



THESIS AND DEFENSE APPROVAL FORM

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Thesis Title: The Dynamics of Power Sharing in Afghanistan: Challenges and Prospects for Ongoing Peace Process

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LIST OF ACRONYMS/ABBREVIATIONS

ACJC	Anti-Corruption Justice Centre
ANPDN	Afghanistan National Peace and Development Network
BICC	Bonn International Centre for Conversion
BRI	Belt and Road Initiative
CAR	Central Asian Republics
CASA	Central Asia-South Asia
CCAP	Citizen Charter Afghanistan Project
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CLJ	Constitutional Loya Jirga
CNN	Cable News Network
CSIS	Centre for Strategic and International Studies
DIS	Democratic International Survey
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
DRA	Democratic Republic of Afghanistan
HCPNR	High Council of Peace and National Reconciliation
HOO	High Office of Oversight
IECA	Independent Election Commission of Afghanistan
IECC	Independent Electoral Complaint Commission
IJC	Islamic Jihad Council
IS	Islamic State
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
ISI	Inter-Services Intelligence
IWA	Integrity Watch Afghanistan
KGB	Komitet Gosudarstvennoy Bezopasnosti (Russian Spy Agency)
LJ	Loya Jirga
MP	Member of Parliament
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO	Nongovernmental Organizations
NPA	National Procurement Authority
NUG	National Unity Government
PDPA	People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan
PSA	Power Sharing Agreement
PTM	Process Tracking Method
RIAC	Russian International Affairs Council
SERC	Special Elections Reform Commission
SNTV	Single Non-Transferable Vote
TOR's	Terms of Reference
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UN	United Nations

UNSC
US
USIP
USSR
WTO
WW1

United Nations Security Council
United States of America
United States Institute of Peace
United Soviet Socialist Republic
World Trade Organization
World War 1

ABSTRACT

This research thesis focuses to evaluate the essence and application of Power Sharing Formula adopted in Afghanistan followed by the conflictual election outcome of 2014. The study also highlights the challenges it face in implementation of Power Sharing settlement and its role in current peace process. After the 2014 presidential elections in Afghanistan, the two leading candidates (Ashraf Ghani & Dr. Abdullah) rejected the election results. The disagreement converted into a political conflict further destabilizing Afghanistan's political fabrication. The re-election in the same year also could not manage the issue. Hence a Power Sharing Formula was charted out considering the dispute and for establishing a legitimate government and peace in Afghanistan. Though, the distribution of power and authority domain remains a complex division to define between the two contenders, however in September 2014, both the parties agreed to a power sharing settlement. Taking both the conflicting parties onboard through this parallel settlement, Afghanistan's political climate became calm. There is a general opinion taken by the researcher while doing this research from the experts and practitioners on Afghan politics and the current peace process that this power sharing settlement remains a blessing for ongoing peace process. Both the executives remain intact and engaged in negotiating with Taliban for bringing peace and stability in Afghanistan. The research also presents an analysis of Afghan peace process and the contribution of both Ghani and Abdullah into it.

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Introduction

Afghanistan has been a conflict-ridden state for decades. The tribal rivalry, elite politics and ethnic fault lines split Afghan society very deeply. Pashtuns form the largest community in Afghanistan and constitute about 42 percent of the whole population. The majority Pashtun tribal population always remains a threat for the rest of the ethnic groups like Tajiks, Uzbeks and Hazaras. Tajiks constitute about 25 percent of the whole population and are the second largest and powerful ethnic group in Afghanistan. Tajiks are followed by Hazaras, they are about 15 percent of the population and are well educated and politically aware as compared to the rest of the groups. Also, Uzbeks reside in Afghanistan whose population is around 10 percent of the total. Uzbeks have been fighters and violent throughout the history. The divergent, cultural and historical identifications and their respective clashing interests laid these ethnic fault lines to flare up time and again historically.

Struggle for power and supremacy in political authority have been a serious bone of contention among the tribal leadership since long. The end of Dawud's rule in 1979 and the emergence of Saur Revolution could be related to an intensive moment for instability and more divisions in Afghanistan. The peak of Cold war between USA and USSR was staged in Afghanistan. It is not an exaggeration to say that, the cold war rivalry of major powers contributed more to de-shape and destabilized Afghanistan more drastically. After the end of the cold war and the USSR's withdrawal from Afghanistan, there started a new chapter in Afghans' history with Taliban-Islamic guerilla fighters also known as 'Mujahedeen' coming into power taking advantage of the vacuum created by the departure of both US and USSR. They had

indirect control in Afghanistan until the beginning of 21st century. They announced open war and issued fatwas against their rivals. They ruled for five years. During their rule, Afghanistan had been known as the world's most dangerous place. Afghanistan under the Taliban presented a miserable scenario with social suffocation, political marginalization and the fundamentalism of religious laws and practices throughout the country. Taliban imposed the 'Wahabi doctrine' sponsored and assisted by Saudi Arabia. Afghans were barred from any social services, basic rights and political freedom. The women and the modern education were the special target of Taliban's Shariah and law system. They imposed veil on women. Beard was obligatory for men during their regime. The Taliban killed and detained all those who opposed their way of governance. Their era is known as draconian, illegitimate and de facto. They imposed strict Shariah laws, banned freedom of speech and expression and ended diplomatic ties with international community. The western states declared Afghanistan as a hub for terrorist organizations and militant groups.

The Taliban regime was overthrown by US and its allied forces followed by American twin towers attack. US alleged Taliban as terrorists and Al-Qaeda as the terrorist organizations having extensive networking worldwide. Resultantly, the US and allied forces stepped in to Afghanistan and an un-ending war broke out. Since then, Afghanistan entered into another array of violence, bloodshed, bombing and deteriorating phase. The political fabrication of Afghanistan shattered terribly and ethnic and cultural division became more conflictual and fatal.

It is worth mentioning here that this war has been proving ever expansive war in the history of mankind and the US having plentiful military aid and resources in Afghanistan wrote another history. The Bush doctrine also described the democratic development, nation building and reconstruction in Afghanistan along with the military actions. US also provided financial aid

for Afghanistan's reconstruction and social development. US' almost \$ 13 billion financial aid to Afghanistan was specified for building infrastructure, economic stability, civilian assistance, political growth and social security¹. But, prior to all this developmental investment, peace in Afghanistan remain elusive.

Afghanistan could not get stable politically due to internal cleavages among divergent tribal groups. In 2014, under the US supervision, elections were held for establishing a legitimate government. The elections were won by Dr. Abdullah, a candidate of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA). But, constitutionally the candidates lacked majority for making a government. In the same year, the elections were re-held. In the second round, Ashraf Ghani won majority votes. The variation of repeated election results led to another conflict in Afghanistan as both the leading candidates claimed to be the winners. Ultimately, US ambassador to Afghanistan James Cunningham and UN head in Afghanistan John Cubis proposed a mutual settlement plan under the formula of 'Power Sharing' between both the contenders. After the few months efforts of negotiations with both the leading candidates (Ghani and Abdullah) a power sharing was agreed and signed. Since, Afghanistan is ruled by two executive heads; Ashraf Ghani as the President and Dr. Abdullah as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO).

During their constitutional five years tenure, both the executives remain quite active and supportive in their domains with mutual understanding. The cabinet members were selected by both the figures through the mutual collaboration. Similarly, many high government officials were appointed mutually. However, apart from their positive role, there had been some areas of disagreement. As mentioned and agreed in the Peace Sharing Formula that a Loya Jirga would be

¹ E. O Hanlon, Michael. The Aid and Reconstruction Agenda for Afghanistan, December 19, 2001. Brookings Institute.

called in the next two years to change the constitution and to create a slot for a Prime Minister, but it could not be materialized. Dr. Abdullah stated this deviation a biased move by Mr. Ashraf Ghani. Similarly, Ashraf Ghani complains about the appointment of non-Pashtuns at the key posts mostly related to the security areas. There are many other areas of disagreement among both the executives, however, Afghans politics is in relative peace under the shared powers of both.

Afghanistan is going through a peace process. Since 2010-11, various peace initiatives have been taken and many efforts were made to a peace settlement in Afghanistan. The peace process entered into a serious phase since February 2020 among the Taliban, the incumbent government and the United States in Doha, Qatar. The main agenda of peace process remain focused on US withdrawal from Afghanistan, release of Taliban prisoners, stopping of Taliban insurgent attacks on the security forces and the preservation of Afghan soil to be misused against either of the rival groups. Initially there were reservations on the part of Afghan government, however, later on, Taliban agreed to accept the government a legitimate one where Dr. Abdullah has been made head of the High Council of Peace and National Reconciliation (HCPNR) with the consultation of President Mr. Ashraf Ghani.

This research elucidates the circumstances which led towards the adoption of power sharing formula. It also sheds light on the challenges that remain intact to the proper implementation of this mutual settlement. The significant part of this research is the performance and the role of both the stakeholders of power sharing formula for current peace process in Afghanistan. The research also examines and presents the key areas that needed to be addressed for maintaining stability and peace in Afghanistan.

Statement of the problem

The 2014 presidential elections brought the two running candidates Ghani and Abdullah at logger head to each other as the election results became contentious between the two. This clash was another blow to already shattered and war torn Afghanistan. However, the power sharing settlement between the two contenders shattered the warm political climate dividing the executive powers between the two, Ghani as becoming the president and Abdullah holding the office of CEO. It is argued that Afghanistan which was already going through the turmoil of post war repercussions with yet indecisive peace process could not have forbore another domestic political upheaval. The 2014 Power Sharing Formula was inevitable that ended the political crisis. This political settlement brought the two political contestants at calm relatively forming an inclusive parallel government. This power sharing settlement has potential implications for intra Afghan dialogue/peace process. Both Ghani and Abdullah hailing from different backgrounds: Abdullah representing majority Tajik and Pashtun ethnic groups became the head of peace process. The role of both the executives in peace process has been largely contributive pushing to some defined conclusion of the negotiations. Although, many of the commitments made at time of power sharing settlement could not be accomplished. However, the inclusive government structure remains beneficiary to deal with US-Taliban peace deal. This research work aims to examine the circumstances that paved the way for power sharing political settlement in Afghanistan and its role in the current peace process. It also deals with the challenges and prospects of the power sharing settlement in Afghanistan.

Objectives of the Study

This study ascertains to find out the following objectives:

- (a) to evaluate the circumstances that led towards adoption of power-sharing formula in Afghanistan
- (b) to elucidate the terms and conditions of power-sharing among contentious groups and its feasibility
- (c) to analyze the challenging circumstances for effective implementation of power-sharing settlement
- (d) to highlight the pragmatic areas for peace and cooperation among rival groups for stable and long-lasting peace in Afghanistan

Literature Review

Afghanistan, a landlocked state has always been faced with bloodshed, tribal enmities, foreign interference and civil wars. Majority people of Afghanistan live in rural areas based on Terrain Mountains and barren land. Afghanistan is a multi-ethnic state. However, as a Congressional Research Services in its March 2011 journal stated that Pashtuns make the single largest community owing to which, Afghanistan has been ruled by Pashtuns mostly². After the Pashtuns, another largest community is of Tajiks. They are around 25 percent of the whole population. They have been resistant to external forces as well as internal rulers³. Another ethnicity is of Hazaras. As Richard Oppel Jr. and Abdul Waheed Wafa in their article “Hazara Minority Hustle to Head of the Class in Afghanistan” write that Hazaras have been educated and politically aware. However, they had been treated like slaves until 2000, specifically by Pashtun tribes⁴. Another ethnic group is of Uzbeks. They have played very active role during the Soviet-Afghan war. They have also been very active politically and militarily. Arend Lijphart in his

² Oppel JR, Richard, and Wafa, Abdul Waheed. Hazara Hustle to Head of Class in Afghanistan. Accessed May 03, 2020. [nytimes.com/2010/01/04/world/asia/04hazaras.html](https://www.nytimes.com/2010/01/04/world/asia/04hazaras.html).

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

article “Constitutional Design for Divided Societies” writes that the newly independent states have flaws in their legislative electoral systems. Lijphart is of the view that to get rid of minority-majority issue, there must be proportional representation to the parliament in the novice democracies⁵.

Similarly, Paul Fitzgerald and Elizabeth Gould write in their book *Rethinking Afghanistan* that Afghanistan has been remained a center of attraction for great powers historically. Yet, it is also a fact that this land has never been fully occupied by any great power⁶. The Anglo-Afghan wars paved way for tribalism where elites were pushed up to assume power. Afghanistan has been faced less to external challenges while greater to internal challenges. Internal divisions among different tribes and ethnicities have torn afghan society into different groups.

John H. Waller in his book *Beyond the Khyber Pass* writes that the kingship of Zahir Shah lasted for almost 40 years. It ended as a result of an internal chaos when his cousin Mohammad Daud ousted him and assumed power in a coup detent in 1973⁷. Though, tribalism has been very strong in Afghanistan and the new government of Sardar Daud faced lots of internal problems. Joseph H. Collins states The Soviet’s entry in Afghanistan in his book *The Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan* that as Soviet forces entered Afghanistan; they initially got success by taking charge of main hubs. They reached to Presidential Palace situated in Kabul and killed Hafiz Ullah Amin. The advent of USSR forces in Afghanistan brought divisions in the ruling class as Konovalov affirms in his book *Legacy of the Afghan War: Some Statistics* that

⁵ Lijphart, Arend. "Constitutional Designs for Divided Societies." *Journal of Democracy* 15, no. N0 2 (April 2004).

⁶ Fitzgerald, Paul, and Eelizabeth Gould. "Rethinking Afghanistan." Middle East Institute, August 09, 2012. Accessed May 11, 2020. mei.edu/publications/rethinking-Afghanistan

⁷ Waller, John Henry. *Beyond the Khyber Pass*. 1st ed. Texas: Austin University of Texas Press, 1990.

bloody clashes took place in many parts of the country. The Soviet forces actively participated in this all episode and succeeded in overthrowing Amin and installing Babrak Karmal. The Soviet intervention was expected a small scale war, however, later on, it exceeded a decade. Almost one million soviet troops participated where tens of thousands lost their lives⁸. Similarly, Daria Fane writes in her book *After Afghanistan: The Decline of Soviet Military Prestige* that the attitude of the Soviet forces towards Afghanis irked afghan army. Corrupt practices, plundering, looting of honor of afghan women downed the morale of afghan army and they revolted against the Soviet forces. All this boosted drugs trafficking, corruption, poppy trade, warlordism, tribalism and ethnic divisions in Afghan society⁹.

While narrating the story of withdrawal of the soviet forces from Afghanistan, van Linschoten and Kuehtn the book *An Enemy We Created-The Myth of The Taliban-Al-Qaeda Merger in Afghanistan* highlights that as soon as the Soviet forces withdrew from Afghanistan, after the fall of Najib government, the different factions of Mujahideen turned against each other in 1992. The ruling elites, the warlords and tribal chieftains changed their allegiance towards different regional and international actors. Resultantly, the province of Kandahar was divided¹⁰.

While Ahmed Rashid in his book *Taliban-Islam, Oil and the new Great Game in Central Asia* writes that as soon as the center of power polarized among different groups, foreign funding lessened. Owing to the shortage of financial resources, these groups imposed toll taxes and people meted out mistreatment. To fill the gap and stop war, many small factions gathered

⁸ V. Kononov, "Legacy of the Afghan War: Some statistics.1999.

⁹ Fane, Daria. "After Afghanistan: The Decline of Soviet Military Prestige." *The Washington Quarterly* 13, no. 2 (1990). Accessed October 23, 2020.

¹⁰ Linschoten, Strick Van, and Kuehtn. *An Enemy We Created-The Myth of The Taliban-Al-Qaeda Merger in Afghanistan 1970-2005*. London: London Press, 2012.

around Mullah Muhammad Omar, a conservative religious clerk, for the purpose to bring peace and impose Shariah laws in Afghanistan¹¹.

During the Taliban regime, strict laws were imposed. Beard for men and veil for women were obligatory. Also, except Pakistan, UAE and Saudi Arabia, diplomatic relations of the Taliban government remained suspended with the rest of the world. The human rights observers and organizations termed this rule draconic and illegitimate. During this rule, Afghanistan remained main hub for terrorists from across the world. Fredrick Starr in his research article “A Federation Afghanistan?” writes that in 2001, a terrorist attack carried out in the US that changed the course of world politics. Al-Qaeda claimed responsibility for this attack. Resultantly, the US and NATO forces attacked Afghanistan where the Taliban rule ended. The US and the UN installed a democratic government in Afghanistan with Hamid Karzai as a president. During the 10 years rule of Hamid Karzai, peace remained a dream yet relative stability has been witnessed. During this tenure, many voices have been noted calling for decentralization of power or federalism¹².

In order to cope with the tribalism and warlordism, the Karzai government along with the US agreed on a power sharing formula where tribal elites and warlords were assigned different positions and portfolios. Resultantly, the ethnic fault lines and tribalism controlled to a greater extent but the Taliban factor remained active and tens of thousands of people, military and paramilitary forces as well as foreigners were killed. However, during the Karzai rule, there was a great debate that what sort of system could be in Afghanistan to cope with the great challenges.

¹¹ Rashid, Ahmed. "Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil, and the New Great Game in Central Asia." *Title Journal of South Asian Studies* 61 (February 22, 2002). Accessed July 06, 2020.[doi:10.2307/2700235](https://doi.org/10.2307/2700235).

¹² Starr, Stephen Frederick. "A Federated Afghanistan?" *The Central Asia-Caucasus ANALYST*, November 07, 2001. Accessed May 27, 2020. cacianalyst.org/pulications/analytical-articles-caci-analyst-2001-11-7-art-7064-html.

To answer this, Lijphart proposes a semi-presidential system. He further adds that though, semi-presidential system gives some weightage over presidential but it should be compulsory for them to agree to power sharing among the President, the PM and the Cabinet.

Stephen Biddle in his research article “Afghanistan and the Future of Warfare; Implications for Army and Defense Policy” writes that the US attack on Afghanistan ended the de-facto government of the Taliban in 2001. The US special combined forces, air power and assistance from neighbor and indigenous allies helped in bringing down the Taliban regime¹³. The US and allied forces were determined to install a democratic government which could represent the masses. Hence, main shareholders were to be the major ethnic communities, warlords, technocrats as well as political figures from all parts of Afghan society. Resultantly, the Bonn Agreement was signed in 2001, focusing chart out political solution to the 23 year’s war in Afghanistan¹⁴.

Astri Surke, Kristian Berg Harpviken and Arne Strand in their research article “After Bonn: Conflictual Peace Building” narrate the agreement that it was charted out that pledged for troops for security and peace in Kabul and the northern alliance was called to call back its forces from Kabul. The UN Security Council resolution no 1386 empowered for formation of an international peace keeping force by asking the stakeholders to join hands cooperate with the international community for working together in order to control narcotics and to curb terrorism which will lead to a high decrease in crime ratio¹⁵.

¹³ Biddle, Stephen. "Afghanistan and the Future Warfare." *Foreign Affairs*, March 2003. Accessed July 17, 2020. foreignaffairs.com/articles/afghanistan//2003-o3-01/afghanistan-and-future-warfare

¹⁴ Surke, Astri, Kristian Berg Harpviken, and Arne Strand. "After Bonn: Conflictual Peace Building." *Taylor and Francis Online* 23, no. 05 (August 25, 2010). tandonfonline.com/doi/abs/0.108/0143659022000028602

¹⁵ Katzman, Kenneth. "Afghanistan: Politics, Elections and Government Performance." *Congressional Research Services*, January 12, 2015. fas.org/gsp/crs/row/RS21922.pdf.

Alexander Thier and Jarat Chopra write in their research article ‘The Road Ahead: Political and Institutional Reconstruction in Afghanistan’ that political space and environment must be created in Afghanistan. By creating political environment, conflicting parties would prefer table talks instead of use of force¹⁶.

Another step that Alexander and Chopra discuss in their article is that national institutions must be priority of the government as well as international actors. Currently, none of the institutions could be termed properly working. Tribal elites, warlords and Taliban are stronger than national institutions.

Keeping in view the Power Sharing Agreement signed in 2002 and 2014 respectively, peace could be brought to Afghanistan by making Taliban part of the government. As Ghani and Abdullah agreed on the power sharing formula and appointments of different portfolios, Taliban may also be added to the National Unity Government.

Core Argument

The 2014 presidential elections brought Ghani and Abdullah at loggerhead to each other. There were immense chances of derailing of the political process. However, a power sharing deal was charted out that paved way for continuation of the political process. It is argued that for a politically bifurcated and socially scattered nation of Afghanistan, the mutual settlement of power sharing between the two contenders Ghani and Abdullah followed by contentious 2014 presidential elections was a need of the time. The challenging circumstances in Afghanistan external factors created more vulnerability in Post war country. Further, the clash between the two leading leaders over election results was a deteriorating factor for the peace process.

¹⁶ Thier, Alexander, and Jarat Chopra. "The Road Ahead: Political and Institutional Reconstruction in Afghanistan." *Third World Quarterly* 23 (October 2002). Accessed November 27,2020

Although, the political ideologies remain different on both the sides, however, the domestic political atmosphere remain calm especially pursuing peace process at that time comparatively. It is also argued that the stable political platform was the only available option in Afghanistan to focus upon intra-Afghan dialogue through political balancing and to curtail any further internal skirmishes among divergent groups.

Research Questions

There is a lot of work and research done on Afghanistan's politics and also on peace talks. This research specially focuses on Afghanistan's internal political climate and the 2014 election conflict between the two running heads Ghani and Abdullah. The research particularly presents an analysis of power sharing inclusive government's role in ongoing peace process addressing the follow questions:

1. How did various circumstances lead towards the adoption of power sharing settlement in post-2014 elections in Afghanistan?
2. What are the challenges to the effectiveness of power sharing settlement in Afghanistan?
3. How did the power sharing political settlement play its role in Afghanistan's peace process?
4. What are the prospects for better peace building in Afghanistan?

Theoretical Framework

Afghan society has been very polarized since long. There are ethnic, lingual, religious and ideological fault lines among different segments of the afghan society. In such a polarized and divided society, it becomes difficult to bring harmony and peace. But, as peace and stability are

pre requisites for stability of a society, hence, different stakeholders are to be made part of government.

This study is aimed to explain the post-Taliban power sharing formula in general and under Ghani's era in particular by applying the "Power Sharing Theory" given by Arend Lijphart. According to the Power Sharing Theory by Lijphart¹⁷, the newly born states copy the Western democracy which does not suit them. For these new states, Lijphart refers that elected legislative system should have proportional representation to the parliament. He further says that these states should adopt semi-presidential system not to exploit the rights and interests of the minorities¹⁸. Similarly, he focuses on power sharing in the executive pillar of state and last but not the least is that decentralization must prevail in such societies. Lijphart further elaborates his theory by saying that political power sharing institutions are always formed at the end of the national armed conflicts to establish peace and order in the society¹⁹. These institutions then ensure that the government will guarantee the rights of the minorities and would provide security of life and properties. The power sharing institutions Lijphart refers are a grand coalition government based on parity system that protects identity of the minority groups²⁰.

In the post 2002 Peace settlement, the landlords and feudal chieftains were given representation in the government in Afghanistan despite knowing their destructive roles in the past. However, as mentioned by Arend Lijphart, without making part all segments of the society, long lasting peace would be a far cry. He asserts that success of democratic governments in divided societies lies in two elements: distribution of power and group autonomy. According to

¹⁷ Lijphart, Arend "Consociational Democracy", World Politics, 21, January 1969.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

him, power sharing implies participation of members of all segments of a community in decision making of state, at the executive level in particular. Likewise, sovereignty of some group denotes that they have the potential and power to control their indigenous matters, those related with education and culture sector. In the Power Sharing Formula, charted out in 2014, the key features were included as laid down by Lijphart. The two are the important essences of the focal points of the democratic system. More often, it has been termed as a democracy based on the concept of sharing of powers or technically speaking of political science' term "consociational democracy" coined by Arend Lijphart. Consociational democracy is referred to a form of government by elite group designed to make democracy functional in a marginalized and divided society towards its stability and development. In this regard, to make consociational democracy successful, following factors are pre-requisite²¹,

1. That the elite class must have the ability to accommodate and secure the multi-ethnic and cultural interests and demands of cultures and sub-cultures.
2. This demands that the elite cartel has the ability to run the affairs of state in accordance with the demands of all segments of life.
3. This, ultimately, depends on their commitment to maintenance of the system and to the improvement of its cohesion and stability.
4. All of the above requirements are based on the assumption that the elite understands the perils of political fragmentation.

Finally, according to this Power Sharing Formula coined by Lijphart, political power sharing institutions are established at the end of the national armed conflicts for maintaining peace and order in a society. These institutions then guarantee that the government will have to ensure

²¹ Lijphart, Arend "Consociational Democracy", World Politics, 21, January 1969.

rights of the minorities and will also make sure security of life and properties. The power sharing institutions Lijphart refers to are a grand coalition government-based on parity system that protects identity of the minority groups²².

Keeping in view the importance and effectiveness of power sharing formula, it has proven to be a solution as a democratic process that is likely successful if it is implemented in divided societies, which proves as a hard task for constitutions' makers to deliberate as second choice to it. More hazardous pitfalls are already lurking in the way of many other ways within the concept of sharing powers²³. Contrary to Horowitz's views that democracy which is based on the concept of sharing of power is an unpurified form "one size fits all" model. However, there lies variation and modification in the power sharing systems which some countries followed prior to 1960 as well as the present day's cases such as Belgium, Bosnia, Czechoslovakia, Northern Ireland, and South Africa. For example, constitutional requirement is needed for representation in the executive and it must be comprised of equal numbers of the two major ethno-linguistic groups (Belgium) by allowing all parties with a minimum of five percent of the members who are part of legislation, the entitlement to be endorsed in the cabinet (South Africa, 1994-99) by the equal say of the two dominant political groups in the cabinet and a choice to be made between the two parties at presidential level (Colombia, 1958- 64) and on long term basis designating the presidency for one political party and the minister ship for the other one (Lebanon)²⁴.

In Gabriel A. Almond's typology of political systems, which he put forward in 1956, he distinguishes three types of western democratic systems: Anglo American political systems (exemplified by Britain and the U.S.), Continental European political systems (France, Germany,

²² Lijphart, Arend "Consociational Democracy for Divided Societies", *Journal of Democracy*, 15, April 2004.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

and Italy), and a third type is consisting of the Scandinavian and Low Countries. The third one has not been demarcated as a distinct type and has not been discussed in detail, Almond merely hints at it that the countries belonging to this type “combine some of the features of the Continental European and the Anglo American”²⁵.

The typology has its theoretical basis in the relationship it establishes between political culture and social structure on one hand and political stability on the other hand. The Anglo-American systems have a homogenous, secular political culture and a highly differentiated role structure, in which governmental agencies, parties, interest groups, and the communication media are independent and have specialized functions and are autonomous. In contrast, the Continental European democracies have foundational basis in division of political culture which has been bifurcated by means of sub-political cultures. Their roles are rooted in the sub cultures and have the tendency to establish and support roles for sub systems²⁶.

In the case of Afghanistan, political culture and social structure were poles apart from each other. In this connection to fill this gap and to bring about harmony among various contenders groups and factions, Lijphart’s Power Sharing Formula was aptly applicable in the case of Afghanistan in 2014.

Political culture and social structure are inter-related to political stability. The Anglo-American democracies are viable and hence display a high degree of stability and effectiveness. The Continental European systems on the other having some tendencies which lead to be instability; they are inherently embedded with political immobilization which is a consequence of the condition of the political culture²⁷. Political stability relies on moderation as well as on

²⁵ Almond.A, Gabriel “Comparative Political Systems.” *Journal of Politics*, xviii, August 1956.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

overlapping memberships. Truman states that the proposition it follows as: “in the long run a complex society may undergo revolution, degeneration, and decay. If it maintains its stability, it may do so in large measures because of the fact of multiple memberships²⁸.”

The second category of the above twofold typology is too broad because it includes both highly stable systems (like Switzerland and Holland) and highly unstable one (like Weimar Germany, and the French third and fourth republics). The political stability of a system cannot apparently be measured and determined solely on the basis of the two variables of political culture and role structure. According to the theory of crosscutting cleavages, one would expect the Low Countries, Switzerland and Austria, with sub-cultures divided from each other by mutually strengthening cleavages, to exhibit greater immobilization and instability however, they do not do so. These deviant cases of fragmented yet stable democracies will be called “consociational democracies”²⁹.

The leaders of the subcultures exacerbate the already created tensions and political stability when they take part in competitive behavior. Moreover, their intentional endeavors thwart the immobilizing and in stabilizing effects of cultural fragmentation. Any country can achieve a great deal of stability in its political system with a great part to its social hegemony owing to such overarching cooperation which may be made by the elite. The examples include are the democratic Austria after the First World War and of pre-democratic Belgium in the early nineteenth century. It was consociational solution which played its part in transforming the

²⁸ Truman.B, David “The Governmental Process: Political Interests and Public Opinion”, (New York 1951).

²⁹ Althusius ,Cf. Johannes, concept of consociation in his Political Methodice Digesta, and the term “consociational”used by David E. apter, The Political Kingdom in Uganda: A Study in Bureaucratic Nationalism (Princeton 1961).

divided and immature Austrian First Republic of the interwar years was into already divided and un-unified, yet mature and successful Second Republic after the Second World War³⁰.

Three factors are considered core for divided societies to construct and maintain cooperation among elites according to Arend Lijphart and among these is the existence of external threat to the country as the most detrimental one. In the consociational democracies, the influence of elites was either incorporated or strengthened in periods of international crisis such as the First World War. In the conflict among Holland's political sub-cultures, pattern of consociational democracy were constructed as "Unionism" i.e. Catholic-Liberal grand coalitions surfaced during Belgium's struggle for independence in the early nineteenth century yet it came to an end when the country appeared to be out of danger³¹.

The Second World War heralded the rise of consociational democracy in Lebanon: the National Pact- the Islamo-Christian accord that provided the basis for consociational government in 1943. In Switzerland, consociational democracy developed slowly and culminated with joining of the socialists to the grand coalition of the Federal Council in 1943³².

A second factor favorable to consociational democracy is a manifold balance of power which exists in the sub-culture which facilitates the elites to recognize the necessity of cooperation. It is the case practiced almost everywhere when one group is in majority, its leaders attempt to dominate others rather than cooperate with the rival minority. Same is the case with two subcultures which evenly matched in a society; the leaders of both cultures may have the desire to achieve their objectives by means of force rather than mutual understanding, in the competition to get the better off in the polls. In this connection, Robert Dahl argument is weighty

³⁰ Ake, Claude. A Theory of Political Integration. Illinois, US: Dorsey Press, 1967

³¹ Adam, Mc, Tarrow, and Tilly. The Work on Mechanism of Tilly. Montreal: University of Quebec, 2001.

³² Ibid.

that the consociational arrangement in Colombia may not last longer because the enticement for the leaders from coalition to competition is very great³³.

Consociational democracy is supported and favored by another factor too; its ubiquitous endorsement of the norms of government in the hands of elite cartel and it is indeed worth mentioning to be explored. In the case of Switzerland, its rich values which have been supported equally by the sharing of executives have invigorated considerably Swiss consociational democracy. On the contrary it was not the case in Austria in the grand coalition. Moreover, it was under diatribe of critics who raised objection that lack of opposition on British lines diverted Austrian politics “undemocratic”. They justified the durability of British system as a standard norm even in cases of divided political cases where this form is not properly aligned and also highlights in accomplishing durability in political system and that too with the help of consociational democracy.

In the case of Afghanistan, different power holders have never been ready to surrender their influence. Owing to their hard stances, peace has always been an elusive idea in Afghanistan. The politics of antagonistic groups seep afghan society deeply in the post-Taliban era. The warlords, the tribal elites and the influential figures have contradictive objectives that make the peace process a hard task. Apart from the above powerful figures, the Taliban factor is also a serious threat to durability of political system in Afghanistan. Though, president of Afghanistan, Ashraf Ghani gave a goodwill gesture and asked that all those who are ready to disarm themselves would be considered stakeholders. Yet, the Taliban leadership termed afghan government puppet and rejected peace talks with it that held recently in Qatar. This power-sharing can become effective formula as the divergent interests of various tribal leaders hindered

³³ Dahl, “Political Opposition in Western Democracies”. (New Haven 1966).

the stable society. Since, all these leaders claim to have power share for legitimizing the government. This formula can be the only way out to accommodate these groups at least to successfully complete the peace process.

Research Methodology

This research is based on qualitative approach. It is descriptive and analytical. It mainly comprises on secondary data resources collected from books, newspaper articles, journals, and research papers, online audio, visual, and print resources. The research also includes some primary data through conducting interviews from academicians, politicians and practitioners relevant to Afghanistan's politics and peace process by the researcher.

Significance of the Study

Afghanistan's geo-political and geo-strategic existence makes it significant to great powers interests historically and now. The country remains vital to international politics and served to the regional and global ambitions of major powers. Another significant element of Afghanistan is the Holy warriors and guerillas during and after the Cold war. These Taliban served US agenda of containment against communist USSR in South Asia during the Cold War. In the beginning of the 21st century, Al-Qaeda targeted US twin towers and its leader was taken asylum in Afghanistan owing to which, once again Taliban came into International streamline. Once again, Afghanistan became central to world politics. US waged a war against Taliban who were alleged to attack on USA.

US with its allies is present in Afghanistan since almost last two decades. US ambitions to fight the terrorists and to reconstruct Afghanistan is a hard task to achieve. It is also worth mentioning that peace in Afghanistan is considered peace and stability for the surrounding countries as well

as for global peace. There have been efforts to bring peace in Afghanistan since 2011. Recently, a momentum have been taken in US-Taliban peace talks in 2020 and there held a series of negotiations between the Taliban and US officials. Despite many efforts the negotiations remain in deadlock situation most of the time. This research is significant and an academic contribution to the very significant and contemporary issue of Afghanistan and the peace process. As the whole world is looking at the Afghan peace dialogue outcomes, this research will give a thorough analysis of the challenges, hurdles and differences that curtails any peace conclusion among the stakeholder.

Delimitations

There had been changing political dimensions in Afghanistan throughout. This study focusses on the particular power sharing settlement in an effort to establish a legitimized government machinery. Most particularly, this work examine the circumstances of 2014 election results and its implications.

Structure of Thesis

This research is divided into chapters addressing all the questions devised for a comprehensive understanding of Afghan internal political environment, its divided society, divergent interests of various tribes and to analyze the peace process. The research starts with an introduction that includes a brief overview of the whole research plan along with its conceptual and theoretical framework.

Chapter One “An Overview of Afghanistan’s Politics” explains the historical background of Afghanistan: its significance, its glorious time and its downfall. This chapter also elaborates the crisis of Cold war where USSR’s forces reached to Afghanistan and their fiasco. It also

discusses the grave crisis where Taliban came to Power and the 9/11 episode. The last part of this chapter deals with the arrival of US and allied forces and the beginning of a political process in Afghanistan.

Chapter Two “The Power Sharing Formula (2014): A Hope in Despair” discusses how was the power sharing agreement needed at that time: what were the factors that led to this agreement and what were its results. The points of agreement and the results are also taken into a detailed account in this chapter.

Chapter Three is “Analyzing the Challenges and Prospects for Power Sharing Settlement in Afghanistan” analyzes all the challenges in detail that hinder the power sharing agreement to be succeeded in letter and spirit completely. Furthermore, all the prospects are also analyzed that may be taken into account to pave way for its success in the future and that may help in the peace building and social construction process.

Chapter Four “The Current Peace Process in Afghanistan and The Power Sharing Formula” elucidates in detail all the internal as well as external actors related to the ongoing peace process: Taliban, warlords, civil society, Afghan government, the US, China, Russia, Pakistan and India. And that how all these actors can play constructive role in the political as well as the peace process in Afghanistan.

The conclusion of this thesis is comprised of three parts. The first part is a brief overview of the whole thesis. Part two contains the findings of this research. And part three has recommendations/way forward and policy options for the ongoing peace process in Afghanistan.

CHAPTER ONE

AN OVERVIEW OF AFGHANISTAN'S POLITICS

1.1 An Overview of Afghanistan's Political Background

In the history of nations, a few countries have the pride of place to object to the hegemony of other strong nations; few have raised their voice against subjugation of the stronger nations and very few have resisted and challenged the great super powers of the time. Among such very few countries is Afghanistan, which has not only remained the battle ground for many nations and civilizations but has also turned into a debacle for the great super powers of the world and even turned the graveyard of Empires. For many centuries, its invincible passes have defied to armies of Persians, Greeks, Maurians, Huns, Mongols, British, Soviets, and American- among others- including the most famous chieftains in history. Moreover, being strategically important, Afghanistan has engendered empires of its own such as the Ghaznavids, Ghorids, and Durranis who spread awe, invulnerability and prowess of Afghans as veteran fighters from Delhi to the Caspian Sea.

1.2 The Geo-Political Significance of Afghanistan

Afghanistan has played a vital role in world affairs so far and had a greater say on international issues in the past. Being at the crossroads of empires, Afghanistan's importance as politically influential nation began to dwindle during the medieval periods. The famous historian, Rhea Talley Stewart while throwing light on Afghanistan, said that it was devastated and

vandalized by two conquerors i.e. Genghis Khan and Christopher Columbus who did irreparable loss to this country³⁴.

Later on, during the 19th century, the great powers i.e. the U.S.S.R and the Great Britain were contestants for gaining control over Afghanistan. The tug of war for the control of Afghanistan has been termed as the Great Game in History. The interests of both the countries were associated with Afghanistan. Still, they did not want Afghanistan to emerge and to become strong both economically and politically rather they wanted to see it as a buffer between larger spheres of influence. Ironically, both the countries in the great game achieved little great goals and mostly were faced with grief in the forays into that buffer³⁵.

It is also evident in the history of Afghans, that whenever they acted for a common cause, their homeland has never been fallen a prey to foreign subjugation rather they emerged as unbeaten nation. However, on the other hand, history is witnessed that Afghanistan has shown unity only when its people are confronted with foreign threat and in such cases they have responded as a nation. Whenever the Afghans are left to their fate, they become entangled in series of internecine battles thereby inflicting massive losses both physical and materials. More importantly, when it comes to freedom and liberty, they do not welcome willingly such legally enforceable acts like Magna Carta, Bill of Rights, or Communist Manifesto, rather they are in favor of more ancient derivation- unbothered by writ of government at all³⁶.

1.3 The Glorious time of Afghanistan

Since ancient times, the Afghans feel proud of their land that the land and its people have never been fully vanquished or subdued by any power.

³⁴ Bosworth, A.B “Conquered an Empire: The Reign of Alexander the Great”, Cambridge University press, 1988

³⁵ Tanner, Stephen “Afghanistan- A Military History From Alexander The Great To The Fall Of The Taliban”, Oxford Press(2002).

³⁶ Ibid.

Afghanistan's history is replete with examples, such as after the fall of Sher Shah Suri in 14th century, the Safavid leader, Sultan Husain, planned to curb the defiant religious practices on his frontier. In order to achieve his objective, he appointed a fanatic Georgian named Abdullah Khan as governor of Kandahar with the task by promulgating Shiism on the subject people. In the clash of interests, Abdullah Khan was thwarted in the first encounter by an army of Baluchs, rampaging from the south. Consequently, the Persians dispatched a new reinforcement of troops of Georgians under another chieftain, Giorgi.

In the fight, the Ghilzai tribe fought ferociously against the savagery of the occupation force but to a little avail. More importantly from strategic point of view, the chieftain of Ghilzai, Mir Wais Khan, was taken captive and was shifted to the Safavid capital, Isfahan. It would have been better for Giorgi, had they been advised to kill the Ghilzai leader because during his stay in Isfahan, Mir Wais, a wealthy and diplomatic individual, soon got himself in Safavid sultan's good book. Meanwhile, he kept his eyes open for the Persian court and its affairs and thus made up his mind to trigger the rebellion in his homeland against his opponents³⁷.

In 1709, when Mir Wais returned to Afghanistan, joined by the Ghilzai tribe together they razed to the ground the Georgian garrison of Kandahar. Thus, Sultan Hussian with no other option left, in retaliation sent his elite Qizilbash bodyguards, more enforcement from Georgians and allies from the Afghan Abdali tribe to crush the rebellious uprising. The encounter of the forces of Mir Wais, joined by Ghilzai and Baluchs took place near Farah, but the Abdalis suddenly refused to fight against Mir Wais. Later on, the Abdalis rejoined the fight but were met with failure in their failed attempt to besiege Kandahar³⁸.

³⁷ Yousaf, Muhammad "Mark Adkin, The Bear Trap", Casemate Publications, USA (2001).

³⁸ Ibid.

In the meanwhile, the Ghilzais wreaked havoc on the countryside, murdering Georgians where they happened to meet them and in one skirmish defeating the Abdalis and finally killing their commander. Soon the natural death of Mir Wais Khan brought about tragedy to the throne and he was succeeded by his brother Abdul Aziz. Later on, he was killed by Mir Wais Khan's son Mahmud. Thus, Nadir Shah ascended to the throne and fought fierce wars with the Safavids as well as Abdalis. But not later, Nadir Shah's inevitable downfall took place in a dramatic manner in a camp in Quchan, where he was suspicious about the moves of his army's officers that they were disloyal to him. When his suspicious grew ripened, he ordered his loyal Abdali guards then commanded by young man of Nadir Shah's army they knew his motives and instead assassinated their leader, leaving Nadir's head to be found cut off from his corpse in the morning. This led to the succession of throne to Ahmed Khan also known as Ahmed Shah Abdali, from Duraani tribe³⁹.

The very first step Ahmed Shah took was the decision of his capital at Kandahar, and then later he forwarded his forces to northward to take hold of Ghazni and Kabul. Kabul at that time was under the control of a Persian governor, who, after Nadir's death, was inclined to divert his allegiance to the Mughals. But no ray of hope appeared to him from the Mughals and he was left only with Hobson's choice of surrender to the veteran advancing forces⁴⁰. Thus getting momentum, Ahmed then made advancement towards the Punjab, demanding the territories to be handed over once they were ceded by the Mughals to Nadir Shah. In the battle, to the dismay of all, his 12000 men cavalry was defeated in the battle of Manpur by a stronger Mughal army under the command of Mir Mannu. It was 1762, that is considered the pinnacle of Durrani empire which encompassed all of the new Afghanistan, Khorasan of Iran, almost all parts of the

³⁹ Tanner, Stephen, "Afghanistan- A Military History From Alexander The Great To The Fall Of The Taliban", Oxford Press(2002).

⁴⁰ Ibid.

current Pakistan, of India, and the area of Kashmir. Its frontiers were extended from Amu Darya in the northern parts to the South i.e. the Arabian Sea. The southern parts of the empire were brought under control and sway under an alliance with the Baloch and Brahui tribes and the conquests grew across those wastelands⁴¹.

While studying thoroughly the role and reign of Ahmed Shah Abdali, few things get crystal clear so far as his vision is concerned. Which are very apt to discuss here. Like, he was the first person who established an independent political authority on this land with legitimate power. In the same blow, he united all afghan factions against the Mughals.

It was also during his tenure that Afghan forces entered several times to the Sub-Continent and ceded provinces of Lahore and Multan. To have an effective control over these areas and run smoothly the affairs of the dynasty, he extended tax and revenue system there. He also exercised political economy. All these steps led to the wreaking of the Mughal Empire. Owing to these services, he was given the title of Durr-e-Durran (the pearl of pearls) and he was termed the father of modern Afghanistan⁴².

1.4 The Downfall of Pashtun Dominance

Ahmed Shah's death was due to a fatal disease in 1772 but he founded a Pashtun nation in Afghanistan. Some of the historians' mark that the birth of Afghan nation was made when Ahmed Shah in 1747 made accession to head of the Abdali tribe. Yet others oppose on the plea that his intention was more of the birth of Durrani's empire rather than Afghan state⁴³.

Ahmed Shah Durrani's contribution to making Afghans as heir of their own land, would have been more hailed victory in history of Afghans, had he guaranteed the peace and order of their

⁴¹ Cook, J. Wm, "The Persian Empire". New York: schocken books, 1983.

⁴² Tanner, Stephen "Afghanistan- A Military History From Alexander The Great To The Fall Of The Taliban", Oxford Press(2002).

⁴³ Ibid.

future. Ahmed Shah's last agonies included, that his sons or his grandsons would carry on the trophy of triumphs but alas, the glorious days came to an early end. Although his successors rested on their laurels yet they were pressed to retain tribal unity in the empire. It was early 19th century that their inevitable doom was destined to dawn upon them even more horrible than that Ahmed had ever envisioned⁴⁴.

Ahmed Shah was immediately succeeded by his second son, Timur, who had a long chain of Harem, owing to the political marriages scheduled by his father for him. Temperamentally, Timur was different from his father who wanted to keep distance from his Pashtun supporters. Therefore, he shifted his capital from Kandahar to Kabul and declared Peshawar as his winter capital. Timur trusted more on Qizilbash warriors rather than tribesmen. His regime lasted for twenty years. His end was also very tragic and his brother toppled him from power and his eyes were put off. This led to unstoppable rivalry and antagonism between his sons which resulted in weakening and disability of Afghan dynasty. Thus a stable dynasty of Ahmed Shah Durrani turned into turmoil and anarchy at the hands of his decedents and the Afghans instead of expressing respect disgusted them⁴⁵.

It was 1826 when Dost Muhammad got control over the throne of Kabul. From his original appointment in Ghazni he had first taken control of Kohistan and then entered the Capital. Amid the tumult situation prevailing in Afghanistan, Dost was forced to deploy both his diplomatic skills and despotic behavior to maintain his throne and thus to counteract rebellion⁴⁶. Meanwhile, the Sikhs came to know about the rivalries and that Afghans were disintegrated. In order to take advantage of the opportunity they sent forces to take hold of Peshawar. Resultantly,

⁴⁴ Muntstuart, Elphinstone, "An Account of the Kingdom of Caubul and its Dependence in Persia Tartary and India", volume I and II. London.

⁴⁵ Tanner, Stephen "Afghanistan- A Military History From Alexander The Great To The Fall Of The Taliban", Oxford Press (2002).

⁴⁶ Ibid.

Dost Muhammad declared jihad but rebellion in his rear troops forced him to hurry back to Kabul. All this led to chaos among the Afghans and in the early 18th century, the tribes fell back from the concept of Afghan nationhood that had once remained so promising under Ahmed Shah Durrani. Its worst time was the beginning of the 19th century, when the people once again degenerated into local tribal systems, blissfully ignorant of the fact how the rest of the world was evolving into modern system.

In 1809, Mountstuart Elphinstone, a British official, had carried out a survey in Afghanistan and called people's opinions which reverberated for centuries. Elphinstone while arguing with an old tribesman highlighted the importance of social stability under strong rule by the government, "we are content with disorder, we are content with arms, we are content with blood," the old man declared, "we will never be content with a master".

During his first visit, Elphinstone noted flaws in the character of Afghan nation, such as strong inclination toward envy, revenge, discord, avarice and. Still, he witnessed much to be admired in them such as their "lofty, martial spirit," hospitality and honesty as well as their fondness for liberty⁴⁷.

The British also came to know about the hard and resistive nature of Afghans when they came to the subcontinent. A British political agent Alexander Burness was assigned the task to provide an assessment of Dost Muhammad and for the purpose he was sent to Kabul. Burness noticed that Dost Muhammad was agreeable and even to the extent to make an alliance with the British but at the same time determined to retrieve Peshawar from the Sikhs. Burness after

⁴⁷ Muntstuart, Elphinstone, "An Account of the Kingdom of Caubul and its Dependence in Persia Tartary and India". Volume I and II. London, 1842.

returning from Afghanistan negotiated it with the governor general of India Lord Auckland, but he refused the deal on the grounds that he was unable to ignore Sikhs in Peshawar⁴⁸.

Meanwhile, a Russian officer Vitkievitch came to Kabul, having letters for Dost Muhammad from the Tsar. The presence of the Russian officer was alarming for Burness as he had no rein on the Russians to constrain on their consultation with Dost Muhammad in Bala Hissar. Likewise, he could not stop the news of the Tsarist agent's presence in Kabul as the news alarmed the British India already. Burness was still deemed the Afghan king as a capable ruler and he favored and considered him as a potential British ally. But it was in April 1838 that he said adieu to Kabul, for the sake of his career, without any apparent resistance to the Russo phobic tide⁴⁹.

When Dost Muhammad was ousted, the British government installed Shah Shuja as a new king of Afghanistan. Yet, Shah Shuja acted on behest of the Britishers throughout his rule. The tenure of Shah Shuja is considered one of the worst era in the modern history of Afghanistan.

Later on, Abdur Rehman, the grandson of Dost Muhammad, crossed the Amu Darya into Afghanistan. He spent there almost a decade with Russians in Tashkent and with the initial force of one hundred men armed with the latest rifles, he began to enlist the people and got support from the people, north of the Hindu Kush⁵⁰.

During this period, Abdur Rehman's forces were getting stronger and in July, he was invited by British to a conference in Kabul. The Afghan prince was dressed in Russian uniform, having a bag full of rubles and his men equipped with Russian repeaters.

Nevertheless, the British took a gamble. Here was a man untouched by religious fanaticism, possessing a legitimate bloodline to the throne, and who furthermore seemed capable of holding

⁴⁸ Muntstuart, Elphinstone, "An Account of the Kingdom of Caubul and its Dependence in Persia Tartary and India". volume I and II. London, 1842.

⁴⁹ Archibald, Forbes "The Afghan Wars, 1839-42 and 1878-80". New York: Charles Scribner's Sons 1892.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

the reins of power in pragmatic fashion. Ironically, the British wanted a safe door for their escape from Afghanistan by appointing the most Russian of all the candidates to replace their military rule; but by that time they were in a rush. In their venture, on July 22, they supported unwillingly Abdur Rehman's ascending the throne and their forces got ready to vacate Afghanistan. Abdur Rehman, being a nationalist and a man of strong nerves, his title of Iron Emir became popular everywhere. His stature as a leader spread as he adopted his irrevocable measures to root out the feudal, tribal Afghan system as well as he stood against the authority of the Mullahs⁵¹.

One of the greatest achievements in Afghan history was the smooth transferring of power from Iron Emir to his son, Habib Ullah in October 1901. Habib Ullah too was heavily financially supported by the British but was uneasy under their control of Afghan foreign policy. His dignity shrunk to a mere governor of a British province. The year 1919 brought about the calamity of Habib Ullah's assassination while he was outside for hunting⁵².

Thus, Habib Ullah, was replaced by his brother's son, Aman Ullah and he soon consolidated power with the feeling that he too was antagonist towards British. This flared for years, small scale battles on the Northwest Frontier as Afghan tribes on either side of the Durand Line had raided today's Pakistan in their attack and ambush on the British forts. During the Great War, British forces were called back from the frontiers and native contingents such as the Frontier Scouts and Khyber Rifles were reckoned with suspicion as being loyal to them. Meanwhile, in Russia the Russian revolution took place and Lenin came to power in the USSR and he made up his mind to establish friendly relations with Afghanistan. The Soviet Union came first to recognize the new government of Afghanistan in 1919. Thus, in continuation of the

⁵¹ Tanner, Stephen "Afghanistan- A Military History From Alexander The Great To The Fall Of The Taliban", Oxford Press (2002).

⁵² Davis, William, Henry, Charles and H.W.C Davis, 1874-1928: A Memoir and Selection of His Historical Papers, London: Constable and co, 1993.

policy, next year, a convoy from the USSR invaded at Kabul and vowed five thousand rifles to Aman Ullah's kingdom in addition to financial aid of one million gold rubbles. The two nations finalized and endorsed friendship treaty in the coming year, and the Soviets established telephone lines and telegraph in Kabul. Moreover, the USSR also financed a textile industry in Herat and planned and finalized a highway over Salang pass in the Hindu Kush. The Soviet s' government extended strategic aid to Afghan air force in the form of supply of eleven planes for military purposes, in addition to the personnel for training and maintenance⁵³.

The journey of Afghanistan's development was about to start in 1927, when King Aman Ullah embarked on a world tour of Calcutta, Cairo, Istanbul, London, Paris, Berlin and Moscow etc, and was welcomed warmly everywhere by all. However, when the king returned to Afghanistan, the locals created havoc that his wife was not dressed in Afghan traditional dress that created public resentment⁵⁴.

The public resentment was growing against Aman Ullah and in 1928, a man called the Bacha-i-Saqao (son of the Water Career) led a rebellion north of Kabul. The Bacha, a Tajik by descent was more of a robber king than a tribal chief, but thousands of fighters from the countryside flocked round him in his command. They were beaten by the troops of the British embassy in Kabul, but then wiped out a government column sent in pursuit. In the next year, January 1929, Bacha had taken control of Kabul, casting aside Aman Ullah's promise to repeal his reforms of modern Afghanistan. The king in his Royal-Royce ran away from Kabul, just evading the Bacha's cavalry on the snowy road⁵⁵.

⁵³ Tanner, Stephen "Afghanistan- A Military History From Alexander The Great To The Fall Of The Taliban", Oxford Press(2002).

⁵⁴ Fraser-Tytler and Tanner, William Kerr, "Afghanistan: A study of Political Developments in Central and Southern Asia", Oxford University press, London 1967.

⁵⁵ Finley, M.I. (ed). "The Great Historians". Viking Press, New York, 1959.

Thus the Bacha's rule continued in Kabul for nine months resembling that of the Visigoths in ancient Rome. Then the Bacha and his mainly unpolished lieutenants were ejected from the capital by a Durrani royal cousin, Nadir Khan, who had gathered Afghan army and tribal units from the northwest frontier region. Nadir then invited the peasant leaders to a conference, at which the Bacha and seventeen of his cohorts were executed. Afterward, Nadir unwillingly accepted the throne, being disgusted to invite the return of Aman Ullah. Nadir Shah, a capable leader was determined and ambitious to modernize Afghanistan, though in a less time frame than his predecessors. But another calamity befell in the form of assassination of Nadir in 1933, thus, the crown passed to his 19-year-old son, Zahir Shah.

1.5 Father of the Nation Zahir Shah Ascends the Throne

Zahir being young, the country affairs were run by regent Nadir's brother and other family members. But a young king, Zahir Shah soon realized his powers and assumed bridle of the state. His era is remembered one of the golden ages in the history of Afghanistan because of the following contribution.

He extended foreign relations to the rest of the international community. It was during his reign that Afghanistan got formal recognition from the U.S. He also signed trade agreements with Italy, Germany and Japan, but still remained neutral during the cold war era. He kept the U.S. and USSR on the same footing and resultantly, Afghanistan was helped financially by both powers.

Owing to political fragmentation and tribalism, he introduced a new constitution in 1964 with modern modes. He named Afghanistan a modern democratic state. He also introduced electoral

system, parliament, women rights as well as human rights. All this contribution stands him very tall in all the Afghan factions⁵⁶.

The emerging influence of the Czars in 1950 in that region led the Soviet Union to invest huge amount in Afghanistan. The investment was made in constructing schools, airfields, road, dams and irrigation systems, as well as by search for mining and drilling of natural resources. During this time, Afghanistan's Prime Minister was Muhammad Dawood who was inclined towards Moscow. He was a cousin and brother in law of king Zahir, and he rushed to Moscow for military assistance. He was rather hasty in his request of the military assistance because of the U.S. arming of Iran and Pakistan. More importantly, the new Khrushchev regime was more internationalist in outlook than that of Stalin's who would have been eager to comply with his request⁵⁷.

The following years of Dawood regime were tumultuous in engendered political upheavals. In 1963, Dawood's iron hand had culminated in excessive number of state prison, slow economic progress and injustice rendered aggrieved both the tribes and Afghanistan's newly emerging educated elite. King Zahir and the rest of his royal family prompted by his failed policies asked him to resign so that they could put into practice a new more liberal constitution. They hoped to reform the constitution by decentralizing the power and thus would lessen one man's despotism. It was a rare event in Afghan history that Dawood simply complied with the royal family's request, though he was thoroughly in control of the army. He stepped down from

⁵⁶ Tanner, Stephen "Afghanistan- A Military History From Alexander The Great To The Fall Of The Taliban", Oxford Press, 2002.

⁵⁷ Goodwin, Jan, "Caught in the Crossfire". New York: E.P. Dutton, 1987.

his office thereby paving way for the new constitution of 1964 which could guarantee greater freedom to the Afghan people for which they had struggled⁵⁸.

1.6 The Arrival of Soviet Forces and Series of an Unending Turmoil

In January 1965, the foundation of People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) was laid down at the home of Nur Muhammad Tarakai in Kabul. It was supported and favored by communism and from the very early days had close ties with Moscow. It was funded by the KGB (a spy agency of the USSR). As its inclination was more towards the leftists, the party soon split up into two wings, the one known as Khalq (the people) and the other Parchami (banner). Babrak Karmal's group more intellectual in their outlook was ready to work in the existing system, whereas Trakai and his Pashtun supporters were mostly radical and orthodox in their approach⁵⁹.

In April 1978, turmoil brewed up, in the assassination of Mir Akbar Khyber, who was a leading communist activist. It was assumed that Dawood's secret police were responsible for the assassination, and Dawood was scared when he saw the funeral procession of 15, 000 men who turned into agitated demonstrators. He started arresting the Marxist leaders. His suppression of the activists flared up the situation to more violent one and on April 27, 1978, a unit Afghan gathered around his palace in Kabul. Similarly, another rebel armored brigade took control of the airport and in the afternoon the palace was bombarded by Afghan air force Mig-21 jets. Meanwhile, the Loyal 7th division tried to march to the capital to bring the situation under control but was unable to stand against the rebel air attacks. Dawood resisted persistently through the

⁵⁸ Tanner, Stephen "Afghanistan- A Military History From Alexander The Great To The Fall Of The Taliban", Oxford Press, 2002.

⁵⁹ Yousaf, Muhammad and Adkin, Mark "The Bear Trap", Casemate Publications, USA, 2001.

night with his 1800-man guard, but the rebels forced their way in and entered the building and in the morning, he and all his family members were murdered⁶⁰.

The Marxist military officers yielded power to the PDPA which proclaimed the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan (DRA). Tarakai, who was head of Khalqi, was given the portfolio of President and Kermal (Parcham) was shouldered with the responsibility of deputy premier. The coup, also called the April Saur revolution, augured badly for the alliance and culminated in the end of Khalq-Parcham goodwill, it also provided Tarakai with the opportunity to purge Parcham elements from the government. He nominated Kermal as ambassador to Czechoslovakia, and replaced him by Hafiz Ullah Amin. However, the factional disputes of the party could not belittle the PDPA's splendid achievement: the communist revolution in Afghanistan did flourish⁶¹.

In the wake of these events, revolts were widespread everywhere. Like other groups, Pashtun tribesmen in the eastern mountains also took up their guns. Thus, it led to the Kunar Valley, the central Hindu Kush, the Badakhshan came to limelight as stronghold of anti-government. The PDPA gave befitting response with mass arrests and executions. The afghan army was not in good vantage point to handle the situation thus they turned their backs on thousands of masses, who grabbed their weapons. As a result of the rebellion, the government opted for a solid support paving way for a treaty with the Soviet Union. Thus, the peaceful settlement of Friendship and Good Neighborliness was chalked out in June 1931, between Democratic Republic of Afghanistan and the Soviet Union⁶².

⁶⁰ Tanner, Stephen Afghanistan- A Military History from Alexander the Great to the fall of The Taliban, Oxford Press, 2002.

⁶¹ Jan, Goodwin Caught in the Crossfire", New York: E.P. Dutton, 1987.

⁶² Lester, Grau W The Bear Went Over the Mountains: Soviet Combat Tactics in Afghanistan", London: Frank Case, 1991.

However, in the scenario of 1979, things went out of control and turned calamitous. In February the American ambassador Adolf Dubs was kidnapped which cast more gloomy shadows on the soil of Afghanistan. The Afghan troops who were supposedly advised by the KGB raided on the Kabul hotel against the wishes of the U.S. where he was made captive. In the operation, not only the criminals were executed but the ambassador was also killed⁶³.

The next month, Herat was taken by violent demonstrators and the Afghan army's seventh division ordered them to put an end to the unrest, instead they defied the authorities more strongly. This unrest unleashed a storm of mutiny by the hands of rebels leading to plundering, collecting and snatching weapons and killing government officials. Tarakai asked the loyal forces to fence off the city while he forwarded two armored brigades from Kabul. He also ordered the forces to strike some parts of Herat and seventeenth divisions headquarter with IL-28 bombers from Shindand airbase. When the rebellion meted out a fiasco, as many as five thousand people were turned to ashes, including one hundred Soviet advisors and their families. The outrageous rebels even celebrated the beheaded Soviet heads by parading around the city on poles⁶⁴.

A turning point was, in the form of aid to the Afghan rebels in 1979, when Jimmy Carter's national security advisor, Zbigniew Brzezinski had convinced the President for initial aid. The consignment of British made 303 Lee Enfield rifles was though meager in quantity yet it provoked Kremlin that the U.S. was intervening in the already fragile campaign. Meanwhile, in September, Tarakai was called for consultation to Moscow and after returning to Kabul he was taken prison and was superseded by his deputy, Amin. The political imbroglio was a mystery and still a possibility was there that Amin had acted the strategy on his own. As soon as Tarakai

⁶³ Yousaf, Muhammad, and Adkin, Mark "The Bear Trap", Casemate Publications, USA, 2001.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

returned to the capital, Amin seized the rein of power and on September 14 took control of the government⁶⁵. He suffocated Tarakai with a pillow the man who was once known as his “Great Teacher”.

The Soviet general staff began to drafting a plan for intervention and for the purpose Red Army forces were prepared in Turkmenistan. In order to execute the mission, another coup, was required by overthrowing Amin with the alternative of Babrak Karmal of the Parcham group of the PDPA. Amin was educated in Columbia University and more fluent in English. However, his incompetency during the fall turned more and more people suspicious about him and his self-centered designs. He was despised bitterly by the Afghan populace. In addition, the public opinion turned against him so much so that they wanted to eliminate him from power. After Amin was ousted, all past blames and negligence were hurled against him. Thus, the Khalq branch of PDPA was maneuvering things for themselves thereby paving way for new Parcham regime⁶⁶.

In order to have the edge over the affairs in Afghanistan, on December 12, Brezhnev, an eighty years old with ailment met some advisors in Kremlin. He was successful in convincing the Soviets political leaders to dispatch to the Red Army to Afghanistan.

The elite Soviet forces in Christmas 1979 started taking off at Kabul airport and also marched to the military airbase at Bagram in the north. These important places were in the control of Afghan government troops and were consolidated already by hundreds of Soviet advisors there. During the initial days, the Soviet advisors tempted Amin that they were there to support his revolution. The Afghan leader had already got away from several assassination attempts and for the time he was in the Darulaman Palace in the suburb of Kabul, encircled by

⁶⁵ Barnett. R and Rubin, *The Search for Peace in Afghanistan- From Buffer State to Failed State*”, Oxford University Press, 1995.

⁶⁶ Selig S. Harrison, “Inside the Afghan Talks”, November 1985”, Slate Group, LLC, (Autumn 1988).

his guards. The Soviets meanwhile crept across the capital to strategic locations and the Red Army forces advanced mechanized movements towards the rest of the country airports and communication and government centers⁶⁷.

On the first evening of the encounter, Amin's palace was pounded shelling. Dressed like Afghan soldiers, Spetsnaz commandos crossed the threshold of the palace who were wearing Afghan soldier's uniforms while hundreds of airborne troops attacked the perimeter. Amin's guards retaliated with full resistance for four hours inside the palace and finally they were vanquished. Later on, the Reports surfaced that Amin had to resign and was killed while he was enjoying a drink at a bar.

Meanwhile, Kernal appeared from the airport in an armored car to take control of the government and to lead the nation. On the Kabul Radio frequency, he addressed the nation, "Today the torture machine of Amin and his henchmen, savage butchers, usurpers and murderers of tens of thousands of our compatriots... has been broken... The great April revolution, accomplished through the indestructible will of the heroic Afghan people...have entered a new stage. The bastions of the despotism of the bloody dynasty of Amin and his supporters- those watchdogs of the Sirdars of Nadir Shah, Zahir Shah, and Dawood Shah, the hirelings of world imperialism, headed by American imperialism- have been destroyed. Not one stone of these bastions remains"⁶⁸.

The Soviet's invasion ignited spark of Jihad and thousands of mullahs played their part in urging and motivating people and instilling in them a firm determination to play their role. This also provoked those who had not yet revolted against Amin now they were spearheading against the Soviet army. They seized arms and ammunition from the hidden nooks of Nuristan to the

⁶⁷ Rashid, Ahmed, *Descent into Chaos*, Penguin Publications,(June 03, 2008).

⁶⁸ Hammond and Taylor, Thomas "Red Flag Over Afghanistan: The Communist Coup, the Soviet Invasion, and the Consequences", Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1984.

wide and arid spaces of the Helmand basin, ranging from nineteenth century muskets to WWI era. The Soviet puppet leader, Babrak Karmal, tried his best to calm down the nation, met the mullahs and announced a broad based “Unity Government” but very few paid heed to his words. Karmal’s Parcham faction of the PDPA in order to avail themselves of the opportunity, now in power, started dismissing the government of rival Khalqs. In the countryside, the Afghanistan’s tribes were imbued with strong feeling of jihad and for the purpose the ethnic peoples were eagerly motivated at once, having the Soviet annexing as their stimulus and Islam their shared belief and identity. The West made reference to members of Afghan resistance, “Freedom Fighters”, but they named themselves Mujahedeen⁶⁹.

In the wake of the tussle fierce fighting was continued for almost eight years, the USSR as well the Mujahedeen suffered thousands of casualties. However, on the part of the USSR, end was not coming to the war. In the last quarter of 1887, Gorbachev apprised Najibullah about the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan. He then informed Pakistan, through the United Nations, to frame a timetable for the withdrawal. However, after a serious blow in the form of failure, Gorbachev simply announced that withdrawals would commence on May 15. On April 14, 1988, the agreement was finalized and approved in Geneva, sparing duration of nine months for the Soviet troops to be withdrawn from Afghanistan.

Najibullah escaped in a coup attempt by Khalq general, Shah Nawaz Tanai in DRA In March 1990. He went to Pakistan, after being thwarted in his design and there he joined forces with Hikmatyar. About the unnatural alliance, Martin Ewans, diplomat and scholar delineated that alliance was quite eccentric in nature between a deadly Islamic radicals and communist, yet it was founded in allegiance to Ghilzai Pashtuns. In the skirmishes and fights, mujahedeen carried out attacks on DRA-held Kandahar, Herat and Khost while government envoys took

⁶⁹ Girarder, Edward R, Afghanistan: The Soviet War, New York St. Martin’s Press, 1985.

risked themselves in extending journey to the roads in between. The small scale resistance had been improvised into guerrilla tactics, in which they excelled the government troop. In this connection, Hekmatyar's attack was a major blow on Kabul yet he was overwhelmed and his troops suffered a large number of casualties⁷⁰.

In the fighting against government in February, the powerful Uzbek warlord, Dostum, also joined hands who was previously supplied with arms by the government. In a joint alliance of Massoud and Dostum forces, they captured the city of Mazar-e –Sharif. DRA authority in Herat and Kandahar were shattered and Mujahideen were inching their way on Kabul from all sides. In this regard, international communities wished for the smooth transition and Russians asked Najibullah to resign. The U.N. also played its role, Security General, Boutros Ghali, submitted a plan demanding Afghan leaders to be neutral and to form a transitional council to supervise the fall of the DRA and to introduce Mujahideen in peaceful transfer of power⁷¹.

However, the plan failed by Najib Ullah when he disappeared from the scene on April 15, feeling fear for his own life. The general in command of KHAD security force committed suicide. Now, Dostum and Masood, from the north, and from the south, Hikmatyar, had closed in on Kabul and by now both groups were reinforced by well-equipped DRA army who was no longer controlled by government. They halted for some time in the suburb of the Capital while the Mujahideen assimilated pressured by the U.N. debated for the method of transition and the construction of the new government. The Mujahideen leaders made a joint committee, the Islamic Jihad Council (IJC). Hekmatyar's militia was already marching towards the streets of Kabul, searching for main installations. Massoud introduced his own army in the imbroglio. Though, Hekmatyar had gained the upper hand in terms of numbers, Massoud, almost excelled

⁷⁰ Griffin, Michael, "Reaping the Whirlwind: The Taliban Movement in Afghanistan", London and Sterling, VA: Pluto Press, 1991.

⁷¹ Yousaf, Muhammad and Adkin, Mark The Bear Trap', Casemate Publications, USA (2001).

other commanders as his army was more trained with superb command and coordination. Dostum's fighters too joined in the fight, falling back to the south⁷².

The year 1993 witnessed fighting and warfare in almost every nook and cranny of Kabul, the country resembled the same kind of situation encountered by Ahmed Shah in 1757. In the beginning of 1994, Dostum along his Uzbeks fighters joined Hekmatyar, and their collective assaults and operations on the capital, including thwarting of air corridor that had brought relief and food supplies. This cessation brought about more worries for the ill-fated nation in form of forced migration of a large number of civilians.

At this juncture, all the Afghan factions were at daggers drawn with one another. A war of all against all was at its peak. There was an unending struggle for power. Each group was hopeful that it would get lion's share in the affairs of Afghanistan. But no one won. The people of Afghanistan witnessed bloodshed, killing of each other, kidnapping of fellows, poverty, drought and destruction of their property. They remained under the dogs of war and a full generation grew in such situation. Also, millions of people migrated to the neighboring countries, in specifics, and the rest of the world, in general.

1.7 The Emergence of the Taliban

It was the end of 1994 that the corridor of government power from Kabul to the Panjshir valley and to Kunduz was under control of Massoud, yet its limited control was held by DRA's former base network. In the summer the same year another armed group appeared around Kandahar. They were not mujahedeen but entirely new armed groups with the name "Taliban". The rise of Taliban was because of a good reason, amid the anarchy of southern Afghanistan when a local strongman raped several girls in the summer of 1994. The Local people who were

⁷² Jalali, A Ali, and Lester W. Grau, "Afghan Guerilla Warfare: in The Words of the Mujahedeen Fighters", St. Paul, MN: MBI Publishing Co, (2001).

fed up by the despotic and ruthless behavior of the war lords and factions turned for help to a local mullah, Muhammad Omer. Mullah Omer along with some of his clerks executed the culprit and intimidated his followers for similar consequences. Likewise, the students called Taliban locally, responded to calls from other victims who suffered at the hands by lawless gangsters. The stature and reputation as messiah of Taliban spread in direct proportion to the society's demand for order and peace⁷³.

The following three few were stunning as Taliban spread over more than ten southern provinces and their number increased with a bunch of volunteers, primarily Afghan refugees or local Pashtuns from Pakistan's religious seminaries. The Taliban in their areas of influence replaced appalling chaotic situation with strict order under hard and fundamental Islamic principles⁷⁴.

Ahmed Rashid in his book, "Descent into Chaos" notes that, "These fellows were different from the Mujahedeen whom he had known during the 1980s, who were people with linking their tribal and clan pedigree, who were gloomy and in state of despair when they were departing from their families and were saying goodbye to their fields and who were feeling proud of their legends and traditions of Afghan history. They were the children of the war apparently, the poor and shaky, and almost pauper and leading life from head to mouth. They glorified war as there was no option for preservation of their lives. Their simple belief in a messianic, puritan Islam which had been imbibed into them by the mullahs of the villages with least Islamic teachings was the only prop they could hold on to and gave a little bit meaning to their lives"⁷⁵.

⁷³ Tanner, Stephen Afghanistan- A Military History From Alexander The Great To The Fall Of The Taliban, Oxford Press. (2002).

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Rashid,Ahmed, Descent into Chaos, Penguin Publications,(June 03, 2008).

The battle impasse in 1996, the winter and spring, put thousands of masses to meet their ends. The U.N. in mid-summer set an emergency food supply into the capital. In June 1996, Hekmatyarr came to surface accepting premiership, he had once rejected. He was welcomed on his arrival to with a 220-rocket barrage from the Taliban. It was time, when almost Massoud, Dostum, and Hekmatyar had set aside their rivalries. In the fierce fighting in the Hazarajat in which the Taliban were victorious, Karim Khalili, the new leader of the Shiite party of Unity, also teamed up the government's coalition⁷⁶.

The victorious parade of Taliban was continued and in the late August, Mullah Muhammad Omer led the Taliban in a battle to the east of the Kabul. The enemy troops had no match to their fierce foray which they carried out and in early days of September, they cleaned their way in the mountains and passes to hold control of Jalalabad. They then moved to northwest of Bagram, north of the Capital. In the end, Massoud was ferreted so fervently that left Kabul. The Taliban once took Jalalabad had cut the transit route to Pakistan. They were planning to reach Bagram and then to cut off the routes to north, controlling the main entrance of the Salang Highway and the Panjshir valley⁷⁷. Meanwhile Masooud envisaged a dreary picture of the city as it was studded with Hikmatyar's radical Pashtuns, the remnants of the past, and the ill-treated inheritors of KHAD and communist military. On 26th of September, 1996, Massoud left the capital city with large amount of weapons and ammunitions, the king of Panjshir valley came back to his native valley. The Taliban launched an unopposed entrance into the capital, showing almost no respect for international restraints, they burst into the U.N. compound where Najibullah, had

⁷⁶ Najumi, Neamatollah. "The Rise of the Taliban in Afghanistan: Mass Mobilization, Civil War, and the Future of the Region", New York: Palgrave, (2002).

⁷⁷ Barnett R. Rubin, "The Search for Peace in Afghanistan- From Buffer State to Failed State". Oxford University Press (November 29, 1995).

been hiding. They not only murdered him and his brother, but also hanged his corpse for public display for several days.

The Taliban also devised strategies to annex other territories and in July 1998, headed to the north, taking control of Tاليقان from Massoud's forces in the east and from Dostum, Mazar-e-Sharif. In the city of Mazar-e-Sharif their revengeful intentions were revealed by slaughtering every Hazara they could find, piling up to six thousands. Here, nine Iranian diplomats were also assassinated in their consulate that provoked Iran for mobilization of its seventy thousand troops on Afghan border. Massoud got back Tاليقان in the same year. Its airfield was quite important for arms and ammunition, he has been getting from Russia and Tajikistan, however, again, he had lost its control when Taliban attacked Kunduz⁷⁸.

In 1997, ferocious fighting was going on when Ahmed Shah Massoud failed a Taliban's heavy attack in north of Bagram that caused more than a thousand casualties. The fighting continued in the Hazarajat for two years until the Taliban took control of Bamian. The world shocked when Taliban dynamited the biggest statues of Bamiana in spring 2001, that had been carved into Bamian cliffs during the third and fifth centuries A.D and now they paid heed to the conflict. The emergence of Taliban had been viewed in the beginning with some hopes by some foreign observers, owing to the anarchy and lawlessness which swayed for decades. In the end of the summer, Massoud agreed for an interview to two Algerian journalists carrying identities from Belgium. Massoud had delayed it for a while, yet finally consented to meet them. A bomb was planted within the camera by the Algerians who were members of Al-Qaeda and it exploded, rendering wounded Massoud with fatal wounds⁷⁹.

⁷⁸ Rashid, Ahmed, *Descent into Chaos*, Penguin Publications, (June 03, 2008).

⁷⁹ Yousaf, Muhammad and Adkin, Mark *The Bear Trap*, Casemate Publications, USA. 2001.

The assassination of Ahmed Shah once again ignited the already hostile and fragile vacuum of Afghanistan. Clashes between Taliban and Northern Alliance took place in many parts of Afghanistan where hundreds of fighters (including civilians) were killed from both sides.

1.8 The 9/11 Attack and Major Shift in Afghanistan Vis a Vis World Politics

On September 11, at 9:50 A.M. US standard time, the south tower of the World Trade Centre completely razed to the ground, followed by tsunami of smoke and debris swirling round through lower Manhattan, wiping out life of thousands of civilians. CNN and other channels telecasted that the south tower had been hit lower than the north one, and the second plane also cut apart the tower. In the wake of the attack the north tower also knocked down. Both the twin Trade Towers had been demolished with a number of other buildings surrounding them. In the wreckage 343 New York City firemen who had rushed into the center of the disaster lost their life, scores of New York City and port authority police, and over 2500 people who had come to perform their duties that day⁸⁰. Before the fall of Millions of tons of debris, many had watched the horrifying sight of dozens of jumpers who were trapped above the infernos of jet fuel, plunged into the lap of angel of death. President Bush, who was in Florida, travelled to Air Force bases in Louisiana and Nebraska, came back to White House on the evening of September 11 to address the American people. He said:

“Today our nation saw evil. Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil, for you are with me. We will make no distinction between the terrorists who committed these acts and those who harbor them”⁸¹.

At first hand, the US demand was handing over of Osama Bin Laden to the US at all costs. The demand was rebuffed by Mullah Omar. Hence, Pakistan came forward and ISI general

⁸⁰ Rashid, Ahmed, *Descent into Chaos*, Penguin Publications, (June 03, 2008).

⁸¹ New York times, Accessed on: www.newyorktimes.com, September 11,2001.

Faiz Gilani travelled to Kandahar to persuade Omar to hand over Bin Laden and his Al Qaeda brethren. The Taliban in their response wanted a kind of bargain, in their demand was included diplomatic ties of their government, end of international aid for the Northern Alliance and restart of foreign aid. Omar also asked for evidential proof of Bin Laden's hand in the attack. The Islamic world was puzzled and perplexed, wherein majority of people believed in Bin Laden's innocence, even his photo was paraded at demonstrations and displayed in families' living rooms. Being an outlaw and outcast, he was treated as superstar by many of the Islamic countries and their youths in particular. However, the US was resolute in their demand and she wanted to get him, in Bush's words, "Dead or alive"⁸².

Later on, it was September 20, 2001, President Bush addressed the U.S. Congress and public with more persuasive manner, determined to take up arms. Many observers witnessed in his personality that formerly known for humor and his hilarity, now a different in different disposition and character and unmistakable resolve. The Taliban must act immediately. He stated,

"The course of this conflict is not known yet its outcome is certain. Freedom and fear, justice and cruelty, have always been at war. And we know that God is not neutral between them. We will meet violence with patient justice, assured of the rightness of our cause and confident of the victories to come. In all that lies before us, may God grant us wisdom and may he watch over the United States of America"⁸³.

Thus, American and British forces launched air strikes against Afghanistan On October 7, 2001. The following days, heavy land-based bombers and carrier based bombers left for Afghanistan, while tens of Tomahawk missiles launched from U.S. ships and British submarines

⁸² Yousaf, Muhammad and Adkin, Mark 'The Bear Trap', Casemate Publications, USA. 2001.

⁸³ From the archives, George W Bush, Oval office speech on 9/11. <https://www.nbcnews.com/now/video/from-the-archives-george-w-bush-s-oval-office-speech-on-9-11-68719685777>

that already existed in the Arabian Sea. In the assault, Taliban compounds were targeted. The command centers and air fields in no time, the air attack capacity of Taliban was smashed down. The U.S. carried out its first large-scale commando operation of the war on the night of October 19, 2001 in Afghanistan. Special Forces came down through helicopters raided one of Mullah Omar's headquarters compounds, whereas Ranger's paratroops descended grounded on an air field south of Kandahar. The U.S. public was thrilled and exhilarated by night vision video of the attack in their enemy Taliban territory. The bloody war continued swallowing many innocent lives along with Taliban and Al Qaeda and the U.S. and her allies tried to establish a democratic government.

By observing keenly, the U.S. bombardment of Afghanistan, it leads us to a conclusion that U.S. had least intelligence information regarding the landscape of Afghanistan. The U.S. and allied forces bombarded many cities and villages where civilians were killed. Similarly, religious seminaries, schools and even hospitals were targeted from jet fighters where innocent were burnt into ashes. Also, the U.S. forces used biological bombs, and specifically the mother of all bombs, that caused environmental pollution in the region.

1.9 The Beginning of a Political/Democratic Process

The coalition forces paved the way for a democratic political process in Afghanistan so as to lead the nation towards stability and development. A senior U.S. Intelligence official stated that how Karzai was finally acceptable to the Americans. Karzai had made up his mind that he could regroup the Pashtuns. Nobody was willing to believe him, and the reports back to Washington were contrary to his opinion about him. Even after 9/11, he was not reckoned as a reliable person until he went inside without any support from the US. It was only after he was picked by them pulled him after the first battle that he was taken into consideration. He was the

only hope among Pashtun who was fighting against Taliban and was alive. After the CIA meeting with him and reported back, George Tenet made timely decision about Karzai that he was the guy that the US should back, this was the guy who would lead this war torn nation to a free Afghanistan⁸⁴.

In order to implement the plan, on November 27, 2001 at Bonn, all the Afghan factions gathered for the opening of the U.N. conference that would finalize a leader with an interim government, who was definitely be Karzai. In a small room with mud backed walls in Tarin Kot, the CIA set up communications equipment so that Karzai could address the opening of the Bonn conference, and thus establishing firmly his nomination as a leader⁸⁵.

According to the plan, in the first phase, Hamid Karzai was nominated as an interim president of Afghanistan. This was followed by the announcement of general elections. Many interested candidates submitted their nomination papers. Elections were held in 2004 and Hamid Karzai won. He was declared as the winner by the Independent Election Commission of Afghanistan (IECA). Hamid Karzai was in power as president of the country for 10 years. During his regime, peace was but a dream yet to some extent stability was achieved. In the course of his regime, many raised their voices demanding decentralization of power or federalism in the country⁸⁶.

During Karzai presidency, Tribalism and Warlordism, aside from Talibanization, were major hazards to peace and order in the country. Although the Americans had defeated the Taliban yet they left the warlords who got stronger. They were treated as U.S' friends and were also granted the CIA's payroll, but the people of varied and diverse nature. In the North, the Uzbek chieftain, General Rashid Dostum, supported and saved Taliban commanders for sake of

⁸⁴ Carney, James "Inside the War Rooms", Time, January 7, 2002.

⁸⁵ Rashid, Ahmed, Descent into Chaos, Penguin Publications, (June 03, 2008).

⁸⁶ Fredrick S, Starr, "A Federation Afghanistan?" Caucasus Institute Analysis, November 2010.

money in the past and his troops were also involved in plundering and robbing against the minority Pashtun population, thwarting the UN agencies to start humanitarian relief program there. Similarly, Turkey and Russia were backing Dostum but did not bother him to support Karzai⁸⁷. Hence all the factors were conducive as has been given by Lijphart conducive for a power sharing formula.

Hence, to bring the vulnerable situation under control, the Karzai government along with the U.S. agreed on a power sharing formula. According to this formula, the tribal elites and warlords were assigned different positions and portfolios. Resultantly, the ethnic fault lines and tribalism were mitigated to a greater extent but the factor of Taliban remained dominant and tens of thousands of people, military and Para-military forces were murdered. However, a positive prospect surfaced that led to a healthy debate during Karzai tenure that what kind of system should be adopted and implemented to address these terrible challenges.

To analyze the power sharing formula and inclusion of the warlords into government, we can say that it did not bring the desired results but paved way for political integration. Except Taliban, all the dissident groups agreed, in one way or the other, upon debates and healthy discussions. They also sat together several times to draw the future lines of action for the newly afghan government and how to curb flaws from the system. During this time, some individuals, who were given portfolios earlier, were removed on charges of corruption, human rights violation and Norco trade.

To sum up, we can conclude that the history of Afghanistan is replete of tribal rivalries, fights for supremacy, foreign conspiracies and foreign occupations. However, Afghanistan had reached to its glorious peak when the nation got unified. Yet, when tribal enmities erupted and personality cults culminated, its downfall begun that paved way for the arrival of USSR. When

⁸⁷ Rashid,Ahmed “Setback as Warlords Return to Old Ways,” The Daily Telegraph, January 12,2002.

the Holy warriors, supported by US and allies, compelled the USSR forces to withdraw, a huge leadership vacuum created that was filled by the students and teachers of religious seminaries coming into power and controlled Afghanistan. It was this era when the 9/11 event happened in the US followed by the arrival of the US and allied forces to Afghanistan. At that time, an unending war broke out, yet political process also begun side by side as herald in the history of Afghanistan.

CHAPTER TWO

THE POWER SHARING FORMULA (2014) IN AFGHANISTAN: A HOPE IN DESPAIR

2.1 Power Sharing Formula: The only option in Afghanistan

During the last fifty years, constitutional and democratic designs have undergone remarkable changes in the world. After the Second World War, many newly independent states emerged on the horizon of the world. The problems with these states were that they adopted constitutional designs of their Master states for granted and without looking for alternatives. The societies which were not conducive for presidential form of government, opted for the presidential form resultantly they failed utterly. The same sort of situation was faced in the states where parliamentary and semi-parliamentary systems were adopted. Today, constitution makers opt deliberately for a broad array of constitutional models, with various prospects and consequences. Prima facie it seemed a positive development, yet it had mixed blessings; they had to deal with other alternatives which were easy for them to handle, constitution writers and legislators were faced with risky situation because they were advised promptly to decide the fate of a country i.e. to frame constitution. In this connection, cases of such deeply divided societies are interesting to be investigated yet at the same time they are vulnerable to disagreement and fragility in terms of failure. Hence, the demands and interests of such dissected groups can be safeguarded through the formula of power sharing. Constitutional experts and law makers have acquiesced in that divided and dissected societies often avert the process of democracy and political stability to a great extent as compared to homogenous societies. The experts are also of the view that ethnicity societal divisions are barriers to the process of democratization and

development even in the 21st century. Countries like Afghanistan also has faced similar precarious situation in its way of democratic development.

In the Post 9/11 scenario when the rule of Taliban was annihilated, the US and other actors intervened into the matter of deciding the fate of Afghanistan. Thus they wanted to install a democratic government in Afghanistan which left them with no option other than to form a government in which giving shares to all contenders was the only choice for the sake of restoring democracy. The set up was acquiesced in by all stakeholders of all parties and was later on approved by international actors and this is known as The Power Sharing Agreement. The Power Sharing Formula was extended to other states where different ethnic, religious and minorities factions were at daggers drawn with one another.

In the post 2002 Peace settlement, the landlords and feudal chieftains were given representation in the government in Afghanistan despite knowing their destructive roles in the past. However, as mentioned by Arend Lijphart, without making part all segments of the society, long lasting peace would a far cry. He asserts that success of democratic governments in divided societies lies in two elements: distribution of power and group autonomy⁸⁸.

According to him, power sharing implies participation of members of all segments of a community in decision making of state but in the executive in particular. Likewise, group supremacy leads them towards the potential and ability to have the acumen for successfully carrying out their matters especially those related with education and culture sector. In the Power Sharing Formula, charted out in 2014, the key features were included as laid down by Lijphart⁸⁹. The often quoted two characteristics are vital for the democratic system which is also known as democracy based on sharing of powers or technically speaking of political science' term

⁸⁸ Lijphart, Arend "Consociational Democracy" .World Politics, 21, January, 1969.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

“consociational democracy” coined by Arend Lijphart. Consociational democracy is referred to a form of government by elite group designed to make democracy functional in a marginalized and divided society towards its stability and development. In this regards, to make consociational democracy successful, following factors are pre-requisite⁹⁰,

- 1 That the elite class must have the ability to accommodate and secure the multi-ethnic and cultural interests and demands of cultures and sub-cultures.
- 2 This demands that the elite cartel has the ability to run the affairs of state in accordance with the demands of all segments of life.
- 3 This, ultimately, depends on their commitment to maintenance of the system and to the improvement of its cohesion and stability.
- 4 Finally, all of the above requirements are based on the assumption that the elites understand the perils of political fragmentation.

According to this Power Sharing Formula coined by Lijphart, political power sharing institutions are established at the end of the national armed conflicts for maintaining peace and order in a society. These institutions then guarantee that the government will have to ensure rights of the minorities and will also make sure security of life and properties. The power sharing institutions Lijphart refers to are a grand coalition government-based on parity system that protects identity of the minority groups⁹¹.

Afghanistan saw presidential elections for the first time, in 2001, in its history⁹². After the elections, Mr. Hamid Karzai became president. In the meanwhile, there was a chaotic situation in the political arena of Afghanistan as people were not compatible with such a system. Also, the

⁹⁰ Lijphart, Arend “Consociational Democracy”, World Politics, 21, January, 1969.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² “Hamid Karzai wins the election”. Wwww.tolonews.com. Accessed online on September 13, 2020.

warlords and the tribal chieftains posed grave challenges to the government. Resultantly, the US and her allies intervened and made the warlords and tribal chieftains' part of the government. This act was widely criticized by many, yet the stakeholders termed it need of the hour. It was basically a power sharing formula among Karzai and his political and tribal opponents. His formula proved a mile stone for the upcoming peace accords and initiatives.

The Karzai Era lasted almost for 10 years in Afghanistan from 2004 to 2014. New elections were announced to be held in May 2014. Different candidates from different ethnicities and tribes contested the Elections which were held in relatively peaceful environment yet none of the contesting candidates got the desired majority. Resultantly, another round of the election was announced in which two runner candidates could only contest as per the constitution. It is worth mentioning to note here that during the first phase, Dr. Abdullah secured 42 percent while Mr. Ashraf Ghani secured 38 percent of the total votes casted⁹³. In the second round, Mr. Ghani secured 55.27 votes while Dr. Abdullah 44.73 percent votes⁹⁴. However, Dr. Abdullah stated that he would not accept the results and termed it a systematic fraud⁹⁵. Dr. Abdullah in his presser stated,

“A great number of our observers had been kept away illegally as captive where they had been thumped and that Hamid Karzai role was not impartial. Our apprehensions that we highlighted shared earlier with the high ups had not been addressed. Hence, we are justified in rejecting the election results”⁹⁶.

⁹³ Graham, Emma and Harrison “Abdullah and Ghani on course for runoff vote in Afghanistan poll.”

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/apr/13/abdullah-abdullah-ashraf-ghani-afghanistan-presidential-election>

⁹⁴ Shalizi, Hamid and Sediqi, Abdulqadir “Afghanistan's Ghani claims narrow win in preliminary presidential vote results”. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-afghanistan-election-idUSKBN1YQ054>

⁹⁵ “The Long Hard Road to the 2014 Transition”. International Crisis Group, October, 8 2014.

⁹⁶ Abdullah Rejects election results, www.newyorktimes.com. Accessed online on August 10, 2020.

In such a divided and opposed situation, a road map for peace after the election seemed futile and unpromising. Because Dr. Abdullah said that he would form parallel government in the areas of his influence if Ghani would be declared victorious. Hence, a power sharing formula became inevitable in Afghanistan to form a legitimate government for a peaceful society. Soon the US ambassador to Afghanistan James Cunningham and Jan Kubis, the UN head to Afghanistan meddled in the issue and asked the two contenders for a power sharing formula⁹⁷. They agreed and an agreement was chalked out dividing powers between Ashraf Ghani and Dr. Abdullah.

During their four years government, many observers and political analysts saw an incredible cooperation and collaboration between the two whereas they meted out many triumphs. However, on the other side, many political thinkers and analysts termed it a face saving and futile formula.

2.2 Factors Responsible for Power Sharing

The crisis unleashed deplorable situation which gave birth to NUG in 2014 as a result of two fundamental elements: i.e. an electoral process which has supportive institutions which gave birth to a high degree of mistrust among the population and key political actors which failed to ascertain the mechanism for verifying transparent results with acceptable outcome. Secondly, political differences and divisions which create shadow of doubts for the winners which call in question the whole system in a pluralistic world, this with the protection of the constitution, is because of the governments in a centralized form. However, if trust deficit is mitigated with impartial institutions' support the losers may readily acknowledge the results which will be

⁹⁷ Jiong,May”Afghan leaders sign power-sharing deal”.
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/sep/21/afghanistan-power-sharing-deal-abdullah-ashraf-ghani-ahmadzai>

healthy democratic value. It would also pave way for check and control system and a smooth transfer of power will be easily made for a contesteer in the coming election.

The last sixteen years as well as Afghanistan's history as a state have witnessed unending competitions between opposite groups fighting for centralization and decentralization of power. Those who support centralization avow that a centralized and modern state is the remedy for curtailing violence and justifying the rule of law, and distributing resources not only for a well-built infrastructure but also for essential services delivery and for making friendly foreign relations. These services delivery is possible when a centralized government is functional. Moreover, it is through the potential of central control that the local warlords could be controlled and thus the menace of corruption could be limited.

Subsequently, elections held in Afghanistan in 2004. Mr. Hamid Karzai won the elections. The first ever direct elections in the history of Afghanistan were greeted by international community. But keeping in mind the fragile and conflict prone society of Afghanistan, it was widely decided to bring the warlords and powerful elites to the domain of the government for long lasting peace and order.

The partnership and the power sharing formula chalked out in 2014 has been relatively successful. It avoided major ethnic and tribal conflicts. However, peace is still on a distance in Afghanistan. There are external as well as internal factors which hinder peace and stability in Afghanistan.

The first and foremost force is Taliban. Taliban are not yet ready for negotiations. Taliban refused to sit with the afghan government for peace talks. Herbert Kelman, professor of

Social Ethics in Harvard, is of the view that Taliban as well as the government are reluctant to find evidence that confirm the negative picture of each other.

Peace and security are the pre-requisites for a society to prosper. Afghan society has been witnessed wars and ruthless bloodshed since long. Since the arrival of the US and NATO forces, the year 2014 and 2015 have been proved the most violent and ruthless where the civilians and security forces lost their lives⁹⁸. Apart from civilians and military forces, another prime target of Taliban has been the Non-governmental Organizations (NGO's) and foreigners⁹⁹. The armed groups consist of Hizb-e-Islami and Haqqani network led by Gulbadin Hikmatyar and Jalal-u-din Haqqani respectively. Apart from these two, the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, Lashkar-e-Tayaba and Islamic State (IS) are also active¹⁰⁰.

Justice and good governance pave way for smooth running of the government. A society based on justice and ensures good governance easily prospers. Unluckily, the aspect of governance has also been neglected in Afghanistan. The powerful elites have been using violence to prolong their hold since long. In 1978, the government and warlords shared the power structure of the state in an agreement. This power sharing, though mitigated the use of violence, yet helped the tribal leaders in assuming their control¹⁰¹. The Karzai led government, in the post-Taliban phenomenon also faced multiple problem of governance. There was rampant corruption, nepotism and negligence on the part of the government officials.

⁹⁸ United Nations Assistance Mission for Afghanistan (UNAMA) 2015.

⁹⁹ "Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction." July 30, 2015. Accessed March 01, 2019. [sigar.mil/pdf/quarterly reports/2015-07-30r.pdf](http://sigar.mil/pdf/quarterly%20reports/2015-07-30r.pdf).

¹⁰⁰ Katzman, Kenneth. "Afghanistan: Post-Taliban Governance, Security, and US Policy." Congressional Research Services, December 13, 2017. Accessed March 20, 2020. fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RL30588.PDF.

¹⁰¹ Afghan Future Survey-Wave6."LANGER RESEARCH ASSOCIATES. Accessed March 11, 2020. d3systems.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/afghan-future-wave.

Afghan society is based on multi ethnic and lingual basis. Multiple ethnic small and large groups reside there. Some states make this multilateral culture their power, however the case of Afghanistan is quite a different one. This ethnic and religious factor has further divided afghan society. Pashtuns have been dominant in Afghanistan. Historically they have ruled Afghanistan for centuries. Hence, a minority and majority cards have been used fully by internal actors as well as external actors.

Since Taliban have been ousted from power, they pose the biggest threat to the peaceful and semi-stable situation in Afghanistan. During Karzai's regime, several steps were ensured initiatives were taken to persuade the Taliban to take part in to mainstream politics. In 2010, 2011, a Grand Peace Jirga and then Loya Jirga were called where Taliban were offered power sharing if they disarm themselves and dissociate themselves from Al-Qaeda, yet in vain¹⁰². The Taliban not only rejected peace talks yet week before the Peace Jirga of 2011, Burhanuddin Rabbani, former president and chief of the Afghan High Peace Council was assassinated by Taliban¹⁰³.

Similarly, the Ghani's government offered peace talks to Taliban to end violence and construct society. The round of peace talks held on February 28, brought many states to bring a formula for sustainable peace¹⁰⁴. Unluckily, the key antagonists- the Taliban did not participate

¹⁰² Lamb, Rrobert D., Mehlaqa, Samdani, and Justine Fleischner. "Afghanistan National Consultative Jirga." Centre for Strategic and International Studies, May 27, 2010. Accessed February 13, 2020.

¹⁰³ Rubin, Alissa J., and Jack Healy. "Survivors Tell of Taliban Plot in former Afghan President Assassination." New York Times, September 22, 2012. Accessed October 12, 2020. www.newyorktimes.com/survivors-tell-of-taliban-plot-in-former-afghan-president-assasination

¹⁰⁴ Government Issues Declaration after Kabul Meeting', Tolo News, February 28, 2018.

despite the fact that Ghani government offered changes in the constitution to meet their basic demands¹⁰⁵.

2.3 Points of Agreement between the Parties

Soon after the agreement, the Independent Election Commission of Afghanistan declared Ghani as the President, Ghani took oath on September 29, 2014 as a President on September and declared Dr. Abdullah as a Chief Executive Officer.

The agreement included the following key tenants¹⁰⁶:

- a. That Ghani would sacrifice some of his powers as president for Dr. Abdullah
- b. That Abdullah, as a Chief Executive Officer (CEO) would have powers of a Prime Minister. He would chair meetings of Council of Ministers on weekly basis. The Cabinet would consist of all ministers including the president, vice president, deputy CEO and the chief advisor to the president.
- c. That the president and the CEO would be on mutual consensus in matters of powers in the appointment of all government officials including the ministers.
- d. That a Loya Jirga (LJ) would be called in the next two years to make a constitutional amendment and draw a formal seat of premiership.

2.4 Success/Analysis of the Power Sharing Formula

The new agreement chalked out between the two individuals seemed ineffectual by many international observers. Keeping in view the history of tribalism and ethnic fault lines that have

¹⁰⁵ Tisdall, Simon. "Afghan Leader's Offer to Taliban in a Last Ditch Gamble for Peace." *The Guardian*. Accessed July 11, 2020. [theguardian.com/world/2018/feb/28/afghan-president-ashraf-ghani-offers-to-recognise-taliban-to-end-war](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/feb/28/afghan-president-ashraf-ghani-offers-to-recognise-taliban-to-end-war).

¹⁰⁶ "Conference Promotes National Unity Government." <https://tolonews.com/afghanistan/conference-promotes-national-unity-government>

always created disorder and divisions in the society, this agreement was not seemingly viable. However, the two individuals showed their enthusiasm and commitment for walking side by side. However, another lurking fear was that tribal elites would come to power which may pose hurdles to institutions building so the idea could not be fruitful. But, Mr. Ghani in his maiden speech vehemently expressed it that all appointments would be made on the basis of merit and all the corrupt individuals would be brought to book. This passion state of mind was appreciated by all and sundry.

Initially, the partnership between the two leaders underwent immense trouble because of the waves of presidential elections and unproved allegations. However, both the President and the CEO succeeded in appointment of the below federal cabinet¹⁰⁷:

- a. The Chief of Afghan National Army, Sher Muhammad Karimi, was given charge as Minister of Defense by Ghani and Nur Ul Haq Ulumi as Minister for Interior by Abdullah. Similarly, Rehmat Ullah Nabi was picked up by Ghani as a head of Afghan Intelligence.
- b. QamarUd Din Shinwari was nominated as Minister for Borders and Frontier regions by Ghani.
- c. Salahudin Rabbani, a Tajik, was appointed by Abdullah as a Foreign Minister.
- d. Minister for Finance was nominated Jelani Popal by Ghani.
- e. Barna Karimi was appointed Minister for Communication and Information Technology by Abdullah.
- f. Three women nominees, two by Ghani and one by Abdullah were also nominated respectively.

¹⁰⁷ “Conference Promotes National Unity Government.” <https://tolonews.com/afghanistan/conference-promotes-national-unity-government>.

2.5 Results of that Power Sharing

The newly formed government that came under a Power Sharing Formula in 2014, was faced with multiple problems and challenges. Illiteracy, corrupt practices, multi ethnic and multi lingual society as well as Talibanization hindered the partnership between Ghani and Abdullah, yet their commitment to the cause achieved commendable results. They not only completed their constitutional tenure yet introduced multiple reforms too. Some of the milestone achievements are given below.

2.5.1 Achievements on Economic Grounds

Economic revival and reforms have been regarded as one of the top priorities on the agenda of the NUG and of particular interest by President Ghani. However, alarming threats have been looming in the shape of insecurity for the socio-economic reforms. One of the aide from the president office described the government's initial was for "survival" in the wake of countless divisions internally whereas the second one as "defense" because continuum of insurgency in the light of possible drawdown of December 2014 international troops. Yet, it has nevertheless achieved somewhat promising points in economy, the collection of domestic revenues system has been improved and some breakthrough in budget deficit has ameliorated the overall economic conditions¹⁰⁸.

Similarly, reforms in budget and uncompromising stance on generating tax and collecting revenues have contributed in the NUG's economic success to a great extent. The statistics of World Bank, indicate that a rise of revenues to 10.4 per cent of GDP in 2015 from 8.7 per cent in 2014 has been witnessed. In 2016, revenue mobilization was thriving with good results to yield higher results, between \$173 and \$180 million per month and 33 per cent increase during the

¹⁰⁸ "Afghanistan: The Future of the National Unity Government." International Crisis Group, April 2010.

first six months. Later on, in 2016 a healthy economic and infrastructure development was noted both in policies and strategies in Afghanistan National Peace and Development Framework 2017-2021 (ANPDF)¹⁰⁹.

Officials whine about the goals achieved so far which have been “overlooked and underestimated” because among the programs, many are infrastructural as well as developmental projects that will take time in their completion. Similarly, the mode of collecting revenue and membership of World Trade Organization (WTO) in July 2016 helped Afghanistan introducing the following progress¹¹⁰:

- Working in energy sector for self-reliance includes the completion and initial process for the CASA 1000 (Central Asia-South Asia) and Turkmenistan 500 KV power projects; the completion of Salma Dam; and signing of the two large contracts of hydroelectric projects as part of public-private partnerships.
- Extending regional trade through the Sino-Afghan Special Transportation Railway between Haimen (near Shanghai) through Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan and Afghanistan’s Hairatan rail port on the Uzbek border; inauguration in November of the Lapis Lazuli Railway Project connecting Afghanistan through Turkmenistan to Azerbaijan, the Balkans and Central Europe; construction of six logistical hubs to provide export access to each of Afghanistan’s major regions; and construction of the Iran-Afghanistan rail line that has begun in Herat; and launching the \$800 million Citizen Charter Afghanistan

¹⁰⁹ “Afghanistan: The Future of the National Unity Government.” International Crisis Group, April 2010.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

Project (CCAP) in September, an inter-ministerial, multi-sectoral national priority program to improve delivery of core infrastructure and social services to communities¹¹¹.

As a candidate in the presidential election, Ghani clearly and vehemently declared in 2014 that the gender bias issue will be reduced. Hence, more women were appointed and selected in the cabinet and other senior portfolios were given to women. It is a fact that the role of women is negligible so far their position as leader is concerned, yet four women are part of the cabinet and many others enjoy their position at executive level. Moreover, Ghani has also been vociferous about protection of women in the workplace and the ANDSF and it is due to the first lady, Rula Ghani, that the women rights' group is closely linked to the Royalty than before¹¹².

2.5.2 On the Menace of Corruption

Both leaders vowed to get rid of the menace of corruption during their campaign. In this connection, Ghani established the National Procurement Authority (NPA) to centralize and put on track the procurement system. In November 2016, it reassessed around 2,000 contracts, approving \$3 billion but rejecting 90, "generating savings of \$270 million" and also not sparing almost 100 companies as bad working ones¹¹³.

Before the commencement of Brussels' conference, the President was committed to establishing anti-corruption bodies such as the Anti-Corruption Justice Centre (ACJC) a specialized body for curbing cases of embezzlement under the patronage of attorney general's direct supervision. In March 2016, the High Council on Governance, Justice and Anti-Corruption

¹¹¹ "Afghanistan and Turkmenistan Opens First Rail Connection." www.bbc.com November 28, 2016, accessed online on November 12, 2020.

¹¹² Aqilzada, Muhammad, "Women and Political Participation: Challenges, Achievements and Opportunities", Free and Fair Election Forum of Afghanistan, January 2017.

¹¹³ "Reforming the Procurement: The Journey So Far." prepared for the weekly donor stakeholder meeting, Kabul, 12 February 2017.

was set for ameliorating the coordination system among anti-corruption bodies such as High Office of Oversight (HOO) and the Independent Joint Anti-Corruption Monitoring and Evaluation Committee. On October 02, Ghani, during chairing a High Council meeting said that his office had collected information about corrupt officials including senior Karzai government officials, to the ACJC for bringing them to book. Later on, in January 2017, Transparency International acknowledged that Afghanistan had made very little progress as compare to its past year in its annual Corruption Perception Index ranking to 169th from 175th¹¹⁴. However, many raised objection, over NUG that it was not fair enough to bring to book the corrupt officials but it was just hoodwinking the people and that the progress made by ACJC was not substantial¹¹⁵.

The donors were also disappointed by a joint and well-defined stance and criticized the government that it lacked political disliking on the menace of corruption, HOO head Ghulam Hussain Fakhri criticized the ACJC for failing to “meet people’s expectations” and demanded a fair trial of investigation of corruption charges. On January 15, 2017 the centers’ head, Alif Erfani, revealed that they had brought to light a huge financial embezzlement case in which involvement of nine defense ministry generals and another case related to the urban development in which 27 officials were involved. In March, a high-profile army officer who was given charge

¹¹⁴ The most significant change was in the Rule of Law index score which increased from two to thirteen. During the London conference, in December 2014, the NUG pledged to draft an anti-corruption strategy by mid 2017 but little progress has been made. Crisis group interviews, board member, Monitoring and Evaluation Committee, Kabul, November 2016.

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in December 2015 for eradicating ANDSF malpractices and embezzlement in Helmand province was reported to be involved in corruption charges and was arrested¹¹⁶.

Such involvement in massive corruption shadowed the efforts of the government and the mistrust of the leaders was also ripened to some extent about each other. Integrity Watch Afghanistan's (IWA) 2016 National Corruption Survey found out that almost \$3 billion amount was piled as kickback in 2015, an almost 50 per cent rise from that of 2014. The IWA survey and the 2016 Asia Foundation Survey pointed out that lack of security and the issue of unemployment, Afghans expressed their concerns corruption that corruption was the mother of all evils and a greater menace to its political stability and democracy. Officials, however, do not pay heed to harangue made against them. They reiterate that reforms are gradually accepted by societies and communities and may take time. Moreover, they also express their concerns that they have back door relations with all-encompassing corrupt networks in the hour when government institutes are weak and the state is faced with more alarming situation¹¹⁷.

2.5.3 Reforms in Electoral System

Though in the NUG agreement they solemnly pledged to make arrangement for a constitutional Loya Jirga to formalize the portfolio of CEO' i.e "prime minister" within time span of twenty-four months, because the assembly could not be materialized without elections for district councils and this will indeed organize the whole system. Similarly vows of enactment which were needed on urgent basis in electoral reforms prior to any polls could not fulfill. Further the process was thwarted by internal mistrust of NUG and the shifting and unbalancing of powers between the two powerful poles of state i.e. executive and legislature (see below).The

¹¹⁶ "Afghan government is determined to eradicate corruption." <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/28/world/asia/afghanistan-helmand-general-faqir.html>

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

NUG was committed to establishing a Special Election Reform Commission (SERC) in June 2015. It also highlighted the need for reforms such as replacing the Single Non-Transferable Vote (SNTV) system with a different mode of representation; cancelling the voter cards which were functional by replacing them with electronic national identity cards (*E-taskera*); giving right to 25 per cent representation of women in the provinces and districts legislatures to have their say in these important affairs; and also assigning substantial role for political wings. However, the Wolesi Jirga (lower house) did not take into account these recommendations in December 2015¹¹⁸.

Ghani through his authority as president in March 2016, enacted with the purpose of narrow focus on the duties and jurisdiction and power of the Independent Election Commission (IEC) and Independent Electoral Complaints Commission (IECC). Changes were made in the requirements and tenure of electoral commissioners accordingly and the Selection Commission recruited seven new IEC members (two women, one less than in 2010-2016), and five new IECC members including one woman were added in November¹¹⁹.

The IEC without taking the government into confidence announced on 18 March 2016 that Wolesi Jirga and district council elections would be held on 15 October. Ghani and Abdullah's teams did not approve this move on the grounds that because of concerns about weak support bases as well as due to concerns on an early vote in the current state of political polarization which could yield more instability to the already fragile state in democratic processes. However, some consensus on electoral reform has been developed and both agreed to discard voters' cards and formation and designing of electronic ID cards. As elections to

¹¹⁸ "Afghanistan: The Future of National Unity Government". International Crisis Group, April 10, 2017.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

legislatures of district and parliament level suffered a lot with delay, hence further delay will give rise to more mistrust. Therefore, for both the president and CEO implementation of major electoral reforms ahead of the polls was mandatory and the same has been suggested already in the NUG agreement. It has also been observed that the most fairly organized election would be subjected to dispute if they do not eliminate the distrust as anticipatory measure, the relationship between leaders and parties and the government will doom to failure¹²⁰.

However, our interaction with individuals, who have been regarded authorities on Afghan issues since long, changed our perceptions and positions which we had earlier. Brigadier Retired Mehmood Shah was of the view that since there was no breakthrough between Ashraf Ghani and Dr. Abdullah so the power sharing formula was a bargaining chip. This power sharing agreement brought about nothing to the people of Afghanistan but legitimized the role of the two political figures. He further stated that the second tenure of Ashraf Ghani is meaningless: everything is controlled by the U.S. and that Ashraf Ghani is an incompetent person. He does not know how to run the affairs of the state. He further added that he does not know even the national interests of Afghanistan. He blames Pakistan for all the wrong doings even knowing the fact that Afghanistan is dependent on Pakistan by so many means and that the rule of Ashraf Ghani is limited to just few provinces¹²¹.

Yet, Afrasiab Khattak presented another sort of visualization. He said that Afghanistan has been passing through transitional stages. He elaborates that when Hamid Karzai came to power, many warlords were made part of the government. Yet, later on, many were discharged from their portfolios on account of Norco-trade, human rights violation and corruption. Ashraf

¹²⁰ “Afghanistan: The Future of National Unity Government”. International Crisis Group, April 10, 2017.

¹²¹ Bri (R) Mehmood Shah, (former Home secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) January 8, 2020.

Ghani is clear enough regarding the way and affairs of governance. He, in a maiden speech, made it clear that corruption would not be tolerated at any cost and focused on nation building as well. Institutions are getting stronger not individuals and the partnership between Ghani and Abdullah is appraisable. Surely, Afghanistan will come on the track of development but it would take time¹²².

Similarly, Prof (R) Dr. Ijaz Khattak said that when the 2014 Power Sharing Agreement is analyzed, which is almost repeated in 2019, Ghani s' winning the election and Abdullah rejecting of the results and then, through external interventions and negotiations, they came up to a Power Sharing Formula. Now, this formula could be termed as mixed blessing some good and negative characteristics it has at the same time. It is negative or bad in a sense that without accepting the electoral results with open hearts weakens the political system, whatever the case may be, whether the elections were good or bad. It is not only the case of Afghanistan and the developing countries, almost all elections are controversial. Even in the US, a developed state, elections are controversial. Similarly, in Pakistan too same sort of situation have been witnessed since long¹²³.

In reply to the same question Mr. Rustam Shah Mohmand said that the 2014 Power Sharing formula was a namesake. The status of a Power Sharing formula would be meaningless if a state was under foreign occupation, he added. John Cubis came to Kabul, asked Ghani and Abdullah and gave the position of Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to Abdullah. Ashraf Ghani has no mass support and Abdullah has only Panjsheer valley on his back. So, according to Rustam

¹²² Afrasiab Khattak, (former senator of Pakistan).December8, 2019.

¹²³ Pro (r) Dr. Ijaz Khattak, Former Chairman Department of International Relations, University of Peshawar. July 31, 2020.

Shah Mohmand, the 2014 Power Sharing Formula has no importance in the contemporary history of Afghanistan¹²⁴.

Similarly, he added that in Afghanistan, the electoral system is very new one and violence and bloodshed has so deeply entrenched in Afghan society. In that sense, political parties may be political in nature but all these have militant and armed wings through which they can enforce the government to accept their demands. In that perception, the good omen was that they agreed, resultantly, the system did not derail. The opposition just went for political protest. So this compromise is seen as a positive development¹²⁵.

In reply to the same question, Sami Yousafzai answered in a different way. He was of the view that the Power Sharing Agreement succeeded in some ways as Ashraf Ghani is a wise man. He assumed the presidency in a very critical situation. He ran the system in sensible manner. He did not let derail the democratic system. He took bold decisions as far as his maiden speech was concerned. He removed Ata Muhammad, the governor of Balakh province, over charges of corruption, who was an influential warlord. During this era, Ghani disarmed many militants, literacy rate rose up and foreign investment came to Afghanistan as well¹²⁶.

Rahim Ullah Yousafzai replied that if the formula is analyzed from one angle the agreement was signed in 2014 after the controversy rose between Ghani and Abdullah. The US was concerned about the rising insurgency of militant groups and it could lead to a civil war, there could be a bloody struggle for power, so the US Secretary of State John Kerry jumped in

¹²⁴ Rustam Shah Mohmand, (former secretary of interior, former Political Agent of South Waziristan), November 1st, 2020.

¹²⁵ Pro (r) Dr. Ijaz Khattak, Former Chairman Department of International Relations, University of Peshawar. July 31, 2020.

¹²⁶ Sami Ullah Yousafzai (a journalist from Afghanistan who covers the Ongoing Peace Process from Qatar for BBC), November 6, 2020.

and mediated a Power Sharing Agreement. “I remember that very well because normally, the US senior officials used to visit Afghanistan un-announced. These were surprised visits. And they never spent a night in Afghanistan. But this time, Kerry spent a night because he had to negotiate with Ghani and Abdullah and make them agree to share powers¹²⁷.

So, finally, the agreement was signed and Ghani became the President and Abdullah the CEO; a newly designated position that did not exist in the Afghan constitution yet they agreed on the intervention of John Kerry. They also agreed to the proposal of a Loya Jirga to be called that would create position of Prime Minister which Abdullah will get. Instead of Chief Executive, he will become the PM. Yet in five years’ time, a Loya Jirga was never called, and he remained the CEO which was unconstitutional. The agreement lasted for a full constitutional term. Now in that context it was successful. The government did not break despite lots of hurdles and challenges which is the case of developing countries¹²⁸.

The partnership between Ghani and Abdullah succeeded where many milestone achievements were got. Yet no doubt that many areas, problems, challenges remained unsolved during their tenure. The opposite view still looks at the Power Sharing Formula as a fruitless attempt. They believe that tensions between the President and CEO mainly originate from widely divergent interpretations of the NUG agreement. While Ghani is the main beneficiary of a centralized constitutional framework that confer considerable powers in the presidency at the same time the vaguely worded agreement gives the CEO the office, which lacks any

¹²⁷ Rahim Ullah Yousafzai (resident editor in chief of The News, a renowned journalist who has been covering Afghanistan since long), November 8, 2020.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

constitutional or formal legal standing, few defined powers or responsibilities other than shared responsibility with regard to senior appointments¹²⁹.

Yet, Abdullah and his team asserted that he has the privilege to perform the responsibilities of a Prime Minister and pending national deliberations through a constitutional Loya Jirga to legalize the position. As an influential pro-Abdullah Tajik parliamentarian representing the Jamiats' Panjshiri faction said, that they got what they wanted: they wanted the creation of the Prime Minister s' position for their team, and they achieved it"¹³⁰.

Ghani has backed up by his group. Which expressed it openly that powers of the president are unlimited and they have been supported by the constitution. They in their justification quote the agreement s' text, for example "the position of the CEO will be created by presidential decree on the basis of Article 50 of the constitution" and the relation is a "political partnership" under the domain of the President". At the same time they hold claim that that the CEO has no "veto" power over appointments and NUG policies, even in reforms, whereas Abdullah and group are adamant that the agreement states very conspicuously that a 50-50 power sharing is there in cases of veto powers¹³¹.

However, relations between President and CEO with parliament are not smooth but in difficult situation. The February, 2016 Democracy International Survey (DIS) of 215 members of the parliament found that 59 and 70 percent were dissatisfied with Ghani and Abdullah's performance. Some factors have triggered the dissatisfaction, some laying the responsibility to the presidential election and link it with MP support for the contesting candidates. Abdullah's

¹²⁹ "Panjshir Province is in the North East." International Crisis Group, Kabul, September 2016.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ "Agreement between the Two Campaign Teams". International Crisis Group, November 2016

support was not there among MP's who were attached with the Jamat-e-Islami, an influential party, and his fountain source with ethnic Hazara MPs whose support was in his favor during the campaign. Many were against him because of failing to represent their views by standing up to a President which they believe is empowering fellow Pashtun officials¹³².

Abdullah is a victim of ethnic pressure too. He has failed to represent the non-Pashtun ethnicities so far their interest and support is considered. On September 22, 2016, ethnic Uzbeks and Turkmen with support of ex-Minister Wahid Ullah Shahrani and ex-MP Sardar Rahmanoglu disavowed their affiliation with him¹³³. In a gathering which was held in Kabul on 9 February, many from Khost province and Fregand Gozargah-e-Noor districts of Baghlan province criticized openly Abdullah of "failing to deliver on his election promises" and also failed terribly to implement the NUG's agreement of power sharing¹³⁴.

So far, Jamiat has given Abdullah tough time and this is a serious blow for him too. Many popular party leaders express their dislike for him on the grounds that he could neither convince the president nor did he safeguard their rights and interests. Before the commencement of Brussels conference, in a Kabul dinner, the senior leadership of Jamiat, warned him either to stand against the president or he would be removed from his position in the party¹³⁵. This discontent has paved way for party's chief executive, Balkh Governor Atta, to present himself as a more effective advocate for party interests in dealing with Ghani.

¹³² "A Survey of the Afghan Parliament". Democracy International, February 2016.

¹³³ Shahrani, Wahidullah and Rahmanoglu, Sardar "Supporter of Turkic people withdraw their support from Abdullah Abdullah", 1TV News Channel, 22 February 2017.

¹³⁴ Rashid, Ahmed "Descent into Chaos" Penguin Publications, (June 03, 2008).

¹³⁵ "Senior Jamiat officials, December Kabul, Mazar-e-Sharif" International Crisis Group Interview, Kabul, Mazar-e-Sharif, October 2016.

Sami Yousafzai insisted that unless Pashtuns make a dominant political party in Afghanistan, the war and bloodshed will not be easy to disappear from the soil of Afghanistan. He said that Pashtuns lack political maturity as compare to other minority groups. Like, Abdur Rashid Dostam has political factions. Ustad Ata has political party. Gulbadin Hikmatyar has political approach. However, if Pashtun leaders are to be looked at, Hamid Karzai, Ashraf Ghani and others are personalities. They did not develop their political parties. Resultantly, Pashtuns have tilt towards militancy and arm struggle¹³⁶.

On the other hand, Rahim Ullah Yousafzai expressed his viewpoint in another sense. He said that the NUG failed because of the presumption that the NUG did not deliver and thus People got disappointed. The 2019 voting turnout was extremely low because the same two candidates were contesting the elections in 2019 as they did in 2014. Likewise, in these five years, they could not do much in resolving the bottom fault lines and fulfilling of their promises. So, it could be inferred that there were so many disagreements between Ghani and Abdullah. Abdullah got fifty percent share in the government, the cabinet and people appointed by him were answerable to him not to Ghani. So there was always difference of opinion, confusion, and a very complex situation. He said that he still remembers going to Kabul and listening to Afghan jokes, saying that look, “we have a government like a vehicle: the two drivers driving in the opposite directions and they both are pulling the vehicle in the opposite sides and they cannot agree on anything.” Hence, this NUG was a big disappointment due to the US pressure and the

¹³⁶ Sami Ullah Yousafzai (a journalist from Afghanistan who covers the Ongoing Peace Process from Qatar for BBC), November 6, 2020.

US assistance, and because of these two factors which proved as ventilators for the government and it lasted for five years otherwise, it would have been dissolved quite early¹³⁷.

To sum up, we can say that the history of Afghanistan is full of wars. Its social fabric has been destroyed by war and bloodshed. However, from 2002 onwards, political process kicked off in Afghanistan. After twelve years, an impasse situation created when Abdullah stated that he would not accept the results as there was systematic rigging. At that time, there was no way except a power sharing deal. Resultantly, a deal was charted out between the two. The formula signed at that time was a balance plan. This agreement bore relatively good results where some basic reforms were introduced, changes were made in the electoral process, drastic steps were taken to uproot corruption, political process did not derail and after all the government completed its five years constitutional tenure. The adoption of Power Sharing Formula in war torn Afghanistan and its functional position throughout the constitutional political period assures that Afghanistan has the potential to become a peaceful legitimate entity. What is needed is to address the internal skirmishes and to cater all the stakeholders taking them onboard for peace and stability in Afghanistan.

¹³⁷ Rahim Ullah Yousafzai (resident editor in chief The News.com, a renowned journalist who has been covering Afghanistan since long), November 8, 2020.

CHAPTER THREE

CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS TO THE POWER SHARING FORMULA (2014) IN AFGHANISTAN

3.1 Road to Power Sharing and Reforms

Afghanistan has been a centripetal force for different stakeholders for a long period of time. In this connection, many episodes of tug of war have taken place between centralized and decentralized forces. The proponents of centralization of power have the stance that brutality and intensity could be diminished in Afghanistan through centralization of power. Thus centralization may usher an era of modernity. Moreover, in this way, rule of law could be ensured; new infrastructure could be built and, in this way, the central forces could pave way for building friendly relations with the world community. They also are of the view that weakning of centralization of power will ultimately lead to poor governance and anarchy at national level. Thus centralization is the key to rein in and reduce the power domain of the warlords. Consequently, it will curb the extreme perimeters of power of local warlords. However, apprehensions are there that this may lead to more malpractices of embezzlement at federal and unit level. This is one of the causes that the power circles remained centralized and as a consequence the power sharing agreement doomed to failure.

When Brigadier (r) Mehmood Shah was asked whether the Power Sharing Formula bore fruits or not? He said that “you see we make constitution and constitution gives and ensures rights”. He added, “like in the case of Pakistan, there are powers with the provinces, there are powers with the federal government”. He elaborated, “What I mean distribution of powers which is done in the constitution through parliament, so it is legitimized”. The same thing has to be done there. They have to first clarify that all these are in the constitution, think about these all

and then lay them out. And if there is something they know that it should not be part of the Power Sharing Agreement so it could be changed in the best national interests of Afghanistan¹³⁸.

3.1.1 Challenges to the Power Sharing Agreement

Alex Their and Scott Worden composed their special report and submitted to the United States Institute of Peace (USIP) in which they had revealed that the objectives behind making National Unity Government in 2014 were expedited as a result two fundamental factors. The first one was the electoral process which was worsened by the associated institutions which were unsuccessful because of the extreme level of mistrust among the population; and also mainstream politicians who could not acknowledge the mechanism of results and thus the gap was widened. The other element was a continued political dissatisfaction of the masses with maximum consequences. For example, a winner could manipulate the entire system in a highly divided pluralistic society; this was because of the constitutional barrier in the form of highly centralized governments¹³⁹. These two basic factors triggered other failures too.

3.1.2 Challenge in making of a vibrant National Unity Government

Since the signing of 2014 National Unity Government (NUG), political crisis were at the doorstep. The two years term expired and no Loya Jirga was called to make changes to the constitution. During their tenure, both Ghani and Abdullah disagreed on many points of their mutual agreement. The deadlock has expedited adverse tendencies by underestimating the national level acknowledgement of the existing government, further sabotaging the main institutions, during confidence in an unstable economy, curtailing world support, and launching a perception of alarming ratio of lack of security and political chaos.

¹³⁸ Bri (R) Mehmood Shah, (former Home secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) January 8, 2020.

¹³⁹ Their, Alex and Worden, Scott "Political Stability in Afghanistan, A 2020 Vision and Roadmap". Published by United States Institute of Peace July 17, 2020.

The failure of an agreement lies in its very parts or factors if they remain unfulfilled or if they are unattended. Likewise, non-collaboration, no power sharing and lack of systematic reforms were factors which led to disappointment of the NUG agreement. Although its roots were lying in giving political power to ethnic, political, and regional groups within Afghanistan which were sought through Bonn Agreement and subsequent framing of 2004 constitution. For sustainable long terms resolution, it is mandatory for both Ghani and Abdullah to rise to this opportune moment and to settle between them a decisive commitment to meaningful electoral and power sharing reforms ahead of the coming 2019 presidential elections.

The NUG appeared as failure to their expectations because of the long held internal conflicts, charges of malpractices, and continual violence between the groups. Almost all the NUG agreements, such as electoral reforms, holding a Loya Jirga to discuss the position of executive prime minister, and organizing district elections were not fulfilled. A study has confirmed that out of the 18 promises, the government was able to implement only one promise in the first three years of the NUG. The government thus shattered people's trust in democracy and public institutions and further widened the gap between the government and the governed¹⁴⁰.

However, when Dr. Ijaz Khattak was asked the question whether the parties had failed in making of a vibrant government or not. He said, "Look, the political process is very novice to Afghanistan. No doubt that the government did not meet its goals completely. Yet, we have to examine ground realities. Afghanistan is a state where violence and bloodshed has gone deep for decades where people did not know about the democratic process. There were immense hurdle to

¹⁴⁰ Haqqarast, Hadia 'Afghanistan has Another Power Sharing Deal. Can This One last?' www.thediplomat.com, accessed on November 4, 2020.

the newly Unity Government. However, not derailing the political and democratic process is its biggest achievement and it hides all the flaws faced during this government”¹⁴¹.

3.1.3 Challenge to Reform the Electoral Process

The NUG agreement was committed to establish a Special Election Reforms Commission and to effectuate practical amendment prior to commencement of the general elections and of district council elections polls. General elections for parliament were announced to be held in the first quarter of 2015 but the uproar over many episodes of fraudulent practices and the results of 2014 presidential election polls pulled the veil of uncertainty and impossibility. Despite many objections and disagreements erupted over the elections, both Ghani and Abdullah were willing to bring electoral reforms in Afghanistan. The NUG disagreement and fighting delayed all initiatives in the way. Still, new electoral laws and a New Independent Election Commission and Electoral Complaint Commission hallmarks were achieved towards the end of 2016. After deploying delaying tactics, the Afghan government in July 2017 declared that the parliamentary and district council elections would commence in July 2018 but even then, it took almost one year to decide and effectuate national elections in Afghanistan.

On the other side, many political leaders in the NUG were of the view that delay in holding elections give uprising to opposition groups for leveling charges of ineffectiveness and illegitimacy.

3.1.4 Challenges in Fixing of Voter Registration

What the most glaring fault in Afghan elections over a few years was faulty voter registration process. This was pointed out because almost twenty two million valid voter

¹⁴¹ Pro (r) Dr. Ijaz Khattak, Former Chairman Department of International Relations, University of Peshawar. July 31, 2020.

registration cards were issued by the IECA since 2004 for a population of approximately thirteen million eligible persons who could cast their vote. The surplus cards formation further complicated the situation and led the election process to several rounds of “top up” registration exercises, the design flaws in the voter registration conducted in 2004 against those already on the list were not rectified. Thus without counter foiling verification and accurate voter registry, and without determining the cross verification of the voter lists led to a huge scale voter fraud¹⁴².

Afghan and international elections experts have been demanding since 2005 election for authentic voter registration and verification of voter lists. The NUG agreement have also called for framing voter registration to be appended with national identification card with biometric verification known as the E-Taskera, which was also recommended by President Ghani and CEO Abdullah. Yet it is irony of the fate that this step has never been materialized even on experimental basis for the upcoming elections.

3.1.5 Challenge of Holding of Local Government Elections

The convenient solution to de-escalate the political turmoil is to redress Afghan’s desire for greater local autonomy it has been recommended by many political leaders to organize district council and municipal elections as per the constitution. This has to be accompanied by the legislation that entitles real powers to those offices in the form of budget authorities as well as conferring role in approving government projects in order to resolve concerns of the masses and the political leaders about an unaccountable central government. Lawmakers in Kabul are still unwilling to share the significant powers which they have over sub national political appointments and spending authorities. Thus, working on the road map, the provincial council law was endorsed in 2005 on the eve of the first provincial council election. According to this

¹⁴² Haqparast, Hadia ‘Afghanistan has Another Power Sharing Deal. Can This One last?’ www.thediplomat.com, accessed on November 4, 2020.

law, the council has no direct authorities in governance, instead, they serve as advisors to the centrally appointed governor about their constituents' needs. The constitution also empowers them by giving the right that the chairperson of each council shall enjoy a seat at a Constitutional Loya Jirga (CLJ) which implies that almost half the Loya Jirga membership has to be from the districts. This gives justification to holding prompt district council election was a key provision of the NUG agreement¹⁴³.

3.1.6 Challenge to Revise the Constitution

In order to remodel and reshape Afghan system of government, revision of the constitution would be helpful to tackle the issue of imbalances of political power. In this connection, generating the post of prime minister is much needed which could share power with the president. In this way the power sharing formula would be successful. This was the most debated issue when the Loya Jirga was called in 2004, however the idea of a president with ultimate powers was victorious. A significant change that would be thriving in this case is to keep balance between the central government and the units i.e. appointment of the governors and not the presidential appointments. Under ideal constitution, Afghanistan's robust presidential system could win laurels of modernization and new reforms because in this way "smart" progressive decisions could be extended to all parts of the country. A powerful central government supported by integrity and monopoly of force backing the rule of law could be more helpful not only in minimizing corruption but could guarantee higher quality administration in the country.

Brig (R) Mehmood Shah stated that this power sharing was meaningless. It was without any authority in the constitution, even in the present constitution. The constitution has to be

¹⁴³ Their, Alex and Worden, Scott "Political Stability in Afghanistan; A 2020 Vision and Roadmap". Published by United States Institute of Peace July 17, 2020.

reviewed-keeping in view the environment of Afghanistan and not according to regional or international lenses. At the spur of the moment, what are the powers of the president are not defined, what are the powers of the CEO are not defined. So it was a formula just to satisfy the dissent groups. It was just the name sake power sharing¹⁴⁴.

Similar views were expressed by Dr. Ijaz Khattak when asked about amendment to the constitution. He said that during the 2014 Power Sharing Formula, Ghani and Abdullah agreed that Constitutional amendment would hold to make slot of premier ship and then Abdullah will be the Prime Minister. However, the government failed in doing so¹⁴⁵.

3.1.7 Challenges in Decentralization of Power

Even under the present constitution and without a CLJ, considerable headway could be achieved by empowering and ensuring regional and local autonomy within the national government system. On practical terms, Kabul's hold over citizens in the provinces is not overwhelming because they are prone to insecurity, backwardness, least capacity, and least credibility. Kabul has the authority and control on security forces and the appointments process outside Kabul, finalizing the national budget, and the delivery of services. As per the constitution, provincial governors are designated by the president and district level posts are also made appointed by the government in Kabul, which is then decides what share should be given to which province and in what method. Only municipalities are the sub-national government entities generate and make collection of revenue that may make able the units to take their own decision.

¹⁴⁴ Bri (R) Mehmood Shah, (former Home secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) January 8, 2020.

¹⁴⁵ Pro (r) Dr. Ijaz Khattak, Former Chairman Department of International Relations, University of Peshawar. July 31, 2020.

The constitution of Afghanistan averse the need in support of decentralization and also has established a clear mechanism to achieve it yet on grounds they are not fulfilled. For example, Article 137 clearly declares that the government ought to share its unnecessary powers to the units, and to the local administration in order to boost and enhance economic, social as well as cultural matters and thereby foster people's contribution in promoting national life. The constitution also supports the elected village councils, district councils, and mayors of official municipalities, but still they are awaited. Similarly, better sub-national governance has been validated as a key objective, and significant efforts have been also made in this regard for making ay to local government facilities, to train officials, and to improve service delivery at the local level.

However, when Brig. Mehmood Shah was asked the question what were the causes of the failure not to opt for decentralizing powers. He said that, "you see, we make constitution and constitution gives powers. Like in our case, there are powers with the provinces, there are powers with federal government. I mean, distribution of power is done through constitution and through the parliament and it is legitimized. The same thing has to be done there. They have to first reform the constitution. But here in this case, even reforming the constitution is the obstacle in the way of decentralization of power¹⁴⁶.

3.2 Prospects of the Power Sharing Formula

The ties between Ghani and Abdullah faced many ups and downs since their charge' resumption. Ghani has aspired to enjoy full extent of his constitutional role, and has announced initiatives to eliminate corruption and hold corrupt individuals accountable, to appoint officials based on merit, to promote women and through several trips to regional countries with a stake in

¹⁴⁶ Bri (R) Mehmood Shah, (former Home secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) January 8, 2020.

Afghanistan's future, to explore new ways to settle the conflict with the Taliban insurgency. Since taking office, he has reportedly emphasized punctuality and tightly run meetings of high officials-departing sharply from Karzai's more free flowing style.

Ghani indicated that he sought to appoint a cabinet based on merit rather than factional interests. However, he and Abdullah reportedly agreed that they would each take a lead role in making half the 25 cabinet post nominations.

Among the appointments¹⁴⁷:

(a) The Chief of Staff of the Afghanistan National Army, Sher Muhammad Karimi, was nominated Minister of Defense by Ghani, and Nur-ul-Haq Ulumi was named by Abdullah as Interior Minister.

(b) The nominee for Minister of Borders and Tribal Affairs, Qamruddin Shinwari, was nominated by Ghani.

(c) The nominated Foreign Minister, Salah U Din Rabbani, a Tajik was nominated by Abdullah. He has succeeded his father Burhanuddin Rabbani who was political head of the Northern Alliance and nominally Abdullah's superior.

(d) The nominated Minister of Finance, Jilani Popal, was nominated by Ghani, who has been close ally of Karzai during 2007-2011 as head of the Independent Directorate of Local Governance.

(e) The nominee for Minister of Communications and Information Technology, Barna Karimi was Ghani's nominee.

(f) Three women were nominated, two by Ghani (Minister of Higher Education and Minister for Information and Culture) and one by Abdullah (Minister of Women Affairs).

¹⁴⁷ "Afghanistan: Politics, Elections, and Governance". Crisis Group Special report 2015.

A veteran politician and political analyst from Pakistan, Mr. Afrasiab Khattak was of the view that Afghan society was divided on multiple ground; political, religious, ethnic as well as social. Also, the people of Afghanistan had never seen an elected government before 2001. Hence, the power sharing agreement made in 2014, brought many changes to Afghan society. It decreased political as well as ethnic tensions. If you see the history of Afghanistan, Pashtuns and other communities have never rule together. However, this time, other communities were also given due powers to have sense of their own government. Yes, one can disagree that this formula did not bring all the results it was charted for. There are multiple reasons for that. Look, the civilized and developed states of the world have also been through these quarrels and disunities. After a long journey, they had reached to these stages. So the history of Afghanistan has been full of bloodshed, polarization and disunity. In such situation, this formula worked tremendously. The sense of exploitation from all communities decreased which had earlier existed. This unity government posed a united front to Taliban, Al-Qaeda as well as to the neighboring states of Afghanistan. There might be some lacunas, however, the success of this formula covers that all¹⁴⁸.

However, others see the phenomenon in a different way. When Ghani and Abdullah signed a power sharing deal, there were lots of challenges. Here, many observers agree that the two leaders controlled the situation to a greater extent, yet things could have been handled in a much better way that could have brought glaring picture of the situation. The prospects that did not take properly into account are as under.

¹⁴⁸ Afrasiab Khattak, (former senator of Pakistan).December8, 2019.

3.2.1 Controversy over the Electoral Process Remained Unresolved

NATO is pressuring for a short-term solution. It is just about a solution which can work in the short run not in the long term,” said Prof. Dr. Conrad Schetter, director of the Bonn International Center for Conversion (BICC).

According to Schetter the two presidential candidates, former World Bank adviser Ashraf Ghani Ahmadzai and former foreign minister, Abdullah Abdullah, who will form a national unity government, have different personalities which will make it difficult for them to work alongside each other in the coming months.

The rivals, Ghani and Abdullah, have jointly established a national unity government. “If you just take Ashraf Ghani, I think for many people, it is not comfortable and easy to work with him because he has his own way of doing things and does not allow any objections,” Schetter added.

Schetter also expresses that both the candidates have some political visions for the future of Afghanistan. “Both the leaders agree to the presence of NATO in Afghanistan and they both are optimistic about the development of the country,” Schetter said.

The electoral process reforms in Afghanistan have a long history and right from the beginning the country has been taken to the whirlwind of anarchy and lurking danger of civil war. With the initiation of the presidential nomination process, the foul play was about to emerge and supporters of some candidates started accusing their rivals of having the government at their back. The result of the polling did not bring absolute majority for any of the candidates in the first round, resultantly the process was reprocessed.

The run-off poll gave birth to more riddles as both the candidates, Ashraf Ghani and Abdullah announced their triumphs and also accused each other of cheating and vote-rigging.

This led Afghanistan to a situation of unending political crisis, and apprehensions were there that civil war was about to erupt on ethnic grounds among Afghans and international observers¹⁴⁹.

When Sami Yousafzai was asked about the prospects to the then government. He said that the political and democratic history had been very weak in Afghanistan. Afghanistan had either been ruled by powerful kings or by Monarchs. He added “They lack political maturity. So, to bring abrupt change to the lives of illiterate and untrained people, there would definitely be lots of challenges and problems”¹⁵⁰.

3.2.2 State of Immaturity and intervention by US

It was not an easy task for US Secretary of State John Kerry to bring the situation under control. He rushed to Kabul two times and finally he was successful to bring the candidates to for negotiating. Kerry hatched a plan and struck the deal to investigate one hundred percent of the votes and then to decide a national unity government after the winner is decided. According to this agreement, the runner up in the elections will be given the position of an executive chief in the upcoming government.

“This government as it has not come into existence through a natural democratic process, hence I believe it will be faced with innumerable internal problems in the coming two to three years,” Kabul University lecturer Sayed Massud told DW.

Massud alarmed that the grave accusations by both the candidates and their supporters raised would dwindle their future cooperation which was not good omen.

Abdullah also laid the blame on Ghani, the Afghan Independent Election Commission (IEC) and departing president Hamid Karzai of conspiring against him and adding more than one million

¹⁴⁹ Afrasiab Khattak, (former senator of Pakistan).December8, 2019.

¹⁵⁰ Sami Ullah Yousafzai (a journalist from Afghanistan who covers the Ongoing Peace Process from Qatar for BBC), November 6, 2020.

bogus votes against him. However, Ghani rebuffed Abdullah's claims and in turn accused him of vote-rigging and violation of law.

Massud also believed that the candidates who have come together under the pressure from the international community and their supporters, have invested huge finances in their presidential campaigns.

“Two rivals who did not accept the results and have raised serious allegations against each other coming to form a government. This, in my opinion, will lead to precarious and after two to three years the government will be under the load of serious internal problems which will not be easy to be handled,” Massud said¹⁵¹.

3.2.3 People’s Faith in Democracy vs Corrupt Practices

The maiden speech by Mr. Ghani clearly avowed that corruption in all its forms and manifestations would not be tolerated at all. However, it is fact that Mr. Ghani’s acumen and expertise could be exploited for uplifting of a failed state towards its economic revival as he was a renowned World Bank economist and equally well-qualified. However, he was faced with prevalent corruption and corrupt practices in Afghanistan¹⁵². In 2014, poverty index was around 48 percent. However, in 2017-18, it witnessed a huge rise to 58 percent same was the state of affair of unemployment and illiteracy.

So plainly speaking, the common masses in Afghanistan were not aware of any noticeable change as a result of Power Agreement in their lives. It led them to despondency about democracy and their hopes and aspirations about democracy almost shattered.

¹⁵¹ “Incoming Afghan government faces Internal Challenges”. September 21st 2014. www.dw.com accessed on November 6, 2020.

¹⁵² Qarizadah, “Afghan President Ashraf Ghani’s Five Biggest Challenges”.www.bbc.com, September 28, 2014.

3.2.4 Rule of Law, Low Political Growth and Sense of Insecurity

Being a militant ravaged state, the people of Afghanistan welcomed political as well as democratic process with hopes to get rid of chaos, uncertainty and looming security threats. International observers also saw hopes that Ghani led National Unity Government will soon overcome violence and bloodshed. However, Ghani and his allies failed in doing so. As Afghanistan has been war ridden and people hardly accept the political system, so political growth remained low owing to which the Peace Agreement failed.

3.2.5 Tribal Rivalries vs Writ of the Government

Afghan society is divided on multiple grounds; on political, on ethnic, on tribal as well as religious. In such a polarized society, it is immensely difficult to prevail writ of the government. The warlords and tribal chieftains were involved in Norco-trade and human trafficking. They remained more powerful in their individual capacity than institutions. They maneuvered things in their favor. So, writ of the government remained quite weak and dysfunctional that led to the failure of the Power Sharing Agreement. Resultantly, it was the failure of Ghani and Abdullah that missed the prospects of the agreement.

3.2.6 Graved Talibanization and Social Restrictions

The 19 years long war did not bring peace to Afghanistan. Afghans suffered the most. They lost their beloved ones. Many among them lost their body parts and crippled down. Their properties destroyed. They faced financial crunches. But they did not see peace of mind and security of life and property. And with the passage of time, Taliban grew more fatal, powerful as well as severe in their killing and atrocities. Resultantly, they faced more restrictions. These all

also led to the failure of the Power Sharing Formula and shows that the two leaders did not produce the desired results¹⁵³.

3.2.7 Grassroots Reforms and Political Awareness throughout Afghan Society

Politics is the art of possible. It is a process where the impossible is made possible. Through politics, problems like wars, skirmishes are solved. If there is no politics and political process in a society, there would be rigidity. So, political process is the epitome to avoid deadlocks and pave way for conciliation that ultimately leads to stability and development of a society.

Unluckily, political awareness as well as political process has been very slow in Afghanistan since Taliban regime has toppled down.

The problem with Afghanistan is that it has not yet developed political culture owing to which, people tend to militarization and arm struggle even on petty issues. The other factions like Tajiks, Uzbeks and Hazaras have developed party structure to some extent, yet Pashtuns, who are in majority, are at huge distance from political process. Hamid Karzai and Ashraf Ghani are individuals. They do not have political parties. It is the reason that majority of Afghan Taliban are Pashtuns¹⁵⁴.

During the last four years, electoral reforms, voter registration etc. have been introduced that will bear fruit but, definitely, will take time.

However, Afrasiab Khattak is of the view that the war ravaged country is back on the right track. The people of Afghanistan have never seen a democratic process. This system is

¹⁵³ Afghanistan: Politics, Elections, and Governance". Crisis Group Special report 2015.

¹⁵⁴ Sami Ullah Yousafzai (a journalist from Afghanistan who covers the Ongoing Peace Process from Qatar for BBC), November 6, 2020.

quite novice for them. And they will be used to with this system as well as process sooner or later¹⁵⁵.

3.2.8 Addressing the Social and Political Problems that Helps Promote Political

Consciousness and economic self sufficiency

The then government of Ghani and Abdullah introduced some kinds of reforms to expedite social and political process in Afghanistan. In this regards, civil society also played a vibrant role. Students' visas were issued to hundreds of students to get higher education from abroad and serve the people as well as government.

Being a World Bank employ, Ghani introduced economic reforms to boost the economy of Afghanistan. Yet these steps were not enough. And opportunities are there to revise socio-political and economic aspects of Afghanistan.

3.3 International/Regional factors through Diplomatic growth that helps promote political stability in Afghanistan.

For a long time after West's military invaded Afghanistan, regional ownership of the situation within the country was not an immediate priority. Western leaders' stated desire was to remain engaged bilaterally until the mission was accomplished, and the regional dimension was ignored or overlooked. This began to change with acknowledgment of the challenges shared by Afghanistan¹⁵⁶.

The Afghan government's steps towards culminating Afghanistan as the "heart of Asia" which could be realized by becoming vital avenue for connectivity and regional economic cooperation encouraged its interest to be present in the BRI. This has its glimpse in the 2016

¹⁵⁵ Afrasiab Khattak, (former senator of Pakistan).December8, 2019.

¹⁵⁶ "Afghanistan and its Neighbors: Forging Regional Engagement". Chatam House, Gareth Price Asia Program, , Afghanistan: Opportunity in Crisis Series no 9,May 2015.

memorandum of understanding (MOU) signed by the two states as an expression of commitment for promoting cooperation as a joint venture under the BRI. Thus, Afghanistan and China have taken part in a few projects such as, the Digital Silk Road, the Sino-Afghanistan Special Railway Transportation Project, the Five Nations Railway Project and a Kabul–Urumqi air corridor. The two governments are also committed to exploring links with the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor that could usher Afghanistan into a regional trade and transit hub¹⁵⁷.

3.3.1 Pakistan

The Taliban’s resurgence began in earnest around 2005, it took a couple more years for the nature and importance of these linkages to become widely accepted. Once this happened, attempts to engage the region focused on Pakistan, as reflected in the coining of the term ‘Af-Pak’. Many Western countries, led by the United States, created special envoys for Afghanistan and Pakistan in 2009. Even as recently as 2010, however, the lack of commitment to a broader regional approach was demonstrated by the exclusion of India as a result of Pakistani pressure, from the Istanbul Conference on Afghanistan¹⁵⁸.

Afghanistan has also joined a number of initiatives over the past few years. These include: the Afghanistan–Iran–Tajikistan dialogue (2005); the Afghanistan–Pakistan–Turkey dialogue (2007); the Afghanistan–Iran–Pakistan dialogue (2007); the Afghanistan–Pakistan–Tajikistan–Russia dialogue (2009); the Afghanistan–India–United States dialogue (2012); the

¹⁵⁷ Safi, Maryam and Alizada, Bismillah, “Integrating Afghanistan into Belt and Road Initiative: Review Analysis and Prospects”. Friedrich Ebert, Stiftung, August 2018.

¹⁵⁸ “Briefing: Afghanistan and its Neighbors: Forging Regional Engagement”. Chatam House, Gareth Price Asia Program, Afghanistan: Opportunity in Crisis Series no 9, (May 2015).

Afghanistan–China–Pakistan dialogue (2012); and the Afghanistan–Pakistan–Iran–Tajikistan dialogue (2014)¹⁵⁹.

However, political instability which lies between Afghanistan and its neighboring countries such as Pakistan, gives rise to alarming situation which ultimately could create hurdles for Afghanistan such as BRI. The hurdle of economic opportunities which has not been emphasized by politicians is quite relevant in the case of Afghanistan. For instance, study finds that the Afghanistan-Pakistan Transit Trade Agreement (APPTA) signed in 2010 for five years has not been revisited after it expired in 2015, because of the dispute between Afghanistan and Pakistan over inclusion of India. Similarly, disagreements between India and Pakistan have thwarted Afghanistan from joining to CPEC. The United States sanctions on Iran in 2015 have also rendered negative impact on Afghanistan’s economy. On the other hand, partially relieved by a recent U.S. exemption on Chabahar port in November 2018, the sanctions still have some negative impacts on remittances, imports, and the illegal movement of U.S. currency from Afghanistan to Iran¹⁶⁰.

Pakistan’s role as a mediator of a political settlement in the Taliban dialogue is crucial. Western sponsored efforts for achieving the desired outcome have turned the progress slow in part because Pakistan has been looking at the impact of the political and military transitions in Afghanistan. Pakistan’s engagements with the Afghan Taliban are based on apprehensions of imminent downfall of the Afghan state. At the same time, Pakistan holds the desire to ensure political influence inside the country in the backdrop of the Western military withdrawal. With a new president officiating in Kabul and the Bilateral Security Agreement between the United

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ Safi, Maryam and Alizada, Bismillah “Afghanistan: Prospects and Challenges to Regional Connectivity”. The Pulse, April 19, 2020.

States and Afghanistan signed. Both of which foretell that the Afghan state is more resilient than the past decades and hence the environment could be more conducive for Pakistan to support an Afghan-led dialogue¹⁶¹.

3.3.2 China

China, an emerging economic superpower, its interests and influence are increasing in Afghanistan day by day and quite recently China has involved in Afghanistan directly. Still hesitant openly, its intensions are becoming assertive in response to the political and military transitions of 2014. In July 2014, China has also deployed a special envoy to Afghanistan, Sun Yuxi, who had also worked as ambassador to the country and to India. China has also declared that it will equip and train the Afghan police. These engagements of China are deep rooted yet, Sun highlighted that China will refrain from Afghanistan's domestic affairs, saying, 'The disputes between different religious and ethnic group are too complicated¹⁶².' China has also started interaction with the Taliban over the past decade and is concerned about the threat of Islamization and separatist violence in the Uighur community in Xinjiang. Moreover, as Barnett Rubin also acknowledges that China's support for a settlement to convince the Taliban into the political system does not extend to retain friendly relations a Taliban government¹⁶³.

China's involvement and role of advocacy for a regional format talk on reconciliation has been appreciated by the West, Afghanistan and Pakistan and realized by India. The United States

¹⁶¹ "Afghanistan and its Neighbors: Forging Regional Engagement". Chatam House, Gareth Price Asia Program. Afghanistan: Opportunity in Crisis Series no 9 (May 2015)

¹⁶² "Sun Yuxi appointed special envoy to Afghanistan", South China Morning Post, 19 July 2014, <http://www.scmp.com/news/china/article/1556206/sun-yuxi-Appointed-special-envoy-Afghanistan>.

¹⁶³ Barnett R. Rubin, "Is the Afghan Unity Government a Roadmap for Negotiations with the Taliban?", Foreign Policy, 20 October 2014, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2014/10/20/is-the-afghan-unity-government-a-roadmap-for-negotiations-with-the-taliban/>.

has affirmed it as a positive development. Likewise, Ghani's first visit as president to China implies an Afghan desire for deeper Chinese relations which is also tantamount to pay bonuses given the reported visit of a Taliban delegation to Beijing in November 2014¹⁶⁴.

Afghan and Chinese policymakers are looking for Afghanistan's location as a most advantageous under the BRI, owing to its facilitation of the movement of goods, data, and energy. The DROPS study demonstrates that though the BRI initially bypassed Afghanistan, yet Chinese officials took concrete steps to link Afghanistan in 2017, a year after signing of a joint MOU. Moreover, China is also joined by the northern Afghanistan through initiation of the Sino-Afghanistan Special Railway Transportation Project and the Five Nations Railway Project. China is also interested in linking itself to southern Afghanistan through the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) but this has made Afghanistan hesitant over dispute between Pakistan and India over CPEC which is crossing through disputed territory. China and Afghanistan have been also linked by a fiber optic link through the Wakhan corridor and are looking to be joined through BRI to various energy projects and extractive sectors. Kabul-Urumqi flights have also been started in 2016¹⁶⁵.

Thus, China's interests and growing supportive role is a constructive development in Afghanistan. In a positive way, a paradigm shift could take place whereby a more self-confident India welcomes Chinese economic engagement and Pakistan devotes more energy for curing

¹⁶⁴ "Afghanistan and its Neighbors: Forging Regional Engagement". Chatam House, Gareth Price Asia Program, Afghanistan: Opportunity in Crisis Series no 9(May 2015)

¹⁶⁵ Safi, Maryam and Alizada, Bismillah "Afghanistan: Prospects and Challenges to Regional Connectivity". The Pulse (April 19, 2020).

extremism. Were this shift likely to take place, the dream of a New Silk Road could be turned into a reality¹⁶⁶.

3.3.3 Russia

International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) is another regional connectivity project which has been advanced by Russia, Iran, and India as of 2017 to join the Indian Ocean to Europe. Afghanistan could link itself with INSTC through Chabahar port and the Lapis Lazuli Corridor. The first shipment from India came to Afghanistan through Chabahar port in November 2017, signaling the port a strategic alternative to Pakistan's Karachi port on which Afghanistan has been relying so far. Moreover, Afghanistan also sent the first shipment of merchandise to Europe through Lapis Lazuli Corridor in mid-December 2018. With both Chabahar port and the Lapis Lazuli Corridor now functional, the INSTC could produce more opportunities for Afghanistan to have access route to the Indian Ocean and Europe¹⁶⁷.

In Afghanistan the U.S. and Russia's interests clash: for Russia more peaceful Afghanistan is needed in order to thwart extremism from flowing over into the Central Asian Republics which have tribal and cultural links with Afghanistan, all of which could lead to play a destabilizing role in Russia.

3.3.4 Iran

Iran is also in the race of creating an economic influence in Afghanistan. Its consumer goods are already in better competition with those from Pakistan. Iran is anxious to prevent the

¹⁶⁶ "Afghanistan and its Neighbors: Forging Regional Engagement". Chatam House, Gareth Price Asia Program, Afghanistan: Opportunity in Crisis Series no 9, (May 2015).

¹⁶⁷ Safi, Maryam and Alizada, Bismillah "Afghanistan: Prospects and Challenges to Regional Connectivity". The Pulse (April 19, 2020).

reorganizing of radical Sunni regime in Afghanistan i.e. Taliban or similar group. During the period of Taliban regime, Tehran was of the belief that the militant movement was a creation of its enemies intended as a strategic distraction. Between Iran and Afghanistan from 400 to 13 500 trucks cross the border with Afghanistan on daily basis. Iran's nonoil commodities exports to Afghanistan have risen to almost \$500 million per year and an Iranian bank to facilitate trade has also opened in Kabul in late 2004¹⁶⁸.

Tehran has also extended generous support for reconstruction of Afghan infrastructure in order to enhance the Afghan market. Pledges of \$560 million in reconstruction assistance over five years have been extended for its electric grid inside Afghanistan. A 132-kilowatt power transmission line to Herat was also initiated in January 2005, with promises for manifold increase in power exports to other cities. Iran has also constructed a 122-kilometer long highway that connects Herat with northeast Iran at an estimated cost of \$68 million. Other reconstruction projects such as including the extension of the Iranian rail system into western Afghanistan to connect it with the Iranian port of Chabahar, making Chabahar a lucrative alternative to Pakistan's new port at Gwadar for both Afghanistan and Central Asia. However, the U.S. persistent objections to projects which are economically and politically beneficial to Iran may limit its future role in regional development¹⁶⁹.

3.3.5 TAPI

Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan and India (TAPI) Gas Pipeline Project is a huge investment project and it could prove a game changer for the region. This gas pipeline project will yield to boost the economy of not only Afghanistan but also Turkmenistan, Pakistan and

¹⁶⁸ Weinbaum, G. Marvin "Afghanistan and its Neighbors". Special Report, United States Institute of Peace, 2006.

¹⁶⁹ Weinbaum, G. Marvin "Afghanistan and its Neighbors". Special Report, United States Institute of Peace, 2006.

India. TAPI has been regarded as not only a pipe for carrying gas but will ensure peace and stability in the region and hence it has been also termed a peace project which connects Turkmenistan with the countries in Southern Asia through mutual cooperation. The TAPI gas pipeline from Caspian Sea, by having an 1814 km of its route line from Galkynysh gas-field, Turkmenistan passing through Afghanistan's Herat, Kandahar, Farah and Helmand provinces to Quetta, Baluchistan and Multan through Pakistan to Fazilka district in Punjab, India. TAPI gas pipeline project, with estimated construction cost is \$10 billion US dollars is hoped to supply 33BCMs annually¹⁷⁰.

Afghanistan will receive its share of 5-5.1 BCMs or 16% and Pakistan and India will individually receive 13.8-16 BCMs or 42% of the total amount annually. From total 1814 km lengthy route, 772 km will pass inside Afghanistan and 828 km will pass through Pakistan. The pipeline will have 56-inch diameter by having 100 standard atmospheres (10000 kPa) pressure power. This multimillion-dollar pipeline project will result to benefit each country for almost 30 years in meeting their energy needs and to managing sustainable development. TAPI pipeline project is hoped to be a game changer which will change the war and conflict scenario into development and political stability in Afghanistan through cooperation of the neighboring countries. In the beginning it was initiated in the 1990s during the Taliban regime. Afghanistan Islamic Emirate (Taliban Regime) at that time had signed a transit agreement with one of the U.S. firms Unocal and Argentinian Bidas. However, Al-Qaeda targeted through suicide attempts the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania after 1998, the agreement of the gas pipeline construction and transit was delayed to its end. After the fall of Taliban regime, the four

¹⁷⁰ Yousaf Saqib, Muhammad Weinbaum, G. Marvin "Afghanistan and its Neighbors". Special Report, United States Institute of Peace, 2006. "TAPI Project as a Role Model for Other National Development Projects of Afghanistan". International Journal of Recent Technology and Engineering, volume 7, (April 2019).

countries again came together in 2002 and 2008 to sign the agreements on gas transiting pipeline and India joined TAPI in 2003. From 2002, the Asian Development Bank has taken the responsibility as TAPI's Secretariat in legal, institutional and technical terms¹⁷¹.

3.3.6 The SCO

Afghanistan's border with Tajikistan is (1,344 kilometers), with Turkmenistan (744 kilometers) and Uzbekistan (137 kilometers) to the North¹⁷². Any untoward situation in Afghanistan has consequences for the neighboring Central Asian states.

Insecurity in Afghanistan could be a great hurdle to China's economic vision (BRI). The presence of Daesh (Islamic State-IS) in Afghanistan has further escalated the security challenge to regional connectivity. As stated by the Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Igor Morgulov, "IS is the most conspicuous challenge to the SCO members"¹⁷³.

Afghanistan is of great importance to the SCO security calculus. The "SCO-Afghanistan Contact Group" has been active in Beijing since November 2005¹⁷⁴. In March 2009, the SCO organized a conference on Afghanistan where issues related to terrorism, illegal drug trafficking and organized crimes were on the agenda¹⁷⁵. At the 15th SCO Summit in 2015, the member states highlights for an "anti-terrorism plan" to limit the influence of Daesh in Afghanistan¹⁷⁶.

¹⁷¹ Yousaf Saqib, Muhammad Weinbaum, G. Marvin "Afghanistan and its Neighbors". Special Report, United States Institute of Peace, 2006.

¹⁷² "Central Asia and Afghanistan: A Tumultuous History," Strat for, <https://www.stratfor.com/analysis/central-asia-and-afghanistan-tumultuous-history>.(September 24, 2013).

¹⁷³ Hasnat and Awan, "Shanghai Cooperation Organization as a Platform for Regional Understanding: It's Economic, Political and Security Potential". Perceptions, spring 2016, Volume xxi.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ Kumar, Raj, Sharma, "SCO's Role in Afghanistan: Prospects and Challenges". Mainstream, Volume LIII No 24, New Delhi, (June 06, 2015).

¹⁷⁶ Munir, "Outcome of SCO Summit".

In this situation, each SCO member state is also striving to promote peace in war-torn Afghanistan in connection with their individual compulsions, subject to their geographic nearness. Apart from the regional front, in order to materialize interregional connectivity between Central and South Asia and the likely operationalization of energy pipelines like the Central Asia South Asia (CASA-1000) and the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan India (TAPI)¹⁷⁷, a peaceful environment is needed, which largely depends upon the internal situation of Afghan.

The drug route from Afghanistan to Central Asia, Russia and China is also an alarming threat to regional peace. However, as stated earlier, member states have adopted an anti-narcotics strategy too¹⁷⁸, proposed a regional anti-drug Centre and a specialized training Centre to train personnel from SCO countries¹⁷⁹, the changing situation of narcotics trade coming out of Kabul are complicated which destabilize the country's economy.

To conclude, it is found that multiple challenges were confronted by the parallel government formed under the power sharing settlement. They include, a vibrant national government, to reform the electoral system on modern lines, to fix the issue of voter registration, to arrange local bodies' elections and to decentralize powers. These all gave birth to feeling of despondency in the people of Afghanistan regarding peace and stability. However, the successful completion of five years tenure of democratic government and the neutral role by both the executives in Afghan peace process to make it successful is promising. There are other

¹⁷⁷ Jaffer, Nabila "The First Enlargement of Shanghai Cooperation Organization and its Implications." Institute of Regional Studies Islamabad, volume xxx, (2016).

¹⁷⁸ Aris, Stephen "Shanghai Cooperation Organization: Mapping Multilateralism in Transition No. 2, International Peace Institute.

¹⁷⁹ Kumar, Raj, Sharma, "SCO's Role in Afghanistan: Prospects and Challenges". Mainstream, Volume LIII No 24, New Delhi, (June 06, 2015).

options for improvement of Afghan civil society and the grooming of its political culture which could be effectuated such as beginning of institution building process, political awareness in the masses, ensuring rule of law and writ of the state as well as the respect of civil rights for all and sundry. Furthermore, regional connectivity with neighboring states and internal focus in Afghanistan are good omen for it. The interdependence and economic interests of each member state in the region will ensure thriving pace for a peaceful and stable Afghanistan. However, it will take time and these efforts will bear fruits.

CHAPTER 4

THE POWER SHARING FORMULA AND THE CURRENT PEACE PROCESS IN AFGHANISTAN

The History of Afghanistan is replete with bloodshed and jingoism either through internal rifts or foreign involvement and occupations. The primary target of all this turmoil has been the poor people of Afghanistan. After the 9/11 episode, the US and allied forces attacked Afghanistan ousting the Taliban regime. However, then, an unending war broke on the soil of Afghanistan. It is the most expensive war, in terms of finance, in the history of US where trillions of dollars have been spent yet with minimum results. During the last 19 years of war, hundreds of thousands Afghans have lost their lives and double have been affected. The Rounds of Peace Talks were started back in 2015, yet there was no point for Taliban and the US to be agreed upon.

Almost eighteen years of war has lapsed in Afghanistan, now the United States and the Taliban have agreed to bring peace to the region by ending the war. The most significant development is the drawdown of the U.S. troops and the change in stance of Taliban from blood shed to peace and they have showed willingness to not welcome terrorists and would cease fire.

The agreement follows more than eighteen months—and nine rounds—of peace talks, involving Khalilzad, representatives from the Taliban, delegations from the Afghan government, and numerous other special representatives or envoys from neighboring or regional countries and international organizations. The signing of the deal was preceded by a seven-day reduction in violence agreement that was seen as a test of the Taliban's ability to control its forces.

The agreement outlines four goals, with the last two dependent on the status of the first two¹⁸⁰:

1. Armed groups will be prevented (by the Taliban and Afghan security forces) from using Afghanistan as a base for acts against the United States and its allies. The Taliban agreed that it will not threaten the United States or its allies, and that it will prevent armed groups and others in Afghanistan from doing the same. The Taliban also committed to sending “a clear message” that it will not cooperate with those intent on such activities.

2. Foreign forces will withdraw from Afghanistan, including U.S. troops and contractors and coalition forces. The United States committed to withdrawing all of its military forces—as well as those of allies, partners, and civilian security personnel—within fourteen months of signing the agreement, pending the Taliban’s demonstration of commitment to the agreement. Presumably as a show of good faith, the United States also committed to drawing down its troops to 8,600, and withdrawing from 5 military bases within the first 135 days.

3. Intra-Afghan negotiations were notionally scheduled to begin on March 10, 2020. The start of negotiations has been dependent on the ability of the Taliban and the Afghan government to release one thousand prisoners and five thousand prisoners respectively, with the ultimate goal of releasing all political prisoners three months after talks begins. Once negotiations have started, the United States has committed to reviewing its sanctions against the Taliban, and working with the UN Security Council and Afghan government to remove their Taliban-related sanctions as well.

¹⁸⁰ “What to Know About the Afghan peace Process” Council on Foreign Relations, Centre for Preventive Action September 11, 2020.

4. The agenda for intra-Afghan negotiations will include discussion of how to implement a permanent and comprehensive cease-fire, and a political roadmap for the future of Afghanistan. The United States and the Taliban agreed that they seek a “post-settlement Afghan Islamic government.” Pending successful negotiations and an agreed-upon settlement, the United States has agreed to seek economic cooperation from allies and UN member states for Afghan reconstruction efforts, and has pledged no further domestic interference in Afghanistan.

4.1 Actors/Parties to the Peace Process

The Afghan imbroglio has been very complicated since the day when the US and others vowed for negotiation. The reasons are the multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and brokered power centers. There was no clear group or party to be talked. Yet, recently, Taliban and the US reached to a certain level of agreement. However, parties and actors are still multiple having different views and opinions regarding peace talks which may be divided in internal and external actors respectively.

4.1.1 Internal Actors/Parties

4.1.1.1 The Taliban

Taliban have been most ferocious, most striking and most organized since the beginning of the war. After the 19 year of war, they have not yet finished from Afghanistan.

According to data shown by Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), till the last week of October, 2018, the jurisdiction and sway over Afghanistan’s districts, villages and towns and are not the same but the grip of Afghan government has been loosened, resultantly Taliban’s dominance and influence has surfaced significantly since July 2018. The rule and jurisdiction of Afghan’s government on its people has rather reduced gradually and no significant development has been seen from July 2018 at around 65% which fall in October to 63 %. This marks a rapid fall

by government in its territorial control and jurisdiction by Afghan government to 2 % since July to 53.8%¹⁸¹.

Taliban's long refusal not to talk to the US, unless it leaves from there had been the biggest hurdle in the peace process. However, once Mr. Trump administration agreed that it would withdraw all its forces as well as non-diplomatic staff from Afghanistan in a span of 14 months, Taliban also showed interests.

The second biggest issue that deterred peace talks was that Taliban were not ready to accept Afghan government as De-Jure. On the other side, there was immense reluctance not to bow down before the Taliban's demands. Yet, the recently held Loya Jirga and notification of Dr. Abdullah as head of the negotiation team shows that the ice is being melted and both the parties are agreed now to sit and talk¹⁸².

Currently, the position of Taliban is stronger than Afghan government and the US. I mean the peace agreement includes that Taliban agreed that Afghan soil will not be used against any state. I see it a joke. Taliban has never accepted that it had allowed militants to use Afghan soil. On the other hand, Taliban have said that they will not talk to Afghan government. They will not accept this government. The US must leave. It is purely an Afghan matter. Foreign interference will not be tolerated. And they agreed that foreign forces will not be attacked during their departure. The US seems in rush and haste. I do not see that Taliban will accept American demands after its withdrawal. Afghan government was enforced by the US to free Taliban prisoners. In this situation, Taliban do not seem to cooperate even an inch. The International community is not pressurizing

¹⁸¹ Anthony H. Cordesman and Hwang, Grace "The State of the War Before-and After-the Peace Agreement" Centre for Strategic and International Studies, (July 2020).

¹⁸² Pro (r) Dr. Ijaz Khattak, Former Chairman Department of International Relations, University of Peshawar. July 31, 2020.

Taliban but Afghan government for doing more. That is why I do not expect peace in the long run¹⁸³.

When Brig. Mehmood Shah was asked that currently, the biggest threat to peace and negotiations is from Taliban so how can Taliban be made part of the government or Peace Settlement? He said that you see the pattern of negotiation was going on and in that, they were agreed upon, they were to be included in the government. It was needed to work out how could they be part of the government. One solution is that all those areas which are under the control of Taliban should go to them. Few of their demands regarding changes in the constitution should be accepted¹⁸⁴. And anyhow, I think that the constitution needs to be amended as they demand the inclusion of Islamic injunctions. And I hope that these few changes would be acceptable to the people of Afghanistan too, who are by nature, diehard Muslims. And you know, certain points can be rejected. They should not be allowed to capture the government. Similarly, if you are making another constitution and making the power sharing part of it between Pashtuns and Northern Alliance and you are also keeping in mind the requirements of the federal government and governments at the regions, they should make some point to the constitution pertaining to Islam and presented by Taliban. And you know that many of the points presented by Taliban have agreed upon by the government. However, if the Taliban are left aside, there would be civil war¹⁸⁵.

When Rustam Shah Mohmand was asked the question how will Taliban agree to what kind of peace agreement? He said that viable peace agreement seems a distant dream so far. However, a broad-based multi-ethnic government is solution to this imbroglio. Taliban will not make government of their own. As Taliban are in Talks with Batoor khan, son of Abdur Rashid

¹⁸³ Pro (r) Dr. Ijaz Khattak, Former Chairman Department of International Relations, University of Peshawar. July 31, 2020.

¹⁸⁴ Bri (R) Mehmood Shah, (former Home secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) January 8, 2020.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

Dostam, who had burnt them in a container. Similarly, they are in negotiation with Ismail Khan of Herat. They are in contacts with Ustaad Ata as well as Hizb-e-Islami of Shiite. This all shows that Taliban are ready for a broad based multi-ethnic government. However, if they are given the driving seat of the government, they would agree. So a question arises here, whether the rest are also ready for this? Will the US agree to this? Will the Ghani government agree to this?¹⁸⁶

When the same question was asked from Rahim Ullah Yousafzai, he answered it in a different way. He said that it is very difficult to predict anything regarding the future of Afghanistan where a conflict has been going on for more than 42 years. So whether Power Agreement, which was eventually got signed, will be viable or not. Yes, we agree that Afghan society is more fragmented. Its tribal system is becoming weak because of urbanization, because of more literacy, because of more education. However, still, it is a tribal society. We know that there has been one Peace Agreement between the US and Taliban signed in February in Doha. That agreement actually paved way for Intra-Afghan dialogue which started again in Doha on 12th of September. In this way, talks have been going on for last 50 days but no breakthrough has yet been seen. Yet, they are continuing talks which is a good omen¹⁸⁷.

Earlier, the Ghani government did not take part. However, later on Loya Jirga was called that gave the approval to release Taliban. So the exchange of prisoners has taken place that is why now, the Intra-Afghan dialogue are happening. However, some hurdles are candid clear in this regard. First, Taliban wants the US-Taliban peace agreement to serve for the intra-Afghan negotiations. They say this agreement is internationally backed and supported. However, the Afghan government is a different view. They refer it to Kabul-US declaration which was

¹⁸⁶ Rustam Shah Mohmand, (former secretary of interior, former Political Agent of South Waziristan), November 1st, 2020.

¹⁸⁷ Rahim Ullah Yousafzai (resident editor in chief of The News, a renowned journalist who has been covering Afghanistan since long), November 8, 2020.

announced in Kabul on the same day the US-Taliban deal was signed. So, the Afghan government wants that declaration in which the US government has reiterated its support for the Afghan government to serve it the basis for the intra-Afghan negotiations. The Afghan government also wants the Loya Jirga resolutions to serve as the basis for the Intra-Afghan negotiations. So there are differences between the two sides. They have yet to agree on rules and procedures of talks¹⁸⁸.

Rahim Ullah Yousafzai further added that Taliban's main demand was that Hanfis should dominate the future set up as they had been in the past. It was the US that, after its attack on Afghanistan back in 2001, pushed and supported ethnic groups against the Pashtun Taliban. Also, Afghan government is demanding a ceasefire and Taliban have not yet agreed on it. Because the main source of their power is force and that is how they used to enforce or persuade the US to directly negotiate with Taliban-keeping the Afghan government out of these talks. But, they are not ready at this stage to give up their power. They want to get something out of the talks first to satisfy their rank and file to tell them look we are negotiating but we are also gaining something without fighting¹⁸⁹.

Sami Yousafzai showed other concerns. He said that Taliban prisoners were freed as a result of Taliban-US deal. However, bloodshed and violence did not stop. Taliban do not show flexibility. Because Taliban are pre-mature for political settlement. In such circumstances, Taliban need to transform their movement into a political party, to have a manifesto and program and hierarchical system so far as ranks are concerned. So currently, I do not see any viable peace

¹⁸⁸ Bri (R) Mehmood Shah, (former Home secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) January 8, 2020.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

formula unless Taliban show flexibility. And if war continues, it is fatal for the poor Afghans who would bitterly suffer¹⁹⁰.

White House national security adviser Robert O'Brien said Wednesday that the peace agreement sealed after 19 years of war "we hope and expect" has put Afghans "on a path toward lasting peace." He credited Trump's working to end America's longest war¹⁹¹.

"We are ending the American involvement in Afghanistan. It does not take place overnight, but if you look at Afghanistan, where we had 15,000 troops, we are now down to 4,500 troops," O'Brien said while delivering a public talk at Washington's Hudson Institute.

"We are on a pathway to get our soldiers, sailors and Marines home after the tremendous sacrifices of blood and treasure that the country has made over the past 19 years," he said.

While explaining a recent tweet by Trump that he wanted all American troops out of Afghanistan by Christmas, the national security adviser said that "as soon as conditions permit," the president has pledged to live up to his commitment.

However, experts stress that the deal between U.S. President Donald J. Trump's administration and the Taliban leadership is only the first step to achieving lasting peace. The bigger challenge, they say, will be negotiating an agreement between the Islamist fundamentalist group and the Afghan government on Afghanistan's future. Many Afghans, exhausted by a war that has killed thousands of people and forced millions to flee as refugees, fear that a U.S. withdrawal could spark new conflict and eventually allow the Taliban to regain control.

¹⁹⁰ Sami Ullah Yousafzai (a journalist from Afghanistan who covers the Ongoing Peace Process from Qatar for BBC), November 6, 2020.

¹⁹¹ White House national security adviser Robert O'Brien in a Public Talk at Hudson Institute, Washington D.C.

4.1.1.2 The Warlords and Tribal Chieftains

Warlords have been very powerful and famous in Afghanistan back in 90s and 2000. They had rule of their own while fighting foreign forces. They had mass support and volunteers to fight for them in their respective areas. However, in the government of Hamid Karzai as well as Ashraf Ghani, many warlords and Tribal Chieftains were made part of the government and their private militias were disarmed through an agreement¹⁹².

So far as the current peace process is concerned, almost all the warlords are welcoming viable peace talks. When question was asked from Rustom Shah Mohmand, he said that warlords have no existence currently in Afghanistan. Gone are the days of warlords and their private armies. For example, Ustaad Ata's army has been disarmed. Similarly, that of Mohhaqqiq, (Hizb e Wahdat) of Rashid Dostam, of Ismail Khan and of Rassul Sayyaf's have been disarmed. In the same way, their influence has also been curtailed to a greater extent in their respective areas. It is not the era of 90s or 2000 where they had popular support and volunteer fighters¹⁹³.

Taliban are talking to the warlords. They are in conversation with the son of Abdur Rashid Dostam. They are talking to Ustaad Ata. They are talking to Ismail Khan as well. It shows that the warlords are also interested in peace building. Same is the case of the civil society. A young afghan lady journalist, who were to Qatar during the recent peace agreement, said that the tone, tenor and way of talking of Taliban was very polite and respectful. She has never seen such gestures from Taliban. It means that Taliban will respect norms and traditions of Afghanistan. When she asked a question from Taliban's spokesperson regarding women rights,

¹⁹² Rustom Shah Mohmand, (former secretary of interior, former Political Agent of South Waziristan), November 1st, 2020.

¹⁹³ Ibid.

the spokesperson answered that Taliban will ensure women rights as well as rights of the minorities that are enshrined by Islam¹⁹⁴.

However, Sami Yousafzai countered the views of Rustam Shah Mohmand while saying that yes civil society has concerns over the ongoing peace deal and release of Taliban. The Media and Civil Society highlight the sacrifices of Afghans while saying that if Taliban do not agree and Afghan government and US beg them for peace, it is wastage of the sacrifices and efforts¹⁹⁵. The Civil society has also concerns for warlords too as the warlords had been cruel and inhumane so far as human rights were concerned. They had burnt Taliban alive. They had killed women. They had violated human rights during their peak time¹⁹⁶.

Also, the Afghan academicians, intellectuals, Human Rights champions as well as Afghan Diaspora are keen in peace talks and long-lasting peace for Afghanistan.

4.1.1.3 The Government of Afghanistan

The position and stance of the US and of the Afghan government does not seem the same. When the US agreed on freeing of Taliban prisoners back in February, Afghan government showed extreme reluctance. However, later on, Ghani government agreed of freeing Taliban prisoners. What the Ghani led government wants in this situation, ongoing peace talks are again ambiguous and different writer's present different pictures.

Ashraf Ghani is a wise as well as simple man. He is in favor of talking to Taliban. However, Abdullah has been fighting Taliban since 90s. Both the Taliban and Northern Alliance have been

¹⁹⁴ Rustam Shah Mohmand, (former secretary of interior, former Political Agent of South Waziristan), November 1st, 2020.

¹⁹⁵ "Afghan Taliban-Peace Talks, an Opportunity for Peace" accessed on November 3rd, 2020 on www.bbc.com

¹⁹⁶ Sami Ullah Yousafzai (a journalist from Afghanistan who covers the Ongoing Peace Process from Qatar for BBC), November 6, 2020.

arch-rivals for decades. So, as Taliban asks for lion's share in the government, I do not think so that Abdullah will agree to this, said, Sami Yousafzai¹⁹⁷.

For example, when Rustam Shah Mohmand was asked about the approach of Ghani led government towards peace talks. He said that the biggest hurdle in this process is Ghani government itself because all his perks and privileges are concerned with this system. He does not want to alter his powers and position. If a peace agreement holds and Taliban comes to power, he would lose his powers¹⁹⁸.

When Rahim Ullah Yousafzai was asked this question, he said that visibly, both Ghani and Abdullah say that they want peace with Taliban. Ghani has been offering talks to Taliban since long, yet Taliban have always rejected the offers on the ground that this government does not represent Afghan nation and it is a puppet government installed by the US¹⁹⁹.

“But I think, Taliban had to eventually agree for talks with the government. Ghani has put certain conditions for Peace Talks. However, Abdullah's approach is more flexible, more lenient towards peace talks. Being head of High Council of Peace and National Reconciliation (HCPNR), it is Abdullah's job to make it successful” Rahim Ullah Yousafzai added²⁰⁰.

However, apart from that, many observers are of the view that Afghanistan needs intra-Afghan dialogue to resolve the deadlock and establish peace. What is the most needed solution is of course, a settlement between the Afghan political leaders within their country and that too through dialogue and negotiations that is required on more urgent basis than the agreement between the US government and the Taliban. The US special representative for Afghanistan

¹⁹⁷ Sami Ullah Yousafzai (a journalist from Afghanistan who covers the Ongoing Peace Process from Qatar for BBC), November 6, 2020.

¹⁹⁸ Rustam Shah Mohmand, (former secretary of interior, former Political Agent of South Waziristan), November 1st, 2020.

¹⁹⁹ Rahim Ullah Yousafzai (resident editor in chief of The News, a renowned journalist who has been covering Afghanistan since long), November 8, 2020.

²⁰⁰ Ibid.

Reconciliation Zalmay Khalilzad has pin pointed this settlement on many occasions. He upholds that the basis of the settlement would be of course Power sharing. Thus, the interests of Taliban would not be injured through this way and the masses will back this settlement. In this way, it could be directed towards success. But again, a successful bargaining of the settlement lies only with the political parties if they are ready to the agreement of power sharing. The success of the settlement will not only be limited to power sharing but the main stake holders and powers such as the United States, Pakistan, China, Russia, and Iran will have to ensure their unconditional support with open hearts to reach a decisive settlement of the issue in Afghanistan. Above all, it is also their prime responsibility to guide and enlighten the parties' leaders in Afghanistan to hold them responsible for not only finalizing the settlement but also to abide by all its key points in letter and spirit for a peaceful and prosperous Afghanistan²⁰¹.

4.2. External Actors

4.2.1 The US.

The US has earlier announced partly draw dawn from Afghanistan. American president Donald J. Trump stated last month that American forces would celebrate Christmas at homes this year. However, the Trump administration either seems in haste or unclear about ground realities of Afghanistan. Like, Rustam Shah Mohmand is of the view that the US fears that if she leaves from Afghanistan, China will jump out in such circumstances and will have a greater say in Afghanistan. However, the arrival of China is definite. I do not know why the US does not understand that. China has a huge investment in oil and gas, minerals, in copper mines, etc. China has reached to Central Asia too. And the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) has relevance with

²⁰¹ Lanz, David, Nathan, Laurie and Raufel, Alexander "Negotiation continued::Ensuring the Positive Performance of Power Sharing-Arrangements "US Institute of Peace, (2019).

Afghanistan, as it will get successful if peace comes to Afghanistan. So China is more concerned and has more stakes for peace in Afghanistan than the US²⁰².

When Sami Yousafzai was asked about the initiatives by US for nation building, democracy and human rights in Afghanistan, he said that in the beginning, US exaggerated for these things. However, later on, ground realities were quite different for them. No doubt, the US worked to ensure women rights as well as civil rights in Afghanistan. US also worked on literacy owing to which millions of children, including girls, go to educational institutes. Afghan Parliament as well as democracy is because of the US. But, at the end, US has to leave. It has not taken contract of Afghanistan for lifetime. As it has been the most expensive war for US in its history. So, it is the Afghans who have to stand. Who have to build the nation; who have to elect the leaders of their choices?²⁰³

However, Rahim Ullah Yousafzai answered the same question in another way. He said that it was a half-hearted effort. The US tried for 19 years to defeat the Taliban. Yet, at the end, they said they were not for nation building in Afghanistan but to fight terrorism. They did not talk to Taliban earlier but fought. So much bloodshed happened and so many hopes dashed to the ground. So, I think, Americans got late in realizing that they cannot achieve a military victory and they must negotiate with Taliban who are major stake holders and without Taliban, there will be no peace in Afghanistan²⁰⁴.

So, the American peace efforts were, I think, very robust and not very sustainable. Even last year, Donald Trump scrapped the Peace Talks with Taliban arguing that they have killed a

²⁰² Rustam Shah Mohmand, (former secretary of interior, former Political Agent of South Waziristan), November 1st, 2020.

²⁰³ Sami Ullah Yousafzai (a journalist from Afghanistan who covers the Ongoing Peace Process from Qatar for BBC), November 6, 2020.

²⁰⁴ Rahim Ullah Yousafzai (resident editor in chief of The News, a renowned journalist who has been covering Afghanistan since long), November 8, 2020.

number of American soldiers which was very inadequate answer or reason. As far as democratization is concerned, it mentioned always John Kerry mediating between Abdullah and Ghani and they said they want to prevent violence, civil war, struggle for power and that is why there was a power sharing agreement²⁰⁵.

So, democracy in Afghanistan is new and fragile. It is gradually taking roots. The US has not done much in this context in terms of having proper democracy, and free and fair elections. Every election that have been held since 2002, have been disputed. There have been allegations of rigging and fraud. So, I think, this democracy of Afghanistan style where use of money, use of muscle power and other efforts to make the elections rigged is not a good omen. There has been very least transparency. Parliament is there yet poor political parties in the parliament. So, there is no real discipline. There are some political parties but outside the parliament run by families and some by warlords. This democracy has actually disappointed the Afghans. That is why the turnout was so low in the recently held presidential elections²⁰⁶.

4.2.2 China

China's prime objectives are restoring and maintaining peace and stability in Afghanistan. From China's point of view, anarchy and less control of the government of Afghanistan are directly the cause of strength of Islamic fundamentalism which is alarming for China in general and in Xinjiang in particular. In this context, China wishes Afghanistan not to have inclination to great power or powers because in this way its own security will be at risk. China's leaders are visionary in this context. They know history of great powers like Britain, USSR AND US that how they were defeated and humiliated at afghan soil. China's vision about

²⁰⁵ Rahim Ullah Yousafzai (resident editor in chief of The News, a renowned journalist who has been covering Afghanistan since long), November 8, 2020.

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

Afghanistan has been termed as the “graveyard of empires.” Therefore, China is refraining from direct involvement in Afghanistan²⁰⁷.

South Asia is a very important region in the diplomatic list of China. The stability of South Asia, especially Afghanistan, has been challenging since the Anti-Terror war started in 2001. As a close neighbor, China wants to see peace, stability and prosperity in the surrounding environment for development of its domestic economy. Because China is still a developing country with a huge number of population. As a result, China would like to contribute to the international as well as regional effort to ensure a stable Afghanistan. Unlike U.S and other west countries, China adopts kind of limited involvement strategy in Afghanistan and emphasizes the role of multilateral diplomacy as well as economic development²⁰⁸.

China has conveyed its support for the Afghan peace process, exchange of Taliban and government prisoners and enforcement of a humanitarian cease-fire. Acting Foreign Minister Mohammad Haneef Atmar and Liu Jin, China’s special representative for Afghanistan, discussed the ongoing peace push and related matters in a phone call. During the call, both parties deliberated the expansion of economic and trade cooperation between the two countries, regional connectivity and the expansion of investment and trade .It said the Chinese envoy reiterated Beijing’s commitment to “supporting the peace process, support for exchange of prisoners, and strengthening regional consensus on peace²⁰⁹.

China’s leadership is trading in Afghanistan in a prudent manners. It has its responsibility in the affairs of security in three dimensional ways in Afghanistan: the first one as marginal because China is not involving directly in the issue of disagreement. The second one is

²⁰⁷ Sun, Yun “China’s Strategic Assessment of Afghanistan “War on the Rocks, (April 8, 2020).

²⁰⁸ Shida,Wang “China’s Role in Facilitating the Peace Process of Afghanistan” CICIR Institute of South, Southeast and Oceanian Studies Beijing,(September 7,8, 2017).

²⁰⁹ “China Reaffirms Support for Afghan Peace Process “Journal of Politics”,(August 25, 2020).

indispensable keeping in view that China is emerging as a great power as well as a close neighbor to Afghanistan. The third one is central because China's investment in Afghanistan will be of great value for its progress and development and thus its implications will be of considerable importance for Afghanistan²¹⁰.

4.2.3 Russia

President Vladimir Putin has commended the efforts made by Washington and its trans-Atlantic allies after almost a lapse of more than a decade after 9/11, for taking on the "burden" of eradicating terrorism in Afghanistan and exhorted them to accomplish it to a decisive end.

The situation in Afghanistan has been one of the key items on our agenda with Washington since we launched the Russia-U.S. dialogue on counterterrorism in December 2018," Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Oleg Syromolotov told Interfax in May 2020.²¹¹

Moscow is still worried about drug trafficking, the IS' presence in Afghanistan and threats aimed at its Central Asian allies. "It is also key for their wider regional influence over Central Asia, particularly Tajikistan, which shares a border with Afghanistan²¹².

Russia has spearheaded numerous multilateral diplomatic initiatives on Afghanistan since late 2016, Moscow has insisted that its involvement in peace negotiations is motivated by national security concerns, rather than aspirations for diplomatic influence. Andrey Kortunov, the Director-General of the Russian International Affairs Council (RIAC), told me in January that Russia does not have any particular interest in "filling the vacuum in Afghanistan," and that

²¹⁰ Ahmed, Waqar "Chinese Role in Afghan Peace" May 2, 2020. Online accessed on November 7, 2020. www.thenews.com.

²¹¹ Abubakar,"Explainer: What Does Russia Want in Afghanistan?" "Radio Free Europe, Radio Liberty, (June 29, 2020).

²¹² Hakimi, Hameed a research associate with Chatam House think tank, London.

Moscow perceives the country as “more of a challenge than an opportunity.” Kortunov also argued that Russia’s most important task is to “prevent Afghanistan from turning into a foothold for international extremists and terrorists,” and Moscow’s engagement in multilateral peace talks helped facilitate these goals²¹³.

4.2.4 Pakistan

Being a neighbor and a landlocked state, Afghanistan is dependent on Pakistan by many means. The porous border, blood and tribal relations as well as humanitarian assistance to Afghan brethren make it possible for thousands of Afghans to come to Pakistan on a daily basis. Hence, resultantly, Peace and stability in Afghanistan is directly linked with peace and order in Pakistan. The poet of East, Mr. Allama Iqbal has aptly said once that Afghanistan is the heart of Asia. If there is peace and order in Afghanistan, the rest of states will also be in peace and vice versa.

As mentioned earlier that Pakistan’s internal stability is linked with Afghanistan that is why Pakistan has been suffering since the era of Afghan war, 1979. Pakistan’s ever initiatives to establish peace in Afghanistan have always been lauded by the international community. In the ongoing peace process in Afghanistan, Pakistan’s role is candidly clear. Whenever there has been a deadlock between the US and Taliban, Pakistan played its role in melting it down.

Islamabad has categorically stated that the Taliban of Afghanistan were not under their direct control and also expressed concerns that the influence of Pakistan over Taliban has been projected negatively. Yet, Pakistan has expressed hope that it would leave no stone unturned to bring peace in Afghanistan. Islamabad has expressed its wish that a peaceful Afghanistan guarantees peace in Pakistan. In this connection, Pakistan organized and hosted the first ever

²¹³ Ramani, Samuel “A US Taliban Peace Process Collapses: an Opportunity for Russia? The Diplomat, September 20, 2019. Accessed online on www.thediplomat.com November 21, 2020.

face-to-face talks between Kabul and the Afghan Taliban back in 2015. Yet, its second round was thwarted when the Afghan government circulated the news of the death of Taliban founder Mullah Mohammed Omar. This was a big blow to the peace process and the two governments were driven apart. Later on, Washington asked Islamabad to reschedule the dialogue process by convincing the Taliban to meet with the U.S. and Afghan delegation. Hence, Pakistan is making efforts and the dialogue process has resumed once again and in the last month, a Taliban delegation led by their chief, Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, paid visit to Islamabad to meet and discuss with the Pakistani delegation²¹⁴.

Similarly, when a raucous occurred recently between Taliban and US, it was Pakistan that melted the ice and brought the two at a negotiation table. America's peace envoy for Afghanistan, Zalmay Khalilzad, visited Pakistan then and conveyed Washington's gratitude for the "important role" Islamabad has played in easing the start of reconciliation talks between warring Afghan parties. The visiting dignitary greatly appreciated Pakistan's role in the ongoing (Afghan) peace process and said that it could not have succeeded without Pakistan's sincere and unconditional support"²¹⁵.

4.2.5 India

India is another active player that can play role in Afghan peace process. India has concerns in Afghanistan. Being the biggest donor and second biggest investor, India is more concerned for peace and stability in Afghanistan. In the recently held talks in Doha, Indian External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar expressed his views that any peace process in

²¹⁴ Ahmed, Munir "US Envoy Lauds Pakistan's Role in Afghan Peace Process" September 15, 2020. www.thediplomat.com accessed online on November 19, 2020.

²¹⁵ Gul, Ayaz "US Hails Pakistan's Role in Advancing Afghan Peace Process" September 14, 2020, www.voa.com accessed online on November 19, 2020.

Afghanistan must be “Afghan-led, Afghan-owned and Afghan-Controlled” and must respect the territorial integrity and national sovereignty of Afghanistan²¹⁶.

The priority for the Afghan people is a peaceful sovereign Afghanistan that does not see interference from its neighbors or from abroad. Towards that, the Taliban and we have similar views. We met last year in Moscow, and their desire for peace was as intense and as deep as ours. Their desire for a sovereign Afghanistan equally strong and good and desire for Afghanistan that should be engaging properly with our friends and neighbors equally, as good as ours. Now for the life within Afghanistan, as to how we should live our lives as Afghans, yes, there are differences in interpretations of things. But there are some fundamentals on which, as we found out in Moscow, there will not be serious disagreements. And if there are any disagreements, they will be resolved. The right of the Afghan woman to educate, the right of the Afghan society to be able to participate in politics, to vote, the right of the country to progress, education and the foundations of a stable democratic state. We do not want Afghanistan to be taken backwards, stated by S Jaishankar, Minister for External Affairs of India²¹⁷.

However, when Rahim Ullah Yousafzai was asked about India’s role in the ongoing peace process, he said that India can play twofold role: one as a spoiler and second as positive. A Spoiler in a sense that India is the biggest donor as well as investor in the region owing to these acts, she may turn things against Pakistan. Since, Pakistan has been presenting dossiers for so long of use of Afghan territory against Pakistan by India. And being positive in a sense to develop regional cooperation in the region. India needs Afghanistan to have access to the Central Asian Republics (CAR’s). India needs gas for CAR’s. India is in search of markets for its goods.

²¹⁶ Deccan Herald, October 8, 2020, www.deccanherald.com online accessed on November 20, 2020.

²¹⁷ Haider, Suhasini “India has Joined Afghan Peace Process at the Right Time Should Engage with the Taliban Directly”. September 22, 2020. www.thehindu.com online accessed on November 20, 2020.

If there is peace and order in Afghanistan, it will attract Indian good. Now, it is up to India what kind of role it wants to play²¹⁸.

Rahim Ullah Yousafzai further added that no single nation can play role in peace building in Afghanistan. I think, he said, it is shared responsibility. Pakistan has to do more in terms of Peace Building in Afghanistan by persuading Taliban to agree to some kind of compromise. And the Afghan government also has to trust Pakistan. Qatar has also very important role as a host of Taliban Political Commission since 2010. US also has to play active role. It has forces in Afghanistan. It is the biggest supporter of Afghan army and the biggest aid giver in terms of economic as well as military assistance. Other states like China, Russia and Iran even have role. So, basically, it is a shared responsibility upon all.

To sum up, the ongoing peace process forecasts peace and stability in Afghanistan where democracy would probably prosper. However, keeping in view the contentious history of Afghanistan and the challenges to peace since last 20 years, all the internal, regional as well international actors have to play vibrant role in the peace making process. Because peace is inevitable in Afghanistan which is linked with the region in general and with the world in particular. In this regard, Afghan government has to be flexible in terms of criticism and objections. However, all the warlords and tribal chieftains have also to be on government side because they have also been the primary victims of the long lasting war. Also, the US, Russia and India have to play their constructive role. Apart from them, Pakistan's role will immensely matter as Pakistan can convince Taliban for peace terms. Similarly, China's role is very important. China has huge investment in Afghanistan. CPEC would connect China as well as it is

²¹⁸ Rahim Ullah Yousafzai (resident editor in chief of The News, a renowned journalist who has been covering Afghanistan since long), November 8, 2020.

a rising super power. And anarchy and instability will disrupt the interests of China directly. Hence China has to play more active role²¹⁹.

²¹⁹ Rahim Ullah Yousafzai (resident editor in chief of The News, a renowned journalist who has been covering Afghanistan since long), November 8, 2020.

CONCLUSION

Afghanistan, a landlocked state and an avenue for the Central Asian states has been confronted with conflicts and external occupations since long. The USSR invasion of Afghanistan and the rising insurgency of the holy warriors or mujahedeen and later on, the uprising of Taliban heralded new chapters in its history. In 2001, the 9/11 attacks were separating moment in history that paved way for the US and allied troops to Afghanistan which unleashed an unending war. Meanwhile, the US and its allied forces also undertook to launch a political process in Afghanistan where Mr. Hamid Karzai was given the responsibility as president for a term of two years through a constitutional Loya Jirga. As a result, during the next two presidential elections, Mr. Hamid Karzai was victorious. Thus his tenure as a president spanned for a period of 12 years. Later on, in 2014, new presidential elections held where many candidates submitted their nomination papers. During the first round of the elections, neither of the candidates was successful to be elected as president. This led to the second round where, as per the constitution, only the two running candidates with great mandate could be allowed to contest. However, it is worth mentioning that Dr. Abdullah secured more votes than Mr. Ghani during the first round. Yet, Mr. Ghani secured more votes than Dr. Abdullah during the second round. Thus the constitutional issue was arisen when Dr. Abdullah avowed that he would not accept the election results as there was organized fraud and rigging in the elections in order to favor Ghani.

This thesis is an attempt to demonstrate a vivid picture of the 2014 Power Sharing Formula that was chalked out between Ghani and Abdullah. The terms of reference, prospects and challenges as well as its reference to the ongoing peace process have been described in the study. During this study, the era from 2014, Mr. Ghani's first tenure as well as second one, till

date has been focused at great length. In this connection, in order to maintain peace, stability and a shared government in Afghanistan, several examples of different states have been applied and examined where the similar situation had been faced, yet later on, they agreed to broad-based, multi-ethnic governments. The concept of shared government was for the first time, coined by a Political Scientist Arend Lijphart whose specialization and expertise are of great worth in comparative study of political affairs, elections process and the system of voting, democratic institutions, ethnicity and political studies. His theory is known as 'Consociationalism' or consociational democracy and very influential one.

The coalition government has been faced with ups and downs during its constitutional tenure. However, keeping in view the fragile and undemocratic history of Afghanistan, many observers and academicians term it a government at par excellence. Though, some of the basic changes did not bring in spirit which were promised. Yet, its overall performance has been commended.

Findings

Afghanistan is a multi-ethnic state further reaped with tribalism and warlords. Its history is full of ousting of each other from power and creating turmoil and uncertain situation. Peace in Afghanistan has been at stake since long from internal as well as external factors. These factors have always been exploited the fault lines in Afghan society for their personal political gains. As Afghan society is multi-ethnic and multi-lingual, so minority-majority issue has always thwarted all efforts of smooth running of the administration. The current imbroglio as well as peace process have been thoroughly discussed everywhere, yet its pragmatic solution could be a grand coalition government. A representative government in which every minority group could have share as per its population.

On the other hand, peace talks are underway in intra Afghan factions. Currently, Taliban are in dialogue with the son of Abdur Rashid Dostam, Batoor Khan. They are on talking terms with Ismail Khan of Herat. Similarly, they are in close contacts with ustad Ata of Hizb-e-Islami". Taliban show flexibility regarding human rights, minority rights as well as women rights. They have vowed that woman will be allowed to work side by side with men but Islamic dress code will be pre-requisite. In the same fashion, Taliban have showed willingness for girl's education. All this indicate that Taliban are in search of partners/parties for the future government that would come into existence after the negotiations are successful. The demands of Taliban are also relatively hard that could be adjusted after thorough consultation and collaboration with all the stakeholders and parties. The Islamic provision, Taliban demands to be included in the constitution, already exists, however, slight changes and modifications are needed.

Similarly, the government and the ruling class are also keenly interested in quest for a peace agreement. The position of Ashraf Ghani is clear with some conditional options for Taliban which may work whereas Dr. Abdullah is somewhat rigid in leading the High Council on Peace Talks. Though he had been fighting Taliban earlier yet he has changed his stance and wants peace and order for Afghanistan.

Recommendations

The Biden administration is committed to withdraw all its forces from Afghanistan. Once forces are withdrawing without peace agreement, peace will be a far cry. In such a complex and vague situation, some drastic steps are needed to be taken by all stake holders.

First, it ought to be realized by all actors that bringing peace and stability in Afghanistan is a shared responsibility of all the actors. If peace is not established in Afghanistan and the US forces withdraw, it will be loss-loss situation for the US. If anarchy remains in Afghanistan, it

would be a big blow for China that will ultimately thwart Chinese investment as well as its Belt and Road Initiative projects. If Afghanistan remains unstable, Pakistan will not be able to save itself from the flames of extremism and bloodshed erupting in Afghanistan. If Afghanistan remains a hub of terrorism, it will export terrorism to Russia. Similarly, India and Iran will face serious consequences in case the issue remains unresolved.

Hence, all the external actors ought to set aside their past bitter experiences and skirmishes and play active role on their parts in Afghanistan.

Furthermore, unless the actors/parties realize that peace in the region is linked with peace in Afghanistan, they will not work sincerely. So it is need of the hour to realize the reality with open eyes.

Similarly, all the actors need to focus on nation building in Afghanistan rather than personality building which will be helpful in the long run for Afghanistan and the region as well.

In the same fashion, all the actors need to pay serious heed to making and strengthening of political culture, political process as well as political awareness in the masses in Afghanistan.

Furthermore, Afghan internal parties/actors: government, warlords, civil society need to entertain some of the valid demands presented by Taliban for larger interests of the state.

As far as Taliban are concerned, they ought to cooperate with the government and the external actors. In this way the bloodshed and unending violence could come to an end and Afghanistan could embark on a way of a better and prosperous future.

Post Script Scenario

The political climate in Afghanistan drastically changed after Taliban took over the central stage in Afghanistan on August 15th, 2021. This was followed by US withdrawal of its forces after the long twenty years war and the agenda of free construction and peace building. This research thesis was submitted in January 2021 when Afghanistan was run by US led government based on the power sharing formula adopted by the two executive heads Ghani and Abdullah. This research also focused significantly on the adoption and implementation of this power sharing settlement.

However, the fall of Kabul changed everything so abruptly. Now, in post US withdrawal Afghanistan and the Taliban's take over led towards an uncertain situation about the formation of future government. The US' role has been decreased to a greater extent in Afghanistan except the Panjshir valley. Yet the affairs of state are ambiguous followed by contradictory outlook of Taliban's old and new perspectives. The previous Taliban ideology was more scary, non-tolerant, violent, and unbearable. Whereas, the current afghan outlook so far seems to be changed and much good. Various statements by Taliban leaders presumes that this new generation of Taliban is absorbent of current modern demands of the system. Taliban have vowed time and again about the acceptance of women education and employment within the Islamic shariah law. At the same time, they ensured minorities' rights. In this connection, universities and colleges have been opened, women have come back at workplace and Taliban local leaders visited religious shrines/centers of minorities.

Keeping in view and observing the ongoing situation, Afghanistan is no more pre 9/11 Afghanistan and so the Afghans are also much reformed, educated and well-groomed due to international exposure. They do not live in the pre-9/11 scenario. The US and allied forces have left Afghanistan since August 15, there comes immense responsibility on Taliban to revisit their ideology about Islamic sharia and law, to make it more flexible and absorbent. Regional and international dimensions have changed at large. China, Russia, India and other powers have stakes in regional and world politics. Taliban has to accept that they cannot live in isolation from

the rest of the international community. So, the emerging regional and world order is more challenging for Taliban led legitimate government in Afghanistan.

With regard to the formation of government in Afghanistan, there is a big question mark? As still, many stakeholders in Afghanistan exists. Afghanistan is a multi-ethnic and multi-tribal country. Majorly, its population is divided into Pashtuns and non-pashtuns. The non-pashtuns are further comprises on tajiks, Uzneks, Hazaras and Persians,etc. they cannot be ignored or marginalized. It is difficult for Taliban to create an exclusive government. A government structure based on the inclusion of all these groups is only preferable for Taliban led government. The power sharing formula became more relevant to post withdrawal Afghanistan. So far the gestures Taliban leaders are expressing being tolerant and absorbent project the formation of an inclusive government in order to legitimize their rule and their victory in Afghanistan.

Many countries have launched developmental projects during Ghani era. If Taliban continues draconic laws and violate human rights, they may hamper these projects. Similarly, some states have invested billions of dollars that has direct links with peace and infrastructure building in Afghanistan. Also, Afghanistan's currency is devaluing day by day, prices of different edible items are increasing owing to which people have fear to face hunger and starvation. The future government will not be in a position to afford any kind of resistance internal or external. If Taliban reverts back to their previous rigid agenda, it would be a hard task to maintain their supremacy. Similarly, the scarcity of financial resources and the cut off of the international aid will lead to another severe disaster in the country. Therefore, the power sharing settlement brings the only viable option for Taliban in order to take onboard all the stakeholders in the larger interests of the country and to maintain peace and stability in Afghanistan. Unless all the segments are made part of the governmental machinery, stability would be a far cry. Apart from Pashtuns, 55 percent population is comprised of non-pashtuns. If the non-Pashtuns are governed without giving them due share, it would be quite difficult to run the administration smoothly. Hence, an inclusive government based on the due share of power and decision making seems to be only workable option in Afghanistan.

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