

Afghanistan's Political and Economic Condition: An Appraisal of Likely Situation at NATO-Drawdown

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Afghanistan as a state emerged in 1747 whereby it was a tribal state at that time. The treaty of Panjdeh and Durand Line stretched its Northwest and Southeast borders and transformed Afghanistan from tribal status to nation-state. This instigates intra-Afghan tribal and ethnic composition with multi-ethnic and multi-sectarian polity. This balance was shattered by Soviet military intervention whereas Afghanistan's problem was turned into an international issue between two superpowers and continued turmoil became Afghanistan's ultimate fate. Meanwhile Al-Qaeda acquired significant policy control over Taliban, and it was refusal by Taliban to hand over Osama Bin Laden after 9/11, which proved as proverbial last straw on the camel's back. The US invaded Afghanistan on the pretext of 9/11 whereby it stretched back to Mearsheimer's theory of Offensive realism because the US engagement in Afghanistan is not short of offensive mode and main aim of the US in this regard is to become a global hegemon. There arise questions that whether the US intervention has improved or exacerbated Afghanistan political and economic conditions? What can be likely situation at post- drawdown? The US decision to drawdown its forces from Afghanistan implies the Taliban demand half way. In this situation dialogues with Taliban has had a chance, but to fulfill it require some basic agreements among power contenders and imaginative diplomacy on the part of the US. By contemplating economic situation, the economy of Afghanistan has been flourished since 2001 due to foreign aid and developmental works. Post exit will instigate fiscal deficit, construction and reconstruction will in doldrums. But despite all this foreign forces cannot be allowed to stay any more. The best possible options in this regard can be international community investment in mines and infrastructure of Afghanistan but it needs political stability and security.

Key Words: Government, nation-state, economy, drawdown, Afghanistan, Durand Line, Taliban.

Afghanistan is at the world focus since 9/11 with international cooperation towards reconstruction and development. As Afghanistan is turmoil ridden country so political instability loomed large there. Numerous factors responsible for this instability as highly centralized political system, demarcation of internal stake holders (most probably warlords) due to controversial background, connecting ongoing insurgency and terrorism with 'Pashtun alienation' and interest oriented usage of this notion by self-seeking politicians, inadequate international aid has exacerbated already worst insecurity. (Qassem, 2009)

Since 2002 Afghanistan government is keen to convert 'landlocked' Afghanistan image to 'landbridge' among Central Asia, South Asia, Middle East and Far East (Veilkind, 2003) This will generate enormous revenue and can be capable to stabilize the country. (Asian Delopment Bank, 2004)
This research will highlight Afghanistan's political and economic condition under the US engagement and an appraisal will be made of likely situation on the eve of NATO-Drawdown. Here main emphasis lies on that whether the US engagement has improved or exacerbated the situation.

Formulation of Government

Representation vis-a-vis ethnic composition of Afghan population

Afghanistan as a state came into existence in 1747. It was founded by Ahmad Shah Abdali. Afghanistan has population of approximately twenty million, dividing into twenty ethnic groups more than fifty in all. People speak one of official languages Pashto and Dari. There are thirty different languages in Afghanistan due to myriad factions (Ewans, 2001).

Pashtun are aboded in the east and south of Afghanistan and same ratio of Pashtun are across the Durand Line on Pakistan side. There are two subdivision of Pashtun as Durrani, who lives in between Herat and Kandahar. Abdali is a sub-tribe of the Durrani tribe which is ethnically Pashtun. In its initial days, Afghanistan was structured around the Durrani tribes' prowess and it consisted of territories inhabited by the Durrani tribe or where the influence of Durranis and their control prevailed. Ghilzai, who are between Kandahar and Ghazni. These tribes lived at south of Afghanistan with not ending confrontations and enmities. Eastern hills comprised Wazirs, Mohmand, Mehsuds, Afridi, Khattaks, and Shinwaris. They are famous for their aggression and were known to British army for skirmishes over north west frontier. Tajiks are one fifth of population who are concentrated in Badakhshah around Kabul, Herat, Kohistan and Panjshir. They have major role in country's administration. So basically it was a tribal state and its borders in the Northwest and Southeast were not internationally demarcated as such.

Uzbek are semi-independent under begs or amirs. They were conquered by Afghan Amir. They are mostly farmers, horse breeders and karakul sheeps. Hazaras are of mongol origin and are descendants of Genghis Khan as flocks of thousands arrived in the same era. Some people opined that they have been migrated from Central Asia. They are mostly sheep breeder.

There is representation of all major ethnic groups in Afghanistan's administration as for instance president, foreign minister and finance minister are all Pashtun, vice president and defense minister are Tajiks, second vice president is of Hazara, minister of mine is an Uzbek besides others (Hanlon and Flourney, 2013).

In order to understand the ethnic strife in Afghanistan it is better to depict the background, which stretched to the treaty of Panjdeh and treaty of Durand Line due to which Afghanistan was transformed from tribal state to national state status. In 1887 in the Treaty of Panjdeh, Afghanistan and Czarist Russia demarcated Afghanistan's North Western border with Central Asia which by then had fallen under Russian control. In 1893, Ameer Abdul Rehman the ruler of Afghanistan under the agreement of Durrand Line demarcated Afghanistan's border with British India. With set and internationally demarcated borders Ameer Abdul Rehman initiated the process of transforming Afghanistan from a tribal into a national state. But his task was not easy.

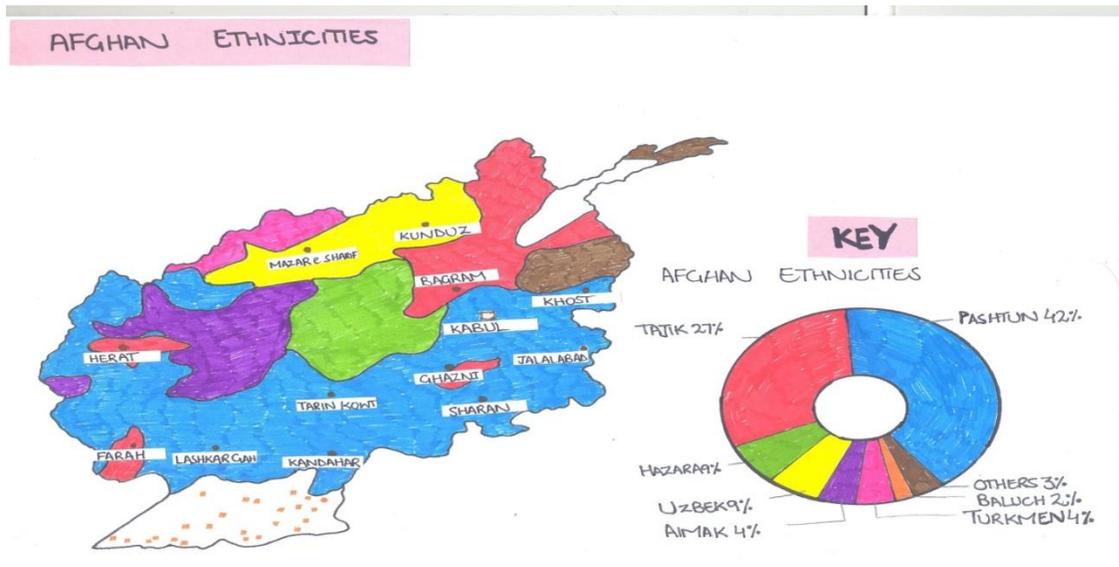
More so since under the Treaty of Panjdeh, significant chunks of Tajik and Uzbek territory had become part of Afghanistan. And under the Treaty of the Durrand Line some major Pashtun tribes like Yusufzais, Khattaks, Mehsuds and sizeable portions of Wazirs, Shinwaris, Mehmunds and Achakzais had come under the control of British India. Besides, the Hazara tribes in central Afghanistan mostly Shiites and of Mongol ethnic origin had also become Afghan nationals. So, this process of transforming a Pashtun tribal state into a national state did not succeed much. It only papered over the cracks or reality of a multi-ethnic and multi-sectarian polity. However, by establishing a delicate balance of intra-Pashtun and inter-ethnic (Pashtuns versus Tajiks, Uzbeks and Hazaras) tribes following a policy of strict neutrality which contributed to regional power equilibrium, Afghan rulers were able to acquire a degree of stability for their country.

That intra -Afghan tribal and ethnic balance and regional equilibrium was disturbed by Sardar Daud who toppled the monarchy of King Zahir Shah in a military coup in 1973. Sardar (President) Daud's government in turn was also toppled five years later in a military coup by General Abdul Qadir Dagarwal and the Afghan army gave power to two little known leftist parties: Khalq (mostly Pashtun dominated) and Parcham (mostly Tajik and Uzbek dominated).

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While Sardar Daud had disturbed the delicate tribal balance inside Afghanistan and regional equilibrium by adopting a proactive irredentist posture against Pakistan, Soviet intervention in Afghanistan (28 December 1979) completely destroyed the balance and equilibrium enjoyed by Afghanistan as a non-aligned neutral state.

In Afghanistan there are myriad factions besides transitional government. There is ethnic strife between Pashtuns mostly Taliban and minority comprised Tajiks and Uzbeks of North of Afghanistan which has hampered integration. Trade of Opium has also intensified this ethnic dispute. Besides ethnicity this unity has been muddled by external actors in order to access and exploit oil resources. Disintegration is apprehensive not only to the local Afghan population but regional countries and above all international community are also at dismay about Taliban brutalities of their recent past regime and even the ongoing insurgencies. (Marine Barracks: 23)



Sources: Maps website, Institution of strategic Studies United Kingdom books and Journals.

The defeat of Taliban has led to the Afghan society's polarization and most probably it is better to state that it get bisected into Taliban and anti-Taliban with two different streams of abiding. Tajik and Uzbek were domineering in comparison of Pashtun. The resistance against foreign forces was waged by Taliban and diverse factions and the strain on the US was further intensified by warlords (Samad, 2011).

There are various factors which have destabilized the political structure of Afghanistan as ethnic strife, poor governance, no viable connections of central government with the people, moreover there is no impartial political dispensation at the local level. Worst of all vested interests have been with due weightage in quite illegal way. To cap it all, the share of common Afghans are negated and their desire for peace and stability is also in dire straits by both Taliban and local power broker. (Brown, 2012).

By political engagement the US aim was to change people's mind set so that to deviate them from traditional abiding to Taliban and to spread the western influence and culture there. This strategy has been working in Afghanistan and Obama is steering his way in an adventurous type mode, without consideration of factor that his administration has faced more losses than gains. (Hilaly, 2012) He does not evaluate tactical retreat until and unless the strategic environs turned into his favor.

The underlying political objective of America is to impede Russian, China and Pakistan entry to Afghanistan so that to have control over natural resources of both Afghanistan and CARs which comprised oil and gas. (Ali, 2013) The US has established Karzai's Government as puppet there.

Afghanistan's main apprehension is ethnic strife which is capable to dismantle the political settlement. Stability cannot be ensured in Afghanistan with increase in size of Afghan forces unless and until people get secure

at local level as well. On the eve of withdrawal both security and political stalemate can be happened. (Brown, 2012) After western exit, the major stake holders in Afghanistan will be Kabul regime, Taliban and northern alliance supported by Afghanistan's neighbours. (Nadir, 2013) On the eve of exit the US needs Zalmi Khalilzad like persons to carry out the US policy, sponsored by CIA in Afghanistan, where they will not physically present. Aftab Sherpao, the former interior minister, Rostam Shah Mohmand, the former Ambassador to Afghanistan, and Hasan Askari Rizvi, Defence Analyst, conceded that After ISAF/US/NATO pullout there will be The Kabul government, various groups working as the Afghan Taliban, tribal chiefs and local Taliban commanders as main power holders. (Sherpao, Mohmand and Rizvi, 2013) Regional stakeholders will be Pakistan, Iran besides Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Turkamanistan, Russia, USA, UK and Saudi Arabia. (Munir, 2013) The level of control of present Afghan Government over the country is moderate and after US pull out is likely to be minimal. The Afghan Taliban are likely to control large parts of the country more so in the South even if Kabul does not fall to them in quick time (Mir, 2013).

Composition and effectiveness/ influences

The US influence is spreading to whole world in shape of its economy and culture. Transnational politics is at forefront which has reduced distances and the US has to include its interests in realm of its foreign policy. She is grappling to eliminate illegal criminal activities as drugs trafficking and terrorism across the border. The US is now to set priorities and to adapt feasible options that what it has to perform for strengthening its domestic politics and to maintain its image to outside world as well. For this purpose it will require coalition to part with and work for stability of democracy, social values and economic growth. Goseph Nye debated on power and divided it into soft and hard power, former dealt with economic and military while latter with cultural and ideological perspective. Both are for coercive and co-optive stances respectively. For him soft power fascination is in international trade and institution that work for it. Soft power is more powerful and obliging than hard power which is compulsive. It was the soft power attractions of hard currency commerce that played a dominant role in bringing down the Iron Curtain and shaping the post-Cold War world. (Nye, 2002: 8-12) Both powers are indispensable for each other as in arena of world politics and especially foreign policy is game of intermingling both soft and hard powers. The US in order to accomplish her policy options, has spread its tentacles to Afghanistan political setup by both soft and hard powers. According to United Kingdom's ambassador to Afghanistan, Afghanistan is not a failed today as things have changed over the last ten years, particularly over the last three years, provincial governance in places like Helmand is very effective, every district has district governor, there is prosecutor, schools are opening and moreover, Afghan people have stake in governance (Patey, 2013).

The present Afghanistan government is totally dependent on the US. There are continuous desertions from the Afghanistan army and police. The Afghanistan President is often referred to as the "Mayor of Kabul" The central government has hardly any control over rural Afghanistan. (Khan, 2013) Many parts of Afghanistan are not under the effective control of the Kabul government at the moment. This control is expected to decline after 2014 when the Afghan Taliban will become more assertive (Rizvi, 2013).

But as stated by Aftab Sherpao, former interior minister, that Karzai government has been right from historical point of view because all kings and president had control over Kabul and provinces were under command of Warlords and chieftains (Sherpao, 2013).

Albeit Karzai has welcomed the entry of peaceful Taliban to join key position in his government on condition to obliged the provisions of constitution (Gall, Abrashi, 2007). He proceeded to include Mullah Omar and Hekmatyar in his government but Taliban are indifferent and have bad taste for political system. They opposed the government backed by US, UK and UN and put forwarded their own notion of constitution based on 'Islamic doctrines (Wilkinson, 2007).

After the US decade long engagement Afghanistan is the third most corrupt country after Somalia and North Korea (Transparency International Report, 2011). According to United Nations report in February, 2012 Afghan Locals had greased the state official's palms with approximately \$3, 9. Moreover, for taking projects of Afghanistan's rebuilding, Western companies had paid \$1 billion to Afghan concerned officials. (Bobkin, 2013) According to Center for American Progress (CAP), the US think tank , which have closer links with the US

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government have commented after studies that main reason for Afghanistan bad governance are the overwhelming influence of the US and NATO at the costs of Local Afghans views (Carlstrom, 2013).

Capabilities- Running the affairs without US assistance

There are rampant corruption cases and government is unable to curb these. (Afghan Online, 2011) According to New York Times report the biggest source of corruption in Afghanistan is the US. The CIA has poured ten millions of dollars in cash to Karzai, and Karzai has conceded with this report. Karzai has confessed that it had been since last decade, this money was given to Afghan warlords in an attempt to secure stability before the foreign forces exit (CIA Buying Peace, 2013). According Glenn Carle, former CIA Deputy national intelligence officer, this is not the entirely new story because ghost money or likely assistance are behind the scene intelligence diplomatic functions.

Due to US engagement in Afghanistan the situation has turned from bad to worse and the political and security set up has become so intricate and it became a nightmare that what could be the post withdrawal scenario as the US is not leaving Afghanistan altogether and will keep minimum presence. This presence will not let Afghan government to decide according to their own will. The US who is staunch advocate of Human Rights, must give a chance to the Afghanistan to develop their political set up. No doubt that Afghan history is abounds with scintillating examples of political chaos but recent turmoil has turned Afghanistan a horrible, ethnic strife ridden soil, where Afghans are tormented by Foreign occupants and has infested insecurity in the region as well. The US is pouring money in Afghanistan for securing her own purposes in the garb to win people minds but all this political engagement has been proved as moth eaten for Afghan society.

Political challenges

The US intervention has caused disparity and discontent due to undue national and provincial power distribution short of public preferences and interests. It has excluded Pashtun from key power position for the sake of Tajiks and Uzbeks. There is dominancy of military power and weak civilian control in Kabul has trembled security. Karzai has even no control on all Pashtun factions (Harrison, 2009). Afghan's military has no independence from Northern Alliance in accomplishing any task and to vanquish militants. There existed major retaliation from Afghan population by excluding Taliban from mainstream.

Neither Afghan national army nor police is capable to have state writ in areas where even US has been succumbed. Karzai is eager to access India for providing additional political and economic assistance in this regard. India's help regarding military and police training would enhance further in subjugating both Afghan militants and Pakistan supported Taliban. Afghanistan political set up has been infested with so many murky factors as sleaze, grave crime, illegal occupation of land and resources, favor to the kith and kin, lawlessness so on and so forth. Afghans have been anguished by prevalent criminal mafia system hence, they are longing for a transparent and accountable system. They hope for steadfast leadership and security for all and sundry.

Meanwhile Afghanistan has myriad ethnic groups and rugged geography so it seems arduous to establish central government writ firmly. Without flourished on the ethnic reality no army or police can control this diverse armed population (hmad, 2011).

Economic Engagement

The US has boosted the Afghan economy with foreign direct investment and various developmental works.

Brief detail of Afghan economy

People of Afghanistan earn from Agriculture, cattle or from crafts of such sorts. Major agricultural production consist food grains principally wheat albeit cotton, fruit and opium are kind of cash crops. The economy of Afghanistan is basically based on farmer, peasants who are connected with these occupations in order to feed their families and forward the products to the market as well. Afghan people are mostly inclined towards herding, forestry and fishing.

Albeit before current devastation manufacturing, trade, mining and transportation were occupied by Afghani. Afghanistan has attempted to cope with successful economic and social models but all these efforts remained futile. Prior to 1917 there was following of capitalist model and Afghans were subjugated by British

imperialism. But the Afghan high handedness and abhorrence for external rule made them revolted against Britain ruthless clutches. Soviet model also come to failure. (McCauley, 2002) Afghanistan dwindling economy has been flourished since 2001 due to donor's contribution and aids. Foreign agencies and companies raised developmental works that are backed by Pentagon and CIA.

American assisted Afghanistan with foreign aid and planning to boost their economy. Per capita income has been enhanced from \$ 147-289 from 2002-2007. This has been due to aid and reconstruction which is approximately 40% of GDP. GDP is directly connected with agriculture production as good cereal harvest of nearly 6 million Tonnes in 2007 ensured production of 13.7 %GDP while poor harvest of 4 million tonnes in 2008 led to 3.6% of GDP in fiscal year 2008/2009. In the same year harvest of 6.8 million tonnes produced 20.9% of GDP. (Harvest Data, 2011) Government revenue has been enhanced ten times in eight years from Af 5.9 billion or 3.3 % of GDP in 2002/2003 to Af 63.3 billion or 9.4 % of GDP in 2009/10. It increased to 26% in 2010/11 due to ameliorated customs and tax collection. (Quarterly Report, 2011) Most of economic share come from agriculture production and for this purpose myriad canals were operated for irrigation but the outcome was of great despair. Afghanistan's farmers are despise new technologies and are headstrong to traditional ways of production.

The disbursement of US aid in Kandahar and Helmand in 2009 has gone for a burton with local economies as it had instigated grumbles rather than development. However, it is foreboding that end of foreign aid on the eve of exit would be detrimental to Afghan economy. Foreign aid is boosting Afghan's economy since 2002 so post 2014 will instigate fiscal deficit, construction and reconstruction will be in doldrums. Transit and security will be adversely affected because recently Afghanistan earn multi-billion dollars projects for transporting 6,000-8,000 convoys, essential for US forces in Afghanistan (Congressional Report, 2010).

The NATO/ISAF withdrawal presents economic crunch for Afghanistan due to discontinuation of International resources funds. Afghanistan has rich mineral resources at her disposal but their exploitation cannot be carried out in instable and insecure atmosphere. Only stability will generate revenue from mineral resources which in turn can be utilized in infrastructure amelioration, human capital and for public goods rather to be snatched by the wealthy few. If Afghanistan Silk Road vision would visualized which is junction of Middle East, south and central Asia then it will dissolved the region's major powers disputes and enmities (Brown, 2012).

Infrastructure development

As Afghanistan is landlocked so all international trade and logistic work is operated through roads and air transport. There are road network as Ring Road, international road links, direct Kabul-Herat road developed during 1930-70s with assistance of USAID and Soviet in cold war. (Isphahani, 1989) There are seven major international road links connecting Ring road and major cities of Mazar-e-Sharif, Qonduz, Herat, Qandahar, Jalalabad to Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkamanistan, Pakistan and Iran. In 2002 these roads were in worst shape when Afghanistan was launching reconstruction process. (Securing Afghanistan: 1-14) By 2008 the ring road and all roads connecting it to neighboring countries were to be fully upgraded and maintained.

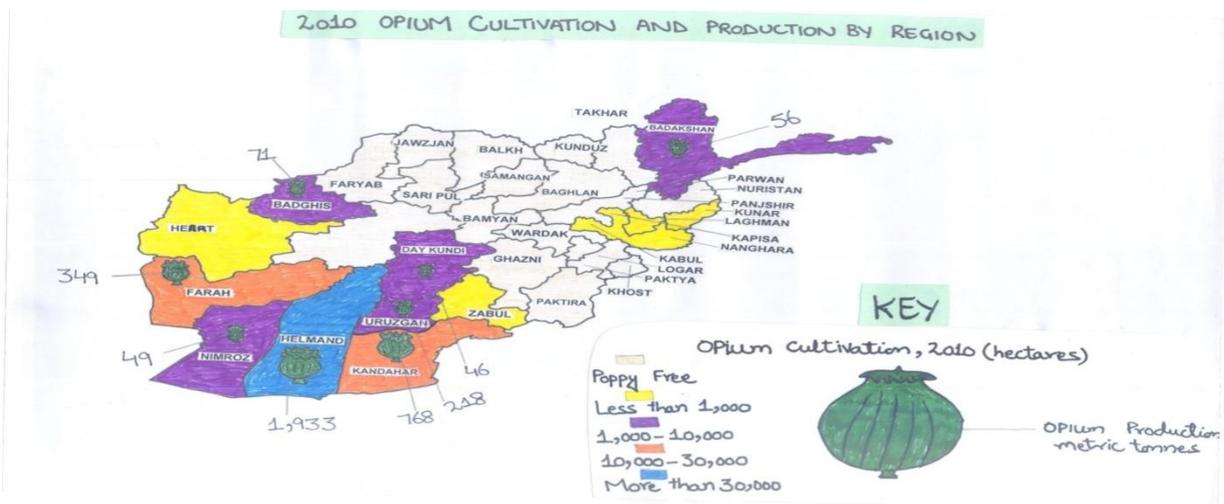
The country aimed to have 'Open sky policy' to have tremendous pace of growth of air transport and to increase aviation field competition. From March 2006 to March 2007 there was rebuilt of 2,200 KM of roads. Ring road construction initiated in 2003 with US help. There would be enhanced traffic speed from 9-16 hours to 5-6 hours if security situation remained stable (Afghanistan Road, 2013). Myriad bridges have been built by USAID and Agha Khan development network over Amu Darya to connect Badakhshah and Qaonduz with Tajikistan (Tayyar, 2000). Asphalt and concrete road network built in 1960s and 1970s by Soviet and the US have been damaged badly by three decades of wars (Dodge and Redman, 2011).

Afghanistan has tremendous mineral resources which are going to be exploited by foreign multinational within probable demarcation. The covetous Chinese companies in order to surpass India are rapidly undergoing contracts in Afghanistan so as to satisfy their presence there albeit they are not initiating practical steps of resources exploitation. Afghan government has to focus and invest in infrastructure development if security remains stable for utilization of resources. Chinese are hesitant about investment in Afghanistan due to prevalent corruption and insecurity which might have drastic impacts for investors.

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Industry and Agriculture sector

The US has flated out to develop agriculture and to prevent poppy cultivation. For this purpose the US has launched 'civilian-military agriculture development strategy to reinvigorate Afghanistan economy with dynamic agriculture with assistance of USAID, US department of agriculture (USDA), Army National Guard Agriculture development Teams. This will work in coordination with Ministry of Agriculture Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL). (USA Report, 2010: 18) Afghanistan northern regions are breadbaskets of country leading to 70 % of total production. But it is in need of rainfall because no widespread irrigation arrangement is available. There is dearth of fertilizers, seeds, machines to many farmers. Furthermore, 58 % of villages have no approach to town by road in some seasons of the year. According to National Risk and Vulnerability Assesment (NRVA) 2007/08, 44% of rural population are dependent on agriculture for income generation while 54% of these firms for household consumption (Boone, 2010). In Northern Afghanistan, cotton, hashish and opium are three major products that are in competition at world community (Clark, 2010). After Soviet withdrawal in 1989, opium became the sole income source of warlords. Afghanistan is manifested by enhanced production of 1,570 tonnes in 1990 and 2,335 tonnes in 1995 which was increased further in Taliban regime. Taliban later on banned its cultivation as 90% of its cultivation was stopped in 2001. After collapse of Taliban regime, opium has again overwhelmed world market. In Afghanistan 2007, there was 95 % of world's papaver somniferum, the type of poppy from which natural alkaloid morphine is derived (Griffith, 2009). Afghanistan provides nine tenth of world's opium and therefore recently heroine. Mostly the cultivation of poppy is carried out by poverty rather than criminal inclination. In 2010 due to fungus and droughts its growth was lowered. Approximately 41% of opium production was processed into heroine in 1995 in Afghanistan, in 2008 that ratio was escalated to 70 %. Whereas in 2011, nearly 380-400 tonnes of heroine was produced in Afghanistan, these are suffice to carry out global demand of consumption. (Dreyfuss, 2010) UNODC had estimated that Afghanistan farmers earned \$ 440 million from opium in 2009, traffickers were with \$ 2.2 billion and the share of Taliban was settled as \$ 140 million to 170 million in informal taxes. (UNODC, 2011) In order to control the poppy production, there must be less demands from consuming countries like the US and Europe. The Afghanistan main source of export and rural earning is opium although it's not officially declared.



Sources: UNODC Afghanistan Opium Survey 2010 and Winter Rapid Assessment 2011, UNODC' Addiction and Insurgency, BBC, Christine Science Monitor, Duetsce Welle, DPA.

Sustainable economy without aid

Afghanistan economy is mostly dependent on foreign assistance, without foreign aid it may be with downward spiral as in Jinnah institute final report on Afghanistan endgame in Pakistan and US perspective the economic ratio shown for year 2010 is \$ 11.4 billion and \$ 4.4 billion has been credited due to trade, transport and government developmental projects, \$ 3.3 billion is by agriculture production and just \$ 52 million is attributed by mining. (Arnoldy, 2010) The IMF predicted that till 2023 it is quite impossible for Afghanistan to achieve fiscal balance as previously the timeline was settled at 2015 (IMF, 2011).

Karzai will strive hard to ameliorate economy for securing validity among Afghan population. Afghanistan can adopt long term economic sustainability if the security prevails Afghanistan mining sector can be exploited, where Afghanistan have \$1 trillion mineral assets (Risen, 2010) and by creating a New Silk Road project.

According to Zalmay Rassoul, Afghan foreign minister stated in one of his interview with James Bays on Aljazeera that there are two things very important for post withdrawal, one is civilian part of Afghanistan post 2014, another is security part. The December Bonn Conference about civilian part was successful, where world community have been agreed to assist us in coming decade. On security side the process is under consideration, long term partnership with Germany, UK, France, Italy, and Australia for military, security and economic assistance. (Rassoul, 2013) Despite great dependence on the US economic aid, Afghanistan cannot allow the foreign forces on her soil for long. The Soviet engagement was also stretched to military, political and economic engagement, where in 1980 the Afghan economy was termed as 'Sovietization' based. (Larry, 200) Because by 1984, Soviet-Afghan trade comprised \$1.1 billion, which was 70-80 % of Afghan trade. By 1986, USSR had disbursed \$1.77 billion. Indeed the Soviet had flourished the Afghan military and economy but if there were no Soviet invasion, then refugees crisis, the narcotics subculture, Klashinkovization and other miserable regional problems could never happened. The US engagement is the same episode which is not devoid of fall out, so the Afghan government would better to explore own resources.

According to Afghan's foreign minister Afghanistan has tremendous economic potentials, minerals, oil and gas. What they want is international community investment in their mines and infrastructure. By 2014, self-sustaining Afghanistan will not in need of dollar.

Likely engagement after 2014 in above areas

There is no satiation in power competition. The US will not exit altogether from Afghanistan but will stay foot here in one or other form in order to covertly observe the region from her bases in Afghanistan. The real challenge is political transition rather than forces withdrawal. Different regional stakeholders have conflicting interests in Afghanistan which would obstruct peace settlement in Afghanistan beyond exit. There can be ethnic strife as already Tajik, Hazara and Uzbek have reservations.

Afghanistan will be with grave scenario on multi fronts as political polarization seems imminent , economic depression due to cutting of military and economic aid by USA not only due to exit from Afghanistan but US is in severe economic pressure. Despite mineral resources at Afghanistan's disposal and silk route establishment, there are still apprehension about country because they are currently dependent on foreign aid in all sectors. In spite of efforts to enhance employment revenue but stalemate is likely for the coming three years. Insecurity and lack of political reconciliation are main impediments to licit economic growth.

By contemplating an overview of the US invasion in Afghanistan, it is clear that inside Afghanistan there was no national consensus for this intervention. Second, the U.S/NATO strategy in Afghanistan was that while through a high tech war they would topple the government of the Taliban, the dirty work on the ground would be done by the forces of the Northern Alliance, mostly Tajiks and Uzbeks. For the same reason, politically only elements belonging to the Northern Alliance or strongly opposed to the Taliban were co-opted by the U.S/NATO. The neutral Pashtuns who were not opposed to the Taliban but were not pro-Taliban either were side-lined in the new dispensation.

Resultantly four things happened. First, the forces of the Northern Alliance effective in the Tajik-Uzbek-Hazarajat areas, turned out to be of no use in Pashtun areas – the hub of the Taliban. They simply could not fight with the Taliban on Pashtun ground. Eventually, while the elements belonging to Northern Alliance came to fill positions in the new dispensation or get top posts in the security services, it mostly fell to the lot of the U.S/NATO forces to do the fighting on the ground. Second, the Bonn Accord about establishment of a new democratic order in Afghanistan acquired little ownership among the majority Pashtun ethnic group in Afghanistan. As a result, its political support base inside Afghanistan remained very narrow. Third, the Taliban who had just melted into the Pashtun areas in the face of a U.S/NATO assault regrouped and started giving tough resistance to the U.S/NATO forces in these areas. Fourth, in this situation a legitimate international military intervention sanctioned by the UN

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came to be seen as a purely foreign occupation by a large number of Afghans since mostly it was a war not between Afghans but between the Afghans and the U.S/NATO forces. The building of the Afghan National Army to fight the Taliban against this background became extremely difficult. That difficulty persists to this day.

Accumulatively the three challenges of reconstruction, reconciliation and restoration of peace and stability could not be addressed timely. These challenges remain to haunt Afghanistan with no clear signs of solution.

Offensive realism is the sub-division of neo-realism theory, expounded by John J. Mearshiemer in The tragedy of great power politics, where he stated that International system is anarchic where states always coaxed to maximize their relative powers at the costs of other states. Mearsheimer, 2001, believes that becoming global hegemon is near impossible so that great power would always wrestle for power. Brandon, 2009, has described the theory as below:

THREE TENETS OF OFFENSIVE REALISM

1. Goal is to maximize share of world power.
2. Ultimate aim is to become the hegemon.
3. Since global hegemony is impossible, the world is condemned to perpetual great power competition.

For power maximization states are ready to offense. (Mearshiemer, 2001: 3) The United States is a regional hegemon according to Mearshiemer, she is trying to become global hegemon, which is impossible so there is perpetual struggle for power. In this pursuit of power struggle and to become a global hegemon which cannot be short of offensive mode as war, turmoil, blood shedding and civilian casualties.

The US invasion of Afghanistan gives her:

1. Power maximization by Military operations in Afghanistan and her rehabilitation later on and Status of a regional hegemon in South Asian and Central Asian regions.
2. More share in the World Power cake.
3. Since global hegemony is impossible, It's better to be a hegemon in more regions for a leading world power.

The US invaded Afghanistan after 9/11, in order to use pre-emptive power mode, to use force before imminent threat happened to the national interests. The US as major power is militarily engaged in the minor state, Afghanistan. The 9/11 was pre-text for the US to invade Afghanistan, because Afghanistan was not directly connected to that incident. The contours of US military engagement policy was to defeat, disrupt and dismantle Al-Qaeda. The operational mode of policy remained in constant state of flux, encircled not only Al-Qaeda but also Taliban in its ambit. Then Obama strategy emphasized on reinvigoration of military engagement but simultaneously came to the reconciliation and talks to the Taliban. It seems the Afghan war is now all about American politics. Obama could have certainly made the peace move two years ago. He could have averted the violence, bloodshed and displacement in Afghanistan produced by the surge, as well as the huge cost involved in the exercise. The strategy of reconciliation has been with no fruitful outcome so the US is to exit from Afghanistan, leaving behind nine military bases. NATO will remained in Herat and Mazar-i-Sharif in order to serve the US underlying objectives, to control Iran and China from those basis. The US is also on alarm from Russia and China as stake holders in Afghanistan. As the US has realized this threat and perhaps this can be one of the reasons for its draw down from Afghanistan soil and to be shifted towards Asia Pacific to have access to Thailand, China, Malaysia, Singapore. If contemplated about the remaining troops, then majority of the troops will be of France and UK who are closest ally of US. Australia and Canadian are in lower number now. In Kabul there will self protected system so that in emergency they could protect themselves by using air and will have fortress or cottage like dwellings (Ghazanfar, 2013).

Conclusion

Afghanistan has been remained turmoil ridden throughout the US engagement whereby nightmarish challenges loom large. The United States of America engagement in Afghanistan is a long war that served no purpose. Did they do it in a premeditated attempt to seize greater political and economic power? These are questions that history will answer. For now, at least, one thing is clear. The US invaded Afghanistan on the pretext

of 9/11 by waging an unrelated “war on terror” which is now generally considered as the ‘wrong war.’ The offenses of the US have perturbed the security of Afghanistan with uprising in insurgency, Taliban and warlords are fighting with their own agendas in order to strengthen their power holds. The US sponsor government has led to corruption, ethnic strife and instability. Undoubtedly the economy of Afghanistan has been flourished due to said US engagement but foreign forces cannot be tolerated for the same very purpose. The best possible option at Afghanistan’s disposal is international investment in their mines and infrastructure and to ensure political stability and security by building agreement among basic power contenders.

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