fiber optic line will help in the realization of the Digital Silk Road Project.¹⁴⁶
- CASA-1000 power transmission line from Kyrgyzstan to Tajikistan to Pakistan through Afghanistan signed among four countries.¹⁴⁷
- In Oct, 2017 Trade and Transit Corridor Agreement signed between Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Turkey and Turkmenistan at the sidelines of the 7th Regional Economic Cooperation Conference on Afghanistan (RECCA-VII).¹⁴⁸

143. Sudha Ramachandran, "Is China Bringing peace to Afghanistan," *The Diplomat*, June 20, 2018, <https://thediplomat.com/2018/06/is-china-bringing-peace-to-afghanistan/>

144. "China's special envoy lauds ISI's fight against terrorism," DAWN, July 22, 2014, <http://www.dawn.com/news/1120769>

145. Regional Economic Cooperation Conference on Afghanistan: Annual Review 2017, p. 21

146. "Lapis Lazuli Trade and Transit Corridor Agreement Signed at RECCA-VII Sideline" (Mary, Turkmenistan: Embassy of Afghanistan, 2017), accessed November 17, 2017, <https://afghanembassyturkmenistan.com/lapis-lazuli-trade-and-transit-corridor-agreementsigned-at-recca-vii-sideline-2/>

147. "CASA-1000 Project Signed, Promising Major Revenues for Afghanistan," *Tolo news* April 25, 2015.

148. "Lapis Lazuli Trade and Transit Corridor Agreement Signed at RECCA-VII Sideline" (Mary, Turkmenistan: Embassy of Afghanistan, 2017), accessed November 17, 2017, <https://afghanembassyturkmenistan.com/lapis-lazuli-trade-and-transit-corridor-agreementsigned-at-recca-vii-sideline-2/>.

- The Afghan government has made involvement with the BRI a priority, representing it as a regional cooperation framework. In which Afghanistan and China stand to benefit in the areas of financial services, natural resource extraction and energy development. During a state visit to China in May 2016, the Chief Executive of Afghanistan, Abdullah Abdullah, and his Chinese counterpart signed an MOU to boost areas of cooperation under the BRI. Through this MOU, it appears that China regards Afghanistan as a partner that is “well placed “to help it connect to the wider region via the BRI. ¹⁴⁹
- Afghanistan became a permanent member of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank in October 2017, which will help facilitate cooperation on infrastructure development between China and Afghanistan under the BRI and RECCA.¹⁵⁰ China boosted up her efforts to transform Afghanistan into a regional trade and transit hub by expanding current trade and transport agreements both northward and southward to connect with the rapidly growing BRI corridors. ¹⁵¹

3.5 US-China Divergence of Interest in Afghanistan

While leading the American delegation for the fourth ministerial session Counsellor John Podesta of White House and John Kerry recognized Afghanistan as “one area” where the Washington and Beijing are in “fundamental agreement”. It has not been restricted to the speeches of the high ups. The new Afghan diplomats are jointly trained by the US and China’s government in their capitals, diplomatic communication and management skills. The joint program is a "good example of how the new model of major-country relationship between China and the United States can contribute to the region," said by the minister of Chinese Embassy, Wu Xi in the US while referring to the agreement reached by the leaders of China and the United States on two-sided relations.¹⁵²

149. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “10 Years RECCA, From Negotiation to Investment, Construction, and Trade: A Decade of Progress,” RECCA Annual Review (Kabul, 2016), 15.

150. Mariam Safi and Bismillah Alizada, “Integrating Afghanistan into Belt and Road initiative,” Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, August 2018. <http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/kabul/15587.pdf>

151. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “10 Years RECCA, From Negotiation to Investment, Construction, and Trade: A Decade of Progress,” RECCA Annual Review (Kabul, 2016), 18.

152. Xinhua, “China, US partner to train Afghan diplomats,” *China Daily*, October 21, 2014. http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/world/2014-10/21/content_18776023.htm

However, there are on both side misconceptions and uncertainties about one another's intention in Afghanistan. Barnett Rubin an American scholar highlighted in his recent paper that there are worries to Chinese government over continued US and NATO existence in Afghanistan. The Beijing sees this appearance as source to contain her rise and reason for enhancing secessionist movements in it. Similarly US is looking critical in approach to the warmth relationship of Islamabad-Beijing as the former had sanctuaries for terrorist launching attacks on US camps in Afghanistan notably the Haqqanis Network. Afghanistan here also provides a suitable chance for both Washington and Beijing to cooperate in the fields of economics and security.

The US with her allies in the world sponsoring various regional arrangements indicates a vast concept especially towards post-2014 Afghanistan sometimes termed as the decade of transformation 2014-24. As the Washington is meaningfully established its presence in Kabul with her military and through economic aid, the neighboring countries also necessarily draw its attention towards the establishment of the war turned state through military and economic assistance.

Chapter 4

IMPACTS ON PAKISTAN

4.1 INTRODUCTION

After the Istanbul Peace Process, the Beijing appears to perform better part in Kabul's reconciliation. During the 4th conference, Beijing advanced the concept of establishing a forum on regional level for resolution in Afghanistan warmly welcomed by the Washington.¹⁵³ Pakistan also supported the Chinese role in Afghan reconciliation and peace. Additionally, when Ghani came back from Kabul, Chen Shijie the in-charge of the affairs of China's Kabul embassy given the charges to the Afghan external affairs referred "an important memorandum" as looming stay of a Chinese top security team to Kabul when visiting Islamabad.

As results, there is some hopefulness that "China can influence Pakistan in a different way than the US can." That's why Beijing had supposed having the confidence of the Pakistan army for decades which is beneficial in transforming Islamabad's approach towards Kabul. Pakistan will definitely retort to the new Chinese phase which is blurring but a worthy indication for understanding among states over certain conflicts. The current Sino-Pak agreement over pricing in the electricity transit shows that the later will preferably goes regional peace as it will be positive sum game.¹⁵⁴

The recent bombs blast in Pakistan and allegation over using Kabul territory by terrorist

153. John Podesta, White House Counsellor, US Department of State Remark, "Heart of Asia Foreign Ministerial," (October 31, 2014). <http://www.state.gov/p/sca/rls/rmks/2014/233563.htm>

154. Said Reza Kazemi, "More bilateral than multilateral effects: The Afghanistan conference in China," Afghanistan Analysts Network, (November 7, 2014). <https://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/more-bilateral-then-multilateral-effects-the-afghanistan-conference-in-china/>

turned down hopes for regional co-operation. It is still ambiguous whether China and the other partner in the region shall be able to convert the palpable challenges into opportunities. Yet no one can be sure of the ongoing process and manifestation as the picture is much complex with certain ambiguities.

4.2 CPEC and Linking of Central Asian Regions (CAR's) with Afghanistan

The CARs countries had a great potential for trade growth that compelled Islamabad to reach and collaborate with these countries. The CARs countries have a combined GDP of 206 US million dollars with 66 million populations. Although Pakistan had a great potential for trade and energy with CARs countries yet the figures of trade is disappointing as the trade volume with Tajikistan and Uzbekistan is respectively figured 89 and 24 US million dollars in 2014. It is worthwhile to mention that while CARs countries had brought their desires for enhancement of trade and energy agreements with Pakistan still has some limitations primarily the route. The CASA-1000 project is still under uncertainties that pass through several Afghani provinces with substantial military threats in the concerned areas. In order to remove all these hurdles and making Afghanistan as land bridge, the Chinese government has initiated the linkage of Afghanistan through CPEC with Pakistan and CARs countries that will economically benefit all the partners. The successful implementation of CPEC will prosper Afghan's economy and will enable Afghanistan to bring back the refugees living in Pakistan. There are millions of registered and unregistered ARs living in Pakistan. Recently Pakistan has initiated crack down on Afghan refugees to get back to their own country but halted its policy because of US pressure as Afghanistan is currently not suitable to hold its migrated population.

According to the power transition theory the rise of China both in economic and security aspects placed it a natural competitor of the United States in the 21st century. Thus China has not only stakes in the region of Asia but also in the far world. For this grand interest China is advancing its policy of linking her territories with CARs countries and South Asian region through extending the old Silk Road. Thus the China has extending both her political and economic interests in this way. Through the BRI project in 2013, Beijing has shaping the public opinion of her immediate and far neighbors as a part of her soft power diplomacy. Meanwhile China has also security

threats to her political and economic stakes that need an active foreign policy. While US are the biggest rival to the PRC thus allow her to safeguard her interests in this region and beyond. Although Trump's administration shows no such direct threat to the China yet she needs to counter the US policy of making allies in respect to Indo-US and US-Japan connections. Afghan security has certain implications for China due to Uyghur, part of the western province Xinyang having majority of Muslim population.

The Afghan Jihad followed by the War on Terror (WoT) has made Afghanistan volatile for the past several decades. Fundamentalist and fanatical ideologies were cultivated and imported to the neighboring countries from Afghanistan in the past. If the Taliban in Afghanistan take over again, it will have certain repercussion for the neighboring countries as well as the regrouping of ETIM, TTP and others. The US troop's presence in Kabul has obscurity in maintaining peace while considered as factor in political instability. They are considered as foreign occupants by the Taliban led to the frequent attacks on US troops. Since the USSR invasion and in the aftermath followed by 9/11 incidents that brought US and NATO forces to the Afghan's soil worsened the situation of peace and stability in Afghanistan except the short period of Taliban regime. In present scenario it is difficult to cultivate a smooth policy for the stability due to its horrific past of fights in Afghanistan. Global and regional powers have stakes in Afghanistan. This segment of the thesis analyses the Beijing initiative and growing influence in Afghanistan with respect to its impacts on the region and for Pakistan particularly.

4.3 Chinese Interests in Pak-Afghan Relationship

The interests of Pakistan are followed by the Chinese interests in the Afghan peace and stability. Both Pakistan and China has the threats of terrorists breeding on Afghan's soil. The terrorist's sanctuaries in Afghanistan and their effects on China and Pakistan are evident in the past decade. Both the countries desire for a stable democratic setup in Afghanistan that could efficiently manage the state affairs with a strong security setup. Thus the convergence of interests of Islamabad with Moscow and Beijing made Pakistan at best position in the global diplomatic arena. It is this reason that whenever Pakistan was blamed by US or the international community for her deceit and lies in the Afghan's case supported by China and Russia for her counterterrorism efforts. The efforts and sacrifices of Islamabad should be fully endorsed and appreciated by the international community in combating international terrorism said by Geng

Shuang, the foreign ministry spokesman of China.¹⁵⁵ The country has faced a staunch blow from terrorists in the War on Terror after the US invasion of Afghanistan. According to the Pakistani government figures almost 60,000 civilians followed by 6000 military personals with 120 billion US dollars cost has been bored during the WoT.¹⁵⁶ The fencing of Pak-Afghan border by Pakistani government was the results of these growing threats from inside Afghanistan and the high cost of the terrorism that compelled the country. The fencing of the border areas will help to enhance the security of the tribal belt and the peripheral areas of the border connecting the two countries. A total of two hundred thousand security personals are currently deployed by the government of Pakistan said by General Zubair Hayat Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (CJCSC). It will not only stabilize the security situation on the boarder but will also decrease the need of security personals on the border once it was accomplished. In continuation of this policy of stabilizing the borders, the Pakistani government also offered the training of the Afghani security official but the response was cold.¹⁵⁷ It was only in 2015 when six Afghani cadets came to the training in military academy in Abbottabad. The Afghani government yet not responded the COAS Raheel Sharif offer of equipping Afghan's army brigade with advanced equipment under the joint strategic agreement in 2011.

4.4 Interests of Global and Regional Powers in Afghanistan and the Case of Pakistan

The currently existing distrust between the two countries will be lowered down by the Chinese growing influence in Afghanistan. Currently the Afghan's government is under the influence of India and US while holding anti Pakistan narrative. This scenario has brought China to hold trilateral talks to decrease the mistrust between the two countries. It was in 2015 that the first session of trilateral talks amongst Pakistan-China-Afghanistan was initiated in Kabul. In 2017 China holds the 1st talks of trilateral initiative in Beijing to discuss the regional peace and stability amongst the three partner's countries. Primarily the aims of the dialogue were to enhance the

155. "Foreign Ministry Spokesperson on Geng Shuang's Regular Press Conference," January 2, 2018. http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/xwfw_665399/s2510_665401/2511_665403/t152_3228.shtml

156. "Pakistan lost over 50,000 civilians in the war on terror," *Tribune*, January 3, 2018. <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1599831/1-pakistan-lost-50000-civilians-war-terror/>

157. "General Hayat says no outside or military solution to Afghan problems," *Geo*, September 09, 2017, <https://www.geo.tv/latest/157281-pakistan-fought-worldsbiggest-battle-against-terrorism-cjcs-mahmood>

mutual trust and relationship between the two countries. In balancing India and US in Afghanistan, China is doing her best in strategic terms. While using the Afghan's territory, India is sponsoring terrorism in Balochistan which poses a huge threat to the flagship project jointly hold by China and Pakistan. Majority of the Indian based projects are running in the eastern parts of Afghanistan that borders Pakistan. It is widely believed and had been proven that the officials working on these projects in Afghanistan belong to the Indian spy agency (RAW) that are managing, directing and influencing the terror attacks in Baluchistan. Till 2014, the Indian army has trained 3000 Afghan's security officials in her military academies shows a clear manifestation of the Indian influence and stakes on Afghan's soil.

4.6 Conclusion

The current Beijing's policy towards Kabul is complemented by high economic and security reasons. The Chinese internal situation and her neighborhood security are directly connected with the Afghan peace and stability that will serve the economic interests of China in the region. The current US policy of staying in Afghanistan for a long period is a matter of concern for China. Apart from all these concerns the Chinese government and other Afghans neighbors desire for a peaceful solution to the Afghan issue of peace and stability. China and other neighboring countries want the permanent solution to the Afghan problem through peaceful diplomacy. The peace process in Afghanistan is majorly associated with the willingness of Taliban. The Washington could also influence the peace process in Afghanistan by devising its exit from Afghanistan that will encourage the neighbors to play their respective role in Afghanistan's peace. Under the bilateral security agreement between US and Afghanistan the Washington's under Trump's administration has plan to keep forces on Afghan soil till 2024 that shows US ambitions in the region. On contrary the Taliban capacity of fighting and opposing US forces in Afghanistan can be shown from the recent attacks on Kabul and capturing Kunduz capital in 2015. The Taliban are demanding as pre-condition for peace negotiation the exit of US forces from Afghanistan. Thus a political solution for afghan issue will be the best possible option that will ease the situation in Afghanistan for implementation of Chinese policy that will equally benefit Pakistan if skillfully exploited. Thus China will be able to overcome the wide mistrust between the two countries that will support her interests in the region. It further expected that the Chinese involvement in Afghanistan shall not only made friendly environment for the ongoing project of

CPEC but will be high beneficial for the strain relationship between Pakistan-Afghanistan.

CONCLUSION

Post-2014 is marked to be the year of transition for Afghanistan in the context of political and security changes and escalation of more challenges after withdrawal of international forces. Number of international coalition forces had completed the mission in Afghanistan and gave responsibility of security to the National Army and police. On the other side one political administrative setup was shifted to new elected governance of Dr. Ashraf Ghani and Abdullah through peaceful election. Bringing stability and peace Afghanistan is although tough challenge for many national and international stock holders and especially for regional states due to its hard changing aspects of politics and security.

The new elected president of Afghanistan Dr. Ashraf Ghani paid his 1st official visit to China in October 2014; he provided a new direction towards Afghan peace settlement more than regional somewhat international. China, being an important neighbor, is also more vigorous to involve in Afghanistan in the context of regional approach while engaging all regional states. Being an important regional player, China has reoriented its foreign policy towards Afghanistan due to changing nature of economic and security interests in Afghanistan South Asia and Central Asia. China initiated rapprochement towards Afghanistan, being gateway in the region, through regional collective cooperation. China seeks that attaining peace and stability in Afghanistan is possible through political reconciliation, supporting mutual economic and security cooperation through regional connectivity of trade, route, rail link, investment, energy projects and common marketing within the region. On the global and regional stage China exerting prominent role in the region as well as in Afghanistan, in this regards China can also play significant role in their western-northern neighbor state. The newly elected Afghan political administration is also convinced for the emerging greater political role of China in the region.

On the other side sharing of 92 kilometers long border between China and Afghanistan is inaccessible but the spill-over of the threat is very limited, certainly the threat posed from the Islamic fundamentalism is very similar to both the nations, in the shape of Taliban in Afghanistan and Uyghur separatist movement in Xingjian province of China. Apart from

Afghanistan Central Asia could also provide alternative route for those Islamic extremists to make inroad into Chinese Xinyang, which ultimately do help and radicalize their brethren of Sunni militant Uyghur group that always claimed responsibility of attacks in China. In that regard China came with more active and positive role in Afghanistan because the war in Afghanistan is not the internal war but it is international too because of its broad linkage with other terrorist networks. Now it must be clear to Chinese authorities that safe and secure Xinyang is only possible through peaceful and stable Afghanistan. To counter the risk more effectively Afghanistan and China need to enhance diplomatic and economic engagement with each other.

In order to facilitate Afghan peace talks with Taliban, China is putting pressure on Pakistan to contribute positively towards Afghan peace processes. Pakistan has been considered one of the primary key players in the whole peace process. Afghan government and its international allies many times asked Pakistan to bring Taliban on the table with sincere efforts but all the times Pakistan always failed to fulfill this demand and make them unsatisfied that is why Pakistan was accused of having supporting and sponsoring extremism and terrorism by religious proxies in Afghanistan. The Haqqanis and the Quetta Shura are state sponsored extremist group based in Pakistan, through which Pakistan wants to exert influence on Kabul.

For the sake of peace and securing interest in the region, China is trying to convince the regional powers to eradicate the future threats through its diplomatic influence in the region. Chinese authorities have added other platforms i.e., Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), the Istanbul Peace Process or Heart of Asia Conferences, Confidence Building Measures (CBMs), Quadrilateral Coordination Group (QCG), to processed peace processes in Afghanistan in order to secure their own interest in the region. It seems that China is following the same track in order to eradicate the religious extremism and terrorism otherwise China will have to pay big cost if they could not achieve their goals through friendly diplomatic ties with neighboring countries especially Afghanistan.

The current Beijing's policy towards Kabul is complemented by high economic and security reasons. The Chinese internal situation and her neighborhood security are directly connected with the Afghan peace and stability that will serve the economic interests of China in the region. The current US policy of staying in Afghanistan for a long period is a matter of concern for China. Apart from all these concerns the Chinese government and other Afghans neighbors desire for a

peaceful solution to the Afghan issue of peace and stability. China and other neighboring countries want the permanent solution to the Afghan problem through peaceful diplomacy. The peace process in Afghanistan is majorly associated with the willingness of Taliban. The Washington could also influence the peace process in Afghanistan by devising its exit from Afghanistan that will encourage the neighbors to play their respective role in Afghanistan's peace. Under the bilateral security agreement between US and Afghanistan the Washington's under Trump's administration has plan to keep forces on Afghan soil till 2024 that shows US ambitions in the region. On contrary the Taliban capacity of fighting and opposing US forces in Afghanistan can be shown from the recent attacks on Kabul and capturing Kunduz capital in 2015. The Taliban are demanding as pre-condition for peace negotiation the exit of US forces from Afghanistan. Thus a political solution for Afghan issue will be the best possible option that will ease the situation in Afghanistan for implementation of Chinese policy that will equally benefit Pakistan if skillfully exploited. Thus China will be able to overcome the wide mistrust between the two countries that will support her interests in the region. It is further expected that the Chinese involvement in Afghanistan shall not only made friendly environment for the ongoing project of CPEC but will be high beneficial for the strain relationship between Pakistan-Afghanistan.

Findings

Security Dynamic

Before 2014 we can only see visible US security role in Afghanistan during Karzai's time period. After 2014 Chinese influence grow in security domain after announcement of withdrawal of International troops from Afghanistan. In (Post-2014) China is solving the existing extremist terrorist group in Afghanistan which are not only problem for Afghanistan but as well as for Chinese geo-Strategic position in the region, and it cannot be solved by military interventions but the strong economic connectivity through trade routes for long term relations. Chinese contributions (post 2014) regarding security are as following:

- i. Chinese government signed Bilateral Security Agreements BSA to the Status of Forces Agreement SOFA in July 2014.¹⁵⁸
- ii. In 2018 China, Pakistan, Afghanistan, signed MoU on Anti-terrorism cooperation to Conduct Joint military exercises.¹⁵⁹
- iii. In 2015 launched the (Quadrilateral Coordination and Cooperation Mechanism QCCM) with Afghanistan Pakistan and Tajikistan.¹⁶⁰
- iv. In 2017, Chinese foreign minister Wang Yi started shuttle diplomacy among Pakistan and Afghanistan.¹⁶¹
- v. December 2017, China created a 'Mountain Brigade'. In September 2018, Afghanistan's Ambassador to China, Janan Mosazai, announced that China will train Afghan soldiers in China.¹⁶²
- vi. China is building base for Afghan Armed Forces in Badakhshan in northern Afghanistan.¹⁶³

166. "BSA, SOFA to be signed in 2 months: MoFA." *Pajhwok news*, Jul 01, 2014 - 17:12,

<https://www.pajhwok.com/en/2014/07/01/bsa-sofa-be-signed-2-months-mofa>

167. "Pakistan, China, Afghanistan sign MoU on anti-terrorism cooperation," *Indo Asian News*, Dec 15, 2018-16:52 IST.

168. Rupert Stone, "Slowly but surely China is moving in Afghanistan," *TRT World*, February 18, 2019.

<https://www.trtworld.com/magazine/slowly-but-surely-china-is-moving-into-afghanistan-24276>

169. Sudha Ramachandran, "China's peacemaking between Pakistan and Afghanistan," *The CACI Analyst*, September 7,

2017. <https://www.cacianalyst.org/publications/analytical-articles/item/13468-chinas-peacemaking-between-pakistan-and-afghanistan.html>

170. "China to create mountain brigade for Afghan army in Badakhshan," *Ariana News*, Last Updated On: December 29, 2017 ,

<https://ariananews.af/china-to-create-mountain-brigade-for-afghan-army-in-badakhshan/>

171. Joshua Kucera, "Report: China building military base in Afghanistan," *eurasianet*, accessed January 29,

2020, <https://eurasianet.org/report-china-building-military-base-on-afghan-tajik-border>

Economic Dynamic

Chinese assistance and economic development is significantly increased in post-2014 era. China did huge investments in various developmental projects of Afghanistan to boost up economy of Afghanistan. Bilateral trade is enhanced on both sides. Trade volume is increased according to world banks and IMF reports. The basic reason behind Chinese assistance to Afghanistan is BRI and its different projects to promote the concept of globalization.

Post-2014 Chinese economic developments in Afghanistan are following:

- 2002-2013 Chinese Economic assistance was \$197 million ranked 23rd donor to Afghanistan published by Kabul in 2009 in 2014 alone it was \$80 million.¹⁶⁴
- Chinese Government has trained more than 2,300 Afghan professionals in different fields.
- In 2015 China-Afghan trade was made duty free to rapid increase the trade among two countries.¹⁶⁵
- In May 2016, the countries signed an agreement on technical cooperation (around \$76million)¹⁶⁶
- In 2016 Two countries signed bilateral trade agreement worth \$1 billion.¹⁶⁷
- China is now Afghanistan's third largest trading partner, surpassing the EU. Kabul signed a memorandum of understanding on BRI cooperation in 2016.¹⁶⁸
- Direct flights between Kabul and Urumqi, Xinyang's capital, resumed in July 2016, while the first cargo train journey from China's Nantong to Afghanistan's Hairatan took place in September 2016.¹⁶⁹
- In January 2020 ANSO announced 500 fully funded Masters to PhD level scholarships for Afghan students in the University of Chinese Academy of Science.¹⁷⁰

172. Sudha Ramachandran, "Is China Bringing peace to Afghanistan," *The Diplomat*, June 20, 2018, <https://thediplomat.com/2018/06/is-china-bringing-peace-to-afghanistan/>

173. Angela Stanzel. "Fear and loathing on the New Silk Road: Chinese security in Afghanistan and beyond," *ECFR* 264, July 2018.

https://www.ecfr.eu/publications/summary/new_silk_road_chinese_security_in_afghanistan_beyond

174. Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Ministry of Finance, Donor Financial Review, Report

175. 1388, November 2009, 38.

<http://undp.org.af/Publications/KeyDocuments/Donor'sFinancialReview%20ReportNov2009.pdf>

176. Angela Stanzel. "Fear and loathing on the New Silk Road: Chinese security in Afghanistan and beyond," *ECFR* 264, July 2018.

177. Angela Stanzel. "Fear and loathing on the New Silk Road: Chinese security in Afghanistan and beyond," *ECFR* 264, July 2018.

178. <https://afghanistan24.com/anso-scholarship-for-young-talents-international-students-in-china-2020/>

- As of June 2018, China also increased its financial investments in Afghanistan chiefly the Mes Aynak copper mines, southeast of Kabul, and the Amu Darya oil fields in northern Afghanistan.¹⁷¹
- China announced in December 2017 that it would be willing to extend CPEC to Afghanistan.¹⁷²
- Future developments projects include resources, joint Sino-Indian schools and hospitals in Afghanistan, and a multitude of smaller bilateral relations.¹⁷³

Geo-Strategic Dynamic

Chinese President Xi Jinping launched the One Road, One Belt Initiative in October 2013. It promotes connectivity between China and Eurasia by integrating the region into a cohesive economic area through new infrastructure, increased cultural exchange and broadened trade.

- In 2016 memorandum of understanding (MOU) both countries signed to promote cooperation under the BRI. Afghanistan and China have started a few projects, such as the Digital Silk Road, the Sino-Afghanistan Special Railway Transportation Project, the Five Nations Railway Project within Afghanistan and a Kabul–Urumqi air corridor.¹⁷⁴
- The one of primary example Sino-Afghan Cooperation is Fiber Optic Agreement (signed in April 2017). The fiber optic line will help in the realization of the Digital Silk Road Project.¹⁷⁵
- CASA-1000 power transmission line from Kyrgyzstan to Tajikistan to Pakistan through Afghanistan signed among four countries.¹⁷⁶
- In Oct, 2017 Trade and Transit Corridor Agreement signed between Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Turkey and Turkmenistan at the sidelines of the 7th Regional Economic Cooperation Conference on Afghanistan (RECCA-VII).¹⁷⁷

179. Sudha Ramachandran, "Is China Bringing peace to Afghanistan," *The Diplomat*, June 20, 2018, <https://thediplomat.com/2018/06/is-china-bringing-peace-to-afghanistan/>

180. Ibid.

181. "China's special envoy lauds ISI's fight against terrorism," *DAWN*, July 22, 2014, <http://www.dawn.com/news/1120769>

182. Regional Economic Cooperation Conference on Afghanistan: Annual Review 2017, p. 21

183. "Lapis Lazuli Trade and Transit Corridor Agreement Signed at RECCA-VII Sideline" (Mary, Turkmenistan: Embassy of Afghanistan, 2017), accessed November 17, 2017, <https://afghanembassyturkmenistan.com/lapis-lazuli-trade-and-transit-corridor-agreementsigned-at-recca-vii-sideline-2/>

184. "CASA-1000 Project Signed, Promising Major Revenues for Afghanistan," *Tolo news* April 25, 2015.

185. "Lapis Lazuli Trade and Transit Corridor Agreement Signed at RECCA-VII Sideline" (Mary, Turkmenistan: Embassy of Afghanistan, 2017), accessed November 17, 2017, <https://afghanembassyturkmenistan.com/lapis-lazuli-trade-and-transit-corridor-agreementsigned-at-recca-vii-sideline-2/>.

- The Afghan government has made involvement with the BRI a priority, representing it as a regional cooperation framework.¹⁷⁸
- Afghanistan became a permanent member of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank in October 2017, which will help facilitate cooperation on infrastructure development between China and Afghanistan under the BRI and RECCA.¹⁷⁹
- China boosted up her efforts to transform Afghanistan into a regional trade and transit hub by expanding current trade and transport agreements both northward and southward to connect with the rapidly growing BRI corridors.¹⁸⁰

Impacts on Pakistan (CPEC)

- The Afghan team is visiting Pakistan as a goodwill gesture and the visit is meant to boost up ties between the two countries and bring stability to the region. (Afghan team delegation). Afghan improved security situation is securing western borders of Pakistan and both Afghanistan and Pakistan military trainings conducted in 2018 under agreement of joint collaborations is the good sign of security situation.¹⁸¹
- In mid of 2018, 1,223 MW Balloki Power Plant, and the 1,180 MW Bhakki power plants have both been completed.¹⁸²
- Neelum-Jhelum and Tarbela hydropower plant project completed in February 2108.¹⁸³
- Pakistan, China and Afghanistan established a special taskforce "TF-88" to ensure maritime security for trade in December 2016.¹⁸⁴
- Phase 1 completed and Phase II under construction.¹⁸⁵
- China growing influence in Afghanistan reflects its influence on Pakistan. In June 2018 the Chinese foreign Minister visited Afghanistan and then Pakistan to press for higher

186. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "10 Years RECCA, From Negotiation to Investment, Construction, and Trade: A Decade of Progress," RECCA Annual Review (Kabul, 2016), 15.

187. Mariam safi and Bismillah Alizada, "Integrating Afghanistan into Belt and Road initiative," Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, August 2018. <http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/kabul/15587.pdf>

188. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "10 Years RECCA, From Negotiation to Investment, Construction, and Trade: A Decade of Progress," RECCA Annual Review (Kabul, 2016), 18.

189. "Pakistan Afghanistan enjoyed good ties," *Epaper The Dawn*, 1/17/2020 12:00:00 AM

190. Zain, Ali, "PM Nawaz inaugurates 1180 MW Bhikhi Power Plant in Sheikhpura," *Daily Pakistan*. 9 October 2015 Retrieved 11 December 2015.

191. "PAKISTAN PM Nawaz inaugurates Balloki power project, which would add 1223 MW". *The News Teller*. 10 November, 2015.

192. "Pakistan Navy's special 'Task Force-88' set up to guard Gwadar port's sea lanes," *The Dawn*, 13 December 2016.

193. "China gets 40-year rights at Pakistani port," *The Jakarta Post*. 15 April 2015.

cooperation. China along with Afghanistan and Pakistan are entered in “Economic hall” of almost \$ 60 billion under improvements as a part of Belt and Road Initiative. The China Pakistan economic Corridor includes huge investments in roads, railways, ports and infrastructure.¹⁸⁶

- CPEC links China’s restive south-west to energy-rich West Asia and further to Europe through the Gwadar port. As in the case of BRI corridors, communication and energy related infrastructure development to the tune of \$49 billion.¹⁸⁷
- Transit Trade among Afghanistan and Pakistan are also stable now. In October 2019, Ministry of commerce in Pakistan officially declared Gwadar port ready to handle bulk cargo to and from Afghanistan.¹⁸⁸

Post-2014 Challenges

Challenges are as follow:

- Forming political unity among different ethnic groups and aims to be dedicated to new Unity government in Kabul
- Creating new structure of governance and balance between factions.
- Operational revenue collection, budget planning and expenditure, and limits to corruption
- Fully replacement of NATO/ISAF with the ANSF and “layered defense” of the Afghan State
- Shaping new pattern of security forces, advisors, and aid funds, to include addressing the presence of U.S and other nations’ personnel.
- Making comprehensive Roadmap of Reconciliations Process with Taliban under acceptance of Afghan Constitution
- Insuring Human Rights and Women Rights in the country with fully implementation
- Making an environment of returning and rehabilitating of Afghan refugees

194. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “10 Years RECCA, From Negotiation to Investment, Construction, and Trade: A Decade of Progress,” RECCA Annual Review (Kabul, 2016), 18.

195. <https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/606083-cpec-the-bigger-picture>

196. Adnan Anwar, “Beijing-backed Pakistan port opens as hub for Afghanistan trade,” *Nikkei Asian Review*, January 23, 2020 14:01 JST.

- Acting on the Tokyo Conference: Creating effective flow and use of aid, economic reforms, and limits to corruption and waste.
- Stabilization of a market economy focused by military spending and moving towards development: Brain drain and capital flight.
- Coping with weather and other challenges to agricultural structure and with pressures to increase the macro-economy.
- Dealing with neighboring countries like: Pakistan, Iran, Central Asian nations, India, China, and Russia.

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