



Afghanistan a Conflict Zone; Inter and Intra-State Dynamics

Pages: 128 – 140

Vol. VI, No. I (Winter 2021)

URL: [http://dx.doi.org/10.31703/gsssr.2021\(VI-I\).14](http://dx.doi.org/10.31703/gsssr.2021(VI-I).14)

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Abstract

The paper elucidates the conflict zone 'Afghanistan' fundamentally divided in two high land and low land climate. from internal perspective and elaborates the inherent issues and internal dynamics of the state that are tormenting its stability. The unit of analysis is state structure and its changing dynamics due to sudden and abrupt shift of power and change in internal dynamics. The exploratory analysis is furthered extrapolated with the empirical findings arrived through qualitative method to infer at findings regarding the question of why the country remained as conflict zone and failed to emerge as stable state and viable state in comity of nations. The public perception about their socio-economic issues and socio- political issues is measured statistically to draw inferences about recommending policy option to the state machinery and reconciliation process.

Key Words: Afghanistan, Conflict Zone, Taliban, Intra-State Dynamics

Introduction

Afghanistan has mostly remained a mythical character in the comity of nations. As Ludwig WAdamec has said, *"Few countries have as much history to both boast of and regret as Afghanistan."* Major reasons are its rough terrain, harsh weather, geostrategic importance, ancient tribal culture, folk lore, multi-ethnic identities and interesting rivalries since ancient times. On behavioural side the pride-conscious Afghans are ego centric as well as pragmatic. No wonder the rugged mountains are called the graveyard of the empires. Barry Neild, a CNN correspondent termed the country a daunting military challenge. Afghanistan is a mix of power physics, sectarian mathematics, tribal politics, criminal geometry, linguistic derivatives, ideological dogmas, as well as gender arithmetic, which when interact with each other create a matrix of infinite conflicts. These are the main reasons for the protracted

conflict. The eclipses of the peace and rivalries engrave so many opaque ingredients in DNA of Afghan state which cannot be decoded easily.

But they are not all that puts Afghanistan in a holistic perspective. On the softer side it's essential to know that the same Afghanistan, which is usually painted as savage state had long been a legacy of literature, religious harmony. It's a state that had amazingly decided to remain neutral during the two world wars. Despite the martial prowess of their ancestors, Afghans have remained in the ranks and files of British campaigners giving lives for the Queen. About two centuries ago local Afghan communities rejected calls for Jihad that was prevailing in India and then about a century ago the same land produced KhudaiKhidmatgar a nonviolent civil disobedience moment.

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With this broader canvass, it would be easy to draw the solutions under a constructivist approach. To placate the rivalries, a constant system from within need to be raised and taken care of till the seeds turn into banyan tree. The detailed comparison of the internal conflict dynamics reveals that the endemic problems are mostly internal but the state intend to externalize them. The tendency of state in absolving themselves of any responsibility is the elite behaviour. Yet, the worst historical dilemma of Afghan nation is establishment of legitimate governing authority or body equally acceptable to power brokers as well as masses. As referred by Scott Seward in these words, "In Afghanistan the challenges were accentuated by the deep division within the country over what Afghanistan should be, based on different conception of what is had been....The constitutional Loya Jirga would include

powerful abuser of ideals , idealistic abusers of power and everything in between."

Methodology

The article is based on the initial findings and qualitative thematic analysis of the focus study group (FSG) comprising of the representative population of the random sample and collection of primary data through Survey for the quantitative analysis using the Qui-Square analysis. The sample is based on the convenient random sampling due to the limitation of access to the region and the volatile security situation. The theoretical model used herein is the ABC model of John Galtung for the deliberation of the conflict reasons and intra-group relationship. And the analysis approach is based on the Frame Analysis of Conflict Actor.

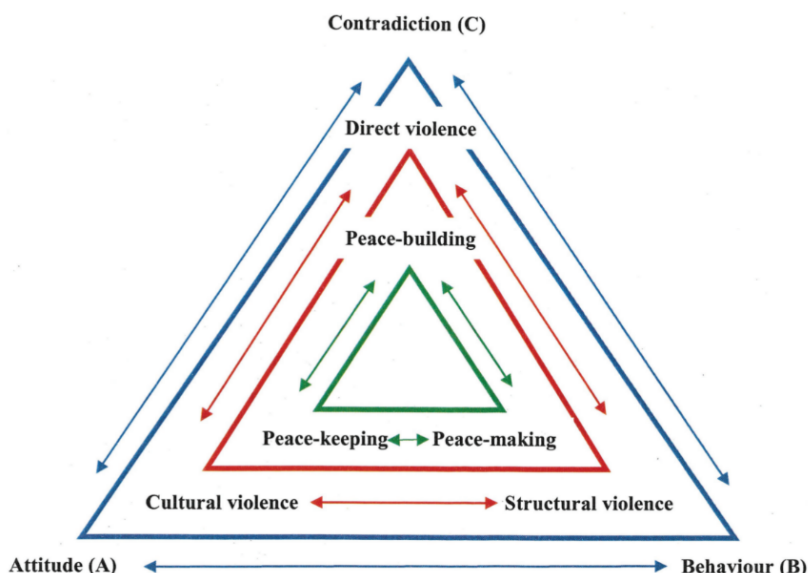


Figure 1. Galtung's triangles of conflict, violence and peace.

Frame Analysis of Afghan Conflict

In Frame Analysis approach, the purpose is to apply various frames to a situation or conflict to dig the complex dynamics of a conflict. This approach not only helps in appreciating the subtle relation of actors, goals and behaviours but also their actions that bring change in conflict situation. This sort of analysis requires

the analysis of leadership as an actor involved in the conflict. By examining actors, their historical views and controversies, it's easy to get a snapshot of their possible strategy based on their credentials and perceptions. The very next stage is to look at the situation from the frame of the goals set by these actors and their contradiction as well as incompatibility with each other in context of ABC (Attitude,

Behaviour, Contradiction) model. And finally ascertaining their behaviours allow more objective but at the same time constructive perspective to the situation. Collating issues with the opponents, so that possible outcome can be sketched on the broader canvass of construct of the conflict. This approach can be further brought in line with the Galtung framework of ABC triangle in analysis of the conflict; keeping them apart and at the same time linking them with each other.

Afghanistan Intrastate Affairs

The situation in Afghanistan is not good. Or at least, it would be artificial to draw a rosy picture albeit US claims. Situation is yet to stabilize. This premise can be confirmed through the latest happening in the Kabul, the routine bombings, suicide attacks and control of area in Sothern Districts by Taliban and ISIS. There are growing attacks in capital. Kabul suicide attack that killed a Briton (Security Personnel of UK Embassy) and three Afghan nationals, wounding more than 30 people is one example. The incident happened just after three days of killing of two US soldiers in the bombing at eastern Kabul by Taliban. So, it's not hard to visualize the Taliban capability of deteriorating a semblance of peace in the region. If we further observe the incidents in the backdrop of lesser US presence in upcoming days and reduced ISAF forces, Taliban has certainly increased their activities and claimed more influence. Opinion differs over the definition of victory. Whichever definition we choose the length of control over the affairs and liberty to perform desired activities cannot be ignored as main measure. This control and the liberty of the allied forces have remained debatable issue for a long time. They European forces have merely remained confined to the centre or the northern region of country, which have largely been inhabited by the protagonist of NATO/ISAF. Despite the varying opinions on the issue, it's harsh reality that in southern region, local stake holders have been on the helm of affairs and government forces have yet to establish writ in the area. If we look from the ABC perspective, we find a greater deviance and more contradictions in the attitude and behaviours of the Actors (Western Forces vs Taliban)

It's true that the country is tormented in its vision over a way forward. The reason is the fragmentation of the society over their desired model of governance. The segmented approaches towards critical and fundamental issues hamper social cohesion and nation building. The basic pillars on which a state forms its foundation and structure are still not visible to the society. The irony of the Afghan society is not limited to their opposing and polarized stances to the basic issues of nation building but also includes the intensity of their affection to their vision of a 'nation'. Tellingly, this had torn apart the masses into various irreconcilable fragments and factions that are carrying a huge baggage of history on their shoulders. A passionate student radicalised at seminary/madrasah in the southern region like Qandahar is dreaming for the implementation of Sharia in the country and the renaissance of Islam in the world by participating in Ghaza (Holy War). While representing a particular segment of society, he seems ready to sacrifice his life for the noble cause. This further sharpens the contradiction with the westernised segments of society living in Kabul that consider the fanaticism as trouble if not evil.

It is therefore, necessary to derive themes from recognised legal theories in understanding legal vacuums created by revolutions in Afghanistan. Hans Kelson's "Theory of Grund-norms or basic norm " and John Austin's theory of "Command of Sovereign" can be compared and applied to the constitutional dilemma of the Afghanistan. Given the history of Anglo-Afghan wars, the nation has paradoxical relation with colonial legacy. The state has floated on the wavering tides of history, where the legitimacy of ruler has been repeatedly challenged by revolutionaries from within and outside. The lack of Grundnorm resulted in confusion over formation of constitution as well as rendering legitimacy to the effective revolution under legal system. Although the Jirga has been institutionalized in Afghanistan its effectiveness remains debatable.

Once the dynastic rulers were overthrown by the revolutionaries the inherent quandary has emerged in the society. The revolutions from Sardar Mohammed Daud Khan

overthrowing King Zahir Shah, Nur Muhammad Taraki ousting President Daud and then Hafizul Amin (Khalafiq) throwing Trarki, to communist intervention placing Babrak Kernal (Parchamites) and Dr. Najeeb and Taliban toppling the puppet regime of Najib have all been ideological convulsions. Unlike, political expediencies there were shifts from state's identity and form of governments. The first revolution was a change from dynastic monarchy to republican presidency through an Armed Coup, the second from a presidential system to socialist democracy and the third to a more assertive socialist democracy, while the last was change from communist to implementation of Sharia by Taliban regime in 1996.

Since independence from colonial regime various constitutions were promulgated in Afghanistan. After King Amanullah Khan's constitution of 1921 and 1923 another constitution with more liberties were proclaimed in 1931, forming a parliamentary system. Later, in 1964 yet another constitution was passed by Grand Jirga forming a constitutional monarchy based on bicameral legislature. After the Taliban intervention and implementation of Sharia at par with constitution, the existing constitution was formed in 2004 in the backdrop of Bonn Agreement.

Under constantly changing constitutions and decentralized governing system, the state and subjects have suffered equal confusion over the definition of legitimate authority, system of election, form of government, balance and distribution of power among the institutions as well as responsibility to protect. The ideological differences over the Grundnorms as basic legal source and lawful authority offered ample opportunity to revolutionaries in establishing their command after successful revolutions. The command theory remained more relevant in establishment of sovereign authority in Afghanistan then the reliance on Grundnorms/Constitutionalism. This attitude of authenticating rebellions without efficacy

defaced the development of normative standards. In the meanwhile, every community has developed its own preferences to secure its interest. In the prevailing insecurity none of the social component is ready to allow concession to the other and compromise its bargaining power, fearing violence from the other side.

Conflict Assessment

The approach adopted in this essay is to deliberate the matters according to their importance and impact on the peace in the region. Initially enlisting and prioritizing the issues in the troubled region is imperative. At the same time, there is dire need to remain keen to their interplay with other variables. The protracted conflicts if not taken into its holistic perspective cannot yield authentic results for the researcher. It would be more appropriate to assign the degree of importance, search its relation with the other issue and pitting one thing versus other. Thus, the dilemma faced by Afghan region mostly relate to following contentions.

Matrix Giving Detail View of Factors of Instability and their co-relationship and interconnectivity

The deliberation of the Focus Study Group discussion of the Afghan sample population has resulted in the initial identification of the conflict factors that play their role as Independent variable and impact significantly upon the instability as dependent variable. The analysis was further used to conduct expert Interview to ascertain their significance in terms of present structure of the state, its dominant relationship with public or elite, conflict intensity, long term Impact, ranking in the list of state priority, link with other factors and finally deviation from contradicting extreme case scenario. The linkages are based on the verification through literature while the rest of ranking is made based on the thematic analysis of qualitative data collected through Semi-structured interview from a random sample of experts.

Table 1

S. No	Issues	Current state position	Dominant Relation with people	Conflict Intensity	Impact in Short term	Impact in Long term	State Priority reduce the difference	Link with other issues either stance	Deviation from History
1	CentervsPeriphery	Centralize	Masses	High	High	High	Low	3,5,6,9,10,II	Limited
2	Democracyvs Shariah/Socialism	Shariah	Factions	High	Low	High	Low	3,4,6,9,10	Extreme
3	Presidential vs Parliamentary	Blend	Leadership	Low	High	Limited	High	1,2,5,9,12	Limited
4	Liberalism vs Religion	Liberalism	Masses	High	High	High	Limited	2,6,9,10,13	Limited
5	Patronized Leadership vs Popular Leadership	Blend	Masses	Low	High	High	Limited	1,3,4,6,7,9,10,13	Extreme
6	Nationalism vs Ethnicity	Blend	Masses	Low	Low	High	Low	1,2,4,5,9,10,II,13	Limited
7	Transparency vs Corruption/underground Economy (East Asian Strategic Review 2014)	Corruption/Shadow economy	Masses	Low	Low	High	Low	5,8,9,II,12	Extreme
8	Economy vs Parasitism	Parasitism	Masses	Low	Limited	High	Low	7,9,12	Extreme
9	Political Opposition vs Militarism	Blend	Masses	High	High	High	Low	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,10,II,13	Limited
10	Globalisation vs Localisation/tribalisation	Blend	Masses	High	High	High	Low	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,13	Extreme
11	Judicial System vs Tribal Justice	Blend	Masses	Low	High	High	Low	1,2,3,4,7,9,12	Limited
12	Expediency vs Sustainability	Expediency	Masses	Low	Low	High	Low	1,2,3,4,5	Extreme
13	Feminism vs traditionalism	Traditional	Masses	Low	High	High	Limited	1,2,3,4	Extreme

Data Analysis

Primary Data has been collected to conduct statistical analysis of the Afghan respondent on random sampling. The survey was meant to measure the perception about the “corruption of government in development projects and people trust ratio of the government, their

perception about the chances of positive contribution from neighbouring (Pakistan) side without reaching level of interference in the Afghan internal affairs. Similarly, the perception about the Trade and Economic Activity generated under Afghan Transit Trade Treaty (ATTA) was also measured. Whereas the final analysis was done on the perception

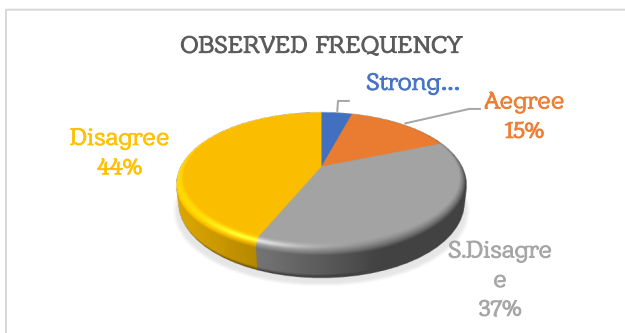
about the Militants vs Jihadist, to observe how the respondent consider the terms either being interchangeable or overlapping or different from each other. The responses were analysed through Chi-Square tests to measure the correlation and also the significance that the respondent assigned to a theme inquired about in the question.

Q.1: Do you agree that the development funds are used honestly in the projects and the government officers/functionaries are not involved in the corruption and misappropriation of the allocated funds meant for prosperity of locals?

Table 2

Q.No#1	Observed Frequency	Expected
Strongly Agree	2	12
Agree	7	12
S.Disagree	18	12
Disagree	21	12
Total	48	
Avg	12	
	P value	1.57E-04
	Chi square Value	20.16666667

Null hypothesis is rejected at 5% level in Q#1



Graph 2

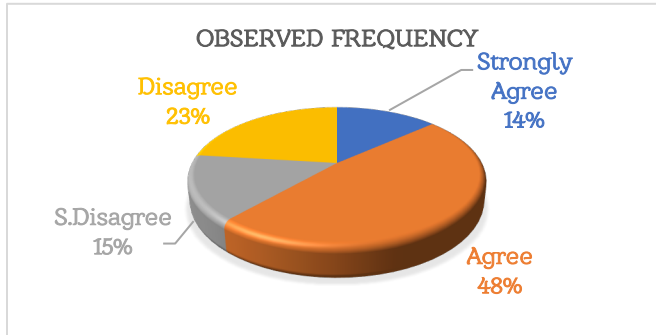
Q 2: How do you see that Pakistan can play a positive role in Afghanistan peace and stability without any allegations of intervening in their

internal issues and without being blamed for supporting proxy in Afghanistan?

Table 3

Q.No#3	Observed Frequency	Expected
Strongly Agree	7	13
Agree	25	13
S.Disagree	8	13
Disagree	12	13
Total	52	
Avg	13	

P value 1.22E-03
 Chi square Value 15.84615385
 The null hypothesis is rejected at 5% level
 in Q#3

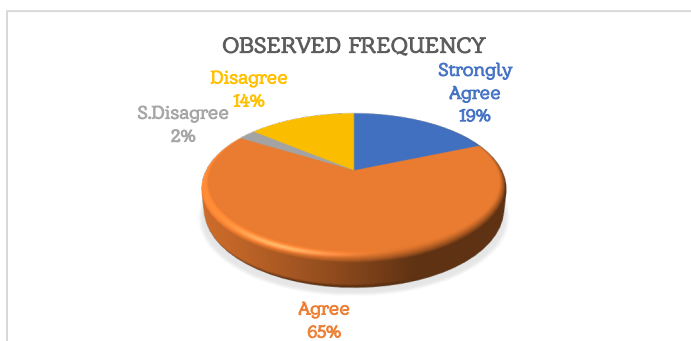


Graph 3

Q 3: Do you agree that Afghan Transit Trade Agreement (ATTA) and supply of tax free/transit free goods to Afghanistan is playing positive role in the relationship with Pakistan?

Table 4

Q.No#4	Observed Frequency	Expected
Strongly Agree	8	10.75
Agree	28	10.75
S.Disagree	1	10.75
Disagree	6	10.75
Total	43	
Avg	10.75	
	P value	1.48E-08
	Chi square Value	39.3255814
Null hypothesis is rejected at 5% level in Q#4		



Graph 4

Q.4 Do you agree that militancy/jihad in the name of Religion is damaging peace and stability of Border Region and it should be stopped without any discriminations of good or bad militants/jihadist?

Table 5

Q.No#5	Observed Frequency	Expected
Strongly Agree	16	12
Agree	28	12
S.Disagree	0	12
Disagree	4	12
Total	48	
Avg	12	
	P value	1.07E-08
	Chi square Value	40

Null hypothesis is rejected at 5% level in Q#5

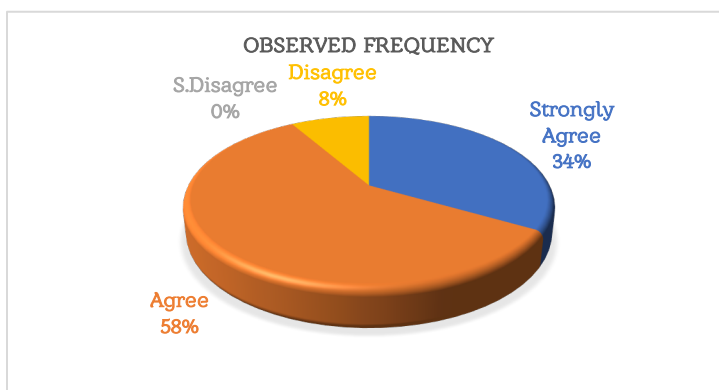


Figure 5

Solution for Conflict Resolution and Thematic Analysis of Qualitative Data

The analysis of the responses reveals that the sample majority population considered that there is corruption in the development projects and the functionaries are not honest. While the answers regarding the positive role of Pakistan without being blamed for interference is possible as per higher majority responses. Whereas regarding the Afghan Transit Trade the majority of respondent were of opinion that ATTA is playing positive role in the relationship and ties with Pakistan. Similarly, most of the respondent were in favour of actions against militants portraying themselves as Jihadist. Since the question has used the world militants interchangeably with jihadist. The measures that are needed to lessen the rifts referred in the above table are to adopt

three-pronged strategy for dealing with the conflicts. The issue itself its relationship with other issue and thirdly with the subsets of the same issue and sets of the other issue need to be dealt in delicate manner. The main reason of failure of foreign supported conflict resolution is their incompatibility with the indigenous aspiration. The suspicion and the half-hearted involvement of the masses tend to deteriorate the conflict resolution efforts by the international community. On the other hand, international community has its own agenda of establishing international norms that are somewhat unsuitable for the local culture.

Strategy for Conflict Resolution at Intra-State Level

The three-pronged strategy refers to; firstly, tailored DDR (Disarmament, Disintegration and

Rehabilitation), secondly narrative formation on crucial issues like the essence of legitimacy to rule, the creation of Grund Norm (Constitution) acceptable to the greater part of people and appropriate to the ground realities, thirdly, take policy measures on comprehensive level and avoid sacrificing sustainability at the cost of political scoring. Endeavour needed for stability are establishment of institution under a recognised constitution, separation of power between executive, judiciary and legislature, development of economy and ending reliance on foreign aid.

Amin Saikal has observed that the country historically comprises of numerous micro societies usually playing debilitating role against its consolidation as viable unit. There are also voices in Parliament that are calling for federal parliamentary form of government instead of presidential form of government.

The imposition of any foreign concept under constraint of time and budget can yield no results as the ingrained habits of Afghan nation cannot be transformed into western norms in short time. And even if superficial democratic norms, feminist ideology, central liberalist approach is imposed on the war ridden tribal society, it would be counterproductive as well as perfunctory. History has proved that Afghans are one of the most resilient nations and they can get over with any foreign element quite swiftly. Their resurrection at individual level, communal level as well as national level is unique. So, the trump card of establishing long term peace is not with anyone else but Afghans themselves. This is evident from the fact that the Afghans had to pay about US\$ 3.9 billion as bribe for public services only in 2012. And it has ranked 175/177 on Corruption Perception Index. Statistics are not very encouraging about opium cultivation and eradication.

The masses in Afghanistan need to review and re-assess their geopolitical dynamics and accordingly their identity as nation fitting in the international community in line with aspiration of their public. They need to deny their homeland to be treated as an arena of wars for imperial domination, super powers great game and regional buffer zone between arch rivals. In the meanwhile, they need to realise that the external reliance is counterproductive and aid is not without

strings. If they envision the free, prosperous nation they need to be more reconciliatory and accommodative to each other than subtle and treacherous in their design to yield power. A supra national identity of Afghan which has prevailed during peace intervals need to be nourished and social contract with the state need to be reviewed.

Internal economic stability is an anti-dot to the militancy in the Afghan perspective as the intersection of both relative deprivation and power hunger create a lethal combination fuelling militancy. The power and control relations between state and factions; including warlords, militants, terrorists, tribes are inverse. Thus, where individuals are more powerful, the state is rendered less powerful, which in turn impact individuals by making them miserable. This vicious cycle needs to be stopped and the wheel of progress moved in the re-calibrated direction in full consonance with realities.

As far as the solution to the terrorism is concerned, heed must be given to the inherent crisis. Feargal Cochrane, while referring to the shadow economies in weak states has warned against the perception of irrationality in relations with the aims of terrorist. He considers that extremist has rational objectives. Thus, there can be no resolution until these actors perceives the violence as obstacle instead of catalyst in achieving their goals. He has referred to the failure of NATO and the questionable success due to the mistaken conception of military capability viz-a-viz network warfare and cell structures of the terrorist organizations like Al-Qaeda and Taliban.

Strategy for Conflict Resolution at Inter-State Level

Feargal argues that ending the GWOT is not possible until the link between the foreign policy and the homeland security is appreciated by the US. This in turn can be replicated by the Afghans. The regional proxies must be seen as the inherent problems. The conflict arising due to the old rivalries and narratives must be shunned. The recent statement of an Afghan MP, Abdul Latif Pedram, the leader of National Congress Party of Afghanistan, implies the same view. While accepting the Durand Line as international

border spread over 2640 Km., He claims that the stability in the region can be guaranteed only if the cause of dispute in the region over past decades is resolved, which to him is “the Durand Line” Although, this statement has received mixed response from Afghan masses and media, yet it’s the first case of confronting the inherent dilemma by a leader in direct terms.

The increasing regional interest in Afghan fiasco and the swiftly changing dynamics call for rationally perceived interest and more pragmatic interpretation of foreign relations with all neighbours. The recent meetings of Quadrilateral Contact Group (QCG) of Afghanistan provide a great insight into understanding the regional dynamics. It has framed a first platform that looks at the issue from regionalized perspective. The most concerned partners in the security dynamics are mandated to take initiative of bringing back peace in Afghanistan. On 11 January 2016 in first meeting at Islamabad, there was a deeper realization to take on-board the stakeholders. The process started with a commitment toward peace in Afghanistan, as Pakistan declared its brotherly relation in hindsight of 5th Ministerial Conference of the Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process. The informal meetings between both the heads of states (Pakistan and Afghanistan), the visit of President Ashraf Ghani to General Head Quarters (GHQ) Rawalpindi and the 27 Dec.2016 visit of former Chief of Army Staff Gen Raheel Sharif to Kabul drew a practical line of action in reconciliation process.

There have been various interruptions and tumults situation across the border including 18 days closure of Pak-Afghan border but the process has survived. The major concerns in these meetings delve upon the ways and means to secure the region from terrorism across the border and use both hard power as well as soft power to deal with the insurgent groups.

The proceedings reveal that there is consensus on the initiation of negotiation with Taliban through direct talks and drawing line between irreconcilables and reconcilable. CBMs for Taliban are also being pondered upon. The joint statement reveals the realization of insecurity spreading in the region due to violence in Afghanistan and the need to

initiate local owned reconciliation. In fact, the most critical problem in this process is the varying perception about the legitimacy of internal and external stake- holders. Current, National Unity Government does not recognise the external elements as legitimate stake holders except US or NATO. India has gained some confidence of the present regime and has leverage over Pakistan’s outlook but it’s not a constant factor. These cross-cutting interest or perceptions of conflicting interests dilute efforts of reconciliation. The spoilers of peace ultimately take the advantage and exploit the situation faced by already grieving Afghan masses. It is apparent that India which is not part of any multi-lateral peace process in Afghanistan is not likely to accept any change in its painstakingly garnered influence over Afghan government. On the other hand, Pakistan which is essential to any peace deal in the region based on its geographical contiguity and ethnic affinity with the insurgent Afghan Pashtun cannot allow its rival to reign in the border region.

The joint press statements issued after the meetings of QCG reflect a gradual improvement in mutually accepted ‘line of action’ in bringing an end to Afghan conflict. While underscoring Afghan aspiration a lasting peace is envisioned through direct talks with Taliban and a joint working group based on Pak-Afghan Ulema. The stakes of India have also been recognised by Pakistan as referred in the press statement of Foreign Secretary in the Heart of Asia-Istanbul process. He reiterated the commitments made in Islamabad declaration on 9th December 2015 for the regional cooperation for long term peace and stability in Afghanistan. While condemning the 19 April 2016 Kabul Attack, he reaffirmed the need to have a shared commitment and result oriented and well-structured dialogue process. Yet, there are complaints regarding resolution of Kashmir, apprehensions about Kulbushan Javed a RAW officer involved in subversive activities and investigation of Pathankot incident from Indian side. It is crucial to understand that while there is greater and stronger commitment among the Af-Pak authorities to meet the challenges festering under prolonged instability in Afghanistan, Indian view run contrary. The bilateral mechanism of meetings among security

Advisors of both Pakistan and Afghanistan at one side and trilateral dialogue on the topic of "Quest for peace in Afghanistan: Role of neighbouring countries" at other side call for resolution of regional differences by all stake holders.

The deepening and broadening of conflict further complicate the Afghan equation. The intricate situation burdens the Afghan elite with more insightful handling of the reconciliation. In a more balanced overview, it needs to address the diaspora influence, the aid based narrative and most importantly the coercive tools of warlords turn politicians. These influences are playing crucial role in framing the mind of elites as well as masses. These pressures are hindering the decision makers from taking ground realities into account. Most of Afghan politician deny that the Indian influence in Afghanistan is not at the cost of their relations with Pakistan. However, they don't realize the regional rivalry of both countries and their constant rift that has turned their relation into zero-sum affair. In a recent statement of Pakistan's Counsel General Fiasal Niaz Tirmizi said ISIS has been declared as threat to regional peace. He has urged to bring Taliban to negotiation table and hold result based talks with India on Kashmir Issue. He has also welcomed the US facilitation of dialogue between India and Pakistan.

While on the other hand, Russian manifestation of interest can be seen in the Moscow's increasing momentum in talks with Taliban. Moscow has shown a firm commitment toward the changing security dynamics. In this pursuit, lastly it had hosted various consultative meeting with Pakistan and China and now it has expanded the process by bringing in Afghanistan, Iran and India. Washington has refused to join in the consultation. While Moscow is widening the consultative process and tilting towards soft power mollifying Taliban, Washington had just dropped a mother of all bombs in Achin District of Nangarhar province, killing number of militants. It is yet to be ascertained that if there is polarization of the conflict once again in the region or the differences are just methodological and tactical. Any strategic change in the region can drastically affect the reconciliation process and embroiled the region into a war zone. The American

perception as liberator from Taliban might change under recent developments. The inference can be drawn from the war of 1812, when the first cries of 'Oh Canada' were not welcomed. Albert Gallatin, Secretary of Treasury acknowledged that far from welcoming the Americans as liberators Canadians were unwilling to revolt against their British landlords. In instant case Afghans who have ceded considerable authority and legitimacy to US in forming governments, framing foreign policy doctrines, and applying combat rules can turn to blame it for failure in delivering proportionally. Benjamin R. Beede in his account referred to drop in the popular support of war when more troops were needed in Afghanistan. The recent statement of Hamid Karzai can be termed as indicator of shift in Afghan thinking about the US misuse of the country as testing ground for their latest bombs and overstaying in the region

Under increasing pressures from various direct and indirect confrontations among the big powers the window of opportunity is shrinking for Afghan peace. It seems that the stakes are increasing in the region, while the violence as coercion is yet to be replaced by peaceful political engagement. Afghan government must display its viability in reconciliation with the insurgent groups and inclusive political process. The reliance upon the foreign troops and their support has hindered a domestic solution to the conflict. Whether the prevailing competition for strategic gains among US-Russia, Pak-India, and Indo-China and Iran-Saudi-Arabia would lead the region to more hard bargains is yet to be seen. Nevertheless, Afghanistan would slip into a dangerous spiral of conflicts if the bilateral and multilateral efforts failed in resolving the pressing conflicts. Permitting the convergence of intrinsic challenges into baits for the external stake holders would turn the region into new marsh. The Afghan government has to re-access its position under the changing circumstances and transcend its image from a patronised government to an independent sovereign entity capable of safeguarding its interest in the region.

In the meanwhile, it has a greater responsibility of alienating itself from all kinds of regional conflicts render itself more independent in its policy making. The country

is required to get rid of the relations that have strings attached to them and freely formulate the policy that ensure realistic assessment of the relations. The embryonic peace and stability have long way to go and develop into strong and durable stat of affairs. The peacemakers are running against the time as US has chosen a more militaristic approach in dealing with the Taliban. The US boycott of Moscow plan and the discourse attended by eleven countries and its restrictive quadrilateral framework excluding Russia is paving way to more dangerous outcome in the region. Once again, the old adversaries seem to be at odds in the region and are thwarting the peace efforts presented by the opponent. Although, this time Russia seems more connected to regional realities and considerate towards forging alliance. On the contrary the European Union or western allies are weary of their policy and stewardship of US in brining end to this long conflict. There are visible doubts in the mind of NATO allies about the future strategy in Afghanistan. Moreover, in case of warmongering it would not be hard to visualise the US as spoiler in the region, when South Asia on contrary is conceiving its huge development project under China's leadership of 'One belt One Road'.

Under the banner of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) both the countries are striving hard for regional connectivity through strategically important Gwadar Port of Baluchistan. These ground realities also dictate a change in regional politics where intervention from outsider would be considered as fatal to the interest of internal stakeholders. Despite many positive indicators the fragile peace in Afghanistan can only be sustained, if the archrivals are ready to offer concessions and agree to find a win-win solution to the situation. The strife to have a greater piece of

pie by the state actors and leaders can lend more legitimacy to non-state actors. Eventually turning the country into carnage and leaving populace at the mercy of ISIS, Al-Qaida, Taliban and other warring factions of all sorts.

The international community and the United Nations must prevent any disruptive action by any of the stakeholders. Afghan community being directly linked to the situation must take notice of the development in the region and avoid falling prey to the international great game. Nevertheless, it is only possible when the vulnerabilities of the region are realized in the first phase. Agnostically, perceived notion of future that is far from ground realities will mar the regional peace again. The Afghan diaspora mostly living in western country is required to play constructive role in helping the country transform from violent to peaceful resolution of inter communal and ethnic conflict. They may also assist in nourishing better relations with neighbours by image building and propagating alternatives to violent means of resolution. These are some essential steps to start a long-lasting peace effort with sincere commitments and shared goals.

Although present US leadership under Trump administration is inclined to show its muscles in Middle East as well as Afghanistan they must not discredit their own efforts in brining hard earned peace in the region. It is time when Afghan situation is ripe for peace building and isolating non-state actors. Use of force would only help in the resurgence of terrorist allowing them to play the victim card and recruit suicide attacks to reign in the Afghan government. Eventually leading to weaken the state authority to an extend that can be uncontrollable and which can once again pay way to the Taliban rule.

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