Taliban Resurgence in Afghanistan: The Role of Post-Conflict Reconstruction

Sadia Sulaiman

S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies

Thesis submitted to the Nanyang Technological University in fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Strategic Studies)

2014
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I want to extend my deepest gratitude to Professor Rajesh Basrur, who inspired, encouraged, guided and helped me at every stage of this study. Without his able guidance and close supervision, I would not have been able to bring this study to a successful end. In him, I not only found an able supervisor, but an honourable mentor, and I feel fortunate to have worked under his supervision.

There are several other persons who provided me with valuable guidance, encouragement and moral support during this study. Professor Ron Mathews, former Head of Studies at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS), was always instrumental and patient in motivating me to ensure my success. Prof Khong Yuen Foong was always generous in guiding and helping me in laying out a solid theoretical foundation for the study. I would like to thank my former supervisor, Professor C. Raja Mohan, for introducing me to new perspectives on political and security issues in South and Central Asia. Professor Gerard Chaliand deserves special thanks for teaching me counter-insurgency and counter-terrorism. I am very indebted to Kashif Mumtaz who was patient enough to read through my drafts again and again and gave me valuable advice on improving it.

I would also like to thank all the researchers who have contributed to the field of post-conflict reconstruction and Afghanistan – without your work there would be no accumulation of knowledge, and nothing for me to build on. Deep thanks goes to Barnett R. Rubin, Antonio Giustozzi, Sultan Barakat, Mark Sedra, and Jonathan Goodhand – to mention just a few.

I am highly thankful to my family and friends who have always been there to support me in my academic endeavours. My special gratitude goes to my Aunt Zaibun Nissa, without whose support it would have been very difficult to accomplish this task. My three children deserve utmost appreciation for having tolerated my indulgence in thesis writing and spending less time with them. I am also grateful to all the administrative staff of the graduate studies programme of the School, who have always been there to extend help to me in both relaxed and distressed situations. Above all, Roxane Romano Domingo deserves special thanks for helping me in organizing my thesis submission and going an extra mile to take care of thesis matters owing to my inability to be physically present in Singapore.
# Table of Contents

**CHAPTER 1: Introduction**

Introduction.................................................................................................................. 1  
The Aim of the Study......................................................................................................... 3  
Working Hypothesis........................................................................................................... 13  
  *Faulty Conception of the Bonn Agreement and the Subsequent Resurgence of the Taliban... 17*  
  *Faulty Implementation of Reconstruction Agenda in Post-Bonn Afghanistan........... 21*  
Conceptual Framework..................................................................................................... 22  
Significance of the Study................................................................................................. 30  
Research Methodology.................................................................................................... 31  
  *Process Tracing*............................................................................................................... 34  
  *Sources of Data*............................................................................................................... 35  
  *Measurement of the Success of Insurgency and the Failure of Reconstruction............ 37*  
Chapterization of the Thesis............................................................................................ 38

**CHAPTER 2: Literature Review**

Introduction...................................................................................................................... 40  
Causes of the Success of Insurgent Movements: A Theoretical Perspective and an Overview of the Taliban-led Insurgency................................................................. 40  
  *Sources of Success of Insurgencies*................................................................................. 41  
  *Existing Explanations for the Revival of the Taliban*......................................................... 44  
  *Post-Conflict Reconstruction and the Resurgence of the Taliban*........................................ 51  
Post-conflict Reconstruction: Ingredients for Success...................................................... 53  
  *Determinants of a Successful Post-Conflict Reconstruction Process*................................. 55  
  *Significance of Proper Conceptualization of Post-Conflict Reconstruction*...................... 60  
  *Ingredients of Success for the Security Reconstruction Policies*........................................ 61  
  *Ingredients of Success of Non-Security Reconstruction Policies*........................................ 67  
Gaps in the Literature....................................................................................................... 72  
Conclusion......................................................................................................................... 73
Inefficient Political Institutions .......................................................................................... 138
Declining Legitimacy of Karzai Regime ........................................................................... 141
Economic Reconstruction: Conceptual Problems ......................................................... 143
Imbalance Between Economic and Security Reconstruction Priorities ....................... 144
Afghanistan’s Financial Needs and Initial Lack of Funding ........................................... 146
Ill-Conceived Aid Related Policies ................................................................................ 148
Problems in Implementation of Economic Reconstruction .......................................... 150
Inadequate Distribution and Allocation of Aid ............................................................... 150
Rentier State Economy .................................................................................................. 152
Corruption ...................................................................................................................... 153
Illicit Poppy Money .......................................................................................................... 155
Coordination deficit among the international actors engaged in post-conflict reconstruction in Afghanistan .............................................................................................................. 160
Conclusion ...................................................................................................................... 162

CHAPTER 6: The Return of the Taliban: Filling the Void

Introduction ..................................................................................................................... 163
The Taliban: Old and New ............................................................................................... 164
International Security Efforts and the Taliban’s Response ........................................... 169
Non-Security Reconstruction Policies: The Taliban Filling the Gaps ......................... 181
The Taliban Capitalising on the Weaknesses of Economic Reconstruction Policies .... 181
Political Reconstruction, Governance Gap and the Taliban’s Approach ...................... 188
Conclusion ...................................................................................................................... 194

Chapter 7: Conclusion

Findings - I: Inadequate Conceptualization and Implementation of Reconstruction .. 196
Findings – II: The Taliban’s Exploitation of the Opportunities .................................... 200
Funding ............................................................................................................................ 200
Public Support ................................................................................................................ 201
Recruits ............................................................................................................................ 202
What Could have been Done to Utilise Post-Bonn-I Window of Opportunity? ......... 203
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contributions of the Study</td>
<td>205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow-up Areas of Research</td>
<td>207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some Policy Recommendations</td>
<td>208</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography</td>
<td>210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annexure - I</td>
<td>238</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annexure - II</td>
<td>247</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Full Form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afghan National Army</td>
<td>ANA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afghan National Police</td>
<td>ANP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afghan National Security Forces</td>
<td>ANSF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afghanistan’s New Beginnings Programme</td>
<td>ANBP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund</td>
<td>ARTF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African Union</td>
<td>AU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agency Coordination Body for Afghan Relief</td>
<td>ACBAR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian Development Bank</td>
<td>ADB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Association of the United States Army</td>
<td>AUSA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Border Coordination Centre</td>
<td>BCC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council on Foreign Relations</td>
<td>CFR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counterinsurgency</td>
<td>COIN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Center for Strategic and International Studies</td>
<td>CSIS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department for International Development</td>
<td>DFID</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic Control of Armed Forces</td>
<td>DCAF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic Republic of Congo</td>
<td>DRC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disbandment of Illegal Armed Groups</td>
<td>DIAG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disarmament Demobilization and Reintegration</td>
<td>DDR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit</td>
<td>GTZ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federally Administered Tribal Areas</td>
<td>FATA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Independent Administration for Anticorruption</td>
<td>GIAA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Office of Oversight and Anti-Corruption</td>
<td>HOOAC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internally Displaced Persons</td>
<td>IDPs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arabian Gulf</td>
<td>AGU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization Name</td>
<td>Acronym</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Assistance Security Force</td>
<td>ISAF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan</td>
<td>IEA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italian Justice Office</td>
<td>IJO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Bank for Reconstruction and Development</td>
<td>IBRD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Governmental Organizations</td>
<td>IGOs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Non-Governmental Organizations</td>
<td>INGOs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judicial Reforms Commission</td>
<td>JRC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberation of Tamil Tigers Elam</td>
<td>LTTE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring and Evaluation Commission</td>
<td>MEC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Drugs Control Strategy</td>
<td>NDCS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Atlantic Treaty Organization</td>
<td>NATO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Alliance</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Governmental Organizations</td>
<td>NGOs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operation Enduring Freedom</td>
<td>OEF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peoples Democratic Party of Afghanistan</td>
<td>PDPA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post Conflict Needs Assessment</td>
<td>PCNA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post Conflict Reconstruction</td>
<td>PCR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provincial Reconstruction Team</td>
<td>PRT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security Sector Reform</td>
<td>SSR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction</td>
<td>SIGAR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Arab Emirates</td>
<td>UAE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Nations Development Programme</td>
<td>UNDP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan</td>
<td>UNAMA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Nations Office for Project Services</td>
<td>UNOPS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UN Children’s Fund</td>
<td>UNICEF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>Acronym</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime</td>
<td>UNODCCP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Nations High Commission for Refugees</td>
<td>UNHCR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs</td>
<td>UNOCHA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States of America</td>
<td>USA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States Agency for International Development</td>
<td>USAID</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ABSTRACT: Taliban Resurgence in Afghanistan: the Role of Post-Conflict Reconstruction

Sadia Sulaiman

The objective of this thesis is to analyze why the Taliban-led insurgency in Afghanistan emerged despite lack of support from the Afghan people on the one hand and significant external assistance on the other.

The study argues that the weaknesses in the post-conflict reconstruction framework developed at the Bonn Conference of December 2001 (Bonn-I), followed by inadequate implementation of the framework, resulted in the revival of the Taliban-led insurgency.

The UN-brokered agreement negotiated at Bonn was the beginning of a process to bring an end to the conflict in Afghanistan and it was aimed at promoting national reconciliation, sustainable peace and stability and to ensure respect for human rights in Afghanistan. Under the auspices of Bonn-I, the international community initiated a process of post-conflict reconstruction on both security and non-security lines. Bonn-I provided a framework for setting up an interim government tasked with drafting a constitution, convening a Loya Jirga (grand assembly), holding presidential and parliamentary elections by 2005, strengthening the Afghan police and military forces, and establishing a judicial system. Although the political benchmarks were achieved in the designated time frame, peace remained elusive in Afghanistan owing to inefficiency and corruption in state civil and security institutions, weak governance, and shortfalls in economic reconstruction. Bonn-I was followed by several international conferences to discuss issues related to the reconstruction and to reaffirm the commitments made by the international community to help rebuild Afghanistan. However, on both security and non-security fronts, international pledges for material and human support remained either inadequately designed or were not implemented well. These shortcomings allowed the window of opportunity created by the fall of the Taliban and the overwhelming support of the Afghan people to close. Subsequently, the Taliban-led insurgents re-emerged as a potent force by exploiting the Afghan people’s discontent, which
arose from the absence of security, especially in the South and East of Afghanistan and the failure to rebuild the country’s economy, as a result of which the weak Karzai regime lost its legitimacy. The international community’s failure to make headway in reconstructing post-Bonn Afghanistan helped the Taliban to draw material and human resources for their movement from the disgruntled population.

The study, which evaluates developments between December 2001 (Bonn-I) and December 2011 (Bonn-II), shows that the relative success of the Taliban-led insurgency can largely be attributed to the improper conception and then inadequate implementation of the post-conflict reconstruction policies by the international community. The study thus underlines the vital importance of a properly planned and implemented process of the reconstruction for ensuring lasting stability in weak post-conflict states.
CHAPTER 1: Introduction

Introduction

Afghanistan continues to descend into chaos which started with the overthrow of the Taliban regime in November 2001. Even the much vaunted "Surge" - the Obama administration’s policy of sending an additional 30,000 troops in Afghanistan in 2009- failed to pacify the country. A series of attacks since early 2010 on high profile targets in Kabul including the presidential palace, the Central Bank, defence and justice ministries, Intercontinental Hotel, the United States (US) embassy and in Wardak Province on a North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) base highlighted the failure of the "Surge" and the growing strength of the Taliban.\(^1\) In fact, the "Surge" had been prompted by the very need to check the growing strength of the Taliban who, by 2009, had established permanent presence in more than 80 percent of Afghan territory, compared with 72 percent and 54 percent in 2008 and 2007 respectively.\(^2\) Even the remaining 17 percent of Afghan territory witnessed “substantial” Taliban activity, meaning that they were present virtually in all of Afghanistan by 2009.

Numerous statements in those days by the US and NATO leaders further attested to the Taliban’s ascendance in Afghanistan. The US President Barak Obama conceded in March 2009 that the US was losing the war in Afghanistan.\(^3\) Voicing similar concerns, General Stanley McChrystal, the then NATO head, said, in August 2009, that the Taliban had gained an upper hand in Afghanistan and were “moving beyond their traditional strongholds in Southern Afghanistan to

---


threaten formerly stable areas in the North and the West.” The then head of the British troops in Helmand, Brigadier Mark Carleton-Smith, ruled out, in an October 2008 statement, a military victory over the Taliban by declaring that “we are not going to win this war.” He warned that only solution to end the conflict is to bring the Taliban to the negotiations table.

The resurgence of the Taliban had come despite international community spending billions of dollars to restore peace in the war-torn Afghanistan, particularly after the resurgence of the Taliban in 2006: only the US spent US$443 billion from 2001 through 2011. This amounted to a monthly spending of US$3.6 billion. The US spending per solider which stood at US$507,000 in 2009 and US$667,000 in 2010 had risen to $697,000 in 2011. In addition to it, the international community had spent, till 2011, US$38 billion on training and equipping Afghan National Army (ANA) and Afghan National Police (ANP).

The resurgence of the Taliban in Afghanistan poses serious challenges to international peace and security. Failure to stabilize Afghanistan and establish the rule of law in the country could again make it a safe haven for terrorist groups. The international community's failure in eliminating al-Qaeda and other transnational terrorist groups allegedly taking refuge in border areas between Pakistan and Afghanistan keeps alive the threat of future acts of terrorism on the scale of September 11, 2001 attacks witnessed in the US.

---

7 Ibid.
9 Ibid.
Having been ousted from power in Kabul as a result of the Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) in October 2001, the Taliban have emerged as a strong resistance force against the Afghan government, the US and the International Security Assistance Force-North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (ISAF-NATO) – a military coalition of 48 countries.

This thesis explores the reasons of resurgence of the Taliban against the US, NATO-ISAF and the Afghan government. It argues that this revival of the Taliban-led insurgency can largely be attributed to the inadequate post-conflict reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan by the international community. The failure of reconstruction efforts in bringing peace and stability to the country, and in creating much needed economic opportunities for the Afghan people made it possible for the Taliban to capitalize on Afghan people's resentment with reconstruction efforts, which enabled them to raise material and human resources for their cause.

**The Aim of the Study**

The aim of the study is to analyse the sources of revival of the Taliban-led insurgency in Afghanistan despite opposition from the international community and the Afghan population.

Afghanistan's location at the confluence of South Asia, Central Asia and the Middle East has bestowed on it immense geostrategic importance, but has also been a bane, frequently inviting foreign interference. The country has suffered interference by Great Powers throughout its history. The nineteenth century, Czarist Russia’s southward expansion into Central Asia rang alarm bells in the British India by raising the spectre of the former sharing a border with the latter. To ward off this possibility, the British tried to occupy Afghanistan which led to three Anglo-Afghan wars (1839-1842, 1878-1880 and 1919). These wars resulted in British India prevailing over Afghanistan and running its foreign and defense policies. The 1883 Anglo-Russian Border Commission, which delineated the northern border of Afghanistan with the Czarist Russia, and the Durand Line Agreement of 1893, demarcated the British India and Afghanistan’s border, finally brought an end to the power struggle between the Czarist Russia
and the British India. For both the empires it was important that Afghanistan played the role of a buffer state.\textsuperscript{10}

In the Cold War era, Afghanistan's importance in calculus of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) remained paramount. However, for the Western powers, Afghanistan became a low priority area. The Soviet interests in Afghanistan were largely due to its close geographic proximity with the predominantly Muslim Soviet Central Asian Republics with whom it had cultural, religious and historical affinities. A pro-Moscow Afghanistan was, therefore, deemed necessary to maintain political and security stability in these republics. Afghanistan's strategic significance for the Soviet Union increased after the success of Ayatollah Khomeini-led Islamic Revolution in Iran - Afghanistan's Western neighbour - in 1979 as the Soviet Union became alarmed over the prospects of revolutionary spill over from Iran to Afghanistan and the Muslim-majority Soviet Central Asian Republics. It was partly due to this concern that the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan in 1979, hoping to install a friendly socialist government in Kabul that would not only act as a bulwark against the expansion of the Revolution, but would also help the Soviet Union in maintaining its influence in the region.\textsuperscript{11}

The Soviets attached significance to Afghanistan also due to its proximity to the Arabian Sea via Pakistan. According to Graham Allison, “Afghanistan represented a calculated step in Russia's centuries-old quest for warm water ports. Domination of the world's strategic oil reserves in the Persian Gulf was the unspoken prize.”\textsuperscript{12} Finally in the Cold War context, the Soviet Union

always considered Afghanistan as an important ally which could balance the US “proxies” in the region, such as Pakistan and pre-Revolution Iran.\textsuperscript{13}

It is this context that explains Soviet Union’s significant military, economic and political support to Afghanistan throughout the Cold War era. This support included provision of training and military equipment for the Afghan National Army, which saw the Soviet Union emerging, by the end of the 1960s, as the largest supplier of military hardware to Afghanistan.\textsuperscript{14} On the economic front too, the Soviet Union greatly helped Afghanistan primarily by building highways in Afghanistan that could connect the country with the Soviet Union, and served as the main conduit for bilateral trade. Between 1954 to 1967, Afghanistan was the third largest recipient of Soviet aid, receiving US$570 million.\textsuperscript{15} The Soviet Union supported Afghanistan politically as well, particularly on the issue of “Pashtunistan”.\textsuperscript{16} The Soviet influence on Afghanistan culminated when 30,000 Soviet troops entered Afghanistan on 24 December, 1979 to bolster the weakening Communist regime led by the Peoples Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA).

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan had come largely in response to the situation that had developed after the overthrow of Sardar Daud government in April 1978 in a military coup, which was supported by some Soviet-trained army officers and politicians belonging to the


\textsuperscript{14} Ibid.


\textsuperscript{16} The issue of Pashtunistan dates back to the time of partition of South Asia in to two sovereign countries – Pakistan and India – in 1947, when the Khudai Khidmatgar Tehrik led by Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, a freedom fighter from Pakistan’s North West Frontier Province (NWFP), demanded of the British Indian government to grant independence to the NWFP and desired to rename it Pashtunistan. The demand was not heeded to, which resulted in the boycott of the referendum that was held in 1946 to determine whether NWFP wants to join Pakistan or stay in India. The issue remained a thorny one between Ghaffar Khan’s supporters and the Pakistani government as well as between Pakistan and Afghanistan when the latter refused to accept the legitimacy of the Durand Line, demarcated in 1893, as an international border between the two neighbours and supported the Pashtunistan demand of Ghaffar Khan.
Khalq faction of the PDPA. The Communists were led by Hafizullah Amin, who after assuming power, had initiated a campaign of terror to eliminate opposition to his rule. This resulted in a revolt in the Afghan National Army. Alarmed at the fast deteriorating situation in Afghanistan, the Kremlin tried to replace Amin with Babrak Karmal by persuading the former to step down. As Amin did not oblige, the Soviets invaded the country and put Karmal in power after killing Amin.

The Soviet invasion provoked not only a strong resistance from the Afghan people, but also severe international criticism. The United Nations General Assembly adopted on 14 January, 1980, Resolution No. ES-6/2, demanding the “immediate, unconditional and the total withdrawal of the foreign troops from Afghanistan.”

The Soviet invasion proved to be a turning point in the US policy towards Afghanistan. Throughout the Cold War era, the US had not attached much significance to Afghanistan. The situation, however, changed dramatically after the Soviet invasion. In fact, well before the actual Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the then US President, Jimmy Carter, had signed on 3 July 1979, the first directive for secret aid to the opponents of the pro-Soviet regime in Kabul. The US considered the Soviet invasion as a threat to the entire region. President Carter in his address to the nation on January 4, 1980 stated:

"This invasion is an extremely serious threat to peace because of the threat of further Soviet expansion into neighbouring countries in Southwest Asia, and also because such an aggressive military policy is unsettling to other people throughout the world."

The US considered the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan as a threat to its interests in Southwest Asia, especially in the aftermath of the Iranian Revolution of 1979, which had deprived the US of its closest ally in the region – the Shah of Iran. Subsequently, the US launched, with the help

of Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, a successful campaign to oust the Soviet Union by supporting the Afghan Mujahideen.

According to some estimates, the US aid to Afghan Mujahideen in arms, cash and training was around US$2 billion.\(^{21}\) According to Ted Galen Carpenter, covert US military assistance to Mujahideen was estimated at US$250 million per year.\(^{22}\) Moreover, the US encouraged the establishment of innumerable training camps and sanctuaries across the length and breadth of Pakistan’s western border region (NWFP, FATA and Balochistan), where thousands of Mujahideen and foreign fighters were formally trained to conduct *jihad* (Holy War) in Afghanistan.\(^{23}\)

The 1988 Geneva Accords brought an end to the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. By 1989, the Soviet forces had withdrawn, leaving behind a country whose political economic and social infrastructure lay in ruins. Although, the Mujahideen insurgency was successful in pushing the Soviet forces out, it had rendered Afghanistan a largely dysfunctional state.\(^{24}\) The Afghan war left approximately one million people dead and 535,000 disabled, while 700,000 were reported as widowed and orphaned. One-third of all villages were destroyed, and two-third of all paved roads were left unusable. The country was left littered with nearly 26 types of mines, and approximately 5.9 million refugees crossed over to neighbouring countries mainly to Pakistan and Iran.\(^{25}\)

In the aftermath of the Soviet withdrawal, the country witnessed inter-factional fighting among various Mujahideen groups for control over Kabul, which led to the rise of warlordism in the country. Ultimately, in 1994, a ragtag militia comprising former Mujahideen and a new breed of


Pakistan-based madrassa-educated Afghan refugees emerged on the scene in Kandahar in 1994 on the popular slogan of restoring law and order in Afghanistan. This militia came to be known as the Taliban. Led by Mullah Omar, the Taliban defeated or subdued most of the warlords in Afghanistan and took control of Kabul in 1996, ultimately spreading their writ to more than 90% of Afghanistan by 2001. The Taliban continued to rule Afghanistan from 1996 to October 2001, when they were overthrown by the US-led coalition in the aftermath of the tragic terrorist attacks in the US on September 11, 2001. However, the Taliban had only lost power; they were not completely wiped out. Rather they melted into the local population and their leadership crossed over into Pakistan’s Balochistan and Northwest Frontier region (both Federally Administered Tribal Areas and Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa [formerly North West Frontier Province]). They were able to stage a return as a potent insurgent force by 2005 - 2006. A look at the ongoing Taliban-led insurgency reveals that it shares a lot of similarities with the Mujahideen insurgency of the 1980s. Please see the Table 1.1 on the next page:
Table 1.1: Comparison of the Mujahideen Insurgency of the 1980s and Post-September 2001 Insurgency led by the Taliban

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>SIMILARITIES</th>
<th>DISSIMILARITIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Type of Warfare</td>
<td>Guerrilla; Small-arms struggle</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objective of the Insurgency</td>
<td>To get rid of foreign occupation and “Alien” system of government</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideology of the Insurgent</td>
<td>Religious (Jihad) and Nationalist (Afghan independence)</td>
<td>driven</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature of Resistance</td>
<td>Armed Struggle</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature of Movement</td>
<td>Factionalised – Afghan Mujahideen of the 1980s were divided into seven factions while Taliban-led insurgency is divided into four main factions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy of the Insurgents</td>
<td>Cross-border support</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-State support</td>
<td>Foreign militants and sympathetic individuals in the Muslim world</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding of the Insurgency</td>
<td>Massive overt international assistance to the Mujahideen of the 1980s, while the Taliban-led insurgency raises its finances independently through narco-business and crime-terror nexus</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Composition of the Movement</td>
<td>Mujahideen movement of 1980s encompassed almost all Afghans from various ethnicities while the Taliban-led insurgency is predominantly Pashtun-based</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic Support to the insurgency</td>
<td>Popular support to the Mujahideen insurgency of 1980s, while limited support to the Taliban-led insurgency</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although the Taliban regime was overthrown in November 2001, and al-Qaeda’s terrorist infrastructure in Afghanistan was dismantled, the coalition troops continued to arrest or kill the
fleeing Taliban and foreign militants in the country. On May 2, 2003 the then US Defence Secretary, Donalds Rumsfeld, announced an end to major Afghan combat, and declared a shift to focus on rebuilding and reconstruction of Afghanistan.26 However, the analysis of the security situation, after a decade of OEF, in Afghanistan presents the stark reality of the relative success of the Taliban-led insurgency, and points towards the failure of the international community, which had promised to bring back peace and stability to Afghanistan after more than two decades of constant conflict. Since September 2005, there was a constant rise in violence in Afghanistan. The violence, which until 2007 was confined only to the Pashtun-dominated East, Southeast and South of Afghanistan, by 2008 had spread to the North and West of the country.27

The passage of every year witnessed an upsurge in Taliban attacks which included armed raids, suicide attacks, roadside bombings, ambushes, target killings, kidnapping and subsequent beheading of government collaborators and spies. The following Tables will show the number of increasing terrorist attacks and suicide attacks by the Taliban in Afghanistan.

**Table 1.2: Number of Terrorist Attacks by the Taliban**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Terrorist Attacks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>1931</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>2,615</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>3,295</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>4,171</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


---

Table 1.3: Increasing Number of Suicide Attacks in Afghanistan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Suicide Attacks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>225</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


According to icasualties.org – a research institute which maintains a database of foreign troops’ casualties in Afghanistan and across the world – the casualty rate of foreign troops deployed in Afghanistan increased from 131 in 2005 to 191, 232, 295 and 521, 566 in 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009 and 2010 respectively. In the first six months (January-June) of 2010, there were 303 causalities of foreign troops, taking the total foreign troops casualties to 1868.28

The Taliban, which according to NATO number around 36,000 fighters, continued to be a formidable force. The Afghan government’s past efforts under the Peace and Reconciliation Program to reconcile with the Taliban and integrate them back into the Afghan society had failed. According to a report titled “Golden Surrender” by the Afghanistan Analysts Network, almost a “quarter of the low-ranking Taleban commanders lured out of the insurgency in Southern Afghanistan has rejoined the fight because of broken government promises and paltry rewards.”29 In 2008, the Taliban changed their fighting strategy, which until then was based on fighting the coalition troops in the rural areas, to target major cities like Kandahar and Kabul. A gradual increase in insurgent attacks on cities forced the coalition forces in late 2009 to pull their

troops out of sparsely populated areas of countryside in order to protect major Afghan population centres. That retreat, which some senior US military officials describe as tactical, came under intense criticism as it was equated with “surrendering the rest of the country to the Taliban” and giving the latter free rein across large parts of Afghanistan, thereby allowing them to establish mini-states with training camps that could be used by al-Qaeda as well. By December 2009, the Taliban had established shadow governments across the entire country, where they issued edicts, collected taxes, held Shariah courts and provided inexpensive and speedy justice to the locals.

Some observers considered the Taliban-led insurgency as continuation of the conflict that started in 1979 with the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. But what was intriguing about the Taliban-led insurgency was that it was self-driven, which was generating its own finances through a myriad of means; and conducting recruitment on its own through using its own jihadi media. Similarly, in terms of local support, the Taliban were perceived “negatively” by both the Afghan and Pakistani populace as compared to the Afghan Mujahideen of the 1980s who enjoyed massive public support. According to a March 2010 Gallup Survey conducted in Afghanistan and Pakistan, the Taliban popularity was at two and four percent in Afghanistan and Pakistan respectively.

---


33 Rubin, “Saving Afghanistan”.


This gives rise to the question: why has the Taliban-led insurgency been successful in reviving itself despite a lack of substantial foreign and domestic support?

**Working Hypothesis**

The weaknesses in the post-conflict reconstruction framework envisaged during the Bonn Conference of December 2001, and subsequent inadequate implementation of the reconstruction framework resulted in the relative success of the Taliban-led insurgency.

Though the Mujahideen had succeeded in forcing the Soviets to withdraw from Afghanistan in 1989, and were also able to bring down the Najibullah’s communist government in 1992, peace continued to elude Afghanistan. The inter-factional fighting among various Mujahideen groups was one of the important factors behind the emergence of the Taliban movement in 1994. However, even though the Taliban were able to capture Kabul and establish a government there, peace remained elusive as they continued to fight against non-Pashtun Mujahideen groups, primarily the Northern Alliance, a north-based group led by Ahmed Shah Masood. Post-9/11, as the international community realized the significance of a stable and peaceful Afghanistan for global peace and security, it initiated a process of political transition and reconstruction in Afghanistan during the Bonn Conference, which took place in December 2001, immediately after the fall of the Taliban regime in Kabul. The then US Deputy Secretary of Defense, Paul Wolfowitz's statement in September 2002 clearly demonstrates this:

> Our emphasis is on helping Afghans establish the means to provide their own stability and security. We know very well that we have a huge stake in Afghanistan’s success. We remember the steep price that we had to pay when Afghanistan was a failed state.

The end of a conflict is rarely a clear process. There is always a risk of the revival of conflict and the situation may remain fragile for many years. That is why it is important to start post-

---

36 Dr. Najibullah served as the head of Afghanistan between 1987-1992. With the Soviet withdrawal in 1989, he was left with no aid money and military assistance and his government fell down in 1992.

conflict reconstruction with the end of active violence or when it is controlled to an extent that normal social, economic and political activities can be restored to a certain degree.\textsuperscript{39} Same was the case with Afghanistan after the fall of the Taliban regime. So the international community while continuing chasing the Taliban and al-Qaeda remnants in Afghanistan and in Pakistan’s border areas started the reconstruction process with the Bonn Agreement. (The Bonn Agreement of December 2001 will also be referred to as Bonn-I in the course of study.) The present study analyses that process in post-Taliban Afghanistan and elaborates how the weaknesses in that process made the task of restoring peace and stability in the war-torn country increasingly difficult by providing space to the Taliban to exploit the situation in their own favour, thereby creating enormous security challenges.

Most of the opinions from both the academia and the policy community attribute the revival and sustenance of the Taliban-led insurgency primarily to the cross-border support from Pakistan in particular and Iran in general. Other factors that have been said to have facilitated the Taliban resurgence include favourable terrain, ideological influence of the Taliban on Pashtuns and diversion of the US attention and resources towards Iraq after March 2003.\textsuperscript{40} These factors, however, appear to offer only partial explanation for the Taliban resurgence; they overlook the critical role of opportunities available to the Taliban in Afghanistan which emerged after the international-led reconstruction policies in both security and non-security spheres. Cross border shelter, for example, can prove a strategic asset for the leaders of an insurgent movement, but only to a certain degree as for the actual fight they need cadre on the ground who are motivated to fight for a cause. The Taliban are no exception; they have to maintain support among masses in order to motivate them to fight the foreign forces. Taliban’s ideology and their strict Shariah law were not attractive enough to compel Afghan people to join the insurgency. It was in fact the international failure to build transparent and accountable security and civil institutions and a truly representative regime in Afghanistan that disappointed the general masses across the


country. The Taliban exploited those conditions in their favour. The general Afghan population was left with no other choice but to support the Taliban. The absence of economic opportunities, political participation and state writ enabled the Taliban to not only compel people to join their movement but also helped them in generating funding and recruits for their movement. For example, according to a report in *The New York Times*, the “Taliban are self-sustaining, by taxing the drug trade or taxing construction projects, and they will just keep fighting.”\(^4^1\) The statement confirms that the Taliban generate their own funding, through extensive local networks across Afghanistan.

A close look at Afghanistan reveals that it has remained an inherently weak state, which has gone through various phases of internal political and economic strife in the course of its history since 1919.\(^4^2\) The Soviet invasion in 1979 and the ensuing anarchy and chaos have left the country in a protracted conflict that has made it a dysfunctional state and one of the poorest countries in the world. In 2001 – 2002, when international community started rebuilding Afghanistan after the fall of the Taliban regime, around 70 percent of the population was malnourished, more than 64 percent was illiterate, 45% had no access to clean drinking water, more than one million were internally displaced and around 3.5 million refugees were living in Iran and Pakistan, and last but not the least GDP per capita was only about US$200.\(^4^3\)

In a situation where an inherently weak state gets further weakened by a protracted conflict, international involvement aimed at stabilization becomes crucial not only for post-conflict recovery and stability but also to avoid resurgence of conflict. For example, peace remained elusive in Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) due to protracted conflict since 1998. According to 2008 figures the conflict in DRC left 5.4 million people dead, mainly because of disease and starvation. Moreover millions of people also crossed borders into neighbouring


states. It became important for the international community to reconstruct and rebuild DRC to avoid conflict recurrence and spill over into neighbouring states.  

Each of these factors - cross border support by Pakistan and Iran, ideological influence and support by al-Qaeda and internal weaknesses of the Afghan state - has played its role in the resurgence of the Taliban. However, one aspect which is missing in the debate on the causes of the Taliban resurgence is the inadequate role of international actors - both state and non-state - in restoring peace in Afghanistan, and its ramifications for the future of Afghanistan. The ISAF spokesman Brigadier General Carsten Jacobson admitted, “Nobody thought they could ever revive. Perhaps blinded by success, we made a mistake then.” A discussion regarding the legality of the US intervention and the subsequent Taliban resurgence in response to it is beyond the purview of this study. This study mainly focuses on the faulty conception and implementation of the post-conflict reconstruction agenda that was adopted during the Bonn-I in particular and other subsequent but relevant conferences in general.

It is important to mention here that Bonn-I was the start of the process of reconstruction in war-torn Afghanistan. It set forth deadlines for political and institutional benchmarks to be achieved by September 2005. In other words it created a window of opportunity for international actors and Afghan authorities to meet the objectives of reconstruction and peace in the country. Other subsequent conferences in Tokyo (2002), Berlin (2004), London (2006), Paris (2008) and London (2010) were in fact part of the process of implementing the goals set forth during Bonn-I.

The study’s time frame is the ten years’ time period from Bonn-I to Bonn-II (Bonn Conference of 2011). Bonn-II was held with the objective of analysing the achievements and failures of

---

Bonn I to lay the framework for future cooperation between the international community and Afghanistan.

Faulty Conception of the Bonn Agreement and the Subsequent Resurgence of the Taliban

The success record of the reconstruction in failed and post-conflict states is not very good.47 There can be several reasons for this. Several International Relations scholars have argued that most of the post-conflict reconstruction operations fail because they seek to implant a foreign system of government in post-conflict states ignoring the implications of such an approach for the local political and economic traditions and culture.48 Some of the authors argue that this failure is because local communities in post-conflict states are not properly engaged in reconstruction which is largely carried out by the external players who, in most cases, are insensitive to the needs and interests of the local communities.49 Dennis A. Rondinelli and John D. Montgomery list several empirical lessons for a successful reconstruction process.50 These lessons are: the need to have a coherent policy, coordination among the actors involved, prioritization of security needs and the need for comprehensive political and economic reforms to cater to the local needs and aspirations.51

The Afghan case study is no exception. The process of reconstruction in Afghanistan started in an environment where each individual and every part of the country was affected due to the prolonged conflict in Afghanistan since 1979. The international community faced serious challenges on all socio-economic and political fronts, which they grappled with by laying the foundations of the reconstruction process in Afghanistan after Bonn-I. Some of the important socio-economic and political achievements met in this regard were an overall improvement in the economic growth, increase in the number of schools and school-going children,

---

51 Ibid.
reconstruction of essential communication infrastructure like roads and bridges, access to healthcare facilities, raising the Afghan army and police, increasing women’s participation in state affairs, drafting an Afghan constitutions and holding parliamentary, provincial and presidential elections in the country.\textsuperscript{52}

Despite all the above mentioned achievements the process of reconstruction was not free of faults. Mistakes were made by the international community first during the stage of conceptualization of the reconstruction process during the Bonn-I and later during its implementation. The signing of Bonn-I was the first effort towards post-conflict reconstruction of war-torn Afghanistan. It laid down both political and institutional benchmarks which were to be accomplished by 2005. The political benchmarks included establishing a transitional government (January 2002), holding a \textit{Loya Jirga}\textsuperscript{53} (2003), enacting a constitution for Afghanistan (January 2004), inaugurating the Afghan Parliament in December 2005, following the holding of presidential and parliamentary elections (October 2004, and September 2005 respectively). All the political benchmarks, except parliamentary elections, were accomplished as scheduled. The elections suffered a slight delay.

The institutional benchmarks, however, remain unaccomplished. These pertained to the creation of ANA, ANP, reforms in the justice ministry, repatriation of Afghan refugees from neighbouring countries, and elimination of drug trafficking by introducing reforms through relevant and transparent institutions under the supervision of the international community. The institution building continued to be a daunting challenge as state institutions at both national and provincial levels remained weak and corrupt.\textsuperscript{54}

\begin{flushleft}

\textsuperscript{53} Loya Jirga is a centuries old traditional institution associated with Pashtun ethnic group that straddles on the Pakistan-Afghanistan border. Its literary meaning is Grand Assembly of Pashtun tribal elders, religious scholars, government functionaries etc, who gather at a specific place to discuss issues of national importance affecting the Pashtun tribe or Afghanistan as a whole. Initially it comprised of only Pashtuns but lately other non-Pashtun ethnicities of Afghanistan has also been incorporated. In the 20th century, the Jirga was invoked on nine occasions to discuss important issues. \\

\end{flushleft}
For a successful reconstruction process a comprehensive agreement that addresses all major causes of war and include all parties to the conflict, is a must. For example, in Aceh the peace process met success because of the well thought-out and adequately framed agreement with clear objectives to be achieved in specific time frame. The former Prime Minister of Finland and chief mediator of Aceh peace process rightly said, “nothing is agreed until everything is agreed.”\(^\text{55}\) The Bonn-I, on the other hand, was not an inclusive agreement and was drafted with the consent of anti-Taliban factions. Moreover, it focused mainly on political and security transition, but ignored the economic transition of the country, an omission which seemed all the more glaring because Afghanistan was one of poorest and the least developed countries in the world. Even the provisions relevant to the political transition were not elaborated in sufficient detail. The Agreement, to quote one example, was silent on the role and responsibilities of the *Loya Jirga* (Grand Council) – one of the most important components of the political transition process in the post-Bonn Afghanistan. (The term post-Bonn Afghanistan will be used in the course of study for mentioning the Afghanistan after the signing of Bonn Agreement in December 2001).

One of the stated objectives of the Bonn-I was, “to end the tragic conflict in Afghanistan and promote national reconciliation, lasting peace, stability and respect for human rights in the country”.\(^\text{56}\) A particularly important step in that direction should have been to bring all warring parties and factions, including the Taliban, to the negotiation table. Lakhdar Brahimi, attributes South Africa’s successful transition from war to peace to the policy of giving share to all the stakeholders in the process of reconstruction. “Even the most extremist groups and individuals who did their damnest to derail the process knew that they were welcome to join in if they so desired and, along the years, many of them did.”\(^\text{57}\) In Afghanistan's case, however, no serious effort was made towards that end.

Another important step in that direction was to address the concerns and stakes of the regional states, especially Pakistan, in Afghanistan. It did not include any provision on formal


\(^{56}\) Please see the Annex 1 for the draft of the Bonn Agreement (December 2001).

\(^{57}\) Lakhdar Brahimi, “State Building in Crisis”.
commitments by Afghanistan’s neighbours including Pakistan to respect the country’s neutrality and end outside support to different military factions.

The Bonn-I had urged “United Nations, the international community, particularly donor countries and multilateral institutions, to reaffirm, strengthen and implement their commitment to assist with the rehabilitation, recovery and reconstruction of Afghanistan, in coordination with the Interim Authority.”58 But, contrary to that, the international community chose the “light footprint model”- lesser external role in order to build and strengthen the local Afghan capacity to meet the challenges of reconstruction.59 The lesser role of the UN, US and NATO-ISAF meant that during the initial but crucial stage of reconstruction they were confined to Kabul only. In that situation, factional leaders and warlords (predominantly non-Pashtuns) who were supportive of the US-led effort to oust the Taliban regime, but not necessarily representative of the Afghan public, were allowed to take a lead and leadership of key ministries in the post-conflict power-sharing arrangements. As stated by B. D. Hopkins, “Instead of disarming the militia commanders who had ravaged the country for 20 years, however, the US saw governing through them as the cheapest option.”60

The model lacked coordination and a coherent vision while demanding specific and far-reaching reforms. Reconstruction efforts were top-down, focusing on strengthening the Kabul-based central government rather than on ensuring a credible government presence at regional, provincial, and district levels.61

58 Please check the Annex 1 for the draft of the Bonn Agreement (December 2001).
These and several other problems, which will be discussed in the subsequent chapters, had hugely negative implications for peace and stability in Afghanistan. The window of opportunity to bring peace, created after the fall of the Taliban in November 2001, was not fully utilized and the Taliban took full advantage of that situation.

**Faulty Implementation of Reconstruction Agenda in Post-Bonn Afghanistan**

Not only was the conception of the Bonn-I faulty, its implementation too was marred with serious deficiencies. It is true that the legacy of decades-long conflict had made reconstructing Afghanistan a particularly challenging enterprise, yet effective implementation of a judiciously conceived reconstruction plan could have yielded significant dividends. For example, initially donor countries did not provide the amount they had pledged during various moots and conferences. After the Bonn-I till 2013, a total of US$62 billion was pledged. However, only 41.3% of that amount had been disbursed by 2010. Moreover, much of the aid provided to Afghanistan after the Bonn-I was either wasted or remained ineffective in realizing its purported goals.

Another important issue in the reconstruction of Afghanistan was to rebuild the relevant state institutions to bring lasting peace and stability. In post-war/conflict reconstruction process the building and strengthening of relevant state institutions is important to establish and maintain law and order and avoid the reversal of conflict. These institutions help the post-conflict state to provide the basic needs to its population such as health, education, security and services, to keep the masses content.

Due to decades of war and conflict, Afghanistan lacks a coherent set of institutions that can meet the basic requirements of statehood, i.e., provision of security, enforcement of law and order and delivery of basic services. As stated earlier, the political benchmarks set during the Bonn-I were

---


63 Ibid.

achieved successfully and the process was completed with the 2005 parliamentary elections. But during the race to achieve these political benchmarks, not much attention was paid to institutions building at provincial, district and local levels and to the capacity building of Afghans to run these institutions. This resulted in inherently weak institutions with low level of legitimacy that could not fulfil the expectations of Afghan people. Subsequently the absence of state writ in many rural areas of Afghanistan created a vacuum which was filled by the Taliban. Asif Rohini, former Deputy Minister of Rural Rehabilitation and Development, once said: “Taliban are filling the gap in South Afghanistan created by the weak government rather than by a strong insurgency.”

**Conceptual Framework**

Intrastate conflicts are one of the most prominent features of international politics. These conflicts have implications for nation-states such as devastated infrastructures, anti-personnel landmines, small weapons proliferation and unemployment. These conflicts can spill over into the neighbouring countries, and can create challenges also for global security. Finding solutions to end such conflicts is, therefore, important. Equally important is effective post-conflict reconstruction in such states to avoid the revival of conflict. However, while the need for reconstruction is most pressing in post-conflict states, their capacity for this is at the lowest due to the devastating legacy of conflict. This calls for international community's role in reconstructing post-conflict states.

Perhaps more than any other conflict-afflicted state, Afghanistan embodied the challenges such states pose to international peace and security; 9/11 terrorist attacks being the prime manifestation of these challenges. Cognizant of these challenges, international community took up reconstructing this war-ravaged country after the fall of the Taliban regime in November 2001. These efforts, however, fell far short of their goal of restoring peace and stability in

---

Afghanistan. The internationally-sponsored reconstruction in Afghanistan had started with the Bonn I of December 2001. When Bonn II was convened in December 2011 to evaluate the achievements of the process initiated as a result of the Bonn I, Afghanistan was far from stable. Rather it had relapsed into the conflict. This study seeks to elaborate how the inadequate international assistance for post-conflict reconstruction paved the way for the resurgence of conflict in the form of the Taliban-led insurgency in Afghanistan.

One useful parameter to gauge the resurgence of the Taliban as a result of international community’s role in reconstruction is to analyse the Counterinsurgency (COIN) policy. The US Counterinsurgency Field Manual defines the COIN as “comprehensive civilian and military efforts designed to simultaneously defeat and contain insurgency and address its root causes.”\textsuperscript{67} The COIN enumerates four important components to defeat an insurgency: 1) plans for political reconciliation; 2) ensure economic stability to generate public confidence in the government; 3) establish effective security apparatus, including the military, police and other relevant civilian institutions; 4) establish an effective intelligence network to analyse and pre-empt insurgents’ moves, and win popular support for the COIN.\textsuperscript{68} The fourth component makes the COIN different from the humanitarian intervention and reconstruction campaign, since it takes into consideration the insurgents’ tactics and strategies in order to seek more information about them.\textsuperscript{69} One can safely assume that while drafting a COIN strategy, the policy makers evaluate and prioritise their goals keeping in view the sole objective of defeating the insurgents. In such circumstances, the focus remains heavily on the use of kinetic approach against the insurgents. Such an approach, however, is ill-suited to the needs of a post-conflict state, which would not like to only ensure the defeat of an insurgency but to guarantee lasting peace and stability so that the conflict is not revived.

In the Afghan context, the analysis of improper conceptualisation and implementation of the COIN has its own limitations for the purpose of this study. The OEF was conceived to defeat the

\textsuperscript{69} Ibid.
Taliban regime and their al-Qaeda allies, and was not conceptualised as a counter-insurgency operation. In fact, there was no insurgency at that stage. Once the OEF achieved its goal of overthrowing the Taliban regime, the international community initiated steps to restore peace in Afghanistan. These efforts did not take into consideration the threat of the Taliban resurgence. The international community also took steps to lay a solid economic and political foundation for Afghanistan.

The failure of the international community to allow the Taliban to sustain themselves despite the presence of international security forces could be found in the COIN implemented by them in Afghanistan. However, it is unable to explain the Taliban’s resurgence after their defeat in the OEF. To understand the Taliban’s resurgence, one needs a broader and deeper understanding of the conditions which prevailed in Afghanistan at the time when internationally-sponsored post-conflict reconstruction was under way and which the Taliban exploited to their benefit.

The study will analyse the conceptual and implementation problems of the transition process in post-Taliban Afghanistan with the help of the concept of post-conflict reconstruction. According to Francis Fukuyama the process of nation-building has three important phases and post-conflict reconstruction is regarded as the first phase of this process.\(^\text{70}\) The second phase comes when the state institutions are strong enough to bear the fallout of the withdrawal of international forces and civil actors.\(^\text{71}\) The third phase is more or less similar to the second phase. It is applicable in the states where state authority exists but is so fragile that it needs international commitment in certain important spheres.\(^\text{72}\)

Of all the three phases the first one is very crucial as it is a starting point towards the end of nation-building. It is applicable to the countries where the state institutions almost non-existent and need to be built from the scratch.\(^\text{73}\) Afghanistan fits in this category owing to the fact that decades of conflict had almost totally destroyed its institutional and physical infrastructure.

\(^{71}\) Ibid.
\(^{72}\) Ibid.
\(^{73}\) Ibid.
The objective of any reconstruction process in post-conflict states is to bring normalcy – an objective which is achieved when the indigenous institutions start functioning on self-sustaining basis and international assistance is not required on a massive scale. In the Afghan context it is important to know why there is resurgence of the Taliban after 2006 and why the country could not experience normalcy.

For attaining the objectives of reconstruction process in post-conflict states, all the reconstruction processes are divided into four pillars, the security sector reforms (SSR), transitional justice, socio-economic well-being and governance and participation. To put it simply the pillars can be broadly divided into two categories: security-related and non security policies such as economic and social well being and governance. In the current study the international reconstruction efforts will be discussed across both these categories.

There are several frameworks drawn by various policy and research organizations, policy papers and research literature based on the past experiences of reconstructing the post-conflict states. A major chunk of literature deals with the important tasks to be completed for the successful reconstruction of such states. The study will use the relevant literature to explore how did the weaknesses in the reconstruction process in post-Bonn Afghanistan benefitted the Taliban (This point will be elaborated in detail in the next chapter which reviews the literature).

For instance, Post-Conflict Reconstruction (PCR) framework, provided by United States Institute of Peace (USIP) and United States Army Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute in 2009 illustrates that identifying all belligerent forces in a conflict and making efforts to integrate them in the society by demobilizing them are the initial steps essential for realizing the security objectives of the reconstruction process. The Bonn Agreement says:

Upon the official transfer of power, all Mujahideen, Afghan armed forces and armed groups in the country shall come under the command and control of the Interim Authority, and be reorganized according to the requirements of the new Afghan security and armed forces.\(^77\)

Though the above mentioned clause used the word Mujahideen, there was no mention of the Taliban, who were the main opposition force. Instead the anti-Taliban forces were rewarded by the international community and the Karzai regime for their support against the Taliban. For example, a prominent warlord, Rashid Dostum, was given the portfolio of defence in the interim government (2002-2005). But no effort was made to neutralise the defeated and weakened Taliban by offering them share in political power, thus providing them with a reason to regroup and oppose the Karzai regime and its international supporters.

Another important characteristic of the post-conflict reconstruction is to secure all important points of entry and exit in the country and to deploy the border control mechanism.\(^78\) While much has been said about Pakistan turning a blind eye to the Taliban and al-Qaeda elements fleeing Afghanistan as a result of OEF, there was no serious effort made by the coalition forces or the Northern Alliances to secure the Pakistan-Afghan border. Several Pakistani security officials have claimed that by not sealing the border from Afghan side the US-led coalition made a grave tactical error, thus allowing the al-Qaeda and the Taliban remnants to enter and seek refuge in the sympathetic Pashtun belt of Pakistan.\(^79\)

Moreover, the post-conflict reconstruction framework requires addressing the concerns of regional powers in any such peace efforts, but these requirements too were ignored. For example, Pakistan’s concerns viz-a-viz Afghanistan and the growing role of India in the country were not addressed during the Bush Administration (2000-2008). The Obama administration’s “Af-Pak” policy was a belated realization of this important factor, which could have made a huge

\(^{77}\) Please see the Annex 1 for the draft of the Bonn Agreement (December 2001).


difference if it could have been realized back in December 2001. These are just a few points in the security arena, and shortcomings in the non-security reconstruction policies will be explored in the course of the study.

Yet another important issue is that of appropriate timing for implementation of the reconstruction policies in post-conflict states. The literature on the subject identifies certain critical thresholds or windows of opportunity where the conflict can be settled or the warring parties brought to the negotiating table. Such windows of opportunity have far-reaching impact on conflict termination. In the case of Afghanistan the two important windows of opportunity for averting the revival of conflict were missed. One was in 1990s when the international and regional powers adopted a hands-off approach after the withdrawal of Soviet troops and did nothing to bring the warring Mujahideen factions to any kind of political solution; and the second was post-9/11 when the Taliban were defeated. Although, efforts are now being made to bring the Taliban to the negotiating table, such efforts could have been more fruitful if they had been made immediately after the Taliban defeat in November 2001 because at that time the militia was weak, whereas now they are in a much better bargaining position.

The devastating legacy of conflict calls for sufficient and sustained international assistance to build efficient indigenous institutions in post-conflict states. International assistance and support during and after conflict has had impacts on various phases of conflict in Afghanistan. For instance, during the Soviet intervention, international assistance was meant to help the Mujahideen against the Soviet occupation and the Communist regime that ruled Kabul. This helped in strengthening one faction of a society against the other, which later on became a cause or source of inter-factional fighting in Afghanistan. The international community's disengagement from Afghanistan during the 1990s was one of the factors that resulted in turning Afghanistan into a sanctuary for international terrorist groups. Even after 2001 the international aid commitments remained unfulfilled.

---

82 Ibid.
Moreover, when it comes to discussing the inadequate international reconstruction efforts in the context of resurgence of the Taliban, there is a need to evaluate the weaknesses in security and non-security reconstruction policies. For example, discussing only the role of lack of judicial reforms as part of security related policies will leave out the significant issue of drug economy which has been providing funding to the Taliban-led insurgency. The evaluation of both security and non-security reconstruction policies by the international community will result in an in-depth analysis of the reconstruction failure as a factor behind the resurgence of the Taliban.
CONCEPTUAL DIAGRAM

Inadequate Conception and Implementation of Post-Conflict Reconstruction Framework

Leads to

Inadequate International Assistance

Results in

Security Lapses

Failure to Ensure Security and weaker security institutions

Inadequate Justice and Reconciliation

Non-Security Lapses

Insufficient Socioeconomic Well-Being

Bad Governance

Creates a Governance Vacuum

Resurgence of Insurgent/Anti-Government Forces

Revival of Conflict
Significance of the Study

A stable Afghanistan is sine qua non for regional peace and stability as it is located on the confluence of three important geographical regions, which are rich in natural resources, but are also fraught with political, social and economic crises. The region is afflicted with several problems like small weapons proliferation, poppy cultivation and narco-trafficking, religious extremism, poverty, illiteracy and underdevelopment.

The study carries significance as it will explore a new aspect on the sources of contemporary conflict and insecurity in Afghanistan. It is important to know and understand the sources of relative success of the Taliban-led insurgency to find a feasible solution to this problem or to draw a counterinsurgency policy to bring peace and prosperity in strategically significant Afghanistan. The analysis of the international community’s inadequate reconstruction efforts as a potent source behind the resurgence of the Taliban is relatively a new dimension in the literature on the rise, success and longevity of the Taliban movement in Afghanistan.

There is a need to understand the sources of the revival of conflict in post-Bonn Afghanistan to find an adequate solution to the problem. The unique location of Afghanistan and its porous borders increases the chances of spill over of the conflict in the neighbouring countries of both South and Central Asia. Afghanistan also shares same ethnicity with almost all the neighbouring states which raises the stakes of all these states in Afghanistan. The far reaching impacts of the instability in Afghanistan had once been experienced in the form of 9/11 and that is why it is important to understand and evaluate the sources of conflict in Afghanistan in order to bring an end to it.

Theoretically, the study will be a good contribution to the literature on the sources of revival of conflict, insurgency and post-conflict reconstruction. Especially in the contemporary context where the international community is engaged in several post-conflict reconstruction operations including that of Iraq the study can be of great help to understand the lacunae in the process of reconstruction itself as a source of revival of conflict.
Research Methodology

The objective of the study is to test the following hypothesis:

The weaknesses in the post-conflict reconstruction framework envisaged during the Bonn Conference of December 2001, and subsequent inadequate implementation of the reconstruction framework resulted in the relative success of the Taliban-led insurgency.

The study will use the case study method to test the hypothesis. John Gerring defines case study as “an in-depth study of single unit (a relatively bounded phenomenon) where the scholar's aim is to elucidate features of a larger class of similar phenomena.”\(^83\) Keith F Punch defines case study as a method in which “one case (or perhaps a small number of cases) will be studied in detail, using whatever method seemed appropriate.”\(^84\) On the basis of these definitions the present study is also a case study in which the case of the resurgence of the Taliban in Afghanistan will be studied in detail and in its entirety.

Not everyone, however, is convinced of the utility of the case study method in social science research. Some of the critics of the case study method argue that the study of a single or small number of cases cannot offer sufficient convincing grounds for establishing reliability or generality of findings. Others feel that the sole focus on the study of a single case biases the findings. Still other analysts also criticize this approach as merely an “exploratory tool”.\(^85\) But the case study has its own strength in exploring a case and hypothesis in its entirety.\(^86\) Alexander L. George and Andrew Bennett in their book *Case Studies and Theory Development in Social*

---

*Sciences* have compared the strengths and weaknesses of the case study method and statistical methods.\(^{87}\)

**Table 1.4: Strength and Weaknesses of the Case Study Method**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Strength</th>
<th>Weakness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Case Study</td>
<td>Scope for ‘conceptual refinement’ due to small number of cases</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statistical Method</td>
<td></td>
<td>‘Conceptual stretching’ due to large number of cases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case Study</td>
<td>Option to study new variables and hypothesis due to sole focus on single or small number of cases</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statistical Method</td>
<td></td>
<td>No scope for new hypothesis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case Study</td>
<td>Scope for analyzing all intervening variables</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statistical Method</td>
<td></td>
<td>Designed to leave out the intervening variable even those having profound effects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case Study</td>
<td>Thorough analysis of causal relationship</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statistical Method</td>
<td></td>
<td>No Scope for Thorough Analysis of single unit of causal relationship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case Study</td>
<td></td>
<td>Chances of case selection bias due to focus on small number of cases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statistical Method</td>
<td></td>
<td>Little chances of case selection bias due to large number of cases</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The purpose to choose this method in the proposed study is to add refinement to the relatively less explored concept of inadequate international assistance as a source of revival of insurgent movements. Afghanistan case study is the best laboratory to test the proposed hypothesis because of the fact that the country experienced internationally-led reconstruction in both security and non-security spheres but still witnessed the revival of conflict. With the potential to spill over into the entire region the revival of conflict in the form of resurgence of the Taliban in Afghanistan has been a question of great concern for the international community, which have invested massive material and human resources in the country for more than a decade.

The multi-dimensional role and policies of the international community in post-Bonn Afghanistan need thorough explanation and analysis. All the security and non-security policy planks will be discussed in detail to find the causal linkage between the inadequate international assistance and the emergence and rise of the Taliban-led insurgency. This task can be made easy with the help of case study method.

For an in-depth analysis of the reconstruction framework for the post-Bonn Afghanistan that comprised both the security and non-security policies, the study will use both within case and across case analysis techniques to make inference possible for the other such cases at present or which may emerge in the future. John Gerring explains the use of both within case and across case techniques in a case study method. He says that at times “an author is likely to advance different propositions in the course of such a study, each of which defines a different primary unit of analysis, and she is likely to exploit both across case and within case evidence to demonstrate these propositions.”\(^88\) The present study relies on within case, as mentioned earlier and also across case (examples from least likely cases) comparisons.

\(^88\) John Gerring, “What is a Case Study”, 217.
It is a well known fact that each conflict is different from the other. Similarly, post-conflict reconstruction policies vary across the cases because different post-conflict situations need different policies. In Iraq, for example, a political setup existed at the time of the US invasion, which meant that international community did not have to start from scratch. In comparison to that in Afghanistan the international community had to struggle hard as the country was widely devastated due to the constant conflict after 1979 Soviet invasion. So in these two post-conflict situations the international community had to adopt different approach despite the fact that both the conflicts emerged within a gap of less than two years. But still across case comparisons will have its value for the study. For instance, while discussing the international efforts to address the problem of opium production and drug trafficking in Afghanistan special attention will be given to the experiences of Peru in Latin America.

Within case comparison especially looking at the history of conflict and instability and their structural causes will be given due consideration in order to analyse the contemporary international efforts in Afghanistan to make it stable and diminish the prospect of revival of conflict. As stated by John Gerring,

Their virtue is their ability to elucidate mechanisms connecting a particular X with a particular Y. By watching the progress of a single unit (a country, a city, a person), over time and by paying attention to variation within that case we can often observe, or at least intuit, a complex causal relationship at work.\(^{89}\)

*Process Tracing*

The case study method usually uses three approaches to test a theory: congruence method, process tracing and controlled comparison.\(^{90}\) The present study will rely on the process tracing to bring out the causal relationship between the inadequate international assistance and its linkage with the resurgence of the Taliban in post-Bonn Afghanistan.


According to Alexander George and Andrew Barnett “process tracing methods attempt to identify the intervening causal process – the causal chain and causal mechanism – between an independent variable and the outcome of the dependent variable.” Process tracing compliments well the case study method by adding strength to it despite its weaknesses discussed above.

One of the important roles of the process tracing is to explain the role of the rival explanation. For the purpose of this study this method can help in explaining the argument of cross border support to the Taliban vis-à-vis the failure of international community in reconstructing the Afghan state as a factor behind the Taliban resurgence.

Process-tracing can help in explaining the deviant cases – the cases where the outcomes are not properly explained. In the Afghan context, the inadequacies and weaknesses of the various aspects of reconstruction is one of the mostly discussed themes in the contemporary International Relations literature but how is it linked with the resurgence of the Taliban is something which is ignored. There is a need to understand the consequences of faulty reconstruction for the revival of conflict in the form of the resurgence of the Taliban in post-Bonn Afghanistan.

Another important benefit of the process tracing is the scope and space to use the large number of data or evidence to verify even a single inference. As it will be discussed in the proceeding sections, for the purpose of this study multiple sources of data will be studied.

**Sources of Data**

In the course of this study, three sets of data will be used. The primary sources include the data provided by interviews, opinion polls and datasets regarding the number of suicide or IED attacks and casualties. The secondary sources would include scholarly research work published in books and research journals. Finally the policy-oriented research material such as reports and assessment produced by various UN agencies, research institutions like International Crisis
Group, RAND and Brookings and other International Financial Institutions (IFIs) will be used to evaluate the reconstruction in Afghanistan.\(^9^4\)

In the Afghan context, there are some constraints of data. The 1990s can be regarded as the data-free decade due to the Taliban regime’s restrictions on international organizations to work in the country and also due to the absence of formal state institutions to maintain statistical data or record and also due to the absence of media because of the extremist ideology of the Taliban. Post-9/11, two types of organizations were involved in data gathering and data generation. One set of organizations was local such as state ministries, research institutes and academic research done by the local scholars. Another set of organizations comprised international NGOs, IGOs, UN and other aid agencies like Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR), United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), US Agency for International Development (USAID), World Bank and Asian Development Bank (ADB). But the works produced by these organizations are usually biased in favour of their own particular perspective and interests. For example, NATO and ISAF will give different figures of casualties and attacks from those which will be provided on the Taliban websites or in the general media sources. To overcome this problem, the proposed study will not rely on any single source of data. As mentioned earlier it will try to use multiple sources to add strength to the argument and avoid questions of reliability.

One important limitation is myself being a Pakistani – a country which has been widely blamed by the international community and the Afghans for nurturing the Taliban. In order to address this problem, the study will use data produced by Pakistani sources as little as possible. Moreover, the study will also depend on the data produced by the interviews. Out of the four interviews conducted for this study, two have been conducted with the Afghan policy makers and scholars, one with an Indian scholar and only one with a Pakistani scholar.

Measurement of the Success of Insurgency and the Failure of Reconstruction

One of the challenges that a researcher comes across during the research on the success or the failure of reconstruction and the revival of conflict is to measure these phenomena. Both the state and non-state actors involved have a tendency to claim success for their policies in post-conflict situations.\textsuperscript{95}

A successful post-conflict reconstruction is a situation where there are less chances of the revival of conflict – an objective which could not be achieved in Afghanistan.\textsuperscript{96} For that purpose international community and its local partners should focus on strengthening political, economic and security institutions, good governance, and to address the socio-economic problems of the population such as poverty and unemployment.

The study will measure the failure of post-conflict reconstruction by looking into various development indicators like levels of poverty, education and access to clean drinking water. Moreover, from various sources empirical evidence will be quoted to evaluate the public response to the policies adopted by the international community. The statements and accounts of experiences by the common Afghans will be use to measure the level of public trust – a crucial factor on which the Taliban capitalised very well.

In order to measure the success of insurgency various modes of violence such as number of casualties both civilian and coalition forces, number of IED attacks, suicide attacks and through the number of parallel governance structure of the Taliban and associated groups established will be considered. The Brookings Institute's yearly Afghanistan Index is one of the sources of data used for the purpose of measuring the success of the Taliban-led insurgency.\textsuperscript{97}


\textsuperscript{96} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{97} “Afghanistan Index”, \textit{Brookings Institute}, \url{http://www.brookings.edu/about/programs/foreign-policy/afghanistan-index} (accessed May 29, 2014).
Chapterization of the Thesis

The study will be structured according to the following lines;

Chapter 1: Introduction

The Purpose of the Chapter is to introduce the reader with the main question and argument of the present study. It will also shed light on the conceptual framework used to analyse the main argument and the research methodology used to reach the findings of the study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The objective of the chapter is to review the relevant literature on the subject under discussion. It will also form the theoretical basis to explore how inadequate and insufficient international assistance in Afghanistan resulted in the resurgence of Taliban in post-9/11 Afghanistan.

Chapter 3: A History of Conflict and Instability in Modern Afghanistan

The chapter highlights and analyses certain important challenges that various Afghan leaders faced when undertaking efforts at reforming Afghan state and society. It is important to know the historical experiences in order to better evaluate international community’s recent efforts to bring stability in post-Bonn Afghanistan.

Chapter 4: The Security Lacuna in the Post-Bonn Afghanistan

The objective of the chapter is to analyze the efforts made by the international community, in the wake of the fall of the Taliban regime, to restore and maintain peace and security in Afghanistan. It argues that international security policies or Security Sector Reform (SSR) were marred by several conceptual shortcomings and poor implementation. The international community failed to allocate sufficient human and material resources for successful SSR, which had negative implications for the reconstruction efforts in the post-Bonn Afghanistan.
Chapter 5: Problems in the Political and Economic Reconstruction of Post-Bonn Afghanistan

The purpose of this chapter is to review the political and economic reconstruction policies in the post-Bonn Afghanistan. The chapter analyses the conceptual and implementation problems in non-security reconstruction policies in the political and economic spheres due to which the international efforts could not bring the desirable result of lasting peace and stability in Afghanistan.

Chapter 6: The Return Of the Taliban: Filling the Void

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss how the Taliban exploited the vacuum created as a result of inadequate international security and non-security efforts for post-conflict reconstruction and staged a successful resurgence.

Chapter 7: Conclusion
CHAPTER 2: Literature Review

Introduction

The aim of this dissertation is to explore the sources of revival of the Taliban-led insurgency against US and ISAF-NATO coalition forces comprised of 48 troop-contributing states and the Afghan government. The thesis argues that inadequate conception and implementation of the Bonn Agreement of December 2001 (Bonn-I) and the subsequent reconstruction framework which resulted in economic, political and security shortcomings, was a critical factor, which not only contributed to the resurgence of the Taliban but also paved way for the Taliban to run a sustained and relatively successful insurgency against the US, the ISAF-NATO coalition and the Afghanistan government.

In order to conduct this study, the literature under review has been divided into two broad categories: the sources of success of the Taliban-led insurgency and the ingredients for the success of post-conflict reconstruction (PCR). A critical appraisal of these works shows why the revival of the Taliban in Afghanistan has not been properly understood and highlights the analytical space that will be filled up by this study.

Causes of the Success of Insurgent Movements: A Theoretical Perspective and an Overview of the Taliban-led Insurgency

In this section, the literature will be reviewed to answer the following questions:

- What are the factors which contribute to the success of an insurgency generally?
- What are the factors behind the success of the Taliban-led insurgency?
- How has the faulty conception and implementation of the Bonn Agreement contributed to the success of the Taliban-led insurgency?
Sources of Success of Insurgencies

Insurgencies continue to fascinate International Relations scholars. This fascination has resulted in a vast amount of literature probing the causes of their emergence, failure, success and longevity. Ethnic divisions and inter-communal hatred, lack of economic opportunities and deprivation, struggle over access to and control over natural resources, lack of political legitimacy of incumbent regimes and state fragility are some of the prominent factors that have been identified as factors responsible for the emergence of insurgencies.¹

In order to succeed, an insurgency requires support from within and outside the state. Both internal and external support bases are crucial for an insurgency to succeed. As far as internal or local support is concerned, it usually comes either from those who have ethnic or ideological affinity with the insurgents' cause or from those who are disenchanted with the system due to their political, economic or social marginalization.² Alok K. Bohara, Neil J. Mitchell and Mani Nepal, while discussing the case study of Nepal, have found that poverty, political instability, newness of the state and the mountainous terrain are some of the conditions that favour insurgents against governments.³ This internal support base acts as a lifeline for the insurgents,


who can utilize it for recruiting new warriors, raising finances, conducting propaganda and for shelter purposes.  

Insurgents’ tactics and strategy are another important internal factor. They are designed to create a law and order situation problem for the perceived enemy, thus affecting the latter’s legitimacy. Ethan Bueno de Mesquita in his study has divided rebel tactics into two categories, conventional and irregular tactics. Conventional tactics are used when rebels have the capacity to mobilise a large number of fighters, while the irregular tactics, such as terrorism and guerrilla attacks are used when the rebels cannot muster a large quantum of support and fighters. If a rebel group has attained the success with the help of irregular tactics it can attract more public support by convincing the general population of its strength. Reed M Wood also emphasises that if an insurgent group use more violence it conveys the message of the group’s strength and in this way can compel and attract more popular support for the purpose of insurgency.

Along with internal sources, there can be certain external sources which play an important role in the success of an insurgency. A RAND Corporation study, *Trends in Outside Support Structure for Insurgent Movements*, discusses several forms of international and cross-border support, which can play an important role in the success of an insurgency. This support can take several forms: safe havens and transit facilities, financial resources, political support and propaganda, direct military support in training and logistics, and inspirational support. Idean Salehyan’s study identifies three factors that can sustain an insurgency: availability of external bases, 

---

7 Ibid.  
support by the refugees and by the friendly neighbouring states.\textsuperscript{10} He is of the opinion that sanctuaries in neighbouring states not only provide favourable conditions for insurgents, but also introduce new actors in bargaining processes between insurgents and the government concerned. This very factor further exacerbates the problem.

In this context, extensive research has been conducted on the role of the Tamil diaspora, whose massive, especially financial, support to the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) is believed to have been the key factor that enabled the LTTE to hold out for so long against the Sri Lankan government.\textsuperscript{11} The LTTE’s network is spread across 40 countries and considered as the economic backbone of the organization. It has also generated tremendous political and diplomatic support for the Tamil cause across the globe.\textsuperscript{12} Even with regard to the contemporary insurgency in Iraq, it has been suggested time and again that policies should be adopted that do not allow the insurgents to make and strengthen cross-border contacts for logistical and financial purposes. For example, Paul Staniland suggests that US forces should implement strict border control in order to prevent cross-border support to the rebels.\textsuperscript{13}

One important aspect regarding the sources of the success of insurgencies which is relevant for the present study is insurgents’ exploitation of local opportunities available in their favour. While much attention has been paid to the internal and external sources of insurgency (as discussed above) very little has been discussed about how insurgents exploit local conditions to revive and strengthen themselves. For example, Mahindra Lawoti’s study discusses the sources of the rise of the Maoist insurgency in Nepal and observes that, although there were fertile conditions like poverty and socio-economic inequality in Nepal since long, the insurgents gathered momentum


\textsuperscript{12} Fair, “Diaspora Involvement in Insurgencies”, 125-126.

only when they exploited those conditions wisely in their favour to emerge as a movement. As he rightly states,

The existence of fertile conditions alone does not explain the rise of Maoist rebellion. Unless a committed group exploits favourable conditions to build an organization and engage in large scale mobilization, a successful rebellion may not occur.\textsuperscript{14}

There is a dearth of literature which explores this particular aspect to explain the rise, resurgence and success of an insurgency, especially in the contemporary context where several post-conflict states are seeing the revival of anti-state movements. The present study will attempt to fill that gap.

\textit{Existing Explanations for the Revival of the Taliban}

The Taliban-led insurgency is no exception. Its survival and success have largely been attributed to both internal and external factors. Post-9/11, Afghanistan's internal conditions are at times regarded as an important factor behind the Taliban resurgence.\textsuperscript{15} Antonio Giustozzi in his widely acclaimed book, \textit{Koran, Kalashnikov and Laptop: The Neo-Taliban Insurgency in Afghanistan}, provides a vivid account of how the Taliban exploited the Afghan government's failures, particularly the rampant corruption and poor governance, to recruit more fighters and to bankroll their insurgency.\textsuperscript{16} Though the writer considers the alleged support to the Taliban by Pakistan and Iran to be of some significance, he does not discuss the failure of reconstruction and development efforts as a source of the resurgence of the Taliban in Afghanistan.\textsuperscript{17} Other recent studies have discussed the international community’s flawed approach, especially with regard to

\textsuperscript{17} Ibid., 1-8.
the governance and security sector reforms, as factors contributing to the Taliban resurgence in Afghanistan.\textsuperscript{18}

Another study by Giustozzi, titled “Thirty Years of Conflict: Drivers of Anti-Government Mobilization in Afghanistan 1979-2011,” concludes that social, ethnic and economic divisions which had existed well before October 2001 – between the urban and the rural, Pashtuns and non-Pashtuns, and the poor and the rich – were further deepened and widened due to the negligence or wrong policies of the Afghan government. The Taliban took full advantage of the situation and mainly recruited disenchanted Afghan youth to fight against the US and NATO-ISAF forces.\textsuperscript{19}

Shehzad H. Qazi, attributes the success of the Taliban to their success in exploiting “local grievances to win allies.”\textsuperscript{20} The Karzai government's indulgence in massive political nepotism, which alienated several Pashtun tribes, provided the Taliban with an opportunity to develop local support bases in the countryside and helped them win new recruits to the insurgency and build a strong intelligence network.\textsuperscript{21}

Thomas M. Johnson and M. Chris Mason have attributed the success of the Taliban-led insurgency to internal factors such as lack of state formation in Afghanistan, absence of security, especially in the rural areas, and disengagement of the people of the South from any


reconstruction and development policy.\textsuperscript{22} Similarly, an International Crisis Group (ICG) study, “The Insurgency in Afghanistan’s Heartland”, has recommended that Afghan citizens should be provided with basic security and other needs. It has underlined the need to strengthen the state and its institutions in order to defeat the insurgency\textsuperscript{23}

Yet another important internal factor that has been widely discussed as a source of the Taliban revival is poppy cultivation and illicit drug trafficking, which has financially benefitted the Taliban.\textsuperscript{24} Drug money has not only bankrolled the Taliban insurgency, but has also helped them increase their political influence by facilitating the drug trade throughout the country.\textsuperscript{25} Absence or lack of alternative economic opportunities, corruption in Afghan society and the warlords’ quest for expanding their political power base are considered factors that gave a boost to poppy cultivation and illicit drug trafficking in post-Bonn Afghanistan. James L. Jones has shown how unemployment compels Afghans to turn towards poppy cultivation. Lack of economic alternatives has thus been a major cause of the increase in poppy production.\textsuperscript{26}

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\end{thebibliography}
An additional argument explaining the Taliban’s success, although supported by a very small number of researchers, gives credit to the mountainous terrain of the country, which is suitable for a guerrilla or insurgent movement and has made Afghanistan a graveyard of empires.\textsuperscript{27}

Along with these internal conditions, other factors that have been extensively debated and discussed in media as well as academia are the alleged external support to the Taliban insurgency by the regional countries. Some reports have pointed towards Iran and elements in Pakistan’s Army in particular, especially its infamous spy agency, the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), as providing covert support to the insurgency. Similarly, the establishment of sanctuaries by the Taliban in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and the Balochistan province of Pakistan and cross-border attacks are regarded as important factor in the resurgence of the Taliban in the war-torn country.\textsuperscript{28}

FATA is a semi-autonomous region, which is located in the northwest Pakistan and straddles the Pakistan-Afghanistan border (also known as the Durand Line). It comprises of seven tribal Agencies: Bajaur, Mohmand, Khyber, Kurram, Orakzai, North Waziristan and South Waziristan Agencies. The Bajaur Agency shares a border with the Kunar Province, while the Mohmand Agency straddles along the Kunar and Ningarhar provinces of Afghanistan. The Khyber Agency abuts the Ningarhar province and the Kurram Agency is located alongside the Ningarhar, Paktia and Khost provinces of Afghanistan. Similarly, the North Waziristan Agency shares a border with Khost and Paktika provinces, while the South Waziristan Agency abuts the Paktika province of Afghanistan. The Orakzai Agency is the only one which does not share a border with Afghanistan.

Several academicians and journalists have discussed various aspects of Pakistan’s alleged support to the Afghan Taliban, which was instrumental in their resurgence. The government of

Pakistan has remained suspicious of Afghanistan’s irredentist claims on Pakistan’s Pashtun-inhabited Northwestern regions and has always feared the rise of Pashtun nationalism in Afghanistan and Pakistan. The Afghan Pashtuns inhabiting the South, Southeast and Eastern parts of Afghan territory have always desired that the Pashtuns living in FATA, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan province of Pakistan may either form a Pashtun dominated area called Pashtunistan or integrate with Afghanistan. Pakistan therefore found it convenient to support religious elements in both Afghanistan and the Pashtun areas in Pakistan In an attempt to undermine Pashtun nationalism the slogans of “Islam” and “Jihad” by the Pakistani government during the 1980s proved helpful in attaining their objectives. But the same policy helped in radicalising the Pashtun population on both sides of the Pakistan-Afghanistan border. Pakistan continued to retain a policy of supporting religious elements, including the Taliban, after the withdrawal of Soviet troops from the country. Over the course of time, Pakistan’s strategy to counter Pashtun nationalism on its Western border on the one hand by penetrating deeper into Afghanistan with the help of its proxies, and warding off any threat from India on its Eastern border came to be known as the policy of “strategic depth”.

When the Taliban first emerged in Afghanistan in 1994, Pakistan’s alleged support for them is said to have been dictated by the notion of “strategic depth,” which it has been pursuing in Afghanistan since the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979. Post-9/11, Pakistan is widely perceived as using the Taliban as a strategic asset in the wake of any sudden withdrawal of foreign troops from the war-ravaged country. However, such reports remain unsubstantiated so far due to lack of cogent evidence. Even if these reports are accepted at face value, the nature and extent of support extended by Pakistan to the Taliban remains unknown.

---


30 Ibid.

This same argument has been expressed by Carlotta Gall in her recent book on the sources of failure of the US policy in Afghanistan. According to Gall, the reason behind consistent and multiplying problems in Afghanistan in the form of revival of Taliban insurgency and increasing socio-economic problems are due to the wrong approach being pursued by the US. According to her, the US should concentrate its efforts on Pakistan instead of Afghanistan. Pakistan has supported the Taliban due to its strategic calculations and concerns vis-à-vis India. However, this policy has only harmed the people in Pakistan who have become victims of the terrorism.32

The US and Pakistan’s support to the Afghan Mujahideen during the 1980s against the Soviet Union nourished a culture of militarism and Islamic extremism in the FATA region. Even after the Soviet withdrawal the jihadi elements especially foreigners belonging to al-Qaeda stayed back in Afghanistan and the adjacent FATA and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. This very factor also facilitated the Afghan Taliban to establish terrorist safe havens in the Pakistani border region.33 After the US-led coalition launched Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) against the Taliban and al-Qaeda in October 2001, many Taliban and al-Qaeda leaders took refuge in the Afghanistan-Pakistan border region –FATA (Pakistan) and the Tora Bora mountainous area (Ningarhar Province in Afghanistan). Gradually, the non-local and foreign militants entrenched themselves in FATA and also initiated a recruitment campaign not only in FATA, but in urban centres of Pakistan like Karachi and Peshawar. The main recruitment is said to have been done through the religious madrassas situated all over Pakistan.34 These fresh recruits were later allegedly brought to FATA for training purposes to prepare them to fight against the US and ISAF troops in Afghanistan.35

The alleged presence of the core Taliban leadership in Quetta, commonly referred to by the Western press as the Quetta Shura, is believed to have played a vital role in the Taliban’s re-

34 Warran, “Madrassa Education in Pakistan”.
35 Qazi, “The Neo-Taliban”.
emergence in Afghanistan. However, whether these activities are state-sponsored is yet to be determined. To date, there is no substantial evidence available of the Afghan Taliban maintaining or running permanent training camps in Balochistan province in particular and in the entire country in general.

Another important Afghan militant group believed to have found sanctuaries in FATA since 1980s is the Haqqani Network. The Network is based in the North Waziristan Agency, and reportedly enjoys protection and support from the ISI as well as other Pakistani militant leaders such as Hafiz Gul Bahadur and Mullah Nazir. This support has helped the Network in expanding insurgent operations in the Afghan provinces of Logar, Wardak and Kabul. These areas are beyond their traditional stronghold in Paktia, Paktika and Khost.

These Afghan and foreign militant groups were able to carve out sanctuaries in FATA and Balochistan not only due to their geographical proximity and US and Pakistani support during the Soviet-Afghan jihad, but also because of the Pashtun population’s sympathies for their ethnic kin across the border. Hassan Abbas, in his book *The Taliban Revival*, has narrated various sources of the Taliban revival in Afghanistan. He is of the opinion that it is the common ethnic composition of the area inhibited by the Pashtuns on both sides of the Afghanistan-Pakistan border that has helped the Taliban to regroup. And the additional help and support by the Pakistan Army and ISI along with the US failure in bringing good governance in Afghanistan has further strengthened the Taliban.

---


40 Ibid.
Ahmed Rashid, in his book *Descent into Chaos: The World’s Most Unstable Region and the Threat to Global Security*, has also highlighted the element of trust deficit on the part of Pakistan Army vis-a-vis the US. Rashid is of the opinion that the Pakistani Army, worried about the US commitment to Afghanistan, especially after the US invaded Iraq, thought it prudent to continue to support the Taliban.\(^41\) Moreover, the overemphasis of the US on capturing and killing al-Qaeda militants and the American failure to commit ground troops for operations in Afghanistan further added to the mistrust of the Pakistan Army and they continued their support for the Taliban in order to preserve their interests in Afghanistan in case of US withdrawal.\(^42\)

*Post-Conflict Reconstruction and the Resurgence of the Taliban*

Although the post conflict reconstruction of Afghanistan is one of the widely discussed themes in the post-9/11 literature on the country, there is no major study on the role of inadequate post-conflict reconstruction as a factor in the resurgence of the Taliban. Transitional justice is one theme which is time and again referred to as the source of creating feasible conditions for the Taliban to garner public support. For example, Stephen Carter and Kate Clark discuss how the failure of the transitional justice system has benefited the Taliban, arguing that the people, dissatisfied with the Afghan Government and its international allies, become an easy target of the Taliban’s recruitment policy.\(^43\) Focusing on case studies of Helmand, Kandahar and Badghis, the analysis highlights the role of injustice and the absence of rule of law in the resurgence of the Taliban. It is one of the few studies which shows the impact of an inadequate justice system in Afghanistan on the overall security of the country.


\(^{42}\) Ahmed Rashid, *Descent into Chaos*, 240-241.

Most of the literature which discusses the weaknesses and inadequacies of PCR in the Afghan context does not link these with the resurgence of the Taliban. For example, there is a vast literature on international actors' efforts towards ensuring peace and security in Afghanistan through aid. One of the few works which criticizes these efforts is that of Jonathan Goodhand, who sheds light on aid patterns in Afghanistan in historical perspective and also highlights the possible negative effects of aid and international financial assistance on Afghan state and society. He is critical of the limited impact of aid on the Afghan state, owing to its history of being a rentier state, where the state’s major source of revenue is foreign aid and there is a limited connection between the state and its citizens. In his view, that problem has been further aggravated because of the improper timing and limited distribution of aid money.44

On the basis of the historical record, Goodhand is not very optimistic about the role of foreign aid and assistance in the restoration of peace in Afghanistan. There are others, however, who do not criticize aid per se, arguing instead for more aid. These scholars find fault largely with the way aid has been disbursed in Afghanistan.45 They highlight several problem areas with regard to international assistance in Afghanistan.46 A significant problem is the gap between commitments and actual delivery in the reconstruction process. A March 2004 study by the Centre on International Cooperation of the New York University provided detailed figures of the economic assistance committed by the donor community as well as states involved in the process.47 Lack of coordination among various international actors is another problem area. Amin Saikal’s study of the role of ISAF in Afghanistan highlights the issue of lack of

coordination and policy differences between the US and its NATO allies. Peter Marsden’s study elaborates on another important aspect; the disagreement among various international actors over prioritizing issue areas in the reconstruction process. For example, the United Kingdom was in favour of assistance to the interim government “to help it get on its feet”, whereas others actors were concerned that the Afghan government might not have the ability to use large-scale funds or execute plans. But none of these studies has linked the failed, faulty and weak aid structure with the revival of the Taliban-led insurgency.

**Post-conflict Reconstruction: Ingredients for Success**

Post-conflict reconstruction is the process of putting the state’s machinery back in order with the international community’s help after a violent conflict. It is not a new concept. Some scholars trace its origin to the post-World War II reconstruction of Japan and Germany. The term was first used in a 1995 World Bank study which described it as a process of “transition from conflict to peace in an affected country through the rebuilding of the socioeconomic framework of the society.” In his edited volume on nation-building in Afghanistan and Iraq, Francis Fukuyama defined PCR as “the first phase of nation-building, which applies to failed states after violent conflict and where the international community has to provide security and all essential needs and services.”

---

The existing literature agrees that security, political, economic and judicial reforms, often regarded as the four pillars of PCR, are required for successful reconstruction and transformation in post-conflict states. All these reforms should aim to prevent the revival of conflict and to strengthen local capacity for running the state machinery. Christopher J. Coyne defines the successful reconstruction process in post-conflict states as “the achievement of a self-sustaining liberal democratic, economic and social order that does not rely on outside assistance in terms of monetary and military support.” While discussing the various factors behind the UN success and failure in peacekeeping operations, Darya Pushkina testifies that consistent UN commitment, absence of any kind of external support to the belligerents, active participation by a major power, support by regional organizations, active diplomacy, commitment by the warring parties to bring peace by non-violent means, presence of balanced force and long-term commitment by the mission are some factors that can make a peacekeeping mission a success.

For the purpose of this study, a successful post-conflict reconstruction is a project that ensures the strength of local capacity by implementing economic, political, judicial and security reforms simultaneously and not at the cost of each other and for the twin purposes of bringing long-term peace and avoiding the revival of conflict.

The literature emphasizes that any PCR operation will be successful when there is no revival of and deterioration in conflict. A study by the Bern-based Swiss Peace Foundation on the interrelationship between post-conflict socioeconomic recovery and recurrence of conflict links the latter with pre-conflict conditions, which may “generate new divisions, new hatreds, and new

55 Ibid.
potential for future conflict.” Moreover, during the course of a conflict, certain groups may arise whose interest would lie in sustaining the conflict. These groups, which may consist of weapon smugglers and drug traffickers, can threaten the peace in post-conflict states. The study underlines the need to implement reconstruction policies within a particular time frame, which it defines as the “first decade in post-conflict recovery,” in order to avoid the resurgence of violence. This is a fundamental pre-requisite for maintaining the peace and growth required for socioeconomic recovery in the course of PCR implementation.

Determinants of a Successful Post-Conflict Reconstruction Process

A major chunk of the literature dealing with post-conflict reconstruction usually provides a list of important tasks to be performed in post-conflict states. This literature can further be divided into two broad categories. One provides guidelines and frameworks on what needs to be done while reconstructing post-conflict states. Another draws upon past experiences of reconstruction in post-conflict states to analyse the determinants of a successful PCR.

The United States Institute of Peace (USIP), in collaboration with the US Army Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute, published “Guiding Principles for Stabilization and Reconstruction” in 2009. The document discusses the basics of the post-conflict reconstruction and what needs to be done vis-a-vis security sector reforms (SSR), justice and reconciliation, governance and participation, economic stabilization, infrastructure and humanitarian assistance, and social wellbeing. The Guidelines emphasize that all the pillars should be given equal

---

60 Ibid.
61 Ibid.
importance when initiating stabilization operation, and that both international and local actors should work together to achieve the targets of any such mission.64

Another important framework has been developed by the US State Department under the title “Post-Conflict Reconstruction Essential Tasks”.65 This framework identifies important tasks that need to be accomplished in the fields of security, governance and participation, humanitarian assistance and social well-being, economic stabilization and infrastructure and justice and reconciliation for ensuring stability in post-conflict states.66

The Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) and the Association of the United States Army (AUSA) jointly produced a study titled “Post-Conflict Reconstruction: Task Framework” in 2002 which threw light on the required tasks under four pillars of PCR to avoid the resurgence of conflict.67

All such frameworks provide details about what needs to be done to achieve the objectives of any reconstruction operation, but none of them focuses on any particular country’s experience. There is however, other literature available which draws lessons from various reconstruction efforts of the past. For instance, Ashraf Ghani and Clare Lockhart, in their book Fixing Failed States: A Framework for Rebuilding a Fractured World, have provided several recommendations on how to make international assistance more beneficial in post-conflict weak and failing states, with special focus on the experience of Afghanistan.68 This literature can be further divided according to two broader themes: one focusing on the planning and coordination of reconstruction operations and the other on institution building.

The Draft Policy Framework for Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development (PCRD) prepared by the African Union (AU) aims at improving the “timeliness, effectiveness and

---

64 Ibid.
65 “Post-Conflict Reconstruction Essential Tasks”
66 Ibid.
67 “Post-Conflict Reconstruction: Task Framework” May 2002
coordination of activities in post conflict countries and to lay the foundation for social justice and sustainable peace, in line with Africa’s vision of renewal and growth”. In other words, it is a document focusing solely on experiences attained in Africa and on the needs of post-conflict sustainable peace and reconstruction on that continent.

In his article on “Security Sector Reform under International Tutelage in Sierra Leone,” Osman Gbla argues that SSR can be sustainable only if the process is owned by the Sierra Leoneans. He further argues that there should be no coordination deficit among various international organizations involved in the security reconstruction of the country. Moreover, there is a need to “go beyond the limited objective of retraining and restructuring formal security institutions and focus on strengthening the oversight capacities of the parliament, judiciary and civil society.”

Darini Rajasingham-Senanayake compares the cases of Aceh and Sri Lanka and concludes that, for Aceh-like success, there must be “a mix of elements of ethno-religious identity,” and that such conflicts need “multi-dimensional solutions and inclusive peace building.” Pierre Englebert and Denis M. Tull explore obstacles to a successful reconstruction in the failed states of sub-Saharan Africa. According to them, the assumption that Western state institutions can be successfully transplanted in Africa or the idea that “one-size-fits-all” does not allow successful reconstruction to materialise. Another reason that hindered the success of reconstruction in these states was a lack of coordination between donors and target states. Finally, lack of will and resources paved the way for failure of post-conflict reconstruction in African states.

A joint study by US Army, Air Force and Naval officers, which evaluates their respective experiences in Haiti, Bosnia and Kosovo, recommends that, in order to avoid mission failures in

---

71 Ibid., 91.
74 Ibid., 10-111.
the reconstruction process, there is a need for thorough civil-military coordination before and during the process. Such coordination should properly define “parameters such as infrastructure requirements, coalition mandates, and the presence of unique cultural issues” to ensure success.\textsuperscript{75}

The 9/11 incident highlighted the implications of state failure for global peace and security. For bringing normalcy in post-9/11 Afghanistan and Iraq, policy makers and researchers have provided several suggestions. One important aspect of the debate is to incorporate the civilian development and reconstruction agendas in these two countries particularly and other post-conflict, fragile and failed states generally, into the broader military role of the international community working under the auspices of counterinsurgency (COIN).\textsuperscript{76} The rationale behind establishing Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) in Afghanistan and Iraq is to properly and efficiently coordinate military and civilian cooperation for achieving political and economic reconstruction objectives of COIN.\textsuperscript{77} Improving the civil side of COIN can prove substantially beneficial in enhancing the legitimacy and effectiveness of the government and thus can win the confidence of the people against the rebels or insurgents.\textsuperscript{78}

An article by Nora Bensahel criticizes the absence of any pre-war planning in the case of Iraq. She mentions other factors as well such as “dysfunctional interagency process, overly optimistic


assumptions, and a lack of contingency planning for alternative outcomes” as the major reason for the bad experience in Iraq.\textsuperscript{79}

Another study done by Andrew Rathmell, titled “Planning Post-Conflict Reconstruction: What Can We Learn From Iraq?”, discusses the need for efficient institutions for properly using available resources for reconstruction purposes and highlights the problems that arose due to the inadequacy of such institutions in Iraq.\textsuperscript{80} Based on the Iraq experience, he emphasizes that the lack of proper policy and institutions in post-war Iraq became a major cause for not utilizing the available financial and other help made available by the international community. This factor did not allow the PCR process to attain its objective of a stable and peaceful Iraq.\textsuperscript{81}

Similarly, several studies discuss the case of inadequate post-conflict reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan. Peter J. Middlebrook and Sharon M. Miller in their analysis of Afghanistan’s experience of state building, provide a list of tasks that need to be performed for achieving the objective of state stability.\textsuperscript{82} The main focus of their paper is on aid effectiveness in the light of the post-Bonn experience. The paper suggests that political normalization is very important to lay the economic and social foundations for the stability of any post-conflict state. The purpose of the international economic aid should be to create a safe environment for economic policies and growth. The article further suggests that local capacity building should be a priority task during PCR.

A similar study by Anders Tang Friborg, which evaluates post-Bonn Agreement lessons, makes the following recommendations. All parties should agree on the objectives to be achieved; security should be given priority in order to attain political and economic stability; the


\textsuperscript{81} Ibid.

international military presence should ensure security against the revival of militant groups; the patterns of civil-military cooperation under Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) should be replicated in other cases as well; former combatants should be disarmed immediately after the cessation of violence; good governance and judicial reforms carry equal weight in restoring and maintaining peace; and finally, the concerns of regional states should be addressed.\(^{83}\)

While discussing the ingredients of a successful post-conflict reconstruction, there is also a need to understand and analyse essential tasks which need to be undertaken while conceptualising the reconstruction process in post-conflict states. Moreover, there is also a need to evaluate various tasks to successfully transform a post-conflict state into a peaceful one under the security and non-security elements of the reconstruction process.

**Significance of Proper Conceptualization of Post-Conflict Reconstruction**

The literature on transition, reconstruction and post-conflict development acknowledges the complexity of the task of reconstructing war-torn societies. It recommends that the process should be initiated properly with the stated objectives that are clearly envisioned and well-defined. However, the reconstruction process is usually conceptualized with either overstated or neglected goals.\(^{84}\) Setting short-term objectives and the failure to properly define the roles of military and civilian actors usually affect the process in a negative way.\(^{85}\) If there is little or no understanding at all of what needs to be done in the beginning, the window of opportunity to bring reforms can be easily wasted. This is why utmost significance should be given to proper conceptualization. At the same time, there is also a need to keep an element of flexibility in the process in order to adjust to a fluid post-conflict situation.


In a United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) study, Post Conflict Needs Assessment (PCNA) is regarded as the baseline for transforming any violent society or state into a peaceful one. The first-order priorities for any nation-building mission are public security and humanitarian assistance. If the most basic human needs for safety, food, and shelter are not met, any money spent on political or economic development will be wasted.

After conceptualization, the next step is proper implementation of both the security and non-security aspects of reconstruction in post-conflict states. The requirements for success in both of these aspects are discussed in the following section.

**Ingredients of Success for the Security Reconstruction Policies**

Security-related policies of reconstruction are usually envisioned under SSR, which aims to develop a safe and stable environment in a post-conflict state by building civil and military institutions and imparting training to police, army and intelligence personnel. SSR is a relatively new concept, originally introduced by development donors in the late 1990s. The concept was introduced at a time when the world was witnessing an increase in the

---


peacekeeping, peace building or peace enforcement roles of international military forces.\textsuperscript{89} The security needs of post-conflict states generally require peacekeepers or peace providers to address issues of “public safety, particularly the establishment of a safe and secure environment and the development of legitimate and stable security institutions.”\textsuperscript{90} Though scholarly opinion is divided vis-à-vis the challenges and priorities involved in implementing an SSR program, there is consensus on the core of an SSR package being the provider and guarantor of security of common people.\textsuperscript{91}

In the absence of security, other reconstruction tasks such as economic well-being, social stability and political transformation cannot be successfully executed and implemented.\textsuperscript{92} (Please see the “Conceptual Diagram” in the Chapter One). For any post-conflict state, it is necessary to resume the role of its own security forces and other relevant civil and military institutions if it is to avoid the revival of conflict. This is why effective SSR is a prerequisite for the success of post-conflict reconstruction.\textsuperscript{93} The United Nations also stresses that SSR in post-conflict environments is “critical to the consolidation of peace and stability, alleviating poverty, strengthening rule of law and good governance, expanding legitimate state authority and preventing countries from relapsing into conflict.”\textsuperscript{94} Conflicts and post-conflict scenarios differ from one another but the general objectives of the “post-conflict security transition agenda” are


\textsuperscript{90} Ibid., 97-98.

\textsuperscript{91} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{92} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{93} Ibid.

the prevention of recurrent conflict, establishment of rule of law, democratization, sustainable development, and transferring security responsibilities to the indigenous organizations.  

A major part of the relevant literature focuses on “what-to-do” lists for making SSR a success. Herbert Wulf emphasizes the role of democratic institutions and their transparency as a recipe for the success for SSR. He asserts that democratic institutions should exist and there must be general respect for such institutions by the government, civil servants and security actors to make SSR a success.  

The Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF), in its study on “Security Sector Reform in Post-Conflict Peace-building,” provides a list of conditions that can ensure success while reconstructing a post-conflict state. A capable and determined leadership, a positive role played by regional and global actors, and the existence of a small number of warring parties with less access to loot-able and exportable economic resources are some of the ingredients of success of SSR. The study also illustrates that SSR success can be assessed by measuring the reduction of violence, economic growth, improved security professionalism and the degree of local ownership. 

A UN study states there must be a constitutional framework, which should provide a legal umbrella to security actors, both international and national, in order to ensure respect for the rule of law. Such a framework will guarantee “transparent mechanisms for interaction amongst security actors,” thereby paving the way for long-lasting peace and stability.

---

96 Ibid.  
98 Ibid.  
99 Ibid.  
The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), in its handbook on SSR, “Security Sector Reforms: Supporting Security and Justice,” emphasizes the importance of clearly stated objectives and policies in the formulation of SSR, the presence of competent leadership and institutional capacity with oversight, and cross-government training and support as prerequisites for a successful SSR.  

The study further illustrates that “i) democratic oversight and accountability; ii) defence reform; iii) intelligence and security services reform; iv) border management; v) policing; vi) justice (judicial and legal) reform; vii) prisons; viii) private security and military companies; and ix) civil society engagement” are some of the other conditions for transforming war-torn fragile states into stable and peaceful ones.

David M. Law discusses six case studies of Afghanistan, Haiti, Bosnia, Kosovo, Sierra Leone and Timor Leste to evaluate the impact of international actors on the outcome of SSR. He is of the view that the outcome of SSR can be influenced positively if the following considerations are given attention. First, there should be support from both the leadership and the general public for SSR in the donor countries and in the countries providing political and material support for such programmes. Second, there is a need to devise a proper strategy to reconstruct the security sector successfully. Third, there should not be a coordination deficit among the major actors involved in any such programme both at the decision making and the operational levels. And finally, there should be sufficient resource allocation for internationally-led SSR.

Despite numerous challenges, all agree on the significance of the international role in promoting SSR in post-conflict scenarios. International actors get involved in SSR under three main circumstances. In some cases, international security intervention occurs after adoption of

102 Ibid.
international peace agreements, as in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in Macedonia. Sometimes, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) provides a mandate for international interim administrations as in the case of Afghanistan, Kosovo and Sierra Leone. Finally, international security assistance is required in particular circumstances where a ceasefire and SSR are mediated or backed by international actors, as in Tajikistan, Nagorno-Karabakh and Northern Ireland. Whatever the circumstances, the literature agrees on the critically important role of international security assistance for successful SSR, which may vary in nature and extent from conflict to conflict.

For the success of SSR, equal responsibility can be given to the host nation, along with an active and effective role assigned to the international actors involved in the process. Robert Egnell and Peter Halden in their study emphasize that a legitimate state order and functioning state institutions are important conditions for a successful SSR.

Within the parameters of SSR, the effective role of police and the efficiency of DDR programmes are the two themes which have been attracting growing scholarly attention. Some authors have separately discussed the factors that can lead to successful police reforms and DDR policies as a contributing factor in the success of SSR in particular and of PCR in general. Johannes Loh, in his work “Success Factor for the Police Reforms in Post-Conflict Situations” describes in detail the determinants of success of police reforms. He compares the case studies of Sierra Leone and DR Congo to determine why police reforms succeeded in one case, but failed in the other, concluding that the active role played by the leadership, capacity building at managerial level, integration of junior level officers in the reform process, sustainable assistance, and interaction with the civil society for building a positive image were some of the reasons that

106 Ibid.
helped police reforms succeed in Sierra Leone. On the other hand, the absence of these factors largely accounted for the failure of police reforms in DR Congo.

Another important element of the SSR is judicial sector reforms, which hold significance for maintaining law and order across post-conflict states. Transitional justice can be defined as a way by which emerging democracies or post-conflict societies deal with the legacy of past human rights abuses perpetrated or permitted by former authoritarian regimes.110

Justice refers to policies and strategies aimed at addressing the immediate cessation of conflict, reconciliation, addressing victims’ needs, and, ideally, ensuring accountability for atrocities and crimes committed, directly and indirectly, of all – from individual perpetrators to those orchestrating the conditions and mandates associated with the crimes committed. This is both similar to and compatible with the United Nations 2004 definition of transitional justice which includes “the full range of processes and mechanisms associated with a society’s attempts to come to terms with a legacy of large-scale past abuses, in order to ensure accountability, serve justice and achieve reconciliation”.111

The justice and reconciliation reforms process not only includes elements about building law enforcement structures, but also has a long-term aim of building and implementing a justice system, which should eliminate the causes leading to future conflicts or state failure. It is one of the most challenging tasks because the local population and legal system can have different approaches to human rights and law. For instance, many Muslim countries use Sharia Law, which is different from Western Law. Security and governance pillars are crucial for supporting and providing conditions conducive to justice and reconciliation. However, an efficient justice system cannot be sustained if social and economic well-being are not ensured.

Transitional justice, whether part of the larger SSR policy or implemented on its own, plays a very important role in ensuring peace and stability in the post-conflict states. Paul Van Zyle has outlined some policy options to be considered for a result-oriented justice reforms system in the peacebuilding process, such as consideration of the local political situation, consensus from all stakeholders, introduction of transitional justice reforms in the peace agreement, and capacity building of local stakeholders in the field of justice reforms.\(^\text{112}\)

*Ingredients of Success of Non-Security Reconstruction Policies*

Non-security reconstruction policies can be further divided into two broad categories: political and economic reconstruction. An important aspect of the non-security reconstruction framework is governance and political participation. It is also one of the most widely discussed themes in post-conflict situations. Political stability is a prerequisite for peace restoration and sustainability.\(^\text{113}\) In political reconstruction process, the state institutions are rebuilt and reformed and a representative government structure is established to ensure equal participation from all segments of the society. The process is responsible for restoring public confidence by establishing and ensuring legitimacy of the government and its institutions, which is a vital factor in avoiding state failure.\(^\text{114}\) It is important to have a strong political basis for a post-conflict state to ensure the smooth running of the state and to support other security and socioeconomic reforms.\(^\text{115}\)


Several steps, such as establishing an interim authority, drafting a constitution, holding elections, and building and strengthening state institutions, are needed for the successful political transition of post-conflict states. A study by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat identifies the following steps that need to be taken for adequate PCR in post-conflict states.\(^{116}\) First, “effectiveness of public administration and the promotion of an efficient, effective, transparent, accountable and innovative government that works in partnership with all stakeholders” must be ensured.\(^{117}\) Second, corruption and nepotism must be prevented at all levels while rebuilding appropriate governance and public administration institutions systems and mechanisms. And third, the efficiency of the public service must be ensured in providing services to the people for restoring their confidence in governance.

The academic literature is critical of the role of international actors, mainly for imposing models based on Western-style democracy in post-conflict states despite their different social, tribal and political cultures.\(^{118}\) This criticism notwithstanding, the literature maintains that in a post-conflict situation, it is the international community’s responsibility to support efforts aimed at bringing a “legitimate” government to power by holding elections and then enhancing the capacity of the new state.\(^{119}\) A 2005 Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) study has laid emphasis on the international role in all three dimensions of governance: security, politics and economics. But the study also stresses that identification and positive engagement of local actors in governance processes are prerequisites for the successful role of the international community.\(^{120}\)

---

117 Ibid.
119 Ibid.
120 Please see GTZ study on “Promoting Good Governance in Post-Conflict Societies”, 2014, [http://www2.gtz.de/dokumente/bib/05-0032.pdf](http://www2.gtz.de/dokumente/bib/05-0032.pdf) (accessed June 1, 2014).
Despite the significance of the political reconstruction it is a fact that the political reconstruction should be done along with security and economic transition so as the process is complete and comprehensive. (Please see the conceptual diagram in Chapter 1).

Since the concept of post-conflict reconstruction started to evolve in the post-Cold War era, most studies on the subject have emphasised the need to prioritize the socio-economic recovery of conflict-affected states. The definitional issues regarding what constitutes socio-economic recovery or reconstruction in a post-conflict situation are dealt with in a study conducted by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The study defines post-conflict economic recovery or reconstruction as a process which is “a mix of far-reaching economic, institutional, legal and policy reforms that allow war-torn countries to re-establish the foundations for self-sustaining development.”

There is a vast literature on the economic pillar of PCR. Several World Bank studies have outlined the framework for PCR processes in conflict or post-conflict states. The rationale of undertaking such studies by international organizations, particularly the World Bank and UNDP, was to redefine their role in the emerging security situation of the 1990s, when interstate conflicts had emerged as the main threat to global security. All of these studies recognized that peace and stability were important contributors to economic and social development, and that international aid can either exacerbate a conflict or help to transform the dynamics of a conflict, thereby contributing to peace building.

122 Ibid.
The social and economic well-being pillar of PCR provides emergency relief after the cessation of conflict in order to ensure restoration of basic services, such as education and health, for the war-weary populace. It also aims at laying the basis for sustainable economic development by initiating appropriate policies and establishing relevant institutions. Economic recovery is essential for providing a solid political and security base to a post-conflict state. Successful economic policies can win and sustain peoples’ confidence in the government, which minimises the chances of revival of violence.

Graciana del Castillo in “The Economics of Peace: Five Rules for Effective Reconstruction” has presented five important principles for attaining success on this front. First, the objective of peace should take precedence over the goal of economic development since no development can take place without peace. Second, economic reconstruction policies should be different from normal economic development policies. Third, aid management should be the responsibility of the host nation. And fourth, humanitarian and reconstruction aid should not be conflated. Castillo is of the opinion that several reconstruction operations failed because of a “development-as-usual” approach to reconstruction, lack of comprehensive planning, insufficient aid and assistance, and inadequacies in the policies of international organizations (e.g., the United Nations and international financial institutions) in dealing with the challenges of reconstruction.

Johanna Mendelson Forman maintains that the success of socio-economic reconstruction depends upon the reconstruction of infrastructure, creation of employment opportunities, establishing open markets, ensuring legal and regulatory reforms, establishing trade relations with other countries, and establishing transparent banking and financial institutions.

125 Forman, “Achieving Socioeconomic Well-Being in Post-Conflict Settings.”
128 Forman, “Achieving Socioeconomic Well-Being in Post-Conflict Settings.”
The literature agrees that proper analyses and goal setting before initiating any economic reconstruction policy are imperative for the success of PCR. Also, there is a need to keep the policy simple and flexible in order to attain the objectives of economic and social reconstruction.129

Coordination between local and international actors is another factor deemed crucial for restoring sustainable peace and economic growth in war-torn countries. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) promotes the “community-based approach to stimulate economic activities in countries emerging from conflict.” If “local drivers” are involved, the process of recovery can be quick and efficient.130 The integration of the policies of various international actors involved in such situations is another important prerequisite for sustainable peace.131 The post-apartheid South African example of an integrated approach to governance could be applied as a model of coherent policy by multiple agencies for attaining peace objectives.132

There are ample research studies which recognized the role of the international aid to restore peace in fragile or failing states. Although, such studies may disagree on the volume of aid or the modes of delivering aid money to post-conflict states, but they agree on the relevance and significance of the aid in post-conflict states and consider economic assistance equally important as humanitarian and political assistance.133 For example, M. Panic in his study considers foreign aid vital to avoid the revival of conflict and restoring peace and stability in post-conflict states.

---

130 Ibid.
However, he contends that a proper institutional framework in the recipient countries is necessary for effective use of aid money.\(^{134}\)

The literature on the post-conflict reconstruction framework and its security and non-security aspects emphasizes the role of international actors as guarantors of peace and sustainable security. It sheds light also on the need to maintain a balance between the role of international and domestic actors in any reconstruction framework in post-conflict settings. Almost all studies agree that all conflicts are different from one another in their economic situation and potential, political system, bureaucratic capacities and the state of security in the country.\(^{135}\) So, before conceptualizing and implementing any post-conflict reconstruction framework, there is a need to develop a proper understanding of the conflict itself and the settings in which it took place. Without the role of international actors, any reconstruction and transition framework for the post-conflict state is almost impossible to conceive or implement fully and successfully. But the literature debates the extent of international involvement according to post-conflict needs.\(^{136}\)

**Gaps in the Literature**

The extensive literature reviewed above identifies a range of factors that facilitate the revival of insurgencies (including that of the Taliban) and hindered the PCR process. A major shortcoming apparent from the review is its failure to theoretically incorporate inadequacies in the conceptualisation and implementation of the post-conflict reconstruction framework explaining the revival of conflict. This study is an effort to improve understanding on this. The study will not only contribute to the analysis of post-conflict reconstruction frameworks, but also to the

---


theoretical understanding of why conflicts recur in post-conflict societies. Existing theories try to answer the following four questions in this regard:

i) Why did the original war start?
ii) How was the original war fought?
iii) How did the original war end? and
iv) What type of economic and political incentives are lacking in a post-conflict state?

The present study will elaborate on the last of the above mentioned points i.e., “lack of economic and political incentives for people after war” in the context of post-conflict reconstruction frameworks. It will show that a properly conceived post-conflict reconstruction agenda, which is sensitive to the nature and history of the relevant conflict and is backed by both the local and international actors, can prevent the recurrence of conflict. Afghanistan is an excellent laboratory for analysing and understanding the deficiencies in the conception and practice of post-conflict reconstruction processes because it has been witnessing one of the major international reconstruction drives of the present century. The study will thus contribute to the literature on the sources of protracted conflict in Afghanistan. It is also significant because, with much of the analysis of the Taliban insurgency focuses on the nature of the insurgency, the cross-border support it is said to receive from both state and non-state actors, and the coalition’s counterinsurgency strategies, there is a little critical appraisal of the role of the international community’s reconstruction efforts in post-9/11 Afghanistan. There is also a dearth of literature that explores and analyses the insurgents’ exploitation of available local opportunities in their favour for the revival of their movement. This study will add to that particular aspect in the literature on insurgencies.

Conclusion

The analysis of the current literature, especially on the sources of the rise of the Taliban in post-Bonn Afghanistan, provides room to explore and investigate a neglected dimension on the subject – the role of inadequate conceptualization and poor implementation of the security and

---

non-security reconstruction policies adopted by the international community. The following chapters will deal with the shortcomings in both security and non-security policies in the course of the reconstruction of Afghanistan and finally, link that faulty international approach to the revival of the Taliban.
CHAPTER 3: A History of Conflict and Instability in Afghanistan

Introduction

Afghanistan has gone through various phases of conflict and instability throughout its history. The purpose of this chapter is to highlight the features of Afghan polity that have contributed towards its instability. It argues that inherent weaknesses in Afghan polity - severe ethnic and tribal divisions, a rentier economy and an unfavourable geographical location, coupled with the negative fallout of Cold War related developments having direct bearing upon the country, are largely responsible for the conflict and instability that have beset Afghanistan for several decades.

Phases of Afghanistan’s Unstable Political History

The present day Afghanistan was conquered by various empires but none of them could establish a geographically demarcated and unified Afghan state. The emergence of Afghanistan as a tribal confederation can be traced back to 1747, when Ahmed Khan Abdali was able to conquer Kandahar and led various Pashtun tribes under one command.\(^1\) Ahmed Khan Abdali was from Sadduzai branch of the Popalzai Pashtuns who were a sub-tribe of the Abdalis. His honorary title *Durri-i-Durran* (pearl of the pearls), earned the name Durrani for the Abdali Pashtuns. He is known also as Ahmed Shah Durrani.\(^2\) Afghanistan's history between 1747 and September 11, 2001 can be divided into seven broad phases.

The first phase started with Ahmed Shah Durrani’s assumption of power in Afghanistan and his efforts to expand the Afghan territory. After coming into power, Ahmed Shah Durrani started expanding his rule beyond Kandahar and within a year captured Ghazni from the Ghilzai Pashtuns and Kabul from the Qizalbashs.\(^3\) His next target was the Indus valley which was under the Mughal rule. He was successful, by 1749, in uniting, for the first time, all the Pashtuns on both sides of the present day Pak-Afghan border. After completing his eastwards expansion, he

---

2. Ibid.
turned towards West and captured Herat from the Persian rulers. He culminated his westward expansion by incorporating Mashad in his empire.\(^4\) Focusing again on the East, he conquered the territories including present day Kashmir. He had conquered Delhi by 1757. But the rise of Sikhs and the constant resistance by Hindus against the Muslim rulers kept him engaged in power struggle over the Indian territories up until his death in 1772.\(^5\)

His son Timur Shah succeeded him in 1772. Although the Durrani empire remained intact during his rule, Timur Shah could not further his father’s legacy. Within two generations of Ahmed Shah’s death, his empire began to dissolve. The rise of Ranjit Singh in Peshawar and subsequent loss of Indian territories in the early nineteenth century resulted in a big loss of revenues for the Saddozai rulers of Afghanistan. The Afghan rulers were unable to pay the tribes – both foes and friends - to keep their rule consolidated.\(^6\)

In the beginning of the nineteenth century, external powers’ influence started to affect Afghanistan, and with this the country entered into second important phase of its history. The Persians under the Qajar dynasty were trying to assert control over parts of Persia and Herat. The Sikhs under the leadership of Ranjit Singh and with the support from their British masters extended their control on parts of present day Khyber Pukhtunkhwa areas, which had been under the Afghan rule since the time of Ahmed Shah Durrani.\(^7\) Both the Russian and British empires were expanding, which made Afghanistan equally important for both of them in their strategic calculation. “Whereas the British came to see the country as a defence line for their colonial interests, to the Russians it was considered a gate to British interests beyond Turkestan.”\(^8\) In the quest for control over Afghanistan, Britain fought three wars with the Afghans: first Anglo-Afghan war (1839-42), second Anglo-Afghan War (1878-80) and third Anglo-Afghan War (May 1919-August 1919).

\(^4\) Ibid., 72.
\(^5\) Ibid., 73.
\(^8\) Ibid.
During the 1830s, Britain was convinced that a weak and divided Afghanistan would be an easy prey for the Russians in their policy of expanding their sphere of influence. They supported Shah Shuja, grandson of Ahmed Shah Durrani, in his attempt to take the throne in 1834. Shah Shuja since very beginning was very close to the British and had received financial and military assistance from the British side in all his political overtures. In 1834 Shah Shuja, however was defeated by his rival, Dost Muhammad, who was supported by the Sikhs. Dost Muhammad engaged the British in a series of negotiations; while the negotiations were underway, Persian King, Shah Muhammad Mirza took over Herat in 1837 with the help of Russia. This provided a pretext for Britain to enter Afghanistan, which compelled Dost Muhammad to seek help from Persian and Russian sides, thereby antagonizing the British. The war continued for few years, and although British could not attain an outright victory, they were successful in neutralising Afghanistan and making it a buffer state. They started to pay the Afghan army and also signed two treaties of friendship in 1855 and 1857 respectively, which established regular ties between British India and Afghanistan.

Dost Muhammad’s son, Sher Ali, took control of the throne after five years of civil war and power struggle with his brothers. The British continued to support Sher Ali. With the British help, Sher Ali raised an army of 50,000 men, which he badly needed to strengthen his rule. After Sher Ali became confident of the constant British help, he wanted a guarantee of military assistance from Britain without interfering in internal affairs of Afghanistan, in case of Russians attack on Afghanistan. But British did not provide any such guarantee. Moreover, the Forward Policy of the British further increased the suspicions on part of Sher Ali. The Forward Policy was designed to increase Britain’s sphere of influence in order to counter Russian expansion by creating a buffer zone between the two.

Cold Shouldered by the British over repeated requests to protect Kabul against Russian moves, Sher Ali decided to abandon them. He received a Russian military delegation and refused to meet a British delegation at the same time. The constant Russian moves towards Afghanistan and

9 Shaista Wahab, A Brief History of Afghanistan, 80-82.
10 Ibid.
11 Ibid., 86.
12 Ibid., 86-87.
Kabul’s dwindling support to the British resulted in second Anglo-Afghan war. During the course of the war, the Treaty of Gandamak was signed in May 1879, which gave control of certain Afghan border territories to the British who also appointed their permanent mission in Kabul. In return, the British agreed to pay an annual stipend of 60,000 British pounds to the Amir and promised to extend support in case of any unprovoked foreign attack.\textsuperscript{13}

Within all this power jockeying, Afghanistan entered into third phase of its history, which was marked with the efforts to modernize the Afghan state and society through the introduction of several socio-economic and political reforms. Amir Abdur Rehman, who came into power immediately after the end of the Second Anglo-Afghan war, had no option of territorial expansion as he was confined on the South and Southeast by the British Empire and on the North by the Russian Empire. Hence he concentrated on nation-building in Afghanistan.\textsuperscript{14} It was Abdur Rehman, who first created several important institutions such as the Board of Treasury, the Board of Trade, the Bureau of Justice and Police, the Office of Records, the Office of Police Works, the Office of Posts and Communications, the Department of Education, the Department of Medicine, and several other cabinet ministries. These institutions existed, with slight changes in structure and work procedures, till Afghanistan came under the Soviet occupation in 1979.\textsuperscript{15}

Another important development that took place during his reign was the demarcation of Afghanistan’s borders. The Anglo-Russian boundary commission fixed the North Western frontier in Turkestan and another commission demarcated the Wakhan strip in the Northeast. These demarcations ensured that both Russian and British empires would not share a common border.\textsuperscript{16} The British Empire and the government of Amir Abdur Rehman also signed an agreement to demarcate the Durand line in 1893 to identify the Afghan boundary on the Southeastern border with British India. The boundary, Durand Line, was named after Sir Mortimer Durand, who headed the British delegation for negotiating the border demarcation with Afghanistan.

\textsuperscript{13} Ibid., 90.
\textsuperscript{14} Louis Dupree, \textit{Afghanistan}, 417.
\textsuperscript{15} Louis Dupree, \textit{Afghanistan}, 420-421.
\textsuperscript{16} Angelo Rasanayagam, \textit{Afghanistan: A Modern History}, 10.
Although, Amir Abdur Rehman’s reforms were implemented well throughout Afghanistan, a major issue with his reforms was his heavy handed implementation approach. He raised a strong army to quell the tribes along the borders and displaced the tribes geographically within Afghanistan to weaken them. He suppressed every opposition to his rule. His heavy handed approach towards his opponents earned him the title of “Iron Amir”. He also committed ethnic cleansing of Shia community in Hazara area. Throughout his reign, Amir Abdur Rehman remained dependent on the foreign economic support. In 1882, the British provided him 1.2 million Indian Rupees. In 1893, after the Durand Line was demarcated, British gave the Amir 1.8 million Indian rupees. At the time of demarcation of the Wakhan corridor in 1897, the Afghan king received 1.85 million Indian rupees from the Britain. The dependence on external financial support did not allow Amir Abdul Rehman to lay a strong foundation for the Afghan economy. Moreover, the repression of tribes and ethnicities also resulted in a shaky foundation for his reign. Such steps were evident of the Amir’s short-sightedness. That could be one of the reasons that despite Amir’s reforms and comparatively peaceful reign, he could not lay the foundations of a stable Afghan polity.

After a passage of almost two decades, Afghanistan once again experienced a reforms and modernization drive which too could not achieve the desired results. After the assassination of King Habibullah in 1921, King Amanullah assumed power after a bloody fight with his brother. He was inspired by the Turk reformist Kamal Attaturk and introduced reforms in educational and legal sectors and attempted to give them a secular orientation. The reforms sought to change the dress and behaviour codes by giving them Western touch, and to streamline the army and the national administration. His modernization drive directly targeted the tribal Pashtun and Islamic culture. His reforms alienated the religiously-oriented and tribal majority population of Afghanistan. As he commanded a weak army, his rule was limited to the heart of Afghanistan, unlike his grandfather, Amir Abdur Rehman, who had ruled over most of the Afghan territory with the help of a strong and efficient army.

King Amanullah lost his throne due to a tribal revolt and Afghanistan, after a brief rule by King Habibullah (January 1929-October 1929), entered into an era of Musabihan rule. Musabihan are Durrani Pashtuns who descended from the Afghan King Dost Mouhammad. That started the fourth important phase in the history of Afghanistan. The most important change in that phase was the emergence of Pakistan as a new entity on the Eastern border of Afghanistan. Pakistan emerged as an independent state in August 1947 after the end of the British colonial rule over the Indian sub-continent. The policies of King Zahir Shah (1933-1973) and Prime Minister Sardar Daud (1953-1963) revolved around the issue of Pashtunistan. Since the creation of Pakistan, Afghanistan has refused to accept the Durand Line as an international border and the border issue remains a bone of contention between the two neighbours.

Sardar Daud tilted towards Soviet Union in the hope of getting support on the Pashtunistan issue, which he thought would counterbalance the US tilt towards Pakistan. Prime Minister Daud also initiated several socio-political and economic reforms, including the introduction of a new constitution, but the rise of leftists and Islamist opposition thwarted his reform efforts.

The fifth phase started with the Saur Revolution of 1978 followed by the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan in 1979. The People’s Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA), which was formed in 1965, introduced “Marxist-oriented” social, economic and political reforms that challenged the tribal and religious nature of Afghan way of life. Nur Mohammad Taraki (1978-1979) tried to transform Afghan society much like the earlier reform efforts initiated in the country. However, in doing so, Taraki also ignored the tribal and ethnic basis of the Afghan society. For example, one of the salient features of PDPA’s reform efforts was women's education and empowerment which, like previous similar efforts did not earn appreciation from the conservative, tribal and rigidly Islamist society of Afghanistan. Land reforms, such as state acquisition and redistribution of tribal lands, disturbed the balance of power in the rural and

---

tribal areas because which it had previously been in the possession of tribal elders and were the
main source of their income and social prestige.\textsuperscript{21}

The use of force by the PDPA to implement these reforms was taken as a grave affront by the
independent-natured Afghans who had always jealously guarded their independence, and had
never succumbed to the state authority except during the reign of Amir Abdur Rehman (1880-
1901).

The Soviet invasion in 1979 and the subsequent decade-long war forms the sixth phase in the
history of Afghanistan. The Afghan Mujahideen were supported by the US, Pakistan, Saudi
Arabia and several other Muslim countries in their struggle to oust the Communists from the
country. The war not only resulted in the fall of Soviet Union but also left Afghanistan totally
devastated. Within few years of war, around three million refugees fled to Pakistan, one million
to Iran and around two million became internally displaced.\textsuperscript{22} The eastern provinces were almost
depopulated because of the heavy Soviet bombardment due to their support to the Afghan
Mujahideen.\textsuperscript{23} Moreover, the fighting caused heavy losses to important infrastructure like roads,
schools and hospital buildings which were targeted indiscriminately. Moreover, the agrarian land
was destroyed as a result of mining, burning of crops and cutting of forests.\textsuperscript{24}

The Soviet withdrawal in 1989 pushed Afghanistan into the seventh phase of its history which
was marked by the civil war, rise of warlords, widening of ethnic, tribal and factional divides and
finally the rise of the Taliban. Even before the withdrawal of the Soviet Union, various
Mujahideen groups started the struggle to take a lead over others to take dominant or leading
position in the future political setup. Cut off from the US and the Soviet aid, the Afghan armed
actors started indulging in criminal activities like looting, extortion, drug trafficking and also in
social abuses like rape. That trend sent shock waves across Afghanistan with the exception of a

\textsuperscript{21} Ibid, 51-57. For the details about Saur Revolution also see, Padmanabh M.Kamath, “The Soviet
Intervention in Afghanistan: The Indian Response” in Afghanistan Dynamics of Survival, ed. Jagmohan
\textsuperscript{22} Raul Bakhsh, War Without Winners, 102.
\textsuperscript{23} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{24} Ibid., 103-104.
few Northern provinces which were comparatively safe. The Taliban emerged in response to that anarchy which was widespread in and around Kandahar in 1994.\textsuperscript{25}

After their rise to power, the euphoria of a stable, peaceful and prosperous Afghanistan soon vanished among the common Afghans due to the extremist Islamist ideology of the Taliban. They could not come up with a political solution which could have been accepted to all the groups jockeying for power. They had no plan for the economic revival of the war-ravaged country. They tried to consolidate their power by imposing extremist version of Shariah, which focused largely on forcing men to grow beards and limiting women’s role in social life by denying them the right to go to schools, hospitals, markets and forcing them to wear veils. The Taliban also alienated the international community due to their rigidity. Instead of bringing peace they remained busy in fighting the civil war throughout their rule. During the Taliban-era, Afghanistan was left with no state institutions to run the state machinery. There was no formal police force to maintain law and order and no army to guard the sovereignty of state. It would be safe to say that during the Taliban era, there was no formal Afghan state that could fit into the modern state system of the twenty-first century; rather, the Taliban generated an outdated system based on extremist Islamist ideology.

Post-9/11, their rule came to an end with OEF and Afghanistan entered into a new phase of its history after signing the Bonn Agreement of December 2001 (Bonn-I), which was marked by international efforts to ensure the political transition and reconstruction of Afghanistan and by the revival of Taliban-led insurgency initially in the Southern and Eastern Afghan provinces which later spread to North also.

This historical account of rise and fall of various rulers and the power struggle among them raises two important questions: 1) why could Afghanistan never become an economically and politically stable state? 2) What were the factors and conditions that dragged Afghanistan into the unending cycle of conflict and instability? The following section attempts to answer these questions by discussing some important issues like ethnic and tribal diversity, geopolitical

landscape of the region and rentier economy as contributing factors in the instability of Afghanistan.

**Sources of Conflict and Instability in Afghanistan**

*Ethnic Divisions within Afghanistan*

Afghanistan is a multi-ethnic society, which is home to 55 ethnic groups, who speak 45 different languages. The following table shows the proportion of various ethnic groups in Afghanistan’s population.

**Table 3.1**

**Ethnic Groups in Afghanistan**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnic Group</th>
<th>Percentage of Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pashtuns</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tajiks</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uzbeks</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hazaras</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkmen</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aimaqs</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balochis</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others (Pashai, Nuristani, Arabs etc)</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


These and other ethnic groups are dispersed throughout Afghanistan, though particular regions have greater concentration of certain groups than of others. Afghanistan’s South, Southeast and East of Afghanistan is inhabited predominantly by Pashtuns, and abuts Pakistan's Pashtun
majority provinces of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Balochistan and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). The North Afghanistan, which shares border with the Central Asian States of Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan, is inhabited largely by Uzbeks, Turkmen and Tajiks respectively.

Numerically and politically the strongest ethnic group in Afghanistan are the Pashtuns who are further divided into tribes, sub-tribes and clans. Durrani and Ghilzai are two important Pashtun tribal confederations, which have played a leading role in state formation in Afghanistan. Both Ghilzais and Durranis have remained engaged in power struggle in Afghanistan. Numerically preponderant, the Ghilzais have been regarded as socially inferior to the Durranis.26 Most of the Afghan rulers hailed from the Durrani Tribe. All Afghan presidents and kings - with the exception of Bacha-i-Saqo (January 1928 – October 1928) and Babrak Karmal (1979-1986), who were both Tajiks - were Pashtuns. These Pashtun rulers promoted a narrative of Afghan nationhood, based solely on Pashtunwali.27

Another important ethnic group in Afghanistan is Tajik. Although, numerically inferior, Tajiks are mostly educated and skilled.28 During the Soviet invasion, Tajik leader Ahmed Shah Masood rose to pre-eminence because of his personal charisma and leadership qualities.29 He obtained external support for resistance against the Soviets and kept the Tajiks unified and internal institutions intact. Post-Soviet withdrawal, Masood emerged as an important contender for power sharing in Afghanistan but could not succeed due to the rise of the Taliban and remained engaged in civil war throughout the 1990s.

Uzbeks are another important ethnic group in Afghanistan. Though a small part of Afghan population (8%), the well educated Uzbeks emerged as one of the contenders for power sharing.

27 The Pashtunwali is an ethical code of conduct and way of life that Pashtuns follow. Allegiance to these codes like Badal (Revenge), Milmasta (Hospitality), and Nang (Honour) is mandatory in a Pashtun society. Also see, Amin Saikal, “Afghanistan and Pakistan: The Question of Pashtun Nationalism?”, *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 30, no. 1 (2010): 5-7.
29 Ibid.
in Afghanistan, especially after the Soviet invasion. The post-9/11 situation put them in a better position like the Tajiks to play a significant role in political transition of Afghanistan.

Hazaras are yet another important ethnic group in Afghanistan. They are of Mongol origins and are mainly belong to the Shia sect of Islam. The Hazaras were subjected to a huge massacre during the time of Amir Abdur Rehman (1880-1901). They again faced great difficulties during the reign of the Taliban who viewed the Shia Hazara as heretics and indulged in their mass killing. Post-9/11, Hazaras became part of state formation process in Afghanistan and are presently serving in important government positions. For example, Karim Khalili, a Hazara, became the vice-President of Afghanistan in 2004.

Despite this diversity, ethnicity was never a factor in internal conflict till 1989. It was only after the Soviet withdrawal that various ethnic groups became so strong that they actively engaged in civil war over the issue of power sharing. Despite this largely peaceful co-existence the smaller ethnic groups felt alienated and neglected in the Pashtun majority rule. Since 1747 till the rise of Amir Abdur Rehman in 1880, Afghan rulers appointed their close family members as in charge of the far off rural areas inhabited by various ethnic and tribal groups but usually left them autonomous. It was under the reign of Amir Abdur Rehman that he tried to bring all the tribes and ethnicities under his central command. Under his reign the Pashtuns had the predominant position in Afghanistan’s politics, while the Tajiks ran the government administration. Other ethnic groups such as Uzbek, Aimaq, and Turkmen leaders did not participate in the political transformation and the Hazaras faced obvious discrimination. The Pashtun leaders did not engage the minorities in state formation process and did not work on any development projects in the non-Pashtun North. The alienated non-Pashtuns could not develop trust for the Pashtun rulers, notwithstanding the veneer of harmony. For example, Sardar Daud’s inclination towards...
the Pashtun nationalism was always seen with suspicion by the non-Pashtuns minorities in Afghanistan throughout his reign as Prime Minister from 1958 to 1963.

Due to the Pashtun dominance and their rhetoric of Pashtunwali, non-Pashtun groups - Tajiks, Uzbeks and Hazaras - were greatly agitated by such attempts which amounted to ostracizing their particular cultural traits and symbols from the narrative of Afghan nationhood. They, however, could not resist these efforts as they lacked power to do so. Pashtuns have associated themselves with the notion of Afghan nationality as it was based only on their norms and values.\(^{34}\) When Babrak Karmal came into power, he tried to give the impression that ethnic divisions did not matter for his regime which was solely concerned with promotion of the communist ideology. But that was not possible in such a fragmented society which was also going through a war.\(^{35}\)

This ethnic diversity coupled with dominant Pashtun’s insistence on associating the concept of nationalism with Pastunwali has rendered the task of creating a sense of Afghani nationhood more difficult especially after the Soviet-Afghan war. Even the bond of common religion could not create this sense, and Afghans continued to pay their loyalties first and foremost to their tribes and ethnic groups.\(^{36}\) Elaborating this point, Micheal Daxner observes, “Afghans identify as Afghans, but family, clan, tribe, and local allegiances are often much stronger than any sense of shared nationality. As a result, governance has historically been a matter of ethnic solidarities, tribal sub-structures, local codes of honour and prestige, and traditional customs of correcting deviations from established patterns among Afghans.”\(^{37}\)

It was after the Saur Revolution and Soviet intervention that the non-Pashtuns started strengthening themselves because of the support they received from the Soviet Union and later from the US, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia to fight the war of resistance against the Soviets. The Soviet policy of divide and rule benefitted the Tajiks and Uzbeks who did not witness any aerial

\(^{34}\) Rasul Bakhsh Rais, *Recovering the Frontier State*, 35-36.

\(^{35}\) Ibid. 40


bombardment on their areas and were able to concentrate on building their political institutions and strength throughout the war. That was the time when Tajiks and Uzbeks consolidated their military power and strengthened their local militias to check the influence of rival ethnic group – the Pashtuns – in their territory. On the other hand there were a group of strong Tajik leaders under the banner of Jamiat-i-Islami, who received huge financial and military support from the US and Pakistan to fight the Soviets.

Despite this internal division, the North escaped much of the war and its infrastructure remained largely intact. The ethnic divide, which had remained passive throughout the history, became pronounced as a result of Soviet invasion. At the time of Soviet withdrawal, the Tajik and Uzbek commanders like Ahmed Shah Masood and Rashid Dostum had become so strong that they demanded political autonomy. Various Mujahideen factions could not come to any consensus over the power sharing, thus paving the way for the emergence of the Taliban.  

After the withdrawal of Soviet Union, Afghanistan plunged into civil war mainly because of the ethnic and tribal divides. The continued infighting between Pashtun and non-Pashtun commanders who had once fought together against the Soviet Union did not allow them to find a viable solution to their conflict. During this phase, several actors emerged as contenders for power sharing in Afghanistan. Burhanuddin Rabbani’s Jamiat-i-Islami party was backed by Tajiks as he had the support of Tajik commander Ahmed Shah Masood. Another important actor of that power politics was Rashid Dostum whose Junbish-e-Milli-e-Islam party mainly comprised Uzbek minority groups. Asif Mohsini was the head of the Shia party; Harakat-e-Islami. Gulbuddin Hekmatyar was leading Hizb-i-Islami comprising Pashtuns. Abdul Rasool Sayyaf also was heading a Pashtun party, Ittihad-i-Islami. Among such divisions, restoring peace was very challenging. Amidst that power struggle and unabated chaos, the Taliban rose to prominence. But the civil war along ethnic lines between Pashtuns and non-Pashtuns continued.

Post-9/11, several important figures from Tajik and Uzbek minorities were included in Afghanistan's interim government by the international community. This, however, gave rise to

---

dissatisfaction among the Pashtuns who considered themselves as the natural leaders of Afghanistan. By choosing Hamid Karzai, a Kandahari Pashtun, international community tried to bring in the balance between Pashtuns and non-Pashtuns.

*Afghanistan: A Tribal Society*

Ethnicity is not the only fault line dividing the Afghan society: there are further divisions along tribal, regional and clan-based identities. The Afghan society is essentially a tribal society consisting of more than 40 tribes, sub tribes and clans. The state-tribe relationship can be very problematic as they are separate entities with different characteristics. Barnett R. Rubin has elaborated the differences between a tribe and the state in the Afghan context in his book *The Fragmentation of Afghanistan*. He argues that in a tribe, tribesmen give allegiance to family ties and their loyalties are for the tribal head. On the contrary, the state is impersonal and the loyalties of those living in the state are for the head of the state. The tribe is ‘homogenous, egalitarian, and segmentary’, while the state is ‘heterogeneous, stratified, and hierarchical’.

The threat of tribal rebellion or revolt has always posed a challenge to the Afghan state, which adopted various methods to suppress or avert that threat. For example, tribes were forcefully displaced within Afghanistan, were suppressed militarily and in certain cases were bribed to win their cooperation.

The very tribal culture of Afghans in which they gave preference to *Qaum*, and to their tribal and ethnic identity over the sense of belonging to a country has proved a major challenge for state formation in Afghanistan. The Pashtuns who have played a dominant role since 1747 in the polity of Afghanistan had introduced Pashtunwali as their code of conduct which further strengthened their allegiance to their *Qaum* and their own particular code of conduct comprising ethos such as Honour, Revenge and Hospitality. The *jirga* (local council comprising tribal

---

41 Ibid., 10.
42 Ibid.
elders) and not any formal state institutions played the predominant role in the lives of Afghans. None of the Afghan rulers ever tried to expand the state writ substantially into the tribal areas by establishing formal institutions. In fact it was this absence of state institutions in the rural areas of Afghanistan which had given the local tribal elders, usually referred to as Maliks and Khans, a major role to play in shaping the political and economic dynamics of those areas. Moreover, ownership of the major source of income in the rural areas, the land, had further strengthened their position.  

Amir Abdur Rehman (1880-1901) tried to dismantle the power structure of the tribes and for that purpose he created Loya Jirga. His Loya Jirga comprised Muhammadzai tribal leaders, important khans from different parts of the country and religious leader instead of powerful tribal leaders who had traditionally comprised the Loya Jirga to execute important tasks like choosing the head of the state. The role of Loya Jirga was nominal to approve the measures Amir wanted to take. Moreover, the presence of tribal leaders in the Jirga kept them away from their power centres, a strategy intentionally drawn by Amir Abdur Rehman to weaken the tribes. Moreover, he tried to authenticate his rule by declaring himself Amir on the basis of religion and in that way he attacked the tribal basis of statehood in Afghanistan. But his efforts could not break the power of the tribes nor could they undermine the tribal culture of Afghanistan. Rather, the institutionalization of tribes especially in the form of Loya Jirga gave a formal and legal status to tribes and formalised their role in state formation in Afghanistan.

Another important feature of tribal societies is their conservative and radical nature. Throughout history modern education seekers have remained a minority in Afghanistan. Most of the Afghans preferred religious over the modern education. Women were never treated as equal citizens. Against this socio-cultural backdrop, any efforts at modernization and political, economic, and social reforms were doomed to meet stiff challenge. Such changes were always difficult for the common people of Afghanistan to understand and own, and the resultant situations always added

46 Ibid.
to the instability in Afghanistan. King Amanullah’s (1919-1929) modernization program, which cost him his throne, is a case in point. 47

Amanullah, inspired by modern education and openness in various Asian and European countries that he visited, initiated a modernization program in Afghanistan. The programme was conceived in three stages: a) modernization of the legal and administrative frameworks of the government (1919-1924); b) establishment of Pushtun Academy and the introduction of foreign languages in schools (1924-1928); and, c) changes in the dress code which required the men working in government offices to wear Western attire. The reforms called into question the traditional methods of education, the predominant role of Mullah and traditional and conservative tribal system. Through these reforms, Amanullah introduced modern education especially for women, separation of secular and religious affairs, and modern judicial reforms. Moreover, he challenged certain social norms of the Afghan society by prohibiting arrange marriages and enforcing minimum age for the bride to be. 48 By unveiling his wife during a royal ceremony, he encouraged the Afghan women to adopt Western dress.

These policies challenged the Islamic and conservative norms of the society. Both the Mullahs and the tribes resisted these policies. The revolt broke out in the South among the Ghilzai Mangals. In order to suppress the revolt, Amanullah had to use force for which he paid huge amount of money to Wazir, Afridi and Mohmand lashkars. 49 Although, the revolt left him politically and economically weak, he continued with the reforms directly questioning the religious and social norms of Afghan society. Moreover, he imposed heavy taxes annoying the economically impoverished majority of merchants and farmers in rural areas of Afghanistan. 50 It is true that he failed to implement the reforms due to the “inherent difficulty in attempting to modernise the devoutly Islamic and fundamentally tribal Afghan state”. 51 Amanullah’s failure to maintain a strong and efficient army added to his difficulties in implementing his controversial

49 Jeffery Roberts, The Origins of Conflict in Afghanistan, 43-44.
50 Ibid, 45.
51 Ibid, 46.
reform package in the rural and tribal Afghan society.\textsuperscript{52} Prime Minister Daud (1953-1963) while drawing a reform programme deemed it necessary to have strong army to quell the revolt or reaction by the tribes.

Similarly the efforts by PDPA and its Khalq faction to introduce educational, social and land reforms on the patterns of Marxism left many Afghans disillusioned and annoyed due to their backwardness and strict Islamic tribal traditions. The reforms like banning forced and underage marriages were considered as a direct attack on the social norms of Afghan society. Similarly, when traditional tribal laws were replaced by Marxist rules and regulation, it gave rise to the agitation across Afghanistan.\textsuperscript{53}

Due to the very tribal nature of Afghan society, it was difficult to have a strong leadership which was much needed after the withdrawal of Soviet Union in 1989.\textsuperscript{54} All of a sudden the country found itself cut off from the massive economic and military assistance which it had enjoyed for almost a decade. Various Mujahideen groups had fought for a common cause to oust the Communist regime from power but with the achievement of that very objective they lost a common purpose to stay together. The tribal and ethnic differences became dominant despite the need to have a stable political setup.

\textit{Geopolitics and Instability in Afghanistan}

Afghanistan is located at the crossroads of Central and South Asia and Middle East, which makes it a pathway to enter any of these regions. Alexander the Great conquered present day Afghanistan in 328 BC. He was followed by several Turk, Mongol and Arab conquerors. Afghanistan’s geographic location meant that the developments taking place across its borders would have a direct bearing on the country. Because of its weak and divided polity, Afghanistan was always subject to the interventions and rivalries of those trying to fill the power vacuum. For example, the Mughals and Iranians fought over Kandahar in the 17\textsuperscript{th} century; the British and the Russians competed in the nineteenth century; the Russians and Americans in the 20th century;

\textsuperscript{52} Ibid, 45.
and after the end of Cold War there were several other powers jockeying for position: China, India, Iran and Pakistan. "Afghanistan suffers the twin geographic curses of sitting astride powerful nations, and having sharp internal, physical division."\

The first episode of the external influence in Afghanistan was the power struggle between the Iranian, Uzbek and Mughal empires in the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries. Since the time period of Zahiruddin Mohammad Babur who was the first Mughal emperor, Afghanistan held strategically important position in the calculation of India. By controlling the affairs of Afghanistan and maintaining an influence in Afghanistan, Babur and his successors stopped foreign invasions of India for more than two hundred years. Moreover, the very location of Afghanistan favourable for regional trade made it economically important for the Mughals as India was a great market and required access to the outer world. Despite Mughal efforts, the Afghans continued to resist their rule. On the other hand, Safavid dynasty (Persian empire) continued a tug of war with the Mughal empire over the control of Afghanistan. The involvement of those two empires initiated a chapter of geopolitics in the history of Afghanistan and it had to accommodate various external powers at different junctures of its history.

Afghanistan’s strategic location made it a focal point of imperial powers’ ‘tug of war’ in the nineteenth century, and of race for influence between the US and the USSR during the Cold War era. The simultaneous expansion of both the Czarist Russia and the British India not only made Afghanistan a buffer state but also a focal point of international powers’ rivalries. Due to that very factor Afghanistan had to fight two wars against the British Empire in 1839-1842 and 1878-1880. The objective of British intervention was to increase influence over Afghanistan in order to stop Russia’s eastwards expansion. After the second Anglo-Afghan war, Amir Abdur Rehman

57 Ibid., 41-42.
(1880-1901) came into power, and it was during his rule that boundaries of Afghanistan were determined and the country got its present territorial shape.\textsuperscript{58}

Sardar Daud as the Prime Minister (1953-1963) initially was tilted more towards the US and the Western bloc mainly for political and economic assistance. The Daud’s era was marked with massive aid programme from the Soviet Union, making Afghanistan the largest aid recipient of the Soviet aid.\textsuperscript{59} His modernization programme to develop the Afghan state in its entirety compelled him to turn towards foreign aid despite claiming to be neutral during the Cold War era.\textsuperscript{60}

The lack of interest on part of the US and its tilt towards Pakistan on the controversial issue of Pashtunistan compelled Sardar Daud to engage Soviet Union. During his regime Soviet Union became a major economic and military partner of Afghanistan. But the clandestine activities of the Islamist elements, especially in the tribal areas and also the strengthening of the communist elements within Afghanistan posed serious challenge to the very existence of the state. After becoming President in 1973 as a result of bloodless coup, Sardar Daud tried to balance his relationship with Soviet Union. He improved relations with Saudi Arabia, Iran, Pakistan and US, which also by that time was keen to engage Afghanistan.\textsuperscript{61}

For Afghanistan, the uninterrupted flow of foreign money and arms during different phases of geopolitics made it heavily dependent on external sources of income. There was little effort made to promote the indigenous sources of income (this point is explained in detail in the following section).

The central authority of the state was strengthened at the cost of promotion of authoritarianism. Tribes and clans were left untouched in most of the cases so as to leave them backward and out

\textsuperscript{59} Amin Saikal, \textit{Modern Afghanistan}, 117-130.
\textsuperscript{60} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{61} Ahmad Shayeq Qassem, \textit{Afghanistan Political Stability: A Dream Unrealised}, (Surrey: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2009): 45-64.
of mainstream politics. Because the ruling elite did not require their support in the presence of international flow of money and weapon, they were manipulated as per the needs of the state. Their backwardness and lack of political participation also did not allow the success of any reform or modernization programme in Afghanistan. Heavy reliance on military assistance by the Soviet Union gave it a role in political affairs in Afghanistan. In the predominantly Muslim society of Afghanistan, implementation of Marxism was doomed to produce devastating consequences as witnessed in the aftermath of Saur Revolution. 62

International actors also used the tribes for achieving their interest in Afghanistan. First the British Empire and then the US and Pakistan provided them with weapons and training and exploited their religious inclination against the Communist Soviet Union. The international involvement in Afghanistan also contributed towards the instability as they supported one faction against the other and served their own interests and in the course of achieving them did not bother about the consequences for Afghanistan. For example, the extended support to Mujahideen resulted in the rise of Islamic extremism in the country which affected not only Afghanistan but the entire world. The next section will highlight how the external financial support made Afghanistan a rentier state.

Afghanistan: A Rentier State

The theory of the rentier state was coined by Hossein Mahdavy in order to explain the Iranian dependency on oil for generating economic means and sources in 1970s. He defined rentier states as “those countries that receive on a regular basis a substantial amount of external economic rent.”63 Hazem Beblawi, another proponent of the idea defined the rentier state “as a state in which the economy is dominated by rents, the rents come from abroad, and the government is the principal recipient of these rents.”64

62 Rasul Bakhsh Rais, Recovering the Frontier State, 14.
The theory was initially introduced and elaborated to explain the Arab Gulf and African states’ dependence on the oil commodity as a source to generate income. The rentier state and rentier economy lead to a rentier mentality, which have negative implications for a country’s economy and long-term prospects for political stability. While many states export resources or license their development by foreign parties, rentier states are characterized by the relative absence of revenue from domestic sources such as taxation, as their naturally occurring wealth undermines the need to extract income from their citizenry. In such states there are no chances of the success of democracy as the regimes in power are usually not accountable to the general masses due to no economic stakes involved in the absence of domestic tax base.

Florian P. Kuhn has identified three forms of rent which are differentiated by its sources. The first form of rent comes from oil resources, the classical source of rent, second form of rent is derived from the illicit sources mainly drugs, and finally the abundant flow of aid money also qualifies to be a rent.

Considering the above mentioned definitions and categories of the rentier states and economies, Afghanistan also qualifies to be a rentier state since its economy has mainly depended on foreign aid and assistance and since the fall of Soviet Union on drug trafficking. Barnett R. Rubin was the first to describe Afghanistan as rentier economy in his book *The Fragmentation of Afghanistan*. According to him the flow of foreign aid due to the geopolitical realities of the Cold War era made Afghanistan a rentier state as between 1958 – 1968 and again in 1970s the Afghan state met its expenditures largely through revenues generated from the foreign aid. It would be convenient to say that throughout the 1960s Afghanistan earned half of its domestic revenue from the foreign sources. Moreover, Afghanistan also depended on the export of gas to

---

69 Ibid, 64-65.
Soviet Union but the prices were beyond its control unlike many Gulf and Arab oil producing countries that were able to have an influence on the oil prices.\textsuperscript{70}

The external influence had implications not only for the economic system but also for the polity of Afghanistan. The foreign supported regime of Daud initiated a modernization programme. The educational reforms were carried out through intellectuals who had mainly been educated in West and in Soviet Union. The new system also allowed the formation of political parties and access to media for the propaganda purposes. The establishment of communist PDPA in 1965 by Nur Mohammad Taraki was one such example. The Islamist groups, while in exile in Pakistan and with the support from Saudi Arabia, also formed Jamiat-i-Islami in 1975, which later on split into Jamiat-i-Islami led by Burhanuddin Rabbani and Hizb-i-Islami led by Gulbuddin Hekmatyar.\textsuperscript{71} The Communist ideology under the PDPA tried to make headways in the Afghan society and ultimately the resistance by the Afghans and the Islamist parties resulted in the Soviet coup.

For one whole decade the communists had to engage in fight with the guerrillas created and financed by Pakistan, US and Saudi Arabia along with several other Muslim countries. So during the Soviet occupation, not only the Afghan economy was dependent on flow of money and weapons from foreign sources, but the political set up in the country also was dependent on the external support. The withdrawal of the Soviet Union and subsequently the lack of interest by the US and Western world resulted in a power and economic vacuum which several regional countries tried to fill in. That very episode ushered Afghanistan into a new era of ‘New Great Game’ which was played-out throughout the 1990s with the active engagement by regional countries such as Pakistan, Iran, China, Russia and India.

But the Afghan dependency on the foreign sources of income could not be associated with the Musabihan rule only. If we look back at the history of Afghanistan, we see that majority of the rulers received funds from the British empire in one way or the other. As stated earlier, Ahmed Shah Durrani received protection money from the Indian territories which he controlled and after

\textsuperscript{70} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{71} Ibid, 82-83.
his death, loss of that source of income had negative repercussions for the stability of the regime. Since he used to pay that amount to the tribes to keep them neutralised, drying up of this source made it difficult for the regime to continue paying the tribes. Amir Abdur Rehman also depended hugely upon the money and weapons’ flow from the British.

Post-Soviet withdrawal, the Afghan reliance on the external sources declined due to the changing geopolitical realities of the region. Then the Afghan economy became dependent on the drug trafficking and smuggling; yet another form of rentier economy. Three important factors helped in making drugs the main source of income. First was the atmosphere which was favourable for the growth of poppies with immense quantity of morphine. Second, due to the widespread insecurity in Afghanistan it was easy to indulge in illicit production of poppy in the absence of state institutions to check this practise, and finally, due to acute poverty and absence of decent economic means of livelihood many people had no choice but to turn to poppy production. Because of these factors, for many people poppy cultivation became the major source of income during the Taliban era. In 1999, the Afghan poppy accounted for the 75 percent of the global poppy production.

During the Soviet-Afghan war the state somehow remained intact, but its capacity to work and serve its citizens was severely undermined. The reliance on drug money had started during the 1980s and Mujahideen commanders too were involved in drug trafficking, a trend which worsened during the 1990s. The Mujahideen commanders and warlords were dependent on the foreign support and with the Soviet withdrawal they turned to opium production as an alternative source. From 1992 to 1995, Afghanistan produced between 2200-2400 metric tons of opium per year. The Taliban after coming into power also relied heavily on poppy money. Under the Taliban rule, the poppy cultivation increased to unprecedented levels before they banned it in 2000.

---

74 Ibid., 197-198.
75 Ibid., 198.
After the fall of the Taliban, Afghanistan continued to depend heavily on poppy cultivation and smuggling. After the Bonn Agreement, a lot of foreign aid started pouring in Afghanistan, particularly after the security situation deteriorated which forced the donor states to make good on their aid commitments. That heavy reliance on aid and drugs has once again put Afghanistan on the way to becoming a rentier state, (the issue will be discussed in detail in Chapter Five of the present study).

After knowing various dimensions of Afghan rentier state under different regimes, it is important to understand the factors that prevented Afghanistan from developing a proper taxation system and other means to generate domestic revenues. One significant structural factor was the difficult terrain of Afghanistan where the central government found it difficult to expand its reach to the periphery, which remained neglected for most of the time.

Another structural factor was the location of Afghanistan where regional and international powers always played a role in shaping the polity of Afghanistan by funding almost all the regimes since 1747 to the present. The easy availability of the economic sources to run the state affairs resulted in slow implementation of economic policies that could have strengthened the sustainable sources of income such as export of fruits, mineral and dry fruits and promotion of tourism industry.

Another important factor was the relatively unsuccessful tax system which could not bring the tribal elders, Maliks and Khan under tax net. For example, King Amanullah conducted a survey of land and livestock owned by people for introducing a tax system. But the collection of heavy taxes from the tribal leaders resulted in lowering their social stature, which made them turn against the King. His attack on the tribal system through his social, educational and tax reforms was one of the main reasons for his downfall. Amir Abdur Rehman favoured Durranis over Ghilzais while implementing the tax system. Durranis continued to enjoy the tax free lands,  

whereas Ghilzais were supposed to pay high taxes to Amir.\textsuperscript{77} That tax system was not based on the idea to expand the domestic revenues rather it was a tactic to be used against the rival tribes.

When Sardar Daud became Prime Minister in 1953, Afghanistan’s economic base was too weak to initiate a modernization and reform programme without external financial help. The reason was the lack of a strong administrative system which could “put in place an efficient and effective system of tax collection targeting landowners, farmers and owners of livestock.”\textsuperscript{78} Major reasons behind that limited tax base were the bureaucratic inefficiency and exemption of influential land owners and tribal elders from taxation.\textsuperscript{79} During his reign, Daud received nearly US$2 billion in economic aid, thanks to the favourable international environment owing to the Cold War. This aid became the major source for running the economic machinery of the state.\textsuperscript{80} During Daud era, 52 percent of domestic expenditures were met with the help of foreign aid.\textsuperscript{81} Remaining expenditures were also met with sources like sale of natural gas and petroleum mainly to the Soviet Union. The tax base remained limited in his era also.

Too much reliance on external economic support increased the gulf between state and society which was predominantly tribal. The state did not bother to engage them for the economic benefit of both the state and society. Rather they were always treated as a tribe, an ethnic group and a religious sect.\textsuperscript{82} It further strengthened the social institutions like mosque and jirga at the expense of civil institutions of the state. The autonomous nature of these social institutions has always hampered the state formation process in Afghanistan. The mountainous and rugged terrain made communication within Afghanistan difficult. The agriculture was difficult due to the land condition, and agricultural products could be consumed only locally due to the absence of road networks to transport these products elsewhere. These factors further widened the state-society chasm.

\textsuperscript{77} Thomas Barfield, \textit{Afghanistan: A Cultural and Political History}, (New Jersy; Princeton University Press, 2010), 148.
\textsuperscript{78} Angelo Rasanayagam, \textit{Afghanistan: A Modern History}, 53.
\textsuperscript{79} Ibid, 54.
\textsuperscript{80} Ibid, 56.
\textsuperscript{81} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{82} Rasul Bakhsh Rais, \textit{Frontier State}, 7.
That dependency on external aid remained a continuous phenomenon during the Soviet-Afghan war and the Taliban rule during the 1990s in one way or the other. Post-9/11, Afghanistan’s rentier syndrome will be taken into account in the following chapters.

Conclusion

Afghanistan’s history and politics have been characterized by power struggle among various rulers, ethnic and tribal tensions, role of external powers and lack of indigenous economic support base. Since 1747, Afghanistan has seen several regime changes and role of several foreign actors in its polity. After Amir Abdur Rehman’s death in 1901, all of Afghanistan's rulers either died violently or were driven into exile. Since King Amanullah’s time it had remained a problem for the Afghan rulers, mostly urban-based, to introduce reforms or any modernization policy in rural areas. It had always resulted in the armed resistance by the rural tribes. Since Prime Minister Daud’s rule, Soviet Union increased it influence in Afghanistan. After the fall of Najibullah regime in 1992, Afghanistan saw the rule of an extremist Islamist faction, the Taliban – a threat which is still haunting Afghanistan.

When the international community initiated a post-conflict reconstruction plan in the wake of the ouster of the Taliban regime, there was a need to understand all those factors which were responsible for the failure of all efforts at reform and modernization throughout the history of Afghanistan. The ethnic and tribal divide, unique geographic location and intense role of Afghanistan in the geopolitics of this region and finally the history of Afghan dependence on rentier economy are the factors that need to be taken into account while devising any security, economic and political policies for present-day Afghanistan. In the next chapters while discussing international community’s security and non-security policies, this historical account will show how the present reconstruction efforts neglected some of the historical realities and structural factors behind the weaknesses of Afghan state.

CHAPTER 4: The Security Lacuna in Post-Bonn Afghanistan

Introduction

In every post-conflict situation there is a unique window of opportunity, when the violence is reduced and active fighting has been halted in majority of places. That is the right time to conceive and implement security reforms so as the spoilers remain unable to fill the security gap and there are no chances of relapse into conflict.¹ Same was the case with Afghanistan. At the time when Security Sector Reform (SSR) was conceived, in 2002 after the fall of the Taliban, security situation had not stabilized, yet the conflict was ripe for the solution and that opportunity could have been used by the international community to lay the foundations of a stable and secure Afghanistan. That conflict was ripe for the solution because there was overwhelming support among the Afghans for the reconstruction efforts, and negligible opposition to these efforts as most of the Taliban and their al-Qaeda supporters were on the run.

To respond to the post-Taliban Afghan security needs, the Bonn Agreement of December 2001 (Bonn-I), in addition to emphasizing the need to establish and organize an Afghan army, requested the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) to establish a force to assist in maintaining security in and around Kabul.² An international security assistance force (ISAF) was established with the very objective to assist in “maintenance of security for Kabul and its surrounding areas” and to “assist in the rehabilitation of Afghanistan's infrastructure.”³ The broader security agenda introduced during the Bonn-I was further elaborated in the G-8 meeting held in Geneva in April 2002.⁴ In the meeting, the SSR agenda was divided into five pillars. Each pillar was assigned to one lead nation: Military (USA), Police (Germany), Judiciary (Italy), Anti-Narcotics (UK), Disarmament Disintegration and Reintegration (DDR) (Japan).

² Please see the Annex 1 for the draft of the Bonn Agreement (December 2001).
³ Ibid.
The five lead nations set forth various goals to achieve the objective of security reforms. For example, Germany was tasked to raise a force of 70,000 policemen along with basic infrastructure development like construction and reopening of police training academy in Kabul. But Germany was too slow to meet the desired results. The US had to play a role in police reforms 2003 onwards, but by 2011, when Bonn-II was convened to evaluate a decade of post-Bonn-I developments the Afghan police was perceived to be the most corrupt and inefficient part of the Afghan security apparatus by the common Afghan people. The police remained under-paid and under-equipped and mostly divided on ethnic and tribal lines and thus left a security vacuum, which was filled by the Taliban. Similarly, the DDR programme set the target to disarm and reintegrate an estimated 1,800 armed groups nation-wide. But by 2006, majority of them were still armed and were “preventing the state from exercising control over its territory and having a monopoly over the use of force.”

The purpose of the chapter is to evaluate the international security efforts in post-9/11 Afghanistan. It will analyze the conceptual problems in the international security policy such as lack of strategic direction, the conceptual issues in “lead nation” and “light foot print” approaches and unrealistic financial estimates. The second part of the chapter will discuss in detail the implementation problems in the four out of five pillars of the SSR, the formation of ANA, ANP, Judicial reforms and DDR efforts. Drug trafficking and counternarcotics will be discussed in the next chapter where the international community’s non-security policies for Afghan reconstruction will be discussed, as the lacunae in counternarcotics policies helped the Taliban in both economic and political terms.

Security Arrangements in Afghanistan: Conceptual Problems

Post-conflict situations vary from state to state, but the objectives of the “post-conflict security transition agenda” in all cases are largely the same: prevention of relapse into conflict, the establishment of the rule of law, democratization, long-term development, and transferring

---

security responsibilities to the local actors.\textsuperscript{6} The international community can play a significant role in promoting SSR.\textsuperscript{7} International actors get involved in SSR usually under three different circumstances.\textsuperscript{8} In some cases international security intervention is made after the adoption of international peace agreements such as in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Macedonia. Sometimes the UNSC provides a mandate for international interim administrations as in the case of Afghanistan, Kosovo and Sierra Leone. Finally, international security assistance is required in particular circumstances where a cease-fire including SSR is mediated and/or backed by international actors for example, in Tajikistan, Nagorno-Karabakh and Northern Ireland.\textsuperscript{9}

If the SSR program is not conceptualized and implemented properly it can lead to worsening security situation, which may force the citizens to look to non-state actors, including the spoilers, for security guarantees.\textsuperscript{10} Afghanistan is no exception. When the SSR framework was conceived for Afghanistan it was not without flaws. Important conceptual shortcomings in the process of SSR were as follows.

\textit{Lack of Strategic Direction}

Strategic planning and preparation is one of the most important tasks that should be done before intervention. In the absence of proper homework, the post-intervention policies are usually

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{9} Ibid.
\end{itemize}
response to a particular situation that can only bring short-term stability or no stability at all.\textsuperscript{11} From the outset, international strategy in Afghanistan was marred by confusion with regard to the aims of the operation in Afghanistan. The US-led international coalition was not sure whether to term the OEF as peacekeeping, nation-building, counter-insurgency or counter-terrorism.\textsuperscript{12} Due to that factor, the entire campaign was fought with a “responding to an emerging situation” mentality. For instance, the surge in the number of forces of both ANA and ANP and ISAF was reactive – in response to the deteriorating situation - and there was no proper planning to allocate the forces according to the dire security needs of the country on pre-planned basis. After 2003, ISAF mandate was expanded into relatively peaceful North, but in the most volatile South and East Afghanistan the ISAF expanded its mandate in 2006, by the time the Taliban had got established themselves well in those areas using the window of opportunity in their own favour.

Another important issue with regard to the lack of strategic direction was the engagement of several actors in security apparatus, each with its own agenda, which prevented coordination among different actors. On the broader level, there were two separate international commands in Afghanistan; one was ISAF, which was created by UNSC Resolution 1386 on December 20, 2001 for the purpose of protecting Kabul in order to smoothly initiate the process of reconstruction and reconciliation; it was initially led by the US. The other consisted of the US-led international troops that were specifically involved in undertaking counter-terrorism operations under OEF.

The two forces operated separately until early 2006. The lack of a unified operation with a clear chain of command and separate mandate adversely impacted the efforts towards ensuring security and stabilization of Afghanistan. However, as the Taliban’s strength grew and they spread themselves to previously peaceful parts of the country, the ISAF and the US-led coalition decided to complement each other by uniting themselves under a single command. In March


2006, former US General John Abizaid announced that NATO would assume overall command of the US-led OEF. But by the time ISAF joined hands with the US-led international coalition to increase the strength and ability of international troops viz the Taliban and al-Qaeda, the spoilers had taken full advantage of the security vacuum.

For achieving the objectives of OEF, the US allied itself with several regional powerbrokers, warlords, and militiamen providing them with money in return for the use of their militias in anti-Taliban and anti-al-Qaeda operations. In a report to the US Congress that strategy was regarded as “short-cut to victory” having long term implications for the stability in Afghanistan. That policy strengthened the elements, who had a history of involvement in human rights violations, corruption and drugs trafficking and thus had been a major source of instability and corruption. Having been empowered by the US, they once again indulged in drug trafficking, land grabbing and extortion. Instead of fighting the Taliban, most of those militias were engaged in turf wars against each other to settle the historical scores. Hiring of those local militiamen further undermined the trust of common Afghan people in the international community and Karzai regime. Such steps showed the inability of the Karzai regime to extend its writ throughout the country and bring all such actors under some institutionalised set up or central command. Such measures were also perceived by common Afghans as a sign of lack of interest and non-commitment by the international community to provide a trust worthy and properly institutionalised security umbrella across Afghanistan.

Lack of strategic planning marred not only the patterns of formulation of international military assistance, but also the conceptualization of the reforms and training of the ANP and ANA. For example, there were fundamental differences between German and US approaches towards the police reforms in Afghanistan. Germany wanted the Afghan police as a primarily civilian force with the prime objective of maintaining law and order. Contrarily, the US wanted the Afghan

---

police to be a security force that could play a significant role in counterinsurgency. The UK also was in favour of more civilian approach while training the Afghan police, but the US emphasized paramilitary training for the ANP. But even the paramilitary training could not bring the desired results in the absence of proper mentoring, financial resources and equipments. That conceptual difference created differences in approaches to train the ANP and thus resulted in creating a weak police force.

*Lead Nations Approach: Lack of Coordination*

The conception and implementation of an effective SSR policy in any post-conflict state is challenging; it was more so in Afghanistan as none of the main pre-requisites for SSR - minimal level of security and political stability, availability of basic human resources and relevant infrastructure - was present. But at the very level of conception of SSR, due to certain mistakes the process became more difficult and challenging. No effort was made to make SSR a unified and comprehensive policy. The rationale behind the ‘lead nation’ approach – different countries taking the lead of five components of SSR - was to ensure long term commitment by the lead donor nations. But that approach undermined the coordination among the actors involved in SSR. The programme was not well-coordinated; it was shaky and imbalanced, leaving a grave security vacuum in Afghanistan. A briefing paper by the Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU) has rightly stated, “…it narrows the scope of reform and is too dependent on the competence of the lead donor.”

---


21 Michael Bhatia, Kevin Lanigan and Philip Wilkinson, “Minimal Investments, Minimal Results: The Failure of Security Policy in Afghanistan”, *Briefing Paper*, Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit,
There was a need to maintain a momentum in all the five pillars of SSR assigned to five lead nations so as to achieve the security objectives on all the fronts. But every lead nation had its own priorities, and allocated funds accordingly which resulted in an imbalanced pace of progress in the five lead areas.\textsuperscript{22} For example, judicial reforms were required to be at par with the police reforms as both complement each other in an SSR process. But in Afghan case there was no recorded evidence to show the coordination between Italy and Germany to devise the reforms strategy in the judiciary and police branches respectively. The Ministry of Justice and police personnel were trained in the same training centres, but there was no such policy to have joint session for all of them to understand the significance of complimenting each other for attaining the security objectives.\textsuperscript{23}

The lack of coordination resulted in poorly conceived policies which at times raised disputes resulted in the wastage of time that should have been utilised to benefit from the window of opportunity available for avoiding the revival of conflict. For example, Italy designed a strategy to implement justice sector reforms, but that could not be implemented till 2005 as Italy designed it without any consultation with other actors involved in SSR and especially ignored the Afghan stakes in the process of judicial reforms. Such delays not only had a negative impact on the SSR process, but also revealed the weaknesses of the Lead Nation approach.\textsuperscript{24}

\textit{Light Footprints: Inadequate Troop Commitment}

From the outset, the UN advocated the ‘light foot print’ approach – minimum international presence and minimum material and military support - by the international community in Afghanistan. The rationale behind the light foot print was to encourage Afghans to take charge of their country’s economic, political and security reconstruction.

\textsuperscript{22} Cyrus Hodes and Mark Sedra, “The Search for Security in Post-Taliban Afghanistan”, \textit{Adelphi Paper} 391 (2007), 52.
\textsuperscript{24} Cyrus Hodes, “The Search for Security”, 79.
During 2002-2003, the US contributed only 7,000 troops to Afghanistan, with the objective of chasing al-Qaeda and the Taliban remnants under the OEF. The ISAF, which had only 5000 troops at its disposal, was mandated with the security of Kabul. The Northern Alliance (a coalition of anti-Taliban jihadist forces of Northern provinces of Afghanistan) which numbered around 90,000 to 100,000 also fought along the US-led coalition. By 2005, these numbers increased to 20,000 for the US soldiers, and 10,000 for the NATO-ISAF troops.

For successful reconstruction and nation building exercises RAND analyst have set a ratio of 20 security personnel per 1,000 people, which makes 2 percent of the total population. The personnel can be from both international troops and local forces. Once the situation is under control, the number can be reduced to 10 security forces per 1,000 residents, or 1 percent of the population. However, for Afghanistan the number of troops formed a ratio of 1 soldier per 1,000 inhabitants, which was quite low for the stabilisation of a war-ravaged country, thereby leaving a huge security gap. The situation was further compounded by the absence of local Afghan army and police force, during the 2001 and 2002, to avoid the resurgence of the Taliban.

One glaring example of the implications of the light foot print approach was the resurgence of the Taliban in Regional Command South (RC South) that comprised six provinces: Nimroz, Helmand, Kandahar, Zabul Uruzgan and Day Kundi. Helmand province became the major source of funding for the Taliban. Helmand valley’s opium production provided the Taliban with $60 - $100million annually. Five of the six primary Taliban infiltration routes, from and to the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) of Pakistan, were located in the south because it

27 Ibid.
30 Thomas Barfield, “The Roots of Failure in Afghanistan”
shared the long border with Pakistan. Yet, till 2006 the presence of international forces was minimal and did not exist even, in several cases, along the border with Pakistan.\(^{31}\)

Kandahar being hometown of the Taliban should have held importance in the strategic calculation of the international coalition. Taliban first rose from Kandahar. But the US in its campaign overlooked the significance of maintaining control on Kandahar in order to pre-empt the revival of conflict. The US did maintain a presence at Kandahar airfield but no large scale military or civilian presence was established in that strategically important city in the South.

The disagreement among troop-contributing countries on sending their troops to the volatile South and East of Afghanistan as well as the growing domestic opposition, in troops contributing states, to the ISAF mission casted doubts on NATO's role. Key troop contributing countries faced problems while deciding on whether to renew their commitments to the mission in Afghanistan or not. The collapse of the Dutch government in February 2010 over the issue of maintaining troops in Afghanistan resulted in the Netherlands withdrawing troops from Afghanistan’s Uruzgan Province, which came as a huge blow to NATO’s future in Afghanistan.\(^{32}\) The Canadian government had withdrawn its entire contingent of 2800 troops from Afghanistan by December 2011.\(^{33}\) The German government also faced domestic opposition regarding maintaining troops in the country. However, Germany maintained its veto on the participation of German troops in combat operations outside its area of operations in the relatively stable North of Afghanistan.

Similarly, the US which had significantly increased its troops to more than 100,000 by the end of 2010, started a gradual withdrawal of troops from the country from July 2011 onwards.\(^{34}\) In


2010, the UK also revealed its intentions to withdraw troops from Afghanistan.\textsuperscript{35} Australian public also wanted the troops to be withdrawn from Afghanistan.\textsuperscript{36} In December 2009, France turned down a US request to send fresh troops to Afghanistan.\textsuperscript{37} Moreover, reports of Italian troops paying to the Taliban to avoid being attacked negatively affected the integrity and morale of the ISAF-NATO mission in the country.\textsuperscript{38} All such issues emphasize the fact that ISAF-NATO was politically and militarily ill prepared for the long haul in Afghanistan; rather it had short-term goals in sight which generated problems at the implementation level.

The problems which were created due to the limited number of troop were further increased due to the caveats that certain individual countries often placed on their contingents, such as forbidding them to undertake offensive operations against Taliban-led insurgents. General James Jones, former Supreme Allied Commander Europe and the US Chairman Joint Chief of Staff, called such national caveats an "operational cancer"\textsuperscript{39} and an "impediment to success."\textsuperscript{40} These caveats caused operational difficulties for ISAF commanders. The caveats included limits on patrols, usage of airlift capabilities, and choice of location to deploy soldiers. Caveats were also the result of political considerations, disagreements about certain aspects of the mission, or lack of proper training or equipment.\textsuperscript{41} For example, German troops were stationed in relatively peaceful northern areas after they refused to be deployed in volatile South. The German troops


were not allowed to patrol during night time and always used armoured personnel carriers when patrolling. Such measures undermined their effectiveness as compared to the US and UK forces who were engaged in active fighting in the South.\footnote{Vincent Morelli and Paul Belkin, “NATO in Afghanistan: A Test of the Transatlantic Alliance”, \textit{CRS Report for Congress}, (December 3, 2009), \url{http://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RL33627.pdf}, (accessed July 5, 2014).}

\textit{Funding Arrangements: Unrealistic Estimates}

One important pre-requisite for a successful SSR is the availability of long-term and sustainable financial resources, which could be generated indigenously if possible or there should be availability of international financial help on long-term basis. But usually international support cannot be sustainable, making the availability of some sort of domestic sources of income a pre-requisite to sustain the pace of SSR with same momentum. Therefore, the donors should undertake realistic assessments of available domestic sources of revenue before initiating SSR.\footnote{Michael Brzoska, “Security Sector Reform and Post-Conflict Reconstruction under International Auspices”, 121-178.}

Afghanistan is one of the poorest countries in the world. It ranks ahead only of Sierra Leone in the UNDP Human Development Index. The three decades long war has left it with minimal infrastructure and with almost no formal state institutions. After the collapse of the Taliban regime, in the reconstruction assessments security was considered as an important pre-requisite for long term stability of Afghanistan. But the same assessments underestimated the amount required for an effective SSR.\footnote{Peter Middlebrook and Gordon Peake, “Right Financing Security Sector Reform”, \textit{A Policy Paper Series}, Joint paper by Centre on International Cooperation and Political Economy Research Institute, (January 2008), \url{http://www.ssrnetwork.net/uploaded_files/3885.pdf} (accessed June 30, 2014).}

All the pillars of SSR were affected due to the lack of funding. In May 2002, the UN Development Program (UNDP) established the Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan (LOTFA) with the objective of generating funds from the donors for the police salaries. For the Afghan police, the government requested US$65 million but only US$11.2 were provided by 2004.\footnote{Robert M. Pareto, “Afghanistan’s Police”, 5.} That inability to provide funding resulted in the Afghan government’s inability to extend
the national police beyond Kabul. Even in Kabul, Afghan police went unpaid for months, a situation that resulted in petty corruption that undermined public confidence. Increasingly, the public regarded the ANP with a mixture of fear and disdain.\[46\]

Similarly, the Afghan government estimated that around US$190 million were required for the judicial sector reforms but the judiciary received only 2 to 4 percent of the total funding allocated for SSR.\[47\] Lack of funding was one important reason behind delayed and ineffective justice sector reform in Afghanistan, which further undermined the law and order in the country.

The World Bank released a report in May 2012, projecting that Afghanistan’s security spending would reach more than 17.5 percent of its GDP in 2021/22, almost equal to its projected total domestic revenue.\[48\] The report emphasized the fact that the Afghans will not “be able to sustain its security expenditure unless the international community maintains and increases the current level of military aid.”\[49\]

The lack of funding at the time when window of opportunity to bring security and stability in Afghanistan was open, exacerbated the problems which had been created due to the improper conceptualization of the security policies for the reconstruction of Afghanistan.

**Implementation Problems**

Just like the conceptual problems, the security reconstruction efforts by international community too suffered from serious weaknesses. Although international community raised a police and armed force, reconstructed training centres, reformed the ministries of Interior, Defence and Justice to a greater extent, the process was incomplete. The evidence of the faulty and weak security reconstruction was the revival of conflict in the shape of Taliban resurgence within first

---

\[46\] Ibid.
\[49\] Ibid.
five years of the fall of the Taliban regime. The following section will show how the different policies of international community were marred by flaws and weaknesses and how the available window of opportunity was missed.

*Weak Security Forces: the ANP and the ANA*

Police reforms are at the core of any SSR policy in post-conflict states. An efficient police force is *sin qua non* in post-conflict states as once operational, police is responsible to protect the people and society. In a post-conflict environment that role becomes more challenging as maintenance of law and order is a pre-requisite for the smooth transformation of post-conflict states. The effective role of police in a post-conflict state not only lays the foundation for internal security in that state, but also restores public trust in the state’s commitment towards that end. In the post-Taliban Afghanistan, police force had an additional responsibility to fight the insurgency which gained momentum in 2006. The role of the police in fighting insurgency is also crucial due to its knowledge of local terrain and its links with the local population. The increasing Taliban activity made it crucial to raise an efficient police force to tackle the security threat.

Since 2001, the US, Germany, the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), the ISAF, and the European Union Police Mission (EUPOL Afghanistan) have been helping to rebuild the police force and reform associated government institution of Ministry of Interior (MOI).

Germany, because of its prior experience of policing in Afghanistan during the 1960s and the 1970s, was given the lead nation role for police reforms. In February 2002, Germany hosted a

---


53 For more details about the history of Afghan police please see Antonio Guistozzi and Mohammad Isaqzadeh, “Afghanistan’s Paramilitary Police in Context: The Risk of Expediency”, A Report by
conference to generate funding for the ANP and international community assured Germany of full assistance in raising a force of 62,000 multi ethnic and efficient and disciplined ANP force. Under the German command four types of police forces were raised, including the Afghan Civilian Police (ACP, formerly the Afghan Uniformed Police), the Gendarmerie (formerly the Afghan National Civil Order Police), the Afghan Border Police and the Afghan Specialised Police. The police force was under the command of MOI which was responsible for the selection, training and salary of all the police force.

Germany was expected to make a comprehensive plan to raise and train the ANP, to help build the required infrastructure and implement plans to make MoI a more responsible actor in the entire process of ANP’s growth. But by 2003, the US realised that the German efforts were too slow to meet the security needs of post-Bonn Afghanistan. Germany was expected to train some 50,000 policemen by December 2005, but it could train only 35,000 policemen who were factionally divided, underfunded and under-resourced.

In 2003 the US took the lead in rebuilding and reforming the Afghan police. Initially the US Department of State (DoS) was responsible for reforming the ANP. Its main focus was on raising a civilian police, which it envisaged as a long-term force as compared to a more militarised police force, which could be useful only in short-term or would have limited objectives.

When US Department of Defence (DoD) took over in 2007, its thrust was more on the militarization of the police. The financial resources increased under the DoD, but the effectiveness was hampered because of this tussle between the DoD and DoS on the issue of whether to have a civilian or a militarized police force. Mentoring of the police remained an


55 Ibid.
issue of concern even under the US. The US initiated the Focused District Development (FDD) programme in which the police units were supposed to be taken away from their base, and to come back, after training, with the team of mentors. The objective of the mentors was to rule out the corruption among the trainees and also to engage them in the training of better weapons. The programme required massive manpower; for each batch of 100-120 policemen there was a need to have 10-12 trainers. Due to the lack of properly trained mentors, the US engaged people from the US Army who became part of the programme without any experience and training. Moreover, eight weeks was too little a time to leave a mark on the trainees. Such improperly planned strategies to train the police force for a country like Afghanistan resulted in weak and corrupt police force which could not play any role in the reconstruction of their country.

Despite this massive international engagement, the police force was numerically insufficient to meet the security requirements. For example, in northern Afghanistan in 2008, an average police station had a force of nineteen policemen, which include a cook, eight guards, two body guards of the district governor, four patrolling policemen and three for other duties as per the situation. Inadequate numbers of police personnel created a security vacuum, which was filled by the spoilers.

The quality of the police force was also affected due to lack of resources and certain other local inherent issues. There is no denying the fact that due to international assistance the MoI’s capacity increased manifold, but in certain areas that support was lacking on very important fronts. For example, the US provided number of Ford Ranger pickups to the police for patrolling purpose, but the quota for the fuel was only 6 litres per day, which was not at all sufficient for patrolling in the mountainous terrain of Afghanistan.

The recruitments were done on the basis of nepotism – every warlord or former Mujahideen commander, who became part of MoI, preferred people from their own ethnic group, tribe, and/or relatives to join the police force. This problem resulted in an inefficient police force,

---

58 Ibid., 50.
59 Ibid., 42.
60 Ibid., 130-131.
61 Ibid.,
which were not recruited on merit. Moreover, their loyalties remained with their own tribe or
ethnic group and they could not develop the sense of serving the Afghan nation without any
discrimination on the basis of tribe, ethnicity or family bonds.  

With the passage of time, the police lost the trust of the common Afghan people. The pervasive
corruption and abuse of authority within the police department also turned people away from the
ANP, especially in the South. The police was largely blamed for indulgence in kidnappings,
murders, rapes, extortion, trafficking and favouritism on the basis of personal connections in the
investigation of crimes. Hence, there was reluctance on the part of the local population to engage
with the police in getting their problems solved. In a survey conducted in 2011, the popularity
of the ANP dropped over the previous years. In the southern provinces, the popularity of the
police dropped from 67% in 2009 to 48% in 2010. Similarly, only 13% of the Afghans
nationwide had a favourable opinion of the Taliban, though the figure was 40% in the south. Such
security gaps offered the Taliban with an opportunity to exploit the worsening law and
order situation in their own favour by exploiting the frustration of the local people towards the
government.

Like police, the revival of local armed forces in post-conflict states holds significance for the
protection of the state’s sovereignty and to enable the state to fight any external threat. Post-9/11
international effort to build ANA was the third instance of international community’s help to the
Afghans in raising their army. Each of these efforts, however, was impeded by the peculiar
social, political and cultural traits of Afghanistan, which included: the allegiance to the tribe and
ethnicity and not to the state, the presence of parallel armed structures like tribal lashkars (Urdu

62 Tonita Murray, “Police-Building in Afghanistan: A Case Study of Civil Security Reform”,
Afghanistan”, in The Peace in Between: Post-War Violence and Peacebuilding. Studies in Conflict,
Development and Peacebuilding, eds. Astri Suhrke and Mats Berdal, (Abingdon: Routlegde, 2012): 153-
172.

63 Nadene Ghouri, “Afghan police: Corrupt and Brutal, and Still not Fit for Purpose”, The Guardian,
(accessed July 1, 2014).


for local militia raised on voluntary basis) usually formed on the basis of popular uprisings. The formation of ANA was not without such challenges. The US assumed the role of lead nation to train and equip the ANA and it was supported by other international state actors like UK, France, Canada, Germany, New Zealand, Romania, Bulgaria and Mongolia.\(^6^6\) Reportedly the US had spent 50 percent of the total US$67 billion pledged to Afghanistan in the building of both the ANA and ANP.\(^6^7\)

Initially the ANA was planned to comprise 70,000 troops divided into the following categories:\(^6^8\)

**Table 4.1: Formation of ANA as Planned by the US**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category of Troops</th>
<th>Number of Troops</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ground Troops</td>
<td>43,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Air Corps</td>
<td>3000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff of Ministry of Defence and General Personnel</td>
<td>3,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support Command Staff</td>
<td>21,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By 2006, the US was halfway to achieve that target as the number of ANA troops was standing at 27,000 and it was expecting to meet the goal of 70,000 by 2008.\(^6^9\) By 2009, there were estimated 80,000 soldiers in ANA and in 2011 there was a force of 170,000 troops.\(^7^0\) The ANA

---


was divided into five combat corps: 201st Corps in Kabul, the 203rd Corps in Gardez; the 205th Corps in Kandahar; the 207th Corps in Herat; the 209th Corps in Mazar-e-Sharif.\textsuperscript{71}

It is a fact that the development of ANA was on much better grounds and the effort was much better financed as compared to ANP, but still the ANA could not prove to be capable enough to take a lead role in maintaining security across Afghanistan. For example, while being on the field the ANA casualties alone were quite high as compared to the overall casualties of international security forces. The following Table will show the increasing number of ANA casualties;

\textbf{Table 4.2: Increasing Number of ANA Troops Casualties}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of ANA Casualties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>282</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>519</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>550</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


In comparison to that the US and NATO-ISAF together suffered 232 causalities in 2007, which rose to 295 in 2008, 521 in 2009, 711 in 2010 and 566 in 2011.\textsuperscript{72} These ANA casualties are a vivid example of their inability to take a lead in the combat operations without the support of NATO-ISAF.

Like the ANP, the ANA could not avoid the influence of strongmen or warlords. Even the Ministry of Defence was under the influence of those strongmen. This factor contributed to the weakening of the ANA, since the militias sometime fought each other over conflicting interests, rather than facing a common enemy like the Taliban. Another negative consequence of incorporating strongmen into the security forces was the low level of discipline, professionalism,

\textsuperscript{71} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{72} “Operation Enduring Freedom”, \url{http://icasualties.org/oef/} (accessed July 5, 2011).
weak command and control structure, corruption and the tendency to live off the population, a trait compounded by the provision of low salaries and payment delays thus demoralising the ANP. That factionalism was not confined to the junior levels; with the appointment of General Fahim as the Defence Minister after Bonn-I, ninety out of first 100 generals appointed were from Tajik faction, as General Fahim himself was a Tajik.

Despite the active engagement of US-led international community in raising, training and reforming the ANA, it largely remained under-resourced and its training was also not up to the mark. For example, the primary objective of the US was to train the ANA as soon as possible so as to enable it to take the lead in maintaining peace and security in Afghanistan. But that emphasis on combat capacity “drew attention away from support commands, namely the recruiting, education and training, acquisition and logistics and communications and intelligence commands.” Both the US and the ISAF-NATO focused on operational readiness of the troops in the shortest possible time, but did not pay attention to the disciplining of the mostly illiterate and drug addicted soldiers, thus affecting their quality. Moreover, the logistical requirements of the army were neglected - a factor that left the army dependent on international troops and unable to act on its own.

Poor salary and lack of banking and other transaction facilities across Afghanistan to deliver the salary to the families of the soldiers became yet another cause of troops leaving the ANA. The problem was aggravated due to the lack of discipline among the ANA troops, which also became a cause of rise in the desertion rates among the soldiers at a crucial juncture when the international community was moving towards its plan to withdraw from Afghanistan and leaving behind the security in the hands of both AN and ANP. Between January 2011 to June 2011, more

---

76 Ibid., 85.
than 24,000 soldiers left the ANA, more than double of troops who left the army in 2010.\textsuperscript{77} According to a report presented to the US Congress by the US government, one out of every four new recruits (roughly 25\% of new soldiers) left the army within the initial few months after joining.\textsuperscript{78} The high desertion rates reported in 2011 not only revealed ANA's failure in retaining its force and strength, but also put into question the future security of Afghanistan in case of international troops’ withdrawal planned for 2014.

Along with the lack of financial resources to meet the ANA needs and lack of adequate training, there was a constant shortage of trainers and mentors to train the Army. The mentoring of ANA like ANP remained a constant problem in terms of availability of mentors. In January 2010, the required number of mentors to train an army of 134,000 troops was 4,235, but the available number of mentors was only 1,731.\textsuperscript{79}

Another important problem was that of the lack of coordination among the ISAF, the US and Afghan Ministry of Defence. Several Afghan soldiers complained of the operational difficulties that they had to face due to disagreements between the US and UK soldiers. Such instances resulted in death of several ANA soldiers.\textsuperscript{80} Another example can be, as discussed earlier in the context of lack of proper training, the focus on developing infantry for combat readiness. Afghan Ministry of Defence continuously requested for maintaining a balance between combat ready and support providing forces, but international community did not pay attention to such requests.\textsuperscript{81} The international community was more concerned to make maximum number of troops combat ready so that it could go ahead with its withdrawal plans.

\textsuperscript{79} Ibid, 9.
\textsuperscript{80} “A Force in Fragments: Reconstituting the Afghan National Army”, \textit{ICG Asia Report}, 9.
\textsuperscript{81} Ibid.
Justice Reforms: Slow Progress

Justice and peace in any post-conflict state are like two sides of the same coin. In the absence of peace, justice reforms or judicial institutions cannot flourish and in the absence of justice it will be difficult to achieve the objective of peace as there will be no rule of law. If SSR process is inclusive of justice sector reforms it can add more value to the SSR as it will prevent the revival of violence and conflict by bringing the past violators and abusers of human rights under the justice umbrella and ensuring rule of law in post-conflict states.\textsuperscript{82}

Before going into the details of judicial sector reforms in post-Bonn Afghanistan it is important to understand what type of legal code of conduct existed in Afghanistan. In the predominantly Pashtun and Muslim state of Afghanistan, people mostly depended on Islamic and customary laws. Islamic laws depended largely on Shariah (Islamic code of conduct) and gave ulema (religious scholars) a greater role in the judicial affairs of the state. Even the 1964 constitution, which was regarded as the most modern constitution of Afghanistan, gave Shariah a role in the state affairs.\textsuperscript{83} When Taliban came into power in 1996 their interpretation of Islam and Shariah gave a deeper position to Shariah in the lives of Muslims. For example, they stoned to death those who were involved in illicit sexual relationship.

The customary laws are another important component of the legal system of Afghanistan. Pashtunwali (code of conduct of the Pashtuns) holds predominant position in Afghanistan as an example of customary law. Principles of Pashtunwali include concepts like nang (Honour), namus (protection of females), ghairat (personal honour), qawm (same ethnic or tribal group), jirga (a tribal institution comprising of tribal elders), badal (revenge).\textsuperscript{84} The customary law may hold the entire tribe responsible for the act of one man and this factor makes it the predominant source of law and order. But at times these laws are very strict and badal, for example, is considered a must in certain circumstances where one’s namoos or ghairat is involved.

\textsuperscript{83} Tazreena Sajjad, Transitional Justice in South Asia: A Study of Afghanistan and Nepal, (Abingdon; Routledge, 2013), 50-52.
\textsuperscript{84} Ibid., 52-53.
Although, both the customary and Islamic laws continued to play a role in the Afghan state, especially after the onset of conflict in the country after Soviet invasion, the overall impact of decades-long war was disastrous for the Afghan justice system. There were hardly any trained judges, attorneys, prosecutors, proper court rooms or any relevant facility and trained staff. On the other hand, the conflict had left majority of Afghans affected by the war crimes, human rights violations and with a constant sense of insecurity. That is why there was a dire need for the justice sector reforms in post-Bonn Afghanistan.

The Bonn-I called for the creation of independent judiciary and other relevant functioning institutions by the interim authorities and declared the 1964 constitution as the legal document until the new constitution was created.\textsuperscript{85} The Ministry of Justice, the Supreme Court and the Attorney General’s office were established to initiate the process of judicial reforms. In order to overlook the work of the above mentioned institutions, and for overall monitoring of justice sector reforms, a Judicial Reforms Commission (JRC) was created through the Bonn-I.

Despite this urgency to create a functioning judiciary in Afghanistan, the international response was very slow, underfinanced and ineffective on this front. Despite the significance of strong judiciary to assist the police force in executing its duties and generally to maintain law and order, only 3 percent of funding was allocated to the judicial system in the budget for SSR during the fiscal year 2003-2004.\textsuperscript{86}

Italy was appointed as a lead nation for the judicial reforms. In practice, however, Italian efforts were inconsistent, underfinanced and understaffed. Since very beginning Italy’s lack of financial resources and slow pace of reforms made its role as a lead nation contested for majority of Afghans.\textsuperscript{87} Several of the programmes Italy outsourced to the International Development Law

\textsuperscript{85} Please see the draft of Bonn Agreement (December 2001) in the Annex 1.
Organization (IDLO), which had only one representative in Afghanistan. Italy drafted laws according to the Italian code of conduct, disregarding the unique cultural and Islamic jurisprudence existing in Afghanistan since 1747. The Afghans resented this move but Italy threatened to withdraw the funding for the programme.

The main tasks of the Italian Justice Office (IJO), which became operational in 2003, were: to ensure legislative reforms, to rebuild justice institutions, to conduct training courses for judges, construction of infrastructure and providing required equipment to the judiciary for routine business.\(^{88}\)

Moreover, the lack of coordination among the donors and between the donors and the Afghan government further complicated the progress on justice sector reforms. The most obvious case of lack of coordination among the donors was between the US and Italy, which was largely due to the distinct legal traditions of two countries, since Italy featured a civil code system and the US practiced common law.\(^{89}\) Italy drafted the Interim Criminal Procedure Code in 2004, but it was not approved by the Afghan jurists who criticised the Code for very high standards of both the police and judiciary in terms of efficiency and transparency, which were not available in Afghanistan. So the Afghan jurists drafted another code of criminal procedure in 2006 without any international guidance or support. Italy criticised it for not meeting the international standards set in the 1976 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Afghanistan was also a signatory.\(^{90}\) Such lack of coordination among the actors involved in the judicial reforms process unnecessarily delayed the process and also undermined the credibility of the emerging judicial system in the eyes of common Afghans.

Another issue, which hindered the progress in justice sector reforms, was that the donors had not taken into consideration, while framing and implementing these reforms, the culture and unique Pashtun traditions of Afghanistan. The country is home to approximately 55 distinct ethnic groups and as many ‘customary legal systems’ like nang (respect), badal (revenge) and masher (elders). Although these customary laws vary from tribe to tribe, there is an overall element of

\(^{88}\) “Security Sector Reforms in Afghanistan: the EU’s Contribution”.

\(^{89}\) Cyrus Hodes, “The Search for Security”, 73-81.

\(^{90}\) Ibid., 76-77.
respect for both the customary and Islamic law, which should not have been ignored by the international community while drafting the judicial reforms.\textsuperscript{91} As a result, majority of Afghans could not associate themselves with the justice sector reform process in the country. For example, according to a survey 76 percent people were satisfied with \textit{shura} and \textit{jirga} mechanisms as compared to 68 percent who showed satisfaction in the court room system. Similarly, 69 percent voted in favour of local norms and values viz 50 percent who wanted modern and western judicial system.\textsuperscript{92}

\textit{Disarmament Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR): A Missed Opportunity}

The process of DDR plays a critical role in transitions from war to peace. The success or failure of this endeavour directly affects the prospects of building long-term peace in any post-conflict society. Poorly conceived and executed DDR programs can spawn new conflicts. The incomplete disarmament in Mozambique contributed to the proliferation of weapons not only throughout the country, but also in neighbouring countries such as South Africa, Zambia and Malawi. By 1998, Mozambique had become the single largest source of small arms in the South African domestic market \textsuperscript{93}

But in terms of Afghanistan, the DDR programme was not made part of the Bonn Agreement as the Afghan delegates at Bonn were afraid to lose their supremacy in favour of others by abandoning their militias. That is why in the Bonn Agreement there was just a mention of the existence of armed groups and Mujahideen who were supposed to operate under the transitional authority in Afghanistan.\textsuperscript{94}

\textsuperscript{91} Amy Senier, “Rebuilding the Judicial Sector in Afghanistan: The Role of Customary Law”, \url{http://fletcher.tufts.edu/AlNakhlah/Archives/~media/Fletcher/Microsites/al%20Nakhlah/archives/2006/senier.ashx} (accessed July 1, 2014).


\textsuperscript{93} Mark Knight and Alpaslan Özerdem, “Guns, Camps and Cash: Disarmament, Demobilization and Reinsertion of Former Combatants in Transitions from War to Peace”, \textit{Journal of Peace Research} 41, no. 4, (July 2004): 499-516

\textsuperscript{94} Please see the Annex 1 for the draft of the Bonn Agreement (December 2001).
The DDR program was conceived as a part of broader SSR program in Afghanistan in December 2002. This program had to deal with the legacy of decades-long war in Afghanistan unlike other pillars of post-conflict reconstruction. Japan was nominated as the lead nation to implement DDR. First step in that direction was the initiation of The Afghanistan New Beginning Program (ANBP) by the UNDP. To coordinate the DDR programme with international actors involved, the Karzai regime appointed four defence commissions in January 2003. The commissions included National Disarmament Commission (for collection and storage of weapons), the Demobilization and Reintegration Commission (for demobilization and reintegration of the former combatants), the Officer Recruiting and Training Commission (for devising strategy to recruit and train commissioned and non-commissioned officers) and the Soldier Recruiting and Training Commission (for the recruitment of soldiers in ANA). But all those commissions had the problem of transparency and despite their huge claims no recorded data or evidence was ever presented by them to approve their claims of disarming several thousands of former combatants and collecting a huge amount of weapons.

During the OEF, the US-led coalition aligned itself with the informal militia groups which were usually referred to as Northern Alliance (NA). After the fall of the Taliban, the NA militias were designated as Afghan Militia Force and became the first target of the DDR process. That formulation left both the Taliban and several other small militia groups, known as illegal armed groups (IAGs), beyond the reach of DDR.

The ANBP was made responsible for the collection of data about the former combatants and the number of illegal weapons and arms in the country. The Disbandment of Illegal Armed Groups (DIAG) was the successor to the DDR. The DDR focused on the ANA while DIAG was created with the objective of disarming the general militia and armed groups across Afghanistan.

95 Cyrus Hodes, “The Search for Security”, 83.
97 Ibid.
98 Ibid., 120-122.
The reintegration of former combatants in Afghanistan was preceded by a lengthy process of identifying and verifying the eligibility of combatants. Lists of combatants and fighters were created by the local commanders and submitted to the Ministry of Defence (MoD) for verification by Regional Verification Committees (RVCs). Those verified combatants were disarmed by Mobile Disarmament and Demobilisation Units (MDDUs), which would provide the fighters with 130 kilograms of food and instructions for registering for reintegration assistance from an ANBP implementing partner. “Former combatants were initially given a one-time, US$200 payment for disarming, though this step was discontinued once it was discovered that commanders were extorting a large proportion of such funds.”

Although it was quite challenging to initiate the DDR programme in the war-torn Afghanistan, which had gone through a decades' long war since the Soviet invasion in 1979, the post-9/11 fall of the Taliban had opened a window of opportunity to initiate DDR programme in the country. People were tired of the war and there was no active violence with the exception of few parts of South across the country. Most importantly the international community was ready to help Afghan people to come out of the vicious cycle of war. But that opportunity was missed as the DDR was initiated with a delay towards the end of 2002. By that time the armed groups, local militias and warlords (terms used interchangeably) had strengthened themselves by establishing connections with the Ministry of Defence. The Ministry was in control of giving the names of ex-combatants to be disarmed and reintegrated and usually excluded the names of influential armed groups and armed men from such lists on the basis of nepotism.

Moreover, the Tajik dominated United Front maintained a control on the benefits the ex-combatants were supposed to get as a result of DDR. The money was mainly distributed in the Tajik-dominated areas of Kabul and Mazar-i-Sharif, which were dominated by the same Tajik

---

faction. Ex-combatants in Kabul got 44 percent of the total economic benefits as compared to 33 percent allocated in total to Gardez, Kandahar, Jalalabad, Bamyan and Herat.\textsuperscript{102}

The initial, slow pace of the pilot phase of ANBP was further complicated due to the absence of any proper field work or assessment studies to take into account the number of ex-combatants or the weapons etc. For example, there was no preliminary study conducted on the number of armed med, armed groups and number of weapons. The Ministry of Defence claimed that there were 250,000 soldiers and UNAMA’s figures indicated that there were between 45–50,000.\textsuperscript{103}

Moreover, the DDR did not pay enough attention to the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, which was a common culture in Afghanistan to carry. Even the weapons which were collected were not only below the estimated number, they were also of poor quality. The ANBP stated that around 70,000 weapons were collected from some 63,380 ex-combatants, which were 57 percent less than the target.\textsuperscript{104}

The inadequate implementation of DDR not only left a large quantity of weapons and former combatants without any restriction, but also undermined the overall process of security reconstruction of post-Bonn Afghanistan. The constantly deteriorating security situation could also be an outcome of easily available weapons all around the country and former combatants. Even those former combatants who tried to disarm and reintegrate in the society could not get the alternative economic opportunities or the required status in the society thus pushing them back to rejoining militias or for that matter the Taliban-led insurgents.

Conclusion

The SSR process covered very crucial areas of Afghan security set up in the post-Taliban Afghanistan. But the conceptual and implementation problems discussed above created certain

\textsuperscript{102} Simonetta Rossi and Antonio Giustozzi, 5-6.
\textsuperscript{104} Simonetta Rossi and Antonio Giustozzi, 4.
circumstances which were favourable for the revival of conflict. Lack of proper planning and subsequent inadequacies in committing troops and funding left post-Bonn Afghanistan marred with increasing insecurity and instability. The inclusion of warlords and militiamen, and disregard for the ethnic and factional realities of Afghanistan in the Ministries of Defence, Justice and Interior, and giving the non-Pashtuns a leading position in ANA and ANP created political problems. Historically, the Pashtuns have played a dominant role in the state formation of Afghanistan. Appointing Hamid Karzai, a Kandahari Pashtun, alone could not address the concerns of the Pashtun majority, especially in the volatile South, which was a hub of Taliban-led insurgency. Last but not the least, the poorly conceived judicial reforms along with a weak DDR programme had social implications for the post-Taliban Afghanistan.

Both the conceptual and implementation weaknesses especially the delay in the initiation of the judicial sector reforms and DDR programme left several spoilers at large and they remained a potential threat for maintenance of the law and order in Afghanistan which was going through a very uncertain and crucial phase of its history. All those security, political and social implications of the poor and flawed security policies adopted by the international community in the post-Bonn Afghanistan created opportunities for the Taliban to take the advantage – an issue which will be discussed in detail in Chapter Six.
CHAPTER 5: Problems in the Political and Economic Reconstruction of Post-Bonn Afghanistan

Introduction

At the time of the signing of the Bonn Agreement December 2001 (Bonn-I), Afghanistan was one of the most impoverished countries in the world. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979 and the subsequent civil conflict had left the country with a host of problems, such as poverty, underdevelopment, and with a huge number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees.\(^1\) The war had left infrastructure like roads, highways and factories in ruins. The country was suffering diplomatic isolation as the Taliban regime was recognized by only three countries: Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates (UAE). This diplomatic isolation also meant there were no trade and economic relations with most other countries. Internally, the country was without any formal political setup and institutions that could define a functioning state. It was against this backdrop that the Bonn-I initiated the process of Afghan transition after decades of war and instability by giving the Afghan people the right to “freely determine their own political future in accordance with the principles of Islam, democracy, pluralism and social justice.”\(^2\)

This chapter will discuss conceptual and implementation problems of non-security - political and economic - reconstruction measures adopted by the international community.

Political Reconstruction: Conceptual Problems

Successful political transition plays a very important role in transforming a post-conflict society into a stable and peaceful one. Weak government structures in such states result in revival of violence, absence or lack of economic opportunities, human rights violations and law and order problems. Such weak governmental structures are a problem not only for these very states but

---


\(^2\) Please see the Annex 1 for the draft of the Bonn Agreement (December 2001).
also for regional and international security.\textsuperscript{3} Transnational crimes, humanitarian disasters, refugee flows and transnational terrorist activities are some of the examples of the international consequences of the post-conflict governance failure. Successful political transitions resulting in effective, transparent and accountable governance is a must to pre-empt these challenges.

The successful experiences of political transition in Cambodia, Mozambique, Rwanda, South Africa and Vietnam suggest that four factors are crucial for a post-conflict political transition to be successful. First, the political transition should be prioritized over other constituent elements of post-conflict reconstruction, and it should show sensitivity to local cultural, political and religious realities. Second, the capacity of local actors should be built to enable them to respond to post-conflict transition challenges. Third, the security forces must be brought under the civilian control to ensure the rule of law. Fourth, the political transition should aim to address all ethnic and factional issues.\textsuperscript{4}

As stated earlier, the process of political transition in the post-Taliban Afghanistan started with the signing of Bonn-I. Under the UN auspices and with the support of international community, the Agreement established the interim government and set the deadlines for convening the Loya Jirga (Grand Council), drafting of the constitution, and for holding parliamentary and presidential elections respectively. All the deadlines for these political benchmarks were met. Peace in Afghanistan, however, remained elusive, raising the question why peace could not be restored despite successfully meeting these deadlines. In this section the conceptual flaws in the Bonn-I and subsequent implementation mistakes in the sphere of political reconstruction will be discussed due to which the political transition process could not bring the desirable results.

\textit{Non-Inclusive Political Process}

After the fall of Taliban, under the auspices of the UN and with full international support, the Bonn Conference was convened in December 2001. From the Afghan side, the participants of the


Bonn Conference included the Northern Alliance, the Cyprus Group (a pro-Iran group of exiles), the Rome Group (including the loyalists of King Zahir Shah) and the Peshawar Group (comprising exiles based in Peshawar). The Bonn-I is criticised for being a victor’s accord rather than a peace accord between the warring parties in Afghanistan – the Northern Alliance and the Taliban.⁵

Stephen John Stedman has discussed how the “spoilers” kept out of the peace process by the international community, become a threat to post-conflict peace.⁶ He has categorized the spoilers as internal and external spoilers.⁷ The internal spoilers are those who are made part of the peace process, but who subsequently fail to fulfil their obligations. The external spoilers, on the other hand, are those who are not included in the peace negotiations and peace process. “Inside spoilers tend to use strategies of stealth; outside spoilers often use strategies of violence.”⁸ Post-9/11, the Taliban also became the external spoilers. At the time of Bonn-I, they were weak, demoralized and defeated. International community could have neutralized them easily by making them part of the political process. Stedman has shed light on the strategies to manage the spoilers during the peace process. He stresses that before including them in the peace process, spoilers should be defeated or weakened to the extent where they cannot manipulate the situation in their favour.

The international community and even the Afghan delegates did not invite spoiler groups like the Taliban, the Haqqani Network and the Hizb-i-Islami. They were weakened and on the run and that would have been a good opportunity to neutralise such groups by giving them a due share in the state formation process.⁹ By excluding them or by not even recognizing them in the draft of the Agreement, the important Pashtun segment was completely ignored in the reconstruction process of Afghanistan. Even Lakhdar Brahimi, one of the prominent figures behind drafting the Bonn Agreement (2001), himself regretted the exclusion of the Taliban from the Bonn-I, which

⁷ Ibid., 8-9.
⁸ Ibid.
proved detrimental to the Karzai regime. He was of the opinion that in 2001 Karzai regime was in a better position to negotiate a peace deal with the Taliban.\textsuperscript{10} He even stated in 2009, “We are now paying the price for what we did wrong from the day one ... The popular support base of the interim administration put together in Bonn under President Karzai was far too narrow. We all vowed to work hard to widen that base once we returned to Kabul. Unfortunately, very little was done.”\textsuperscript{11}

In the Interim setup, which was assigned with the task of laying the foundation of political, economic and security transformation of Afghanistan majority of the ministries were assigned to the non-Pashtuns. Within the 30 member cabinet of the Interim setup, 11 portfolios went to the Pashtuns, eight to the Tajiks, five to the Hazaras, three to the Uzbeks and rest to the other minorities.\textsuperscript{12} Maintaining the ethnic balance was very important in an ethnically divided country like Afghanistan. Initially this policy of giving leverage to the non-Pashtuns in the political set up of Afghanistan alienated the Pashtuns who has ruled the Afghan state since 1747.\textsuperscript{13}

Although President Hamid Karzai was a Pashtun, even his presence could not satisfy the Pashtuns since he was surrounded by predominantly Tajik leaders holding high positions in his cabinet. The Pashtuns were very sceptical of the Bonn-process and considered the post-Bonn political setup as not a true representative setup as propagated by the international community. Rather the dominant positions of the non-Pashtuns in the interim authority and the presence of military units of the Tajik strongmen like that of Marshal Qasim Fahim – the then Defence Minister – who refused to withdraw his militia from Kabul, generated a sense of deprivation among the Pashtuns.

When the \textit{Emergency Loya Jirga} (June 2002) was in its preparatory phase, two major incidents gave further boost to the non-Pashtun part of the Interim authority, and further disappointed the

\textsuperscript{13} Rubin, “(Re)Building Afghanistan”.
Pashtuns. One was the sudden announcement by the King Zahir Shah to withdraw from his candidature for presidency. The Tajiks considered him as a symbol of Pashtun’s glorious past and their pride, so they were against his candidature since the very beginning. The visit by Zalmay Khalilzad to his home and subsequent announcement by King Zahir Shah to support President Hamid Karzai deepened the mistrust of the Pashtuns.

Another incident was tasking National Directorate of Security (NDS), which was dominated by Panjshiri Tajiks, with the protection of the Jirga’s location, whereas earlier it had been decided that the responsibility would be handed over to ISAF or international forces. That caused further resentment among the Pashtuns.

The scope of the reconstruction process in post-Bonn Afghanistan could have been expanded by including those elements, which became a major threat to the process in the form of resurgence of Taliban and other predominantly Pashtun insurgent groups like Haqqani Network and Salafis, as they were totally sidelined.

**Strengthening of Warlords**

Antonio Giustozzi defines a warlord as “a legitimate, charismatic and patrimonial military leader with autonomous control over a military force capable of achieving and maintaining a monopoly of large scale violence over a sizeable territory”. The warlords emerge on the basis of their needs or self-interest rather than ideology. They are violent in nature. They find it difficult to pursue their agenda in a strong and stable governance system. In this study the word “warlord” and “strongman” will be used interchangeably.

---

15 Ibid.
A major criticism against the Bonn Agreement has been that it contributed to re-strengthening the warlords and emergence of new powerful strongmen who held parallel structures that undermined the state. This had grave political as well as economic ramifications for the post-Bonn Afghanistan. The objective of the US-led international invasion of Afghanistan was to remove the Taliban, who had provided shelter to al-Qaeda, from power. To attain this objective, the US-led international coalition sought the help of anti-Taliban warlords who were mainly non-Pashtuns.\textsuperscript{17} In this regard, the Northern Alliance, which comprised some prominent warlords like Rashid Dostum (an ethnic Uzbek) and Marshal Fahim (an ethnic Tajik), played a particularly crucial role. Subsequently, these very warlords became an obstacle in the way of a strong Afghan centralised government.\textsuperscript{18}

The warlords and strongmen also overshadowed the Cabinet of Hamid Karzai during the interim set up. Those warlords had a history of involvement in human rights violations and drug trafficking.\textsuperscript{19} The same pattern was replicated at the provincial and local levels, where all the important police and other bureaucratic posts were given to the favourites of the strongmen or warlords.\textsuperscript{20} The culture of nepotism and corruption resulted in undermining the state legitimacy in the eyes of ordinary Afghans. That lack of trust in Karzai regime was exploited by the Taliban as spoilers in their favour. (The details will be discussed in the next chapter.)

Two main ethnically based militias in Northern Afghanistan were able to secure positions in the Interim setup; the Panjsheri Tajik leadership secured the defence, interior and foreign ministries; and the Hizb-i-Wahdat was given the planning department and its leader was among the five deputy chairmen of the setup.\textsuperscript{21} That policy of co-opting with the warlords not only revived their power but also ethnically favoured non-Pashtuns over Pashtuns.


\textsuperscript{20} Roger Mac Ginty, 588-589.

It was not only the cabinet that included many warlords, the *Loya Jirga* also had many of them, against the rules and regulations. For example, General Dostum, the deputy defence minister in the interim authority and a regional warlord, got elected himself to the *Loya Jirga*. He was not eligible to be a *Jirga* member as he was accused of human rights violations in the past, and was serving as military commander of his militia.²² Other provincial governors - for example, the governor of Kandahar, Gul Agha Sherzai, the governor of Nangahar, Haji Abdul Qadir, and Ismail Khan, the governor of Herat - also were involved in tampering with rules of participation in the *Loya Jirga*.²³ In addition to this, both the US and UNAMA pressurized the *Loya Jirga* to allow those regional power brokers to be part of it to appease them.²⁴

In addition to strengthening the old warlords, the culture of nepotism further gave rise to certain new but very strong political figures in Afghanistan who manipulated their political associations for their own individual interests. The rise of Ahmed Wali Karzai, the paternal half-brother of President Hamid Karzai, is one such example. He rose to prominence in the aftermath of post-9/11 developments with the support from both the international community and Karzai regime. He not only exercised strong control over the political appointments and political developments in the Kandahar province but also controlled the real estate and contracting business. The police force was intentionally kept weak to facilitate the Wali Karzai’s “shadow government” or parallel power structure in the province.²⁵

The issue of inclusion or exclusion of the Afghan warlords was a key controversial issue which kept analysts and observers divided. Some political analysts were of the opinion that the inclusion of warlords into the *Loya Jirga* (2002) and the Presidential and Parliamentary elections in 2004 and 2005 respectively undermined the state legitimacy.²⁶ Others opined that these

---

²³ Ibid.
²⁴ Ibid.
warlords were neutralised by becoming part of the governance process. It is a fact that the international community faced a challenge in 2001 to ignore the warlords and explore alternate leaders, because they were dependent upon them to disempower the Taliban and hunt al-Qaeda terrorists. Also, the warlords were enjoying a preeminent role in the polity of Afghanistan. In the absence of local security apparatus and sufficient international security forces, the Karzai regime had no choice but to co-opt the warlords for the regime to survive. There was a need for institution building at the political, economic and security fronts to counter the role of informal actors in post-Bonn Afghanistan. There could be no quick solutions to the problems of Afghanistan. There was a need to gradually erode the power base of the warlords and win public confidence by paying more attention to the social welfare and human security aspects of the state and society relationship. However, like many other things this aspect of the political transformation became a prey to the US and its allies’ myopic vision and short-term policies in Afghanistan to defeat the Taliban and al-Qaeda and undertake nation-building from that very perspective.

Inherent Weaknesses in the Interim Structure

The Bonn process and the subsequent political developments were marred by the fact that international community had short-term stability in the perspective and adopted quick-fix solutions to the issues and problems of political reconstruction in post-Taliban Afghanistan. That initial lack of farsightedness and steady approach affected the process negatively, and their failure to appreciate the significance of sound political basis for Afghanistan could not create a state capable of resolving its problems.

During the Bonn conference, an interim governing structure was established for the six months until a traditional Loya Jirga would be convened to elect a Transition Authority or Government.

27 Ibid.
28 Ibid.
Hamid Karzai was made the head of the interim set up. The 30-member interim cabinet included eleven Pashtuns, eight Tajiks, five Hazaras and three Uzbeks. Rest of the members were drawn from other minorities. Karzai’s cabinet consisted mainly of the people who had supported the US-led international coalition in ousting Taliban and al-Qaeda. The three most powerful ministries of his cabinet went to Panjshiri Tajiks of the Northern Alliance. Younis Qanooni, who led the Northern Alliance’s Bonn delegation, was selected Interior Minister. Marshal Fahim, Commander-in-Chief of the Northern Alliance, was given charge of the Defence Ministry and Dr Abdullah Abdullah was selected as Foreign Minister. As stated earlier, providing these strongmen with the power and access to economic opportunities resulted in disturbing the ethnic balance and promoting a culture of nepotism and corruption.

Moreover, majority of the cabinet ministers had no prior and formal experience which was vital for the development of a democratic and peaceful Afghan state.\textsuperscript{31} Also, the ministries and government institutions had no clear division of work among themselves, leading at times to confusion.\textsuperscript{32} One glaring example is that of the Ministry of Education. The Ministry not only lacked funds, but also capacity. A UN official once stated that the Ministry of Education employees were even unable to conduct a simple survey to count how many girls go to school in a district. Moreover, the problem of lack of capacity and funding was made more acute by the fact that the Ministry of Education had no mechanism to communicate with the Provincial Education Departments to have an idea of the needs and requirements of the schools at provincial and district level.\textsuperscript{33} Another example is that of the Office of Administrative Affairs, which was created to liaise between the executive and legislative branches. However, both the branches continued to work in isolation and at times executive passed laws without the approval of the legislature.\textsuperscript{34} The lack of capacity and coordination among various government branches in the initial phase laid weak foundations of the state-building process and it became difficult and more costly to cover these holes in the process at a later stage.

\begin{itemize}
\item[\textsuperscript{31}] Ibid.
\item[\textsuperscript{32}] Ibid.
\end{itemize}
Problems in Implementation of Political Reconstruction

The conceptual problems in Bonn-I made it more challenging to carry out the political reconstruction. At the implementation level, the process was further marred with problems like slow pace in establishing and reviving state institutions, imbalance of power among the state institutions and constant decline in legitimacy of the Karzai regime. In this section it will be analysed how these problems resulted in delayed and slow start of the political reconstruction.

Inefficient Political Institutions

Institution building in post-conflict states is a complex and lengthy process, which has several phases. In that process first of all institutions are designed and then their capacity building is done. Finally they have to pass the legitimacy test. But regardless of the phase or stage that they had to pass through, institutions play a very important role in the reconstruction of post-conflict states. These institutions establish a set of common rules on which the foundations of stability of a state are laid. The institutions if representative in nature can accommodate well the ethnic and factional divides within the society. Moreover, they play very important role in ensuring law and order in post-conflict fragile security environment.

Post-Taliban Afghanistan was no exception in this regard. In order to help build a stable and prosperous Afghanistan, functional, legitimate and accountable state institutions had to be built at the central, provincial, and local government level because decades of war and conflict in the country had deprived the country of a coherent set of institutions that could meet the basic requirements of a state, i.e., provision of security, enforcement of law and delivery of basic services. As stated earlier, the political benchmarks set during the Bonn Agreement were achieved successfully and the process was completed with the 2005 parliamentary elections. However, during the race to achieve these political benchmarks, little attention was paid towards institution building at provincial, district and local levels and the capacity building of the local Afghans to run these institutions. Professor Barnett R. Rubin stated that the Bonn Agreement

created a government but not a state. The Agreement did not define and explain several important aspects of institutions building process in post-Bonn Afghanistan, such as the procedure to select government representatives and the ways to maintain ethnic and tribal balances in the institutions.

When the post-Bonn Afghanistan started the process of political reconstruction, at that time the country did not have a centralised authority to coordinate and control various institutions at the provincial level. The entire country was run by a few strongmen who had been exercising control in their areas without any link or coordination with others. Keeping in view that fragmented political power structure, the Bonn-I advocated a centralised government and the new constitution also invested powers in the centralised presidential system. But the challenge and the risk in such system was its limited engagement with institutions at the provincial, district and local levels.

There are 34 provinces in Afghanistan, 399 districts, 217 municipalities and roughly 40,020 villages. The 2004 constitution had inherited several features of the 1923 constitution and the subsequent form of government which emerged in post-Bonn Afghanistan was highly centralised.

At the provincial and district level both the provincial and district governors were nominated, while Mayors were elected by voters only at the municipality level. On the village level, there was no such formal representative to give a feel to Afghan people of the presence of the state. That centralised system had made the authorities less accountable to the masses, and thus oblivious to the needs of the people whom they promised to serve.

---

36 Rubin, “(Re) Building Afghanistan”, 168.
38 Ibid., 895.
40 Ibid., 5-6.
Another dimension of the problem was the lack of coordination in that system. For example, the municipalities were supposed to generate their funding on their own and were supposed to spend them with very little support from the centre.\textsuperscript{41} That lack of coordination further increased the gap between the centre and the periphery which was not a good sign for the reconstruction.

The institutions in Afghanistan were not only weak they also had problems with each other. The growing lack of trust between the Executive and the Legislative branches, continuing even after the election of a second Parliament in September 2010, has seriously undermined the processes of building inter-institutional cooperation and institutionalization against the entrenched personalizing politics in Afghanistan.\textsuperscript{42}

In the process of institution building the aspect of “capacity building” was neglected which was tied with the issue of legitimacy of the new institutions. The UNDP has defined capacity building as a process that involves “focus on technical or functional capacities, organizational change, leadership and social cohesion, or shifts in policies or other aspects of the enabling environment which can facilitate more effective use of capacity.”\textsuperscript{43} Capacity building is one of the essential components of the reconstruction related tasks in the post-conflict states. In the absence of building local capacity in the post-conflict states, the reconstruction process cannot bring the required results of long-term peace and stability. The international partners may not stay indefinitely to do the job of indigenous actors. There is a need to build capacity at the institutional level to avoid the revival of conflict.

Post-Bonn Afghanistan was no exception in this regard. The tight time frame set in the Bonn Agreement to achieve the political benchmarks compromised not only the institution building process, it also had implications for capacity building. For example, the international community emphasized holding elections within the designated timeframe set during Bonn-I. That rush to

\textsuperscript{41} Ibid.
hold elections did not allow for creating local capacity and the reliance on international expertise proved costly as the cost of holding election was estimated at US$ 300 million.\textsuperscript{44}

It is a fact that Afghanistan was inherently a weak state and achieving the objectives of the reconstruction process in a limited time frame was very difficult. But considering the willingness of the Afghan population to have a better future with the help of international community, the task of the latter was relatively easy as compared to other such nation-building operations around the globe. There was a need for properly understanding the institutional requirements of post-Bonn Afghanistan by the international community in order to lay solid foundations of the reconstruction process. The institutional weaknesses not only created problems in the political reconstruction and transition but also resulted in a legitimacy crisis for the Karzai regime as discussed in the following section.

\textit{Declining Legitimacy of Karzai Regime}

Legitimacy in simple terms in a post-conflict state rests on people’s perceptions about the new government and institutions that they are capable of running the state machinery and will prevent the revival of conflict.\textsuperscript{45} Political legitimacy can be achieved through reviving or creating transparent and efficient state institutions for state’s good, drafting a constitution, charismatic leadership, and holding elections. But in case the leadership is corrupt, fraudulent, and incapable of creating or reviving state institutions, the leader and his regime cannot attain legitimacy and the public’s trust and confidence.\textsuperscript{46} The regimes in those states, which go through conflicts, face the problem of legitimacy. That is why it is important in post-conflict situations for both the


donors and the indigenous actors to work for the restoration of the legitimacy of the regimes in power.\textsuperscript{47}

In the post-Bonn Afghanistan, people had hoped that the Karzai regime and its international backers would work for viable peace in the country and security, political and economic reconstruction will be done according to the aspirations of Afghan people and for their benefit.

Several factors can be held responsible for undermining the state legitimacy in the eyes of common Afghans. The inclusion of warlords and emergence of several strong actors due to nepotism and kinship policies of the Karzai regime undermined the legitimacy of the state. The warlords undermined the state legitimacy in three main ways: first, they were not considered as legitimate actors by the common Afghan people in any kind of political rule due to their past record of human rights violations. Second, they weakened the ability of the government to deliver services as warlords favoured their own specific group of people acting in the capacity of government representative; and finally in certain cases, they intentionally tried to undermine the state legitimacy by promoting the culture of nepotism, kinship and corruption.\textsuperscript{48}

Another factor was the lack of local institutions at provincial, district and village level and the central government’s reach was limited to the main cities of Afghanistan. This factor further undermined the legitimacy of the Karzai regime as majority of Afghans are rural inhabitants and by not addressing their concerns the state alienated them.\textsuperscript{49}

Corruption also undermined the internal as well as the external legitimacy of the government, something it could ill-afford in the midst of a growing civil war. The general Afghan population was wary of the authorities throughout the country. It was particularly concerned over the rampant corruption. The public trust in the regime was further shaken among the general public

after reports of fraud committed during the 2009 election process surfaced. A common Afghan, while giving his views on the elections, expressed a lack of trust and worsening legitimacy crisis in the country: “A group of traitors, smugglers, mafia and robbers are leading Afghanistan and now the destiny of the country is in their hands.”

The political legitimacy of the regime in power during the post-conflict reconstruction was a must to erode the chances of revival of conflict. But Afghanistan became a victim of that problem due to the poorly conceived political transition policies and the subsequent poor performance by both the Karzai regime and its international backers, which could not bring the desirable results. But the poor political planning, combined with poor economic transition approaches, created more challenges for the reconstruction and development of Afghanistan.

**Economic Reconstruction: Conceptual Problems**

Economic reconstruction holds importance in post-conflict states as it addresses the issues of economic revival of these countries to meet the objective of sustainable economic prosperity, which is one of the important factors to avoid the revival of conflict. In the peace transition international state and non-state actors play a crucial role by providing financial resources to address the immediate humanitarian needs of the post-conflict states and also to help build the state capacity to attain the goal of long-term development. Post-9/11, Afghanistan had also gone through the process of economic reconstruction but a decade-long international engagement could not bring the desired results. The poppy production and illicit drug trade, increasing dependence on external sources of funding, corruption and persistent poverty and unemployment were some of the problem areas that continued to haunt Afghanistan at the time of Bonn-II (December 2011), exactly a decade after the Bonn-I.

---

This section will discuss the conceptual problems in the internationally-led economic reconstruction process in Afghanistan.

**Imbalance Between Economic and Security Reconstruction Priorities**

State building in a fragile and post-conflict state is a very challenging task. Each post-conflict state varies from others due to its own geographical, ethnic, cultural, socio-economic and political backgrounds. Similarly, the nature of conflict also varies from state to state. In such a situation every state’s post-conflict reconstruction requirements vary from those of others and there can be no “Fit for All” formula. In almost all the post-conflict states, the policy makers have to initiate an all-encompassing policy to integrate the four pillars of reconstruction, i.e., security, political, socio-economic and judicial reforms. But at times one of the pillars receives more attention than the others, thereby making the progress unequal. Similarly, the results cannot be realised or achieved due to the inter-connected nature of the reconstruction reforms. SSR is no exception. Usually security is given precedence over other pillars of reconstruction but in the absence of economic opportunities and political stability, peace remains elusive in post-conflict states. This is why there is a need to have a coherent and comprehensive policy addressing the problems at every level of state formation.\(^\text{51}\)

In the Afghan case, since the inception of Bonn-I, the international community was more concerned with the security needs of the country, instead of looking into the overall requirements of Afghanistan. Economic reconstruction was not a priority task. Though the Bonn Agreement had elaborated the political transition of future Afghanistan, it undermined the importance of a strong economic base for smooth political transition and security transformation in post-Taliban

Afghanistan. The Bonn-I in its Annex III requested the UN and the international donor community to help in the reconstruction, rehabilitation and recovery of Afghanistan.\textsuperscript{52} Beyond this, Bonn-I was silent on the need to have a robust economic recovery programme for the country which had a history of poor economic performance and continuing conflict since the Soviet invasion in 1979.

However, with the resurgence of the Taliban, revival of drug trafficking and limited state capacity to address the needs of common Afghans, the international community in London Compact of 2006 devised a broad based strategy to address the economic concerns of the Afghan people. But the conceptual flaws at the time of inception of economic reconstruction policy and subsequent problems, such as corruption, by then had become deep rooted and difficult to be eliminate.

In the initial phase the international community was more concerned with addressing the security needs although those efforts could not have significant impact on the security situation either. In the first year after Bonn-I, 84 percent of international spending was allocated towards the fight against al-Qaeda and the Taliban, nine per cent on humanitarian assistance, four per cent on ISAF and only three per cent on reconstruction.\textsuperscript{53} According to a report by the Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief (ACBAR), between 2001 to 2008, the US military expenditure rose to US$100 million a day; however, during the same time period the average amount of aid by all donors combined was less than US$7 million a day.\textsuperscript{54} The impact of such imbalance between security and reconstruction spending was that majority of Afghan population could not enjoy the fruits of reconstruction in the country and they also developed a negative image for the Karzai regime and its international allies.\textsuperscript{55}

The creation of Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) and then putting Army in the driving seat to conceive the projects and distribute funds further hampered the economic revival process

\textsuperscript{52} Please see the draft of Bonn Agreement (December 2001) in Annex 1.
\textsuperscript{54} Amin Saikal, “Afghanistan on the Edge of a Political Abyss”, 34.
\textsuperscript{55} Ibid.
in Afghanistan. In most of the areas the aid was used to win “hearts and minds” for military or security purposes, and not for the local capacity building to achieve the objectives of reconstruction. For example, in Kapisa Province, PRTs constructed the school buildings. But the construction of building was not enough for the local capacity building as the school required trained teaching staff, a security guarantee that the student especially girls attending the school would be unharmed and close coordination with the Ministry of Education. But the PRTs were only involved in construction of infrastructure.56

Such militarised approach further limited the Afghan state’s capacity to deliver services and earn the required trust and confidence of general population who wanted to see the state’s writ to tackle any kind of threat. The policies left a critical dimension of post-conflict reconstruction undermined. Security no doubt was needed, but in the absence of economic revival the goals of security also could not be achieved.

Afghanistan’s Financial Needs and Initial Lack of Funding

The Tokyo Conference (January 2002) was held in the aftermath of Bonn-I to financially assist the Afghan Interim Authority in its reconstruction drive. On the sidelines of Tokyo Conference, international community also decided to conduct a preliminary needs assessment for Afghanistan in order to better articulate the spending process of aid money. The UNDP, the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) jointly conducted the need assessment for Afghanistan.

The preliminary needs assessment took into consideration the security, political, social, economic and infrastructural reconstruction and set goals and made an estimate of funding requirements accordingly. For economic recovery, the needs assessment gave priority to establish a central bank, payment system, prepare an interim budget, establishing treasury accounts for receiving funds, and assist the Aid Coordination Unit in Ministry of Finance.57 For

---


57 Dennis A. Rondinelli, “International Goals and Strategies for Afghanistan’s Development: Reconstruction and Beyond”, in Beyond Reconstruction in Afghanistan: Lessons from Development
the overall reconstruction of Afghanistan, the estimated amount in the short-term (five years) was US$11.4 billion, while in the long-term (ten years) it was estimated at US$18.1 billion.\textsuperscript{58}

But the dilemma of Afghanistan started from the very beginning since it received only US$4.5 billion in assistance at Tokyo Conference - much less that its requirements.\textsuperscript{59}

The problem of inadequate funding in the beginning got more complex, because in most of the cases the pledges made by the international community were not fulfilled in timely manner that delayed the implementation of the aid projects and reconstruction. From 2001 to 2011, international community committed to pay US$90 billion for the reconstruction of Afghanistan but by 2010 it had paid only US$57 billion.\textsuperscript{60} The donor countries could not fulfil their promise to extend aid money in time. For example, according to a report by ACBAR, by 2008, Spain gave only 10 percent of the aid it promised for the period between 2002 to 2011. Same was the case with Turkey, China, Saudi Arabia, ADB and International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) who had all delivered less than 40 percent of their aid pledges for the period between 2002 to 2011.\textsuperscript{61}

According to a study by the RAND Corporation (RAND) if a post-conflict country wanted to attain the minimum level of success in nation building it would require US$100 per capita but in comparison to that Afghanistan received only US$57 per capita.\textsuperscript{62} Such paucity of aid in the initial phase of reconstruction when the window of opportunity was opened led towards a shaky start of the post-conflict reconstruction process in post-Bonn Afghanistan.

\textsuperscript{58} Ibid., 22.
\textsuperscript{59} Ibid., 23.
**Ill-Conceived Aid Related Policies**

It is always challenging for the donor community to work in post-conflict environments due to fragile security situation, weak state institutions and engagement of several stakeholders in the process of reconstruction.\(^{63}\) That is why there is need to properly evaluate and plan the aid financing in post-conflict states. Usually ill-conceived policies can result in corruption, waste of aid money and subsequently lack of required development.

The Bonn-I created a flawed model to bring peace to Afghanistan which required modifications. Hence, the international community from the beginning had to act very cautiously while devising post-conflict reconstruction policies.\(^{64}\) However, contrary to this, international community’s policies were ill-conceived with short term objectives in mind. Besides the issues of prioritising security over economic reconstruction and consequently militarized aid problems and lack of funding in the initial years of reconstruction, the international donors were reluctant to engage the Afghan government in aid related policies. The donor community bypassed the Afghan government on the pretext of being weak and inefficient to handle the tremendous amount of aid. But such practices do not allow the state’s capacity building and undermines the state legitimacy.\(^{65}\)

The Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF) was established in May 2002 to coordinate financial mechanisms for recurring budgets and priority reconstruction programs and projects. It had reportedly received US$2.3 billion by 2008, which was less than 16 percent of total Afghan reconstruction fund.\(^{66}\)

---


\(^{64}\) Jonathan Goodhand, “Bribes and Bargain”, 50.


In addition to bypassing the Afghan government, the international donors usually had “donor driven” priorities and policies while allocating aid to Afghanistan. For example, according to World Bank a quarter of aid by 2008 was going to technical assistance with little impact on capacity building.\(^6^7\) Another relevant problem was that the amount which the government used to receive was reduced because around 40 percent of all aid used to go back to the donor countries in the form of corporate profits and salaries.\(^6^8\) The control by the donors on aid money had resulted in the lack of capacity building of the Ministry of Finance and the government of Afghanistan was unaware of how more than one-third of all aid had been spent between 2001 to 2008.\(^6^9\)

In the Afghan context, another problem was the “Quick Impact Projects” – short-term and small scale projects targeted at winning hearts and minds in post-conflict situations.\(^7^0\) Such projects were usually undertaken by the PRTs to win peoples’ hearts and minds. But as the title indicates such projects could not have the long lasting impacts on the Afghan state as expected in a reconstruction process. The PRTs constructed school buildings, roads, clinics and bridges in the provinces, but they did not coordinate with the local Afghan authorities about the local requirements. Subsequently, many such projects could not bring the desired results. Moreover, several of the projects remained incomplete, such as the US project of building a school at the cost of US$310,000 in the Parwan Province, which remained incomplete and the PRT also winded up from the area, leaving the broken and shaky building behind.\(^7^1\)

In Laghman Province, a project was initiated to construct nine roads under the Quick Impact Projects banner, but the project worth US$44 million was at the risk of failure since the local

---


\(^6^8\) Ibid.

\(^6^9\) Ibid., 90.


authorities had no resources and capacity to maintain the roads.\textsuperscript{72} Such ill-conceived and short-term policies resulted in faulty implementation of the reconstruction policies.

**Problems in Implementation of Economic Reconstruction**

The economic reconstruction process in Afghanistan was not only affected by the conceptual problems while devising the policies, but it also had several implementation issues which undermined the economic reconstruction and development process in the country. The implementation issues are discussed as following:

*Inadequate Distribution and Allocation of Aid*

When it came to the implementation of the aid projects, which were mainly donor oriented, the process was not smooth and in most of the cases either the projects were not initiated keeping in view the local needs or in certain cases were left incomplete. A significant amount of aid money delivered to Afghanistan was either wasted or remained ineffective in addressing issues relating to reconstruction and maintaining peace and stability. Especially, once the international community wanted an honourable withdrawal from Afghanistan they rushed with abundant flow of money which resulted in leakage, waste and mismanagement of the funds.

During the Tokyo conference of January 2002, international donor community did not make distinction between the humanitarian aid and reconstruction-related assistance. The result was that by 2006, one third of the aid was directed towards humanitarian assistance thus affecting the pace and progress of under resourced reconstruction efforts.\textsuperscript{73} According to a former official of SIGAR, only 15\% of the total aid money so far provided to Afghanistan reached the intended recipients and the remaining 85\% was wasted or utilized by corrupt officials.\textsuperscript{74}

\textsuperscript{72}“Aid and Conflict in Afghanistan”, 18.
\textsuperscript{73}“Aid and Conflict in Afghanistan”, 6.
\textsuperscript{74}“$85 Billion of Afghan Aid Wasted”, http://www.afghanistanstudygroup.org/2012/05/28/85-billion-of-afghan-aid-wasted/
The money was in most of the cases used by the international donors themselves without engaging or outsourcing it to the local partners which could significantly bring down the costs of the projects and could use that money in something else. For example, the cost of a paved road built by USAID was US$250,000. But if it was built by a local company the cost could be only US$40,000. Similarly, the cost of water wells built under UNDP’s area-based programme was US$600 if it was built locally, but could incur a cost of US$3,000 if it was to be built by an international NGO.\(^75\)

In Herat city, notebooks, bags and other stationary kits marked with the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) logo were sold in the markets, which was a sign of sheer mismanagement in aid distribution. That happened because the aid was distributed without assessing the local needs for the kind of aid assistance where people exchange goods in such cases or it ended up in the markets for the monetary benefit.\(^76\)

The lack of transparency, while using the aid money, was not a phenomenon confined to the Afghans only. International donors also had been involved in fraud and mismanagement of the aid money designated for Afghanistan. For example, USAID issued a report on US$25 million worth of projects subcontracted to a UN agency called United Nation Office for Project Services (UNOPS). According to that report, in addition to other irregularities, around US$10 million were spent on projects in Haiti, Sudan, Sri Lanka and Dubai instead of Afghanistan.\(^77\) In another instance, a local director of UNOPS spent US$200,000 of the US money in renovating his guesthouse.\(^78\)

In 2007, the US gave a contract worth almost US$300 million to a Miami, Florida company called AEY, Inc. to supply Afghan National Army (ANA) with 52 types of ammunition, primarily 7.62 bullets for AK-47s. But the company delivered Chinese weapons manufactured in

\(^{75}\) Carrol Faubert, “Case Study Afghanistan”, 14-15.


\(^{78}\) Ibid.
1960s which were outdated and substandard. Worse, the US did nothing to terminate the contract or to take any kind of disciplinary action despite becoming aware of the irregularity. Such cases were endemic for the process of economic reconstruction in post-Bonn Afghanistan.

The lack of capacity building and ill-conceived off-budget funding had resulted in establishment of a dual public sector - an internal public sector that the government of Afghanistan managed and an external public sector that donor community financed and managed. The result of such parallel structures was brain drain, as most of the Afghan professionals chose the external public sector which paid higher salaries than the government.

**Rentier State Economy**

The issue of aid and its effectiveness has remained one of the most controversial topics in the post-Taliban discourse on Afghanistan. Immediately after the fall of Taliban the aid and economic assistance pledges were made in a way that could not fulfil the needs of almost totally devastated Afghanistan. It was only after the resurgence of the Taliban that the amount of aid was increased gradually. The international assistance proved problematic in the sense that it created another rentier regime in Afghanistan. The economic policy did not focus on improving the local economic conditions and economic capacity building. Almost all the dynamics of economic policy were financed by the aid money.

The low levels of taxation from productive activities and dependence on external sources might lead to an unaccountable state which is not interested in democratic rule or people-centric policies. This happened in post-Bonn Afghanistan. Between 2009 and 2010, 70 percent of the Afghan budget was derived from the foreign economic sources. On top of that, the money was not spent according to the public aspirations and needs. The leadership in the centralised system of Afghanistan was not accountable to the general masses, but to the President; and such policies

---

further undermined the objective of politically transforming Afghanistan into a stable, representative and democratic society.\textsuperscript{82}

According to the World Bank, “an estimated 97 percent of Afghanistan’s roughly $15.7 billion gross domestic product comes from international military and development aid and spending in the country by foreign troops.”\textsuperscript{83} Despite well-known weaknesses of the rentier economy in the Afghan context, the post-Bonn aid allocation policy gave rise to the rentier state.

\textit{Corruption}

Corruption - the misuse of public and private property and position for the personal gains - is a major issue in most post-conflict states which start receiving huge sums of aid \textsuperscript{84} precisely at a time when institutions and mechanisms to foster transparency and accountability are extremely weak or non-existent.\textsuperscript{85} Bribery, patronage and nepotism are various forms of corruption that can exist in a post-conflict state. Bribery can be demanded by those private or public officials who work under ambiguous and vague rule of law. Bribery can be offered to government officials to seek their patronage by those involved in illicit activities like drug and weapons trafficking.\textsuperscript{86}

Corruption had been a more persistent and permanent feature of post-Taliban Afghanistan which had eroded the trust in the Karzai regime to a great extent.\textsuperscript{87} Corruption had not only undermined the government’s legitimacy but also created problems for the success of reconstruction efforts.

\textsuperscript{85} Ibid.,
\textsuperscript{87} Astri Shukri, “Statebuilding in Afghanistan”, 277.
In 2005 Afghanistan was on number 117 on Corruption Perceptions Index. It fell to number 176 in 2010, and further slipped to 180 in 2011 just above Somalia, North Korea and Myanmar.\footnote{Please see Afghanistan’s position on Corruption Perceptions Index for the years 2005, 2010 and in 2011 in the following websites: \url{http://www.transparency.org/cpi2010/results} (accessed July 8, 2014); \url{http://archive.transparency.org/policy_research/surveys_indices/cpi/2005} (accessed July 8, 2014); \url{http://www.transparency.org/cpi2011/results} (accessed July 8, 2014).}

According to 2010 Asia Foundation Survey, 55 percent of the people said corruption was a major problem in their daily life, 56 percent said that corruption was a major problem in local authorities and 65 percent said the same about their provincial government. 76 percent said that corruption was a major problem for the country as a whole.\footnote{“Afghanistan in 2010: A Survey of the Afghan People”, Asia Foundation, 2010, \url{http://asiafoundation.org/resources/pdfs/KeyFindingsAGSurvey2010.pdf} (accessed July 9, 2014).}

An anti-corruption watchdog, the General Independent Administration for Anticorruption (GIAA), was established in 2004. The GIAA, however, could not show substantial performance. Its own credibility was compromised, when in 2007 Izzatullah Wasifi, who had been convicted of drug trafficking in the US, was appointed as its head.\footnote{Vanda Felbab-Brown, \textit{Aspiration and Ambivalence: Strategies and Realities of Counterinsurgency and Statebuilding in Afghanistan}, (Washington: Brookings Institution Press, 2013): 98-100.} The GIAA was replaced in 2008 with the High Office of Oversight and Anti-Corruption (HOOAC). The latter too proved inefficient in eradicating corruption.\footnote{Ibid.} According to SIGAR it was understaffed, was not independent to take decisions and also not efficient to pursue cases.\footnote{Lianne Gutcher, “Afghanistan’s Anti-Corruption Efforts Thwarted at Every Turn”, \textit{The Guardian}, July 19, 2011, \url{http://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/jul/19/afghanistan-anti-corruption-efforts-thwarted}, (accessed July 8, 2014).} In December 2010, President Karzai created the Monitoring and Evaluation Commission (MEC). The appointments to the Commission were not necessarily done on the basis of merit: “Clientelism, rather than merit, was the determining factor of appointments even in the main anti-corruption bodies - or perhaps one should say particularly in such bodies, given the pervasiveness of corruption and patronage.”\footnote{Felbab-Brown, \textit{Aspiration and Ambivalence}, 99.}

Creation of such anti-corruption bodies could not make a difference due to the reason that they themselves were plagued with corrupt and incompetent officials who were surviving well during the Karzai regime. One classic example of the seriousness of the corruption issue was the
collapse of Kabul Bank. The Bank was essentially run by the corrupt leaders. The US$900 million of depositors’ money disappeared from the Bank and no one was arrested over that fraud. That scandal further undermined the Karzai regime’s legitimacy and also created problems of trust deficit in the banking system of Afghanistan to attract foreign investment in various sectors.

Illicit Poppy Money


Poppy is not only a commodity it is also politics in Afghanistan. A conducive climate along with favourable economic, political and physical conditions has made Afghanistan a major source of world’s opium production and trade. Afghanistan, along with Pakistan and Iran, constitutes the so-called “Golden Crescent” - a famous route for the opium trade since decades. High levels of rural poverty and an absence of sufficient economic opportunities made many Afghans look
towards drugs as a lucrative source of livelihood. The poppy cultivation increased significantly under the Soviet occupation, which had displaced millions of Afghans and destroyed much of the agricultural land. Very few skilled people with a very small amount of arable land were left in Afghanistan. Poppy cultivation proliferated under those conditions as it was the only viable alternative for the war-affected people. According to a National Narcotics Intelligence Consumers Committee Report for 1985–86, the poppy production in Afghanistan increased from 140 to 400 metric tons between 1985 and 1986. The Mujahideen commanders, not content with huge funds they were receiving from external sources including the CIA and ISI, also tried to control the opium trade routes to make more money. Gulbuddin Hekmatyar - a stalwart of anti-Soviet struggle, for example, fought against other strongmen for the control over poppy cultivation and trading routes. The control of poppy trading also increased their political power and reach.

Afghanistan continued to be the hub of poppy cultivation and opium production even under the Taliban regime. The Taliban government had brokered deals with several tribal elders to secure the poppy trade routes. These deals not only helped the Taliban generate funds but also secured political backing for their movement. They even collected Islamic tax *Ushar* (10 percent of a crop produce) from the local poppy farmers and truck drivers who transported the opium to the market. By 1999, the areas under the Taliban control accounted for 97 percent of total poppy production in Afghanistan, which itself accounted for 75 percent of the global poppy production. However, in July 2000, the Taliban banned opium production, declaring it un-Islamic. The ban resulted in a drastic fall in opium from 3,656 to 185 tons, of which 85 percent was produced in the areas controlled by Northern Alliance.

---

96 Ibid., 7-8.
97 Ibid. 9.
98 Ibid, 12.
However, after the demise of the Taliban regime, opium production started increasing again. According to a survey conducted by the United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention (UNODCCP) in 2002, the production of opium increased to 3,400 metric tons from 185 metric tons in 2001. The number has continued to increase. In 2011, poppy cultivation and opium production were estimated at 131,000 hectares and 5,800 metric tons respectively.

There were several factors behind the revival of drug economy in post-Bonn Afghanistan. After the Taliban banned the opium production in July 2000 it resulted in increasing debts for the opium producing farmers and increasing prices. In November 2001, with the fall of the Taliban such farmers immediately started opium cultivation to pay the huge debts. Increased prices also motivated several farmers to return to the poppy cultivation and production and trade. Moreover, the US-led international coalition paid huge amounts of money to warlords and militiamen to chase al-Qaeda and Taliban and they reportedly used that money in the lucrative business of drug trafficking as international community was intentionally ignoring such practices by the warlords in order to maintain the political clout to attain the objectives of OEF.

The international community’s light foot prints approach along with strengthening the warlords and local militias for the pursuit of counter-terrorism objectives had implications for the increasing drug trade. Initially, the international community turned a blind eye to the increasing poppy production for attaining their own objectives.

Moreover, the inherent flaw in the Bonn Agreement, such as ignoring the retreating Taliban, provided the pretext to spoilers, the Taliban and associated militant groups, to join hands, regroup and challenge the new government by all the means at their disposal. The drugs provided

---


both money and political clout to such groups especially in opium-rich South and East Afghanistan provinces.\textsuperscript{103}

For the post-conflict reconstruction efforts the drug traffickers also emerged as challenge because such elements emerge as parallel power structure with the help of huge drug money and strong political grounding due to their involvement in government at higher position, which they received as reward from international community for chasing the Taliban and al-Qaeda back in 2001. Such parallel power structures proved a great legitimacy challenge for the Karzai regime since the regime was also unable to challenge such elements which, because of faulty international design of state building, became an important part of the Afghan polity.\textsuperscript{104}

In the early post-Bonn days, anti-narcotics policy was not accorded much significance. However, with the sharp increase in the poppy cultivation, international community started paying attention to the problem. The anti-narcotics policy was dealt under the (Security Sector Reforms (SSR) program by the international community, and the UK was designated as the lead nation to deal with the opium production and trafficking. The UK with support from the US and other international actors devised several policies to avoid the surge in poppy production. The UK initiated a scheme of poppy eradication in exchange for money in 2002. It was decided to compensate farmers by giving them US$350 per \textit{jerib} (a fifth of a hectare or half an acre) of poppy field destroyed.\textsuperscript{105} In 2003, the Afghan government introduced the National Drug Control Strategy (NDCS). Its main objective was to ensure the elimination of cultivation and sale and eradication of the opium. Ministry of Counter-Narcotics, Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Defense collaborate with each other for poppy eradication.

In 2004 and 2005, once again in response to the increasing poppy growth, international community initiated the eradication using aerial sprays also. From 2004 to 2009, the manual eradication was carried out by local Afghans trained by DynCorp International.\textsuperscript{106} But the

\begin{footnotes}
\footnotetext[103]{Ibid., 411.}
\footnotetext[104]{Ibid., 412.}
\footnotetext[105]{Cyrus Hodes and Mark Sedra, “The Opium Trade”, \textit{The Adelphi Papers} 47, no. 391, (2007): 39-40.}
\end{footnotes}
eradication policy could not render desirable results due to certain reasons. Most importantly the policy ignored the historical reliance of Afghans on the poppies. Lack of alternatives for the farmers who fell under eradication policy resulted in resentment. Even the money promised in certain cases was not provided. The governors were made in charge for the implementation of the policy, but in most of the cases they themselves were involved in the drug trafficking.107

Similarly, the international community and the Afghan government lost the trust of the poppy growing farmers when they could not keep their promises and pledges. These farmers were promised financial compensation and assistance to grow alternative crops, but such pledges were not fulfilled in some instances, which developed distrust among local population towards them. For example, in 2002, the British Government devised a scheme to compensate opium farmers who refrained from planting or agreed to eradicate their crop. As mentioned earlier, British officials allegedly met Shura representatives and agreed to pay a compensatory sum of US $350 for each Jerib (half-acre) eradicated. Subsequently, a total of 62,000 hectares were eradicated, which required the British government to pay a total of US $21 million as compensation to the farmers. Once the eradication took place, the local farmers were given cheques to draw the amount from a local bank in Helmand. However, only a minority of the cheques was honoured and the vast majority of farmers were told that there were no more funds. Subsequently, the farmers returned to their homes dejected and empty handed.108

The unsuccessful counter-narcotics efforts had resulted in the corruption and governance problems. Around a quarter of Afghan parliamentarians, which comprised 249 members, had links with opium trafficking and different government officials were reportedly involved in 70 percent of the total opium trade. Most importantly, the Afghan National Police (ANP) had played a vital role as “facilitators, protectors and even consumers” of the opium and drug trafficking.109

---

108 Jonathan Goodhand, “Bribes or Bargains”, 54-55.
According to a report prepared by a British official, only in Helmand province 60 percent of ANP was dependent on opium money.\textsuperscript{110}

Such dependence on drug economy resulted not only in corruption, security problems and undermining of the legitimacy of the Karzai regime, it also created a parallel economic structure which was benefitting a large section of population without state’s scrutiny and involvement. Such factors undermined the reconstruction agenda badly.

\textit{Coordination deficit among the international actors engaged in post-conflict reconstruction in Afghanistan}

Historically, international community’s engagement in Afghanistan has been inconsistent and often ineffective. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) was the first international actor which became involved in Afghanistan after the 1979 Soviet invasion. The agency had been asked for assistance by Pakistan which at that time was experiencing a huge refugee influx from Afghanistan. By 1990, the number of registered Afghan refugees in Pakistan was 3.3 million.\textsuperscript{111} The Security Council, the General Assembly, the Secretary-General and several other UN bodies became involved in Afghanistan. However, different ways and approaches adopted by these bodies were not comprehensive and the inconsistent engagement of the international community resulted in the continued conflict in Afghanistan.\textsuperscript{112}

The international community's engagement in post-Taliban Afghanistan failed to bring about intended benefits to the country and its people. Of several issues that were responsible for this outcome, two are worth discussing here in detail: lack of coordination between civil and military actors; and lack of coordination among various donor states and agencies.

\textsuperscript{110} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{112} Ibid.
The relationship between NGOs and military actors in Afghanistan is crucial for the state building agenda since both operate to sustain it on the ground in complementary ways.\(^\text{113}\) In Afghanistan, there were 26 PRTs deployed all across the country. (A PRT is basically a military body with civilian personals to coordinate efforts for promoting governance, humanitarian security and achieve the overall objectives of reconstruction and development in Afghanistan.)\(^\text{114}\)

In addition to the problems such as militarization of aid and money going to PRTs instead of humanitarian actors, one serious problem was the lack of coordination among civil and military personnel on the one hand, and among the PRTs themselves on the other hand. This had the effect of further slowing down the process of reconstruction in Afghanistan.\(^\text{115}\) With the growing number of PRTs and actors involved, the ISAF-NATO and the US never took any step to draw a mechanism for coordination. Moreover, there was a constant tension among the PRTs and the civil actors involved in the reconstruction and development projects.

Apart from a lack of coordination among the US and ISAF-NATO countries over the strategy to reconstruct Afghanistan, an absence of coordination was visible also among the development community such as the inter-governmental organisations (IGO)s, international non-governmental organisations (INGO)s, and non-governmental organisations (NGO)s involved in Afghanistan. This lack of coordination slowed down the process of reconstruction. INGOs and NGOs outsourced their projects to local Afghan partners for implementation, which bred corruption and resulted in outcomes which did not usher into development and prosperity in the area of operations. These corrupt practices discouraged an active role of the Afghan government in national development. As the international aid failed to benefit those at the bottom of the Afghan society, the Taliban got an opportunity to tarnish the image of both the international community and the Afghan government. The donors did not share their assessment and research work with other donors that usually resulted in duplication of the projects which could only result in waste of money. For example, by 2009 the World Bank spent US$3.8 billion and the UK’s Department


\(^{115}\) Ibid.
for International Development (DFID) spent US$1.2 billion.\(^\text{116}\) However, there was no coordination between them to distribute and allocate that aid money in Afghanistan.

**Conclusion**

The international community prioritized the security reconstruction over the non-security aspect of the reconstruction. But even that prioritization could not achieve the goal of the revival of peace and the conflict returned to the country. But the inadequacies in the security policies alone cannot be held accountable for the revival of conflict in the form of the Taliban resurgence, since the weaknesses of the non-security policies, both political and economic, had a role to play in that resurgence of the Taliban. The conceptual and implementation weaknesses in the political reconstruction and transition had both social and political impacts. Giving the warlords a prominent role in the new government not only promoted a culture of nepotism and kinship in post-Bonn Afghanistan, it also weakened the Karzai regime to the extent that he had to rely on them widely in order to sustain power. Consequently, the process was unbalanced and faulty since it benefitted the non-Pashtun faction of the Afghan society more than the majority Pashtun population of the country, created weak institutional structures which could not grow in the presence of public leaders who were immune to accountability, and created legitimacy crisis for the Karzai regime.

On the economic front, both the conceptual and implementation problems did not allow Afghanistan to economically prosper despite having tremendous international funding. The lack of vision, strategic planning and coordination among various actors involved in the process resulted in the emergence of several parallel economic structures, like drug traffickers, NGOs, INGOS, PRTs and international contractors. These factors also undermined the legitimacy of the regime along with undermining the chances of capacity building in Afghan institutions by not providing the Afghan government a chance to actively participate in the process of reconstruction. The next chapter will discuss how those inadequacies and weaknesses in both security and non-security policies created conditions favourable for the Taliban return.

CHAPTER 6: The Return of the Taliban: Filling the Void

The crucial difference between the success and failure of spoilers is the role played by international actors as custodians of peace. Where international custodians have created and implemented coherent and effective strategies for protecting peace and managing spoilers, damage has been limited and peace has triumphed. Where international custodians have failed to develop and implement such strategies, spoilers have succeeded at the cost of hundreds of thousands of lives.¹

Introduction

The Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) succeeded in ousting the Taliban regime within days, not only from Kabul, but also from Kandahar and Helmand - the Taliban strongholds in Southern Afghanistan. Amidst the ensuing triumphal euphoria, Donald H. Rumsfeld, the then US Defence Secretary, announced in May 2003 that “major combat activity” had come to an end in Afghanistan and that the country was at the stage of “stability and stabilization and reconstruction activity.”² However, by the late 2005, Afghanistan was witnessing the Taliban resurgence, posing a grave challenge to the Afghan government and the US and NATO-ISAF missions. In September 2005, there were 130 attacks perpetrated by the Taliban-led insurgents, which rose to 300 in March 2006 and to 600 in September 2006.³ Similarly, number of suicide attacks increased dramatically: between 2001 and August 2005, only five suicide attacks were recorded, whereas 17 such attacks were recorded during September-December 2005. In 2006, a total of 123 suicide attacks were reported; the number rose to 131 in 2007.⁴

The Taliban not only made a comeback after their defeat and fall in 2001, but also developed a proper organizational structure and propaganda mechanism to achieve the objectives of the

insurgency. As mentioned earlier much of the academic and policy research points towards the role of cross border sanctuaries in Pakistan and lack of governance within Afghanistan as important factors behind the relative success of the Taliban during the first decade of war on terrorism in Afghanistan. These factors did facilitate the resurgence of the Taliban in the post-Bonn Afghanistan, but they were not the only factors responsible for the Taliban resurgence. Some other factors too share the blame. One of these factors, which has been overlooked by most observers, is the role of international community - its failure at effective state-building in the post-Taliban Afghanistan which led to the resurgence of the Taliban. The decades-long war had left Afghanistan’s state and society totally paralysed and it was impossible to have a functional state without adequate international assistance. International community tried to address almost all the issues: economic, political, security, and foreign policy of Afghanistan. It therefore has to share the blame for whatever went wrong with the process of reconstruction in the post-Bonn Afghanistan.

The Chapters Four and Five discussed the conceptual and implementation problems in the post-conflict reconstruction process envisaged by the international community. The present chapter will show how the international community’s faulty, ill conceived and short term security and non-security reconstruction policies created conditions to facilitate the resurgence of the Taliban in the post-Bonn Afghanistan.

The Taliban: Old and New

The Taliban movement in Afghanistan first emerged in 1994 largely in reaction to inter-factional fighting and warlordism in the country. Initially, the Taliban were not an organised or distinct force. The movement drew its initial leadership and cadres from religious madrassas in Pakistan and from other 1980s era Mujahideen groups like Hizb-e-Islami-Khalis and Hizb-e-Islami-Gulbuddin. It acquired a distinct political identity only after it took over Kabul in 1996.

Thereafter, it was widely recognized as symbolizing an ideology markedly different from the one professed by other jihadist groups existing in Afghanistan since 1970s.

The Taliban’s religious beliefs involve - rigid interpretation of Islamic tenets and punishments. After assuming power, they made it obligatory for men to sport a beard, and for women to wear burqa (veil) if they were to come out of their homes. The women were not allowed to leave their homes unless they were accompanied by a male family member. Modern education was banned for both boys and girls, whereas religious education and madrassas were encouraged. Television, photography, chess and kite flying were banned. Public amputations of thieves and stoning of adulterers was widely practiced. The ideology of the Taliban during the 1990s could best be summarized in the following quote: “Distorted versions of Sunni Deobandism and Pashtunwali, the tribal social code of the Pashtuns of Afghanistan and Pakistan, became the basis of the Taliban ideology. Once in power in Afghanistan, the authoritarian administration of the Taliban imposed their radical interpretations of Islam and Pashtun social codes as law.”

Such policies of the Taliban regime (1996-2001) angered most of the Afghans who welcomed its removal by the US-led foreign forces in 2001. Several public opinion polls have shown that the overwhelming majority of Afghans strongly disapproved of the way the Taliban governed the country. According to a 2005 ABC News survey, the first national survey in Afghanistan, 91 percent of the respondents preferred the Karzai-led Afghan government over the Taliban, and 87 percent of them supported the overthrow of the Taliban regime, terming it as good for their country. A January 2006 poll by the WorldPublicOpinion.org confirmed the findings of the ABC News survey. According to this poll, 88 percent of the respondents viewed the Taliban unfavourably, whereas only eight percent viewed them favourably. The overthrow of the Taliban regime was supported by 82 percent of the respondents, whereas 11 percent favoured the Taliban

---


regime. According to the organisation, these views were held by large majorities of all ethnic groups living in Afghanistan, including the Pashtun, Tajik, Uzbek and Hazara.  

Despite that massive popular support for the international community-backed Karzai regime, it could not meet the public aspirations, and by 2006 the Taliban had re-emerged as a potent force in Afghanistan. They were able to do so partly through internal reorganization and appropriately tailored strategy.

Post-9/11, the Taliban movement, which officially calls itself as the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA), has been restructured into a hierarchically organised government-in-exile, which maintained its administrative structure from the grassroots village communities to shadow governors of respective provinces.

*Al-Samood* magazine, a Taliban mouthpiece, has thrown light on the administrative system of the shadow Taliban government. According to the magazine, the basic administrative unit of the IEA exists on village level, which is headed by a local Emir. His activities are monitored by a directorate at the district level. Various committees are established at district level, which include: the Committee for Arbitration and Settling Disputes; the Committee for Education and Development; and the Military Commission to manage war issues. Each province is headed by a shadow governor and his deputy, who operate from within the province or from exile in the neighbouring Pakistan. At the national level too, there are various committees, like the Military Committee, the Preaching and Guidance Committee, the Ministry of Culture and Information, the Political Committee, the Education Committee, the Financial Committee, the Committee for Prisoners and Orphans, the Health Committee and the Committee for Foreign Establishments.

---


The work of these committees is overseen by the High Shura Council, which works under the guidance of the Supreme Leader, Mullah Omar.\textsuperscript{10}

However, the current Taliban leadership, also known as the neo-Taliban, have shown flexibility in their attitudes and pronouncements to win public support. They are no longer opposed to the internet and television which they previously viewed as promoting vulgarity and pornography. They have transformed themselves into a high tech-savvy militant group. Their battlefield is not confined to the rugged terrain of Afghanistan, they are also competing in the cyberspace and on airwaves. They maintain a slick website which is regularly updated in five languages - English, Urdu, Arabic, Pashto and Persian, clandestine radio stations and magazines. They are increasingly using social networking sites like Twitter and Facebook. And their jihadi studios regularly produce propaganda videos which are uploaded on YouTube.\textsuperscript{11} They use different modes of media sources like newspapers, magazines, video interviews, internet websites and emails to approach common Afghans. They have used the Shabnamas (Pashto for night letters that are distributed at night containing a message or a threat) for their propaganda purposes. Late Mullah Daadullah (died May 2007), who served as Taliban’s chief military commander, was well known for his audio and video interviews to attract tribal cadres to the Taliban movement.\textsuperscript{12}

Between 2001 – 2011, the Taliban issued three Layeha (code of conduct) in Spring 2006, in May 2009 and in May 2010. The Layeha provided an insight into the strategy and mindset of the Taliban. The 2006 Layeha, which comprised 29 clauses, provided insight into the Taliban movement's internal problems and issues.\textsuperscript{13} The 2009 Layeha, which comprised 67 clauses, highlighted Taliban’s approach to issues of war and peace in the country. The May 2010 Layeha

\textsuperscript{10} Ibid.
comprised 84 clauses. Although it shared many important clauses with the 2009 Layeha, it was more detailed and comprised several clauses on the governance strategy of the Taliban to win “hearts and minds” of the Afghan people. The Layeha elaborated the Taliban’s plans to create provincial commissions in order to increase the reach and influence of the Taliban at rural and district levels (unlike the Karzai regime which was confined to Kabul and major urban centres). They provided detailed administrative setup comprising Zonal Chief, Provincial Governor, Provincial Commission and Governor.

In an attempt to garner greater public support by portraying a more positive image of the movement, Mullah Omar in one of his Eid-ul-Fitr messages asserted that the Taliban wanted to be part of an inclusive Islamic government and did not intend to monopolize power after NATO left Afghanistan in 2014. Mullah Omar rejected the accusation of Taliban’s involvement in burning down schools, asserting that they did not aim to harm civilians in their efforts to “liberate” Afghanistan from “foreign occupation.” Such pronouncements by the Supreme Leader of the Taliban were rightly interpreted by several Afghan political commentators as a propaganda ploy to woo the Afghan people.

The Taliban movement also has a chain of command, but it is not centralized; rather it is disrupted at various levels. The Taliban leadership has created a Taliban recruitment and Amnesty Commission to overlook the job of recruiting Afghans to join their insurgency. As of 2010 data, the Taliban had around 60,000 core fighters along with hundreds of facilitators, supporters and political cadres.

---

16 Ibid
The above discussion about the Taliban’s new organizational structure and revised strategies and tactics to respond to the international troops in Afghanistan highlights the fact that the Taliban were able to re-emerge in Afghanistan despite the absence of support from the local community for them and without any visible and extensive international assistance. The following sections will discuss how the Taliban exploited the conditions which emerged as a result of faulty and inadequate conception and implementation of the security and non-security reconstruction policies by the international community.

**International Security Efforts and the Taliban’s Response**

As shown in Chapter Four, the security policies adopted by the international community in the post-Bonn Afghanistan suffered from both conceptual and implementation problems. The conceptual and implementation lacunae had the following broader implications for the Afghan state and society;

First, lack of strategic direction and proper planning resulted in allocation of fewer international troops to fill the security vacuum, who remained largely unable to respond to the arising security situation adequately.

Second, the lack of funding, resources and clarity of objectives while training the Afghan National Army (ANA) and Afghan National Police (ANP) resulted in raising inefficient, ethnically divided, undisciplined and corrupt forces of Afghanistan, which were unable to take a lead in maintaining security and law and order across Afghanistan.

Third, reliance on non-Pashtun Northern Alliance to chase the al-Qaeda and the Taliban and subsequently favouring them, in response to their support, by giving them predominant positions in the interim government, ANA, ANP and the ministries of Interior, Defence and Justice further undermined the efficiency of state institutions and the confidence of the people who ultimately started looking towards the Taliban to meet their security demands.
Fourth, due to the inadequate conception and implementation of the Judicial sector reforms and Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) reforms, viable conditions for maintaining law and order could not be created. The widespread corruption in judiciary could not help the ANP in enforcing respect for law across Afghanistan. The delayed and corruption-hit DDR remained largely unsuccessful in disarming the ex-combatants and reintegrating them back into the society.

These broader implications of faulty security reconstruction approach had created certain conditions which helped the Taliban in their resurgence. The lack of strategic direction prevented the Bush administration from committing sufficient human and financial resources - a factor which had hugely negative impact on the reconstruction agenda, primarily because it left the international security forces unable to adequately respond to the insurgency. Afghanistan, in fact, had the lowest ratio of international troops per person in any post-conflict reconstruction operation. For Iraq, it was one soldier per 161 persons, for Somalia it was one soldier per 200 persons, for Sierra Leone it was one soldier per 300 persons, and for Afghanistan it was one soldier per 653 persons. In terms of the territory covered by the international troops, there was one soldier per 2.8 km in Iraq, one soldier per 16 km in Somalia, one soldier per 4.0 km in Somalia, whereas in Afghanistan, there was one soldier per 13.2 km.

This lack of forces, particularly in the South, immediately after the collapse of Taliban regime when the window of opportunity was open, largely enabled the Taliban to stage their come back. The Southern provinces of Afghanistan, especially Kandahar and Helmand, had always served as the fountainhead and a stronghold of the Taliban. As stated earlier, there were strong fears from the outset that the Taliban after fleeing Afghanistan to escape the chasing coalition troops would seek refuge in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) of Pakistan. However, the number of the US troops deployed on the ground during 2001-2002 were insufficient to tackle the triple challenge of rooting out the Taliban, maintaining security and protecting the porous

---

The border between Afghanistan and Pakistan. There were only three battalions of international security forces operating in the entire Regional Command South before 2006.\footnote{Carl Forsberg, “Taliban’s Campaign for Kandahar”, \textit{Afghanistan report 3}, December 2009, \url{http://www.understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/The_Talibans_Campaign_For_Kandahar.pdf} (accessed July 18, 2014).}

This “light foot print” or “less boots on the ground” approach adopted by the US was primarily responsible for the US failure in rooting out al-Qaeda during the battle of Tora Bora (December 2001) in the Nangarhar province adjacent to the Khyber Agency of FATA. The heavy aerial bombardment of the Tora Bora mountains by the US remained ineffective largely because of the absence of ground troops who could have cordoned off the area to stop al-Qaeda elements from fleeing across the border into Pakistan’s FATA.

The lack of troops when combined with the absence of cross-border coordination between the US, Afghanistan and Pakistan, further enabled the insurgents to utilise the rugged and porous Pakistan-Afghanistan border to establish sanctuaries and carry out cross-border movement for guerrilla attacks. It was not until March 2008 that the concept of joint border security mechanism materialized when the Border Coordination Centre (BCC) between Afghanistan, Pakistan and ISAF-NATO was set up in the Afghan Torkham area on the border between Afghanistan’s Nangarhar Province and the Khyber Agency on the Pakistan side.\footnote{“Border Security: Promoting Cooperation Between Afghanistan and Pakistan”, May 8, 2009, \url{http://www.nato.int/isaf/topics/border-security/index.html} (accessed June 13, 2014).}

A glaring example of international security forces' failure in checking Taliban's cross border movement was their inability to monitor the important entry and exit points of the Taliban on southern frontier of the country. One of the main entry points for the Taliban into Kandahar was the Maruf district of the province, but there was very little presence of the US security forces or the Afghan national security forces (ANSF). It was only in 2005 that the French Special Forces established a strategic outpost to curb growing violence due to the insurgent activity.\footnote{Carl Forsberg, “Taliban’s Campaign for Kandahar”, \textit{Afghanistan report 3}, December 2009,}

Initially, the ISAF’s mandate was limited to providing security in and around Kabul. In October 2003, the UN extended ISAF’s mandate to cover the entire Afghanistan (United Nations Security
Council Resolution 1510), thereby paving the way for an expansion of the mission across the
country. The ISAF divided the Afghan territory into five Regional Commands (RC), whose
details are given in the table below:

Table 6.1 Regional Commands under NATO-ISAF as in 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of RC</th>
<th>Areas of Operation</th>
<th>Lead Nation</th>
<th>Number of Troops</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regional Command Capital</td>
<td>Kabul</td>
<td>France</td>
<td>6,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Command North</td>
<td>Badakhshan, Takhar, Kunduz, Baghlan, Balkh, Samangan, Jawzjan, Sar-e Pul and Faryab</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>5,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Command South</td>
<td>Nimruz, Helmand, Kandahar, Zabol, Urozgan and Day Kundi</td>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>34,855</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Command East</td>
<td>Bamyan, Ghazni, Kapisa, Khost, Kunar, Laghman, Logar, Nangarhar, Nuristan, Paktika, Paktiya, Panjshir, Parwan, and Wardak</td>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>16,225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Command West</td>
<td>Herat, Farah, Badghis and Ghor</td>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>4,400</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The ISAF mandate was only and belatedly expanded across Afghanistan in all the five RCs in
the following chronological order:

---


In December 2003, the ISAF took command of the Kunduz Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) and the process was completed in October 2004 with the establishment of PRTs in Mazar-e-Sharif, Meymana, Feyzabad and Baghlan in North Afghanistan.

In May 2006, the ISAF took command of two additional PRTs in the provinces of Herat and Farah (West Afghanistan). The ISAF completed the process of westwards expansion by September 2006 by creating two more PRTs in the provinces of Ghor and Baghdis.

In July 2006, the ISAF expanded its mission into South Afghanistan by taking the command of South from the US-led coalition forces in the provinces of Day Kundi, Helmand, Kandahar, Nimroz, Uruzgan and Zabul. Thereafter, four additional PRTs came under the command of ISAF.

On 5 October 2006, the ISAF implemented the final stage of its expansion by taking over the command of the international military forces in eastern Afghanistan from the US-led coalition.

Map 6.1: ISAF Regional Commands in Afghanistan
The most volatile parts of Afghanistan were the Pashtun-dominated provinces located in the South, Southeast and East of the country. These areas were taken over by the ISAF quite late to help the US-led coalition forces and for coordinating the civil-military relations for reconstruction purposes. The logic behind this delay could be the continued conflict and the presence of the US coalition troops there. But the number of the troops, as mentioned earlier, stationed in the South and Southeast were sufficient neither for the short-term objective of terminating the conflict nor for the long-term objective of bringing stability in the area through reconstruction efforts. For example, the ISAF did not allocate enough resources in the Kandahar city, Zhari, Panjwai and other districts in Kandahar, stronghold of the Taliban insurgency. Despite the importance of Kandahar as being the stronghold of Taliban and its adjacency to the FATA areas in Pakistan, the ISAF did not allocate manpower and resources to Kandahar Province between 2005 to 2009. That factor paved the way for the Taliban insurgents to influence and persuade local population and control the entire province.\(^\text{26}\)

The security vacuum which the initial lack of international troops could not fulfil was further widened due to the absence of local police and army. Although, international community rushed to raise the numbers of both ANA and ANP, the overall process was not without problems as discussed in chapter four. Those problems facilitated the Taliban in several ways: first, the security vacuum especially in the volatile South and Southeast was filled by the spoilers, second, the people were wary of the corrupt and inefficient police force so started looking towards the Taliban as an alternative to the state institutions. The Afghan army’s inefficiency created the impression in the minds of the common people that after the withdrawal of foreign troops, the return of Taliban was inevitable. People thought it prudent to support the Taliban before hand in order to avoid their wrath once they would be in power.

The ANP remained the weakest link in the chain of institutions meant to address the security needs of the post-9/11 Afghanistan.\textsuperscript{27} The problem with the ANP was the lack of trained personnel, corruption and lack of equipment to fight the Taliban or to maintain law and order, especially in the countryside of South Afghanistan. Although for the NATO-ISAF and the US-led coalition it was easy to clear an area in Kandahar and Helmand from the insurgents, but the international forces were not themselves numerically strong enough to hold the area. The ANP itself was very weak and incapable of holding an area to avoid the return of the Taliban-led insurgents. General Laroche, a Canadian commander, talking about the operations in Punjwai and Zahiri districts of Southwest Kandahar, reiterated the need for strong and honest policemen to hold an area and protect the population against the return of Taliban-led militants.\textsuperscript{28}

A US delegation, which visited Afghanistan in 2007, stated the need to have more troops on the ground to avoid the comeback of the Taliban-led insurgents. The delegation observed that areas in South and Southeast were easy to be cleared, but for holding those areas they needed either more international troops or strong local Afghan army and police. Mandating more troops for the ISAF was thought to be politically difficult, so the delegation emphasized the need to have a strong ANA and ANP to maintain the gains of coalition forces.\textsuperscript{29}

Such inability on part of ANA and ANP widened the security vacuum, which was filled by the Taliban. For example in 2009, the German forces and the Afghan army launched an anti-Taliban operation Chahar Dara near Kunduz in Northern Afghanistan. But after the initial defeat of the Taliban-led insurgents, including some Arab fighters as well, they returned back to the area claiming victory. The German troops repeated the mistake of the US troops, which they used to commit in the South that after clearing an area they withdrew quickly. German troops withdrew

from Chahar Dara, leaving behind hardly 300 ANA troops - a force too small to prevent the return of the Taliban-led insurgents.30

The corruption and involvement in crimes and brutalities by Afghan police was yet another reason due to which the Taliban were successful in gaining the crucial support by the population across the South and Southeast provinces. One Taliban commander Dr. Karim also known as Dr Qwagha, joined the Taliban-led insurgency because he was needlessly abused by the police, which turned him into an enemy of the police and the Afghan government.31

There are numerous examples where the police was involved in crimes, intimidation and harassment of the common people, whose hearts and minds shifted in favour of the Taliban. In Kabul, taxi drivers complained of the police taking bribes on daily basis from them to allow them to work in the city.32 In Helmand’s capital Lashkar Gah, police harassed the local mechanics who eventually took to the streets against bad behaviour of the police.33 Similarly, in Helmand’s Sangin district both police and army were involved in extortions and lootings.34 These examples from the insurgency hit South illustrate the public disenchantment with the internationally-raised and trained police force. Such incidents made people wonder whether they should side with the Taliban or the internationally-backed Karzai regime.

Both the ANP and ANA were not trained and groomed to meet the challenges of Afghanistan’s fragile security situation and they were unable to tackle the Taliban threat on their own. Abdul Aleem, a Kandahari who fought against the Taliban and in return was receiving the death threats

33 Ibid.
34 Ibid.
from them, once said it quite clearly that without the support of international forces both the Afghan police and army were unable to protect the city against the Taliban-led militants.\textsuperscript{35}

The strategic fallout of supporting and favouring warlords and militias, in return for their help in chasing out al-Qaeda and the Taliban during OEF benefitted the Taliban. In Southern Afghanistan, the US and the Karzai regime supported and strengthened the local strongmen and warlords in order to chase the Taliban out of the area, and to promote peace and stability in those areas. But the inter-tribe and inter-warlords fighting was reminiscent of the 1990s when the Taliban emerged in response to the inter-factional, inter-ethnic fighting and corruption and brutalities of the warlords and Mujahideen across Afghanistan.

The same was the case after 9/11, when warlords, militiamen and strong tribal leaders got engaged with Afghan Interim Government, which increased their power. Instead of fighting the common enemy, the Taliban, they got busy in fighting each other or gaining maximum financial advantage of the international security contracts. That lack of security provided the Taliban with inroads into the rural areas of Afghan South and East.

In Kandahar, for example, the tribal militias were nurtured by both the US and the Karzai family. Although President Karzai was appointed as the head of the Interim Afghan Authority, he enjoyed limited support base in Kandahar – his home town. Therefore, Karzai banked upon the support of local strongmen from bigger Durrani clans like the Barakzai. These strongmen included Gul Agha Sherzai and Zabit Akram Khakrezwali. Their militias were incorporated into the ANA and ANP. For example, the militia led by Zakir Akram Khakrezwali (from Achakzai sub-tribe of the Durrani tribe) was made part of the Afghan National Border Police and the 358\textsuperscript{th} Border Brigade. Nazar Jan, another strongman from the Barakzai sub-tribe of the Durrani tribe, who was infamous for his inter-tribal feuds and indulgence in criminal activities, was made the deputy police Chief of Kandahar.\textsuperscript{36} In Kandahar, the UN, international security forces and NGOs used to hire local militias for providing security. There were two major competing figures in Kandahar in this respect: Ahmed Wali Karzai and Gul Agha Sherzai, who were competing for


\textsuperscript{36} Carl Forsberg, “Taliban’s Campaign for Kandahar”.
award of various financial contracts which were more lucrative than providing security to the population or fighting the insurgents.37 “The power struggle between various warlords in the South negatively affected their ability to contain the resurgence of the Taliban at an initial stage. The priority of each of these warlords was not to fight the insurgents, but to undermine each other. 38

In some instances, those strongmen who were ignored or sidelined by the central government switched over to the Taliban to balance their rivals in the southern provinces of Afghanistan. One such example was that of Sher Muhammad Akhundzada, who was the governor of volatile Helmand province from 2001-2005. He was removed from his position due to his alleged involvement in drug trade. He claimed that he had some 3,000 followers and after dismissal he was unable to economically afford to maintain that force of followers. So he had no choice but to turn them to the Taliban who were paying them money. Those people lost the respect for international partners of the corrupt Karzai regime and as a consequence of that episode, British marines had to face tough time in Helmand because the Taliban got not only the required manpower but also a pool of local sympathisers and supporter who were wary of the Karzai and his international partners.39

One example can be of the brutalities committed by a border police commander, Abdul Razik in Spin Boldak district of Kandahar. He was appointed to the post in response to the support he extended to the coalition forces and the Karzai regime. He was notorious for operating prisoners and was involved in drug trafficking and extrajudicial killings. He was involved in atrocities against the Noorzai tribe who joined hands with the Taliban against Razik in Panjwai district in 2006.40

37 Ibid.
40 Stephen Carter and Kate Clark, “No Shortcut to Stability: Justice, Politics and Insurgency in Afghanistan”, Published by Chatham House, (December 2010), 14,
The Taliban proved very flexible as they changed their strategies and tactics according to the security gap existing in any particular area to fill that accordingly. For example, in a statement in 2006 Mullah Omar clearly warned all the government and security forces officials that they would be punished for their support to the US or the Afghan government. But the 2010 Layeha clearly announced to provide amnesty to the Afghan security officials who wanted to join the insurgency. That move enabled the Taliban to properly counter the surge in the numbers of international troops in 2010 by attracting more and more people in their rank and file. The Taliban were aware of the corruption and lack of capacity in the ANA and ANP and were also aware of the fact that people were not happy with them and they capitalised on such security lacunae very well.

The international community failed to accord sufficient attention to the needs and desires of the Afghan population and channel them into effective policy responses especially while restructuring and reforming the judicial sector. The Taliban were quick enough to fill that gap which led to their rising popularity among the general populace. The unique Islamic judicial system, in which a Qazi or an Islamic judge plays a dominant role, was ignored in the newly implemented judicial system in Afghanistan. The Qazis’ comprised a religious class who were well versed in religious and Shariah matters, and had played a traditional role of a judge and an arbiter in the rural areas since centuries. They exercised enormous influence among the locals. Their position also formed a source of their income, apart from conferring upon them high social status. The Western judicial system implemented in Afghanistan brought them in direct conflict with the Afghan regime. The Taliban were smart enough to attract the disenchanted Qazis to support them.

Post-9/11, in Helmand province the anti-Taliban strongmen were appointed to prominent positions. Important figures were Sher Mohammad Akhundzada (provincial governor), Abdul Rehman Jan (police chief) and Dad Mohammad Khan (the NDS chief). They were reportedly involved in human rights abuses and other crimes like extrajudicial killings, maintaining prisons and were also involved in drug trafficking. But since they were enjoying the unconditional support from both the Karzai regime and international troops for being anti-Taliban, they were never tried in a court and never brought to justice for their record of atrocities. Such incidents fuelled anti-government sentiments among the common Afghan people and they started to openly express their desire for the return of Taliban not because of their ideology but because of their ability to maintain law and order through proper policing and justice system.\textsuperscript{44}

Similarly, the ineffective DDR policy also helped the Taliban with the presence of weapons and armed men to support the insurgency. In 2006, Afghanistan had the highest rates of per capita guns and small arms. According to a January 2006 report there were at least 10 million small arms across Afghanistan.\textsuperscript{45} The local tribal culture of carrying weapons when combined with the poor international implementation of disarmament policies gave an edge to the Taliban. The fighters that they could attract were usually armed beforehand.\textsuperscript{46} It was also easy for them to buy weapons due to the easy availability of weapons at cheap prices. Moreover, underpaid local ANA soldiers were also reported to have sold their weapons to the Taliban.\textsuperscript{47}

All those security lapses when combined with the shortcomings in the economic and political reconstruction policies provided the Taliban with a good opportunity to stage a comeback on Afghan political scene.

\textsuperscript{44} Stephen Clark, “No Shortcut to Stability”, 17-18.
\textsuperscript{45} http://www.icosgroup.net/static/reports/Afghanistan_5_Years_Later.pdf, (accessed July 17, 2014).
\textsuperscript{46} Interview, conducted with Mansur Khan Mahsud, Director Admin, FATA Research Centre, Islamabad, Pakistan, June 6, 2014.
\textsuperscript{47} “Afghanistan Five Years Later”.
Non-Security Reconstruction Policies: The Taliban Filling the Gaps

The international community's efforts to help Afghanistan revive its political and economic system produced minimal results. The following section will discuss how the flawed non-security reconstruction policies enabled the Taliban to garner popular support and material help for their movement.

The Taliban Capitalising on the Weaknesses of Economic Reconstruction Policies

The faulty conception and implementation of the economic reconstruction policies had the following implications for the Afghan state and society;

First, the international financial flows, which in most cases bypassed the Afghan government, largely undermined the chances of capacity building of Afghan institutions by making them in charge of the financial activity.

Second, the flow of the external resources in the absence of a proper strategy to disburse that money in order to effectively address the reconstruction requirements resulted in the concentration of wealth and power in few hands, which gave rise to a culture of corruption at all levels of government.

Third, the lack of economic opportunities and alternative sources of income, especially in rural areas of Afghanistan, gave a boost to the poppy cultivation and drug trade, which once again made Afghanistan a rentier economy, dependent largely on foreign aid and drugs. The drug economy had its political fallout; it further strengthened the warlords. The culture of nepotism, kinship and corruption continued to undermine the public trust in the Karzai regime and its international associates.

The faulty conception and implementation of economic reconstruction policies by the international community in the post-Bonn Afghanistan created circumstances which were beneficial for the revival of conflict in the form of the Taliban-led insurgency. Those
circumstances helped the Taliban to garner popular support and generate funding for the movement.

The steady flow of financial resources acts as a life line for terrorist and insurgent movements. The money is required to buy arms and ammunition, to pay the fighters, to maintain safe heavens, to do the propaganda and to bribe people to get social and political support.\(^48\) Funding can be generated through various dependent and independent means. The dependent means include financial assistance from external sources – both state and non-state actors – who have geopolitical stakes in any particular insurgency. The independent sources of funding may include generation of local resources, such as drug trafficking, arms smuggling, kidnapping for ransom, extortion and taxing local people. Any insurgent group which lacks independent funding basis cannot sustain for long. In the present case, the relative absence of external resources caused the Taliban to focus on generating resources internally.

The Taliban-led insurgents astutely capitalised on the implications of the faulty economic reconstruction approach to generate independent sources of money for their movement. According to a UN report about the Islamist militant groups’ funding, the Taliban generated around US$400 million in 2011 from various sources, such as donations, levying taxes upon local people and extorting money from such targets as drug dealers, cell phone operators and aid projects.\(^49\) Moreover drug money had become one of the important sources of the Taliban funding, which helped them sustain their movement. The Afghan officials estimate that the Taliban earned about $100 million in 2011-2012 from the opium poppy industry - a small share considering the annual value of the drug crop which is estimated at US$3.6 billion to US$4 billion.\(^50\)


\(^{50}\) Ibid.
According to the *Afghanistan: Annual Opium Poppy Survey 2001*, conducted by the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) in 2001, there was not any poppy cultivation in the southern provinces of Afghanistan because of the ban imposed by the Taliban on poppy cultivation in 2000. The only remaining fields were in the northern provinces of the country which were outside the ambit of the Taliban government.\(^{51}\) By 2011, poppy comprised 15 percent of the Afghan GDP, and it was being cultivated in 17 out of 35 Afghan provinces.\(^{52}\)

In the poppy rich South, the Taliban regularly collected 10 percent tax from the farmers over the production of opium and in most of the cases take raw opium and maintain their warehouses to preserve the opium for later use. For example in December 2007, NATO forces found warehouses in Musa Qala where 11 tons of opium was stored.\(^{53}\) The opium money and taxes that were collected at the village level were used for operational needs of the district and village level Taliban commanders such as salaries, fuel, food, weapon and transport.\(^{54}\)

Taliban were also reportedly involved in collecting protection money to protect the crops and the shipment convoys. They collected an estimated 20 percent of the total value of a single shipment from the drug traffickers. The Taliban-led insurgents usually engage the coalition troops in diversionary attacks to get a shipment through. They had also attacked several security checkpoints to clear the way for the drug traffickers. Their tactics in such opium-rich areas influenced by were largely the need to protect the opium crop and trafficking routes.\(^{55}\)

The Taliban got political benefit out of the ill-conceived counternarcotics policies adopted by the international community namely the eradication and alternative livelihood. The poppy eradication efforts did not target the major stakeholders in poppy cultivation due to their political influence over the Karzai administration and backing by the international community. Rather the programme targeted poor farmers who were severely affected and hence were won over by the

---


\(^{54}\) Ibid.

\(^{55}\) Ibid., 20-21.
Taliban. In Helmand province, for example, there was evidence that the indiscriminate eradication policies had strengthened the bond between poppy farmers and the insurgents.\textsuperscript{56}

The poppy crop that the soldiers destroyed was not the illicit asset of insurgents, but the personal property of ordinary civilians, whose only source of income was poppy. Faced with an unappealing choice between the socially repressive Taliban and an American coalition that destroys their livelihood, the ordinary Afghans tend to prefer the Taliban. A report released by the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) entitled, “The Taliban in Afghanistan” highlighted the worrisome trend of increasing support for the Taliban in the Helmand and Kandahar provinces of southern Afghanistan.\textsuperscript{57} Poppy farm labourers stated their intentions to join the Taliban in 2005 and said, “We were better off under the Taliban and we hope that they return. They are not the same as before and they would not tolerate the cruel things that had been done by the previous Taliban. If we joined them we would be paid [the equivalent of] US$500 a month”\textsuperscript{58}.

In Helmand province the Taliban reportedly offered protection to the farmers targeted by the eradication policy. In Kandahar they reportedly offered financial compensation to the farmers whose poppy crops were being destroyed. On top of that, when international community decided not to pay any more compensation money to the farmers coming under eradication policies, it generated more political support and backing for the Taliban insurgency.\textsuperscript{59}

Alternative livelihoods could not materialize in many cases. For example in Nangarhar province many farmers, who were unable to repay debts were forced to sell daughters as young as 3 years old as brides or to migrate to Pakistan, where refugees have frequently ended up in the radical


\textsuperscript{58} “Afghanistan Five Years Later: The Return of Taliban”, \textit{Senlis Afghanistan}, (Spring/Summer 2006), \url{http://www.icosgroup.net/static/reports/Afghanistan_5_Years_Later.pdf} (accessed July 17, 2014).

Deobandi madrasas, refilling the ranks of the Taliban.\textsuperscript{60} Such policies had proved counterproductive and benefitted the Taliban instead. Not only the poor, but rich farmers also turned to them for protection.

The faulty conception and implementation of aid policies in the post-Bonn Afghanistan also helped the Taliban generate independent sources of income for their movement. As discussed in Chapter Five of the current study, the donors in most of the cases bypassed the local Afghan institutions while using the aid money, which undermined the efforts at capacity building of the Afghan institutions. Moreover, much of the aid was spent on projects that did not address the Afghan people's needs.

Taliban exploited the faulty aid policy in three ways: they fanned the public resentment over improper utilisation of the aid money; they benefitted from the lack or absence of state institutions and proper policies to stop the wastage of money and finally they were successful in further weakening public confidence in the Karzai regime's ability to provide them security, particularly by targeting NGO and donor organizations' personnel.\textsuperscript{61}

Most of the money went to the short-term or the quick impact projects. Some of these projects, like the ones related to gender equality, women and human rights violations, were of least significance for Afghan people, especially the youth.\textsuperscript{62} No effective steps were taken to create long-term employment opportunities for Afghan people; instead short-term and quick response solutions were preferred.\textsuperscript{63} One such example was Afghan government’s policy of importing electricity from neighbouring Central Asian states to meet the country’s growing energy requirements. If it had started building a dam, it would not only have produced electricity on a


\textsuperscript{62} Interview with Aryan Sharifi, Former Employee of Afghanistan Ministry of Economics, June 4, 2014.

\textsuperscript{63} Ibid.
long-term basis, but would also have created significant employment opportunities for Afghan youth.\textsuperscript{64}

The Taliban became the major beneficiaries of the aid money spent in the country, especially after 2005-2006. Several instances have been reported in the media where the US contractors paid the Taliban insurgents to ensure security of their logistics and on-site projects. Such steps were taken by the contractors despite knowing the fact that this was tantamount to abetting the insurgency. For example, the ArmorGroup and its affiliates hired two key Taliban commanders to provide them with security - one of whom was killed by the ISAF while hosting a meeting of key Taliban commanders at his place.\textsuperscript{65}

The low level of economic development in Afghanistan (Please see the section on the faulty conception and implementation of the economic policies in Chapter Five for post-Bonn poor economic figures) had shattered people’s trust in international community and the Karzai regime. The development planning and its impact remained confined largely to major cities, with little trickle down impact on rural and peripheral areas of the country. The insurgency-hit areas of south and south-eastern Afghanistan were neglected not only in terms of provision of security, but also in terms of political and economic reconstruction policies.

For example, a comparison of Kandahar province’s development indicators with those of the a relatively stable but impoverished northern province of Badakhshan provides us with a better understanding of the slow pace of development work undertaken in the southern provinces. In Kandahar in 2005, 64% of households had access to clean drinking water which fell to 32% in 2011.\textsuperscript{66} Similarly, overall net school enrolment rate (6-13 years of age) fell from 23% in 2005 to 11% in 2011.\textsuperscript{67} Compared to this, one can discern an improvement in the development indicators of Badakhshan, where 13% of the population had access to the clean drinking water in 2005,

\textsuperscript{64} Ibid. Please also see “Import of Power from Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan”, https://www.irp-af.com/?pname=open&id=291&type=html&c=5 (accessed June 18, 2014).
\textsuperscript{65} Ibid., 262-263.
\textsuperscript{67} Ibid.
which was increased to 21% in 2011.\textsuperscript{68} Similarly, the overall net school enrolment rate (6-13 years of age) witnessed an upward trend from 46% in 2005 to 68% in 2011.\textsuperscript{69} Such kind of situations were another structural cause which was exacerbated by the presence of plethora of international aid organizations, contractors and NGOs to facilitate the revival of economy in the post-Bonn Afghanistan.

Another similar example can be of Paktia, Paktika and Zabul provinces which are inhabited by Zadran tribe – a predominant faction of the Taliban-associated Haqqani Network. The lack of financial resources and subsequently low levels of reconstruction activity was regarded as important factor behind the increasing violence in the provinces.\textsuperscript{70}

According to a report published by the Senlis Council, the Taliban have exploited the poverty and hunger crisis resulting from international negligence. Emmanuel Reinert, executive director of The Senlis Council stated “There are around Kandahar now camps with people starving, kids dying almost every day, and this is obviously used by the Taliban to regain the confidence of the people, and to regain control of the country.”\textsuperscript{71}

The widespread economic corruption further reduced the public confidence in the Afghan government and they considered it better to support the Taliban as they did not expect rather any fair policy and economic benefit from the government. For example, the bribery rates in the judicial sector were the highest as compared to any other department. The immense poverty and lack of economic opportunities forced people turn towards the Taliban judges, who were not only quick in responding to the people’s request without any discrimination of rich and poor, but in most cases provided free justice.

\textsuperscript{68} “Badakhshan Province”, Civil-Military Fusion Center, \url{https://www.cimicweb.org/AfghanistanProvincialMap/Pages/Badakhshan.aspx} (accessed June 18, 2014).
\textsuperscript{69} Ibid.
That negligence on part of the international community to direct aid money to address the needs of the Afghan people especially in the south and southeast also became an important factor in creating circumstances which favoured the return of the Taliban. Moreover, international community did not pay attention to establish state institutions in the peripheral and rural areas where they were needed most due to the potential of revival of conflict.

*Political Reconstruction, Governance Gap and the Taliban’s Approach*

“Successful guerrilla operations involve the people. It is the quality of their resistance to the enemy and support for the guerrillas which in the end will be the decisive factor … In fact, a guerrilla force will be unable to operate in an area where the people are hostile to its aims.”

Anarchy in a state can facilitate the insurgents in several ways; the situation on the ground will be favourable for an insurgent to gain the public support by frequent opportunities to meet the public for both logistics and propaganda purposes. The instability in the country can facilitate an insurgent in finding recruits along with sources of funding. This is why a politically stable and legitimate government is vital for preventing the penetration and influence of insurgents.

Post-Bonn Afghanistan, despite the international engagement and backing for the Karzai regime, could not bring the long-awaited political stability in the country. The conceptual and implementation problems in the political reconstruction policies by the international community had the following broader implications for Afghan polity:

First, the inclusion of warlords especially from North alienated the Pashtun majority population in the South;

Second, the inefficient and corrupt state institutions shook the public confidence in the Karzai regime and its international backers;

---


Third, the centralised form of government with little, and in certain cases no, contact with the peripheries when combined with the above two factors greatly affected the legitimacy of the regime.

The fallout of the faulty post-conflict political reconstruction created circumstances which proved helpful for the Taliban in reviving their insurgency. The first and foremost political fallout of the Bonn process was the alienation of the Pashtuns who have played a predominant role in the politics of Afghanistan since 1747. The international coalition’s strategy to associate itself with the Northern Alliance to chase the al-Qaeda and Taliban during OEF had its own security repercussions which we have discussed in detail earlier; but the same strategy had political repercussion too. In order to appease the Northern Alliance, the international community gave them high profile portfolios in the Interim setup. Their dominance in the emerging political setup was reaffirmed at the Emergency Loya Jirga in 2002, which had direct consequences for the Pashtuns who were disappointed with the loss of power. The cabinet formation of the Karzai government further disappointed several influential Pashtuns who pinned their hopes on obtaining an influential position in the interim setup.\textsuperscript{74}

The loss of power and political influence was accompanied by the assault on Pashtuns in the North and West of Afghanistan. The empowered Northern Alliance also was involved in violence against Pashtuns in the North, which resulted in killing of several hundred Pashtuns in the North.\textsuperscript{75} A large number of Pashtuns were displaced from the North, and were relocated in the South and Southeast. Their bitterness for the regime dominated mainly by the non-Pashtuns made them tilt towards the Taliban. The security and political power vacuum which was created by the fall of the Taliban, especially in the Pashtun majority provinces, was something which the international community should never had ignored since the very beginning of the reconstruction. Their policies and approach towards Pashtuns in hunt for Taliban and al-Qaeda squandered the overwhelming support which international coalition enjoyed after the fall of Taliban. For example, one local commander’s family was mistreated at the hands of the US

\textsuperscript{74}“Afghanistan: The Problem of Pashtun Alienation”, \textit{ICG Asia Report}, no. 62, 5 August, 2003, \\

\textsuperscript{75}Ibid., 11-12.
forces in Helmand province on the suspicion of being a Taliban, while actually he belonged to an anti-Taliban group.\textsuperscript{76}

Taliban were able to quickly grasp that major flaw in the post-Bonn Afghan political setup. The Taliban did not have to offer immense incentives to the common Afghans especially in the rural areas, which were largely ignored by the Karzai regime.\textsuperscript{77} They wisely drew up a strategy to exploit the absence of state writ in the predominantly Pashtun-inhabited rural areas in south, southeast and eastern provinces of the country, where corrupt police and judiciary was unable to offer basic security to the people.\textsuperscript{78} The post-Bonn political set up strengthened the local strongmen, militias and warlords in Afghanistan, who doled out favours to their own supporters. For the ordinary civilians, the warlords offered torture, extortions and marginalization. Such communities often felt that they had no choice but to favour the Taliban as an alternative force to balance out the warlords in their respective areas.\textsuperscript{79}

Any insurgency can get advantage of such a situation where there is governance gap and the regime has no or little credibility. The local conditions such as lack of governance, corruption, dissatisfied population due to poverty and unemployment when combined with the international failure to meet their promises made the resurgence of the Taliban possible.\textsuperscript{80} The Taliban had exploited the feelings of the Afghan population due to the governance gap and failure by the Karzai administration to deliver on social and economic fronts. They also fed pessimism about Afghanistan’s stabilization effort.\textsuperscript{81} Soon after the fall of the Taliban, Karzai had been perceived by many as a puppet of the US and NATO countries which were involved in the reconstruction of Afghanistan. General Stanely McChrystal, former commander of the ISAF and US troops in Afghanistan stated, “The key is the Afghan government. It needs to be viewed as a legitimate

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{76} Ibid., 21.
\bibitem{77} Ibid. \url{http://www.ispu.org/files/PDFs/586_ISPU\%20Report\%20Neo\%20Taliban_Qazi_WEB.pdf} (accessed June 9, 2014).
\bibitem{78} Ibid.
\bibitem{80} Interview with Shahmehmood Miankhel, USIP Country Head in Kabul, June 1, 2014.
\end{thebibliography}
representative of the Afghan people, otherwise we will be seen as occupiers.”

It was only in late 2009 that the Obama administration realized the significance of expanding the state capacity beyond Kabul and in the rural areas across Afghanistan. Meanwhile the Taliban took full advantage of the absence of state writ and launched a propaganda campaign to malign and hold the Karzai regime and international community responsible for all the woes of the Afghans. The common people started to rely on alternatives presented by the Taliban.

After their defeat in OEF, the Taliban attempted to regroup their dispersed cadres to restart guerrilla warfare against the Afghan government. Along with their old cadres, madrassa students from Pakistan also joined the Taliban movement. Slowly and gradually the local clergies also approached the Taliban. The main reason behind the clergy joining the Taliban was their marginalization in post-Bonn political transition process and the unacceptable cultural changes. Taliban drew a proper strategy to exploit the local grievances against the international troops and the Afghan government to attract more people to their cause. They sent teams across Afghanistan to assess and evaluate the people’s discontent against the Karzai regime and their international partners and then accordingly targeted the communities for recruitment purposes.

After the fall of the Taliban, the people of Afghanistan were very optimistic about the revival of peace and prosperity across the country. Especially the youth and women were very optimistic and they were against the revival of Taliban. But the rush of international community to bring an end to the Taliban and al-Qaeda diverted their attention from political and economic reconstruction of the country. Such disenchanted youth and common Afghans had no choice but to choose between the corrupt and incompetent regime on one hand and the Taliban on the other. One resident of the area in the surroundings of Kabul once said about Taliban judges and

83 Ibid, 79.
85 Ibid. 22-23.
86 Interview with Dr Shanthie Mariet D'Souza, June 12, 2014.
justice system, “Not that they are just, but what they do is they use this as a tool. They are very smart in choosing what tools they should use that society is looking for.”

The state’s failure to provide employment opportunities in rural areas made several people turning to the insurgents. According to some estimates, the Taliban paid between US$100 – 300 to a foot soldier which motivated the youth to join the insurgent movement. There are both full time and part time fighters with the Taliban, who are being paid by the Taliban. According to journalist Nir Rosen, “Most of the Taliban that I have met are poor madrassa students living off whatever charity people give them. They are local guys fighting for local reasons.”

The inability of the Afghan government and international community to meet their promises for reconstruction has further undermined the legitimacy of the Karzai regime and people started to openly express their disdain with centre and empty promises and inclination to join the Taliban back for some form of support at economic and political level. For example, the relative success of the Taliban-led insurgency in the North has largely been attributed to the peoples’ dissatisfaction with the weak government and the ISAF’s inability to meet the security requirements in the North. Even in the provinces surrounding Kabul like Wardak and Logar, where there was concentration of international troops and aid workers, the Taliban were successful in making inroads due to the incompetent security forces, bad governance and corruption in state institutions especially judiciary.

90 “Afghanistan Five Years Later”.
Although the eastern provinces of Kunar, Nuristan and Nangarhar and Laghman, shared a border with Pakistan, it was difficult for the Taliban to penetrate there due to the popular opposition from the local populace. However, lack of governance and insensitivity of the international troops to the local culture, especially during house-to-house search operations without accompanying local Afghan forces, slowly and gradually increased the popularity and backing for the Taliban. The governance gap was also exploited by the Taliban to expand their territorial reach across Afghanistan. The first sign of the emergence of a shadow government of the Taliban appeared in 2003. By 2010, the Taliban had appointed 33 shadow provincial governors and around 180 district governors in the entire country.

If we compare both the North and Southern regions of Afghanistan, the presence of historical patterns of governance and state institutions albeit fragile, had given the North a stable foundation to undertake the reconstruction activities. The Northern Alliance leaders like Ismail Khan, Rashid Dostum and Ahmed Shah Masood either belonged to the former government structure in Afghanistan or were part of the Mujahideen and had broader areas under control not restricted by the tribal affiliations. In contrast, in the South the strongmen were strongly affiliated on the tribal lines and most of the times they were involved in internal feuds. They did not allow to have a pattern of governance with formal state institutions and revenue collection system. The filling up of this gap was very challenging for the international community and the Karzai regime due to their myopic approach of strengthening the centre at the cost of the periphery. As observed by classical counterinsurgency theorist, Bernard Fall, a government which is losing to an insurgency is not being outfought, it is being out-governed.

The Taliban had exploited the weak governance especially in the Pashtun majority provinces of South and Southeast. The empty promises by the international community and the inability of the

---

96 Ibid. 749.
97 “Reforming the Afghan National Police”, RUSI
local government to give a promising future to their people provided the Taliban with ripe conditions to regroup and challenge the government in power.

Conclusion

The faulty and inadequate conception and implementation of the PCR created the circumstances which were favourable for the Taliban. The insurgents mainly took three significant benefits due to absence of security, political and economic stability. First of all, the Taliban were able to gain the support of the population especially in the rural areas of Afghanistan. The lack of state writ and absence of reconstruction - against the promises made by the international community – and widespread corruption and inefficiency in the government institutions resulted in loss of hope on part of Afghans. Those conditions somehow created the fear in the population that in case international troops left the Taliban would definitely come back due to the inefficient local government. So they though it better to support the Taliban beforehand in order to avoid their revenge in future. Secondly, the same condition also helped the Taliban to raise and train local recruits without whom it would have been impossible for the Taliban to sustain the pace of insurgency. Finally, the Taliban were able to generate funding for their insurgency.

If international community would have drafted both the security and non-security reconstruction policies keeping in mind the local socio-cultural and economic realities of the pre-dominantly Pashtun and tribal Afghanistan and addressed the people’s aspirations thoroughly, the chances of the return of the Taliban could have been reduced to a greater extent, since it is a well known fact that no insurgency can attain success solely on the basis of external support.
Chapter 7: Conclusion

The 9/11 attacks awoke the world to the dangers failed states posed to international peace and stability. Afghanistan was a test case to demonstrate the international community's resolve to fix failed states in order to prevent another 9/11. The international community, however, appeared to be failing in this regard as Afghanistan relapsed into conflict within five years of the ouster of the Taliban regime at the hands of the US-led international coalition and NATO-ISAF.

The present study has attempted to analyse the causes of the resurgence of the Taliban despite their lacking any substantial international and local support. The study has argued that the inadequate post-conflict reconstruction framework envisaged during the Bonn Agreement of December 2001 (Bonn-I) and its faulty implementation resulted in the resurgence of the Taliban.

Ever since 1747, when Ahmed Shah Durrani made it a tribal confederation, Afghanistan has experienced several long episodes of conflict and instability. This has been due to certain unique features of the Afghan polity.

First, Afghanistan is a tribal society, with each tribe jealously guarding its tribal identity and independence, and resisting every effort by the central government to bring it under Kabul's control. Too much focus on their identity has prevented the tribes from adopting any notion of Afghan nationhood. Moreover, they have resisted every reform effort by the Afghan state, viewing it as detrimental to their autonomy and their socio-cultural traits.

Second, Afghan society is also divided along ethnic lines - a division which became all the more pronounced in the wake of the Soviet withdrawal in 1989. Since then various ethnic groups have remained at loggerheads over power sharing in Afghanistan - a factor which was mainly responsible for the emergence and the rise of the Taliban in 1994.

Third, a history of external engagement has caused instability in Afghanistan at various junctures in its history. The Russian and British empires jockeyed for power over Afghanistan throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, which resulted in three Anglo-Afghan Wars: the First Anglo-Afghan War (1839-1842); the Second Anglo-Afghan War (1878-1880) and the Third Anglo-Afghan War (1919). Throughout the Cold War era, the Soviet Union tried to bring
Afghanistan under its sphere of influence and these efforts culminated in the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979. This in turn led to (indirect) American intervention.

External influence encouraged a tendency to rely heavily upon external military and economic assistance. This tendency made Afghanistan a rentier economy. The easy availability of external financial assistance undermined the state’s capacity to generate revenues from domestic sources. The state remained largely unaccountable to the people – a typical feature of rentier economies – thus further widening a gap between the people and the state.

In sum, the unique geographical location, the ethnic and tribal divide and the rentier state economy did not allow Afghanistan to experience stability at any stage of its existence. It remained in a constant state of turmoil. The situation worsened with the Soviet invasion in 1979. The conflict left Afghanistan devastated and ethnic and factional divides tremendously sharpened. Post-Soviet withdrawal, several internal and external actors tried to fill the power vacuum. Amidst the power jockeying, the Taliban rose to power in 1994 and by 1996 were in control of more than 80 percent of the territory of Afghanistan. But their extremist ideology and harbouring of al-Qaeda alienated the international community. 9/11 was the climax when a failed state challenged the security of a major power thousands of miles away from its borders.

Findings - I: Inadequate Conceptualization and Implementation of Reconstruction

In repose to 9/11, the US-led coalition launched Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) in Afghanistan to eliminate al-Qaeda and the Taliban. At the time of OEF, Afghanistan was an economically impoverished and politically unstable country without any formal state institutions. There was no state army or police force to maintain law and order. After the fall of the Taliban in November 2001, the international community initiated a post-conflict reconstruction process. The Bonn conference was convened in December 2001 to draw an initial framework for the reconstruction process in both the security and non-security spheres. Bonn-I developed the following features to address the security and non-security needs of post-9/11 Afghanistan.¹

¹ Please see the Annex 1 for the draft of the Bonn Agreement (December 2001).
For security purposes, Bonn-I mandated the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) to maintain security in and around Kabul. The Agreement also stressed the need to raise local security forces to ensure security throughout Afghanistan. Revival of the judicial system was deemed necessary to restore law and order in Afghanistan.

For political reconstruction, the Bonn-I set the following benchmarks: convening of *Loya Jirga*, holding of Presidential and Parliamentary elections and drafting constitution.

For economic reconstruction, Bonn-I expressed its desire for the international community to assist in the reconstruction of Afghanistan.

As stated earlier, post-conflict reconstruction was not on the agenda of the international community when it came to rescue Afghanistan from al-Qaeda and the Taliban. The only purpose of the international community was to oust al-Qaeda and the Taliban from that country. It was only after the realization on part of the international community that abandoning Afghanistan in the absence of a functioning state civil and security apparatus would have grave implications that the international community started giving serious consideration to reconstructing war-torn Afghanistan. Post-conflict reconstruction in Afghanistan was thus conceived in haste. This is perhaps why it suffered from so many conceptual and implementation flaws.

A major conceptual flaw arose from the international community's failure to grasp the true magnitude of the security challenge the post-Taliban Afghanistan presented. This underestimation resulted in the allocation of only a small number of troops to protect Kabul alone along with the US-led coalition conducting OEF, mainly in the South and Southeast, and the use of anti-Taliban proxies (the warlords and the Northern Alliance) to combat al-Qaeda and the Taliban. This approach, which was described as the “light footprint” approach, was primarily responsible for the subsequent breakdown of security in Afghanistan. The problem was aggravated due to the initial absence of the Afghan National Army (ANA) and the Afghan National Police (ANP). Another conceptually flawed policy was the “lead nation” approach,
which led to each lead nation pursuing its own agenda in isolation, thereby precluding the formation of a coherent and comprehensive Security Sector Reform (SSR) policy.

The implementation of SSR was equally flawed. The international community failed to provide requisite training and funding to the ANA and the ANP, which rendered them unable to tackle the security challenge alone and without the assistance of NATO-ISAF. The judicial sector reforms were equally flawed, producing similarly disastrous consequences for the reconstruction process. For example, Kandahar required 50 trained judges in 2011, but it had only 18 by that time. The Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) programme met a similar fate, largely due to lack of interest on the part of the international community and rampant corruption in various state institutions. Since the warlords and militiamen played a role in ousting the Taliban and al-Qaeda, the international community could not afford to offend them by bringing them under the DDR programme. This resulted in leaving Afghanistan filled with armed militia, which also exercised political power, thereby cutting into Kabul’s authority.

The faulty conception and implementation of security reconstruction policies left a security gap which was easy for the Taliban to exploit in their favour. The security gap also disappointed the Afghan people, who had high expectations of the Karzai regime and their international backers. As a result, public faith in the regime declined over time.

Non-security reconstruction efforts too were marred by conceptual and implementation problems. Political reconstruction was a non-inclusive process, embracing only anti-Taliban elements, particularly the warlords who had helped the foreign forces against the Taliban. The political reconstruction process had a clear anti-Pashtun bias, which alienated the country's majority ethnic group. Moreover, it was carried out without giving due consideration to the local people’s high aspirations for a stable post-Bonn Afghanistan. For example, the government writ was confined only to Kabul and major urban centres and at the provincial and district levels in mostly rural areas people could not see any substantial change.

---

On the implementation side, the rush to achieve the deadline set during Bonn-I undermined the need to establish viable state institutions. The problems created due to the lack of institutions were compounded by the culture of nepotism, kinship and political patronage in those institutions where the warlords enjoyed an upper hand. The centralised nature of the state institutions did not allow the people to feel the benefits of reconstruction in far off rural areas and peripheries. Rather the centre periphery divide sharpened and further alienated the majority of the population. When all these factors combined they resulted in the Karzai regime losing its legitimacy in the eyes of the Afghan people.

Like political reconstruction, economic reconstruction also suffered from conceptual and implementation flaws. Economic revival was not a priority for those gathered during Bonn-I. From the very beginning, security reconstruction was given priority and economic reconstruction had to take a back seat. Whatever funding was pledged at the Tokyo conference (January 2002), was not delivered on time. The initial lack of funding resulted in the slow start of economic reconstruction.

Like other aspects of the reconstruction in Afghanistan, economic reconstruction was characterised by a quick fix mentality, focusing mainly on short-term objectives. Resultantly, Afghan economy could not be revived to an extent which was expected at the time of Bonn-I. Rather, the culture of corruption and poppy cultivation and drug trafficking flourished. The involvement of several key government officials in drug trafficking further undermined the Karzai regime's legitimacy.

Foreign aid too could not help. Rather, it undermined both the state-building project and the Karzai regime's legitimacy as most of the donors preferred to bypass the Afghan government, thereby undermining the effort to build the state’s capacity. Much of the aid was wasted in corruption. Afghan officials used aid money to support their own groups rather than to provide public goods to the Afghan masses. The donors’ policies were driven more by their own priorities and less by the needs and requirements of Afghanistan. Moreover, donors did not devise any mechanism to coordinate their policies among themselves, which resulted, in many
cases, in waste of money due to, for example, duplication of projects or undertaking of unnecessary projects.

With the security situation worsening, especially after the resurgence of the Taliban in 2005-2006, the international community tried to tackle the growing problems by injecting more human and financial resources, but again without any proper planning and without fully engaging the Afghan government. But the unaccounted flow of money did not bring the required development results rather it once again made Afghanistan largely dependent upon aid money, thus pushing it towards becoming a rentier state as it had been during the course of its history.

The problems discussed above created the conditions which the Taliban needed to stage a comeback. Three of these conditions were particularly exploited by the Taliban. These are discussed below.

**Findings – II: The Taliban’s Exploitation of the Opportunities**

The circumstances which were created by the faulty conception and implementation of post-conflict reconstruction helped the Taliban in garnering funding, obtaining public support and attracting local cadres to their movement.

*Funding*

As observed earlier, funding is the lifeblood of any insurgent movement. In particular, independent sources of funding that insurgents are able to generate themselves is critically important in sustaining an insurgency. The Taliban generated much of their financial resources themselves locally by exploiting the poor law and order environment.

The Taliban exploited the ill-conceived and improperly implemented antinarcotics policies for their benefit. As discussed in the study, poppy has been a major source of income for most Afghan poor farmers as it fetches a far higher price than other crops like wheat and cotton. The Afghan farmers' dependence on poppy cultivation increased during the 1990s - a period of
severe economic downturn and political chaos. This reliance on poppy cultivation continued during post-Bonn Afghanistan as the internationally-led post-conflict reconstruction failed to resurrect the Afghan economy. The trickle down impact of aid policies and economic reconstruction could not be felt at the far off peripheries and people continued to rely on illicit poppy cultivation and trafficking as a major source of income.

The international community did try to eradicate poppy cultivation by means of an eradication policy and by offering opportunities for earning livelihoods through alternative means. Its efforts, however, betrayed only a partial understanding of the issue as it failed to appreciate that poppy cultivation was the source of livelihood for many Afghan farmers. Worse still, it failed to honour its commitments to provide various economic incentives to the farmers in exchange of stopping poppy cultivation, thereby angering many poor farmers in the poppy rich South and East Afghanistan. The Taliban readily capitalized on the situation. They provided protection to poppy growers and drug traffickers in exchange for money. This turned out to be the major source of income for the Taliban which they used to sustain and expand their operations.

The inefficiency of law enforcement agencies (ANA and ANP) provided the Taliban with yet another opportunity to fill their coffers - through extortion, looting and tax collection from trade convoys passing through their areas of control. As the security situation continued to deteriorate, even international agencies were forced to pay protection money to the Taliban, thereby further augmenting the latter’s income. The Taliban’s ability to acquire financial resources by exploiting the poor security situation and the ill-conceived counter-narcotics policies of the international community were a clear example of the latter’s failure to reconstruct the country to prevent the revival of conflict.

Public Support

Public support is vital for the success of an insurgency. As discussed, most Afghans had welcomed the ouster of the Taliban regime in 2001 in the hope of a better future for themselves and for coming generations. Their hopes, however, were dashed by the abysmal performance of both the international community and the Karzai regime.
The poor security situation, which was mainly the result of the inadequate number of international troops and the incompetence of both the ANA and ANP, undermined the public confidence in them, and made it look towards the Taliban for security and protection, especially in the volatile South and Southeast. Supporting the Taliban made more sense after the international community announced its plans to withdraw from Afghanistan in 2010, putting a huge question mark over Afghanistan's future security. The widespread corruption, the high number of ANA casualties in field, and even higher rates of desertions from the ANA were some important reasons which made the Afghans still more worried about the future of the country. The failure to bring political stability and economic prosperity to the war-torn country, as had been hoped by the Afghan people, further disappointed the people and subsequently undermined the legitimacy of the internationally-backed Karzai regime.

The Taliban, on the other hand, gained public support by providing people with security and in certain cases also satisfied their social requirements especially by providing them with free justice through their own courts and judges. The Taliban were sharp enough to portray themselves as the true sympathisers of the marginalized Pashtun majority rural population and the harbinger of peace and prosperity across Afghanistan. For example, their adaptability according to the need of the time and their use of the media such as radio, internet and social media like facebook and twitter helped them portray a more positive image for themselves. No doubt, most people, especially the youth and women, did not really want a return to Taliban rule, yet they supported the parallel governing structures established by the Taliban across 80 percent of the territory by 2009, viewing them as better than the corrupt and inefficient Karazi regime.

**Recruits**

The international community's failures also helped the Taliban in finding more recruits. Initially, the Taliban recruited mostly from Pakistani madrassas. But as the international community's shortcomings became more obvious with each passing day, the Taliban were able to penetrate into most of rural Afghanistan, winning increasing numbers over to their cause. Several factors helped the Taliban attract fresh recruits.
Most individuals who joined the Taliban did so out of fear and intimidation, knowing well that the ANA and the ANP were incapable of providing them security. Moreover, people also supported the Taliban to avoid their vengeance in case of international withdrawal and their possible return to power. The failure of the Karzai regime and its international backers in improving the daily life of the common people also weaned them away from Karzai and his supporters. The economic incentives offered by the Taliban were yet another crucial factor that helped the militia to win much wanted public support. In most cases, the Taliban were reported to have paid wages higher than those received by soldiers of the ANA. Such incentives were attractive for an economically impoverished rural population. Finally, the politically marginalised Pashtun majority, who felt they had not been given sufficient share in the political setup, joined hands with the Taliban.

All these three elements, beyond any doubt, played a significant role in the resurgence of the Taliban and the sustainability of their movement between Bonn-I and Bonn-II. The benefits that the Taliban were able to reap due to the faulty conception and poor implementation of the reconstruction were far greater than the element of cross border sanctuaries in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) of Pakistan and support from regional states like Iran and Pakistan.

**What Could Have Been Done to Utilise Post-Bonn-I Window of Opportunity?**

As stated earlier the reconstruction process at both the security and non-security levels was not without flaws and shortcomings. These mistakes, if avoided while the “window of opportunity” before 2005 was still open, could have made a huge difference to the situation in Afghanistan. There was a need for a comprehensive reconstruction strategy for Afghanistan encompassing both security and non-security components.
In the context of security policies, the international community should have recognised the existing security vacuum in the country, which was filled by the Taliban-led elements. There was a need to devise a proper and clear strategy as per the security requirements of Afghanistan. It would have been appropriate to jointly pursue the goals of counter-terrorism and nation-building and drafting those policies in a manner which could not have led towards confusion and empowering those elements that were endemic to the long-term peace in the country. In the absence of local police and army in Afghanistan there was a need for expanding the ISAF’s agenda outside of Kabul with immediate effect after the Bonn-I. This could have not only strengthened the people’s confidence but also forestalled the return of local militias with malafide intentions to exact old revenges from rival factions. The task of expanding the ISAF mandate outside the Kabul city, although undertaken during 2006, came too late.

Another priority area which required attention during the timeframe of 2001-2006 (the window of opportunity) was to build a police force and an army capable of taking charge of the security situation in Afghanistan along with establishing a justice system to ensure law and order in the country. The challenges of rebuilding the Afghan state and society were undoubtly difficult, but building security institutions was never given a priority in the immediate aftermath of Bonn-I. Similar apathy was shown towards the judicial transformation. Timely and speedy initiation of the Justice reforms by Italy could have given people more confidence in the new system and the Afghan authorities and its international allies, but the pace of reforms remained slow which eroded the overall effectiveness of the judicial system.

As far as non-security measures are concerned, there was a need to prioritise institution and capacity building post-Bonn Afghanistan since the conflict was ripe for resolution amidst massive public support and willingness to reconstruct Afghanistan on all fronts. The international community chose and supported a strong centralised state in the form of a presidential system. It is true that Afghanistan has a history of a strong central government and the Afghan state survived very well under it. But the post-2001 international objective of introducing democracy in the country and then supporting and maintaining a centralised regime
under the leadership of Hamid Karzai were two opposite objectives. Subsequently, the
government’s writ remained strong in the centre, while it remained weak in the periphery. The
culture of nepotism and corruption promoted by the Karzai regime further undermined the
people’s confidence, from which the Taliban benefited tremendously. There was a need for
devolution of power to the peripheries of Afghanistan to neutralise the insurgents. Institution
building and local capacity building should have been two priority areas as they could have
forestalled the revival of elements like the Taliban.

On the economic front there was also need to undertake institution and capacity building at the
local levels. Training local youth and incorporating them in relevant institutions across
Afghanistan could have provided them with viable alternatives as compared to the Taliban.
Moreover, in the absence of local capacity and local institutions the control of aid money
remained in the hands of the international donors, who effectively bypassed the Afghan regime.

In sum there was need for not only properly prioritizing the tasks in both security and non-
security spheres but there was a need for institution and local capacity building at all levels
across Afghanistan to prevent the Taliban from filling the vacuum.

**Contributions of the Study**

The present study is the first to highlight the international community's flawed approach towards
Afghanistan's reconstruction as a source of the Taliban’s resurgence in post-Bonn Afghanistan.
The dominant strand in the existing literature on the subject attributes the Taliban resurgence to
support from Pakistan and Iran and to the governance failure of the Karzai regime. Some
attribute the success of the Taliban to the diversion of US attention and resources to Iraq as early
as in 2003. The present study does not deny the role played by these factors in the resurgence of
the Taliban. It, however, focuses on a relatively less explored issue: the international
community's failure in the reconstruction of Afghanistan. It argues that, given its
overwhelmingly predominant role in the reconstruction process, the international community must share much of the responsibility for the mess post-Bonn Afghanistan became. Putting the entire blame either on external support or on the failure of the Afghan government distorts the reality. It was largely due to the international community's faulty reconstruction agenda in the post-Bonn Afghanistan that the Taliban were able to stage a comeback.

The findings of this study are relevant to other cases of post-conflict reconstruction where conflict returns despite the international community's engagement; for example, post-Saddam Iraq, where, despite massive intervention by the international community, conflict re-emerged. Similarly, the findings are instructive for other cases where a post-conflict state relapses into conflict, for example, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Sierra Leone, Mozambique and Somalia. In all such cases, there is a need to hold to account international reconstruction efforts that are initiated under various banners like humanitarian intervention, peacekeeping and nation building, but which are largely unable to establish peace and stability.

Theoretically, the study can claim to be unique in that it has drawn attention to the conceptual and implementation problems of post-conflict reconstruction as a critical cause of the revival of the Taliban. Most existing works analysing the failures and shortcomings in the reconstruction process in post-conflict states tend to focus on a single dimension. This study, on the other hand, shows how both security and non-security aspects of post-conflict reconstruction remained faulty, and led to the failure of the overall reconstruction programme. Moreover, the study has identified the problem of faulty post-conflict reconstruction in Afghanistan in two aspects: inadequate conception and poor implementation, which is again rarely done in the context of analysing reconstruction programmes. A focus on any one aspect would leave the discussion incomplete and analysts unable to grasp the essence of the problem.

Above all, this study is distinctive in linking inadequate post-conflict reconstruction with the revival of a defeated group. It thus demonstrates that post-conflict reconstruction in itself can be a contributing factor in the revival of conflicts. This goes against the dominant strand in the literature, which attributes the revival of conflicts to local conditions and pre-existing conflicts.
There is certainly a trend to discuss the shortcomings and failures of the reconstruction agenda in post-conflict states, but the larger implications of such failures tend to be ignored. This study has shown the causal link between faulty reconstruction and the revival of conflict.

**Follow-up Areas of Research**

The study opens possibilities for future research from a variety of angles. There is scope for more detailed studies on the conceptual and implementation shortcomings of post-conflict reconstruction either in the security sphere alone or in the non-security sphere only. Both the conceptual and implementation problems can be studied in any post-conflict state to evaluate the linkages between faulty reconstruction efforts and the revival of conflict in any form, be it the revival of insurgencies, widening of ethnic divides or conflicts over the control of economic resources.

Beyond individual case studies, comparative studies of similar cases involving the revival of insurgencies (or other conflicts) would be useful in producing across-case generalizations that could strengthen or refine the conclusions in this thesis. This would not only help generate a better and more reliable theory, but would also help provide clearer policy direction to policy makers in the future about the requirements of effective reconstruction.

More studies can be undertaken to further investigate the causes of the revival of conflict in Afghanistan. The security and non-security policies can be studied separately to understand the conditions that led to the resurgence of the Taliban. Moreover, Afghanistan can be compared with other cases such as Iraq to better understand what went wrong with internationally-led reconstruction that facilitated the revival of conflict.

Further research studies can be conducted to assess the fallout of the flawed/faulty reconstruction process in Afghanistan on its neighbouring countries - Pakistan, China, India and Central Asian States. Such studies will be interesting and significant in the context of post US-NATO troops’ withdrawal in 2014. Since Afghan conflict was never free of the regional spill over so it would
be a timely study to assess the implications of that faulty reconstruction process for the region to reduce the chances of region falling into the wraps of conflict.

**Some Policy Recommendations**

Though focused on Afghanistan between 2001 and 2011, the study is relevant to many other post-conflict reconstruction cases. The study tries to bring home some important lessons for both policy makers and theoreticians.

Post-conflict reconstruction is a difficult business, but one which has been widely practiced, especially since the end of the Cold War. There is a need to take it seriously from the very beginning to ensure its success. Faulty conception will lay a shaky foundation for the process and cannot be sustained on an enduring basis. Reconstruction is always a long-term and time-consuming agenda. Hasty “quick-fix” and “quick-impact” approaches cannot bring the desirable results, but rather can revive the cycle of conflict.

The study also cautions against setting over-ambitious targets for a post-conflict reconstruction process. In this regard, it argues that ensuring good governance in post-conflict states is an extremely challenging task owing to the complexities of post-conflict states. Those involved with post-conflict resolution should, therefore, have in mind “good enough governance,” which aims first at attaining the minimal possible conditions required for ensuring a sustainable process of political, economic and security revival.

In the case of Afghanistan, policy makers – before withdrawal – should evaluate both their security and non-security policies and focus on mending past mistakes rather than on trying new recipes or abandoning everything for the Afghans to fix.

The Afghan problem is not confined within the country’s borders alone. It has a regional dynamic owing to its unique geographical location. The study urges the relevant players to appreciate the regional dynamics of the Afghan conflict, which necessitate addressing the
concerns of regional players, particularly those of Pakistan. Doing so will prevent Taliban sympathisers in Pakistan from supporting the Taliban.

There are no quick fix solutions to the problems of Afghanistan. Sustained and focused efforts by the international community, however, can ultimately help the war-ravaged country turn the corner.

There is a need to engage Afghanistan at regional and global forums so as to increase its commitments towards a prosperous and responsible international player and this strategy would also give Afghanistan several sources to increase its economic potential.
PRIMARY SOURCES

Interviews

Interview conducted with Shahmehmood Miakhel, Country Head USIP, Kabul, Afghanistan on June 1, 2014 via Skype.

Interview, conducted with Mansur Khan Mahsud, Director Admin, FATA Research Centre, Islamabad, Pakistan, on June 6, 2014 at Islamabad.

Interview conducted with Aryan Sharifi, Former Employee of Afghanistan Ministry of Economics on June 4, 2014 via Skype.

Interview conducted with Dr Shanthie Mariet D'Souza, former Research Fellow, ISAS, National University Singapore, on June 12, 2014 via Skype.

Opinion Polls

Gallup Pakistan (2012)

Asia Foundation Survey of Afghan People and Assessment (2007 - 2010)

Databases

Afghanistan Index, Brookings Institute, Washington.

iCasualties.com (A database that maintain record of foreign troops casualties)


Miscellaneous Documents


Secondary Sources

Books


**Book Chapters**


**JOURNAL ARTICLES**


Knight, Mark and Alpaslan Özerdem. “Guns, Camps and Cash: Disarmament, Demobilization and Reinsertion of Former Combatants in Transitions from War to Peace.” *Journal of Peace Research* 41, no. 4 (July 2004): 499-516


**Online Articles**


Forbis, Jamey and Brian Dudley, “Increase in Taliban Effort to Recruit from Afghan Government and Security Forces.” CTC Sentinel 6, no. 11-12, 2013.


Newspapers

The New York Times
The Washington Post
The Daily Times
The Los Angeles Times
The Guardian
The Telegraph
Daily Outlook Afghanistan
Tolo News
The Express Tribune
Annexure I

AGREEMENT ON PROVISIONAL ARRANGEMENTS IN AFGHANISTAN PENDING THE RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF PERMANENT GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS

The participants in the UN Talks on Afghanistan,

In the presence of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan,

Determined to end the tragic conflict in Afghanistan and promote national reconciliation, lasting peace, stability and respect for human rights in the country,

Reaffirming the independence, national sovereignty and territorial integrity of Afghanistan,

Acknowledging the right of the people of Afghanistan to freely determine their own political future in accordance with the principles of Islam, democracy, pluralism and social justice,

Expressing their appreciation to the Afghan mujahidin who, over the years, have defended the independence, territorial integrity and national unity of the country and have played a major role in the struggle against terrorism and oppression, and whose sacrifice has now made them both heroes of jihad and champions of peace, stability and reconstruction of their beloved homeland, Afghanistan,

Aware that the unstable situation in Afghanistan requires the implementation of emergency interim arrangements and expressing their deep appreciation to His Excellency Professor Burhanuddin Rabbani for his readiness to transfer power to an interim authority which is to be established pursuant to this agreement,

Recognizing the need to ensure broad representation in these interim arrangements of all segments of the Afghan population, including groups that have not been adequately represented at the UN Talks on Afghanistan,

Noting that these interim arrangements are intended as a first step toward the establishment of a broad-based, gender-sensitive, multi-ethnic and fully representative government, and are not intended to remain in place beyond the specified period of time,

Recognizing that some time may be required for a new Afghan security force to be fully constituted and functional and that therefore other security provisions detailed in Annex I to this agreement must meanwhile be put in place,

Considering that the United Nations, as the internationally recognized impartial institution, has a particularly important role to play, detailed in Annex II to this agreement, in the period prior to the establishment of permanent institutions in Afghanistan,
Have agreed as follows:

THE INTERIM AUTHORITY

I. General provisions

1) An Interim Authority shall be established upon the official transfer of power on 22 December 2001.

2) The Interim Authority shall consist of an Interim Administration presided over by a Chairman, a Special Independent Commission for the Convening of the Emergency Loya Jirga, and a Supreme Court of Afghanistan, as well as such other courts as may be established by the Interim Administration. The composition, functions and governing procedures for the Interim Administration and the Special Independent Commission are set forth in this agreement.

3) Upon the official transfer of power, the Interim Authority shall be the repository of Afghan sovereignty, with immediate effect. As such, it shall, throughout the interim period, represent Afghanistan in its external relations and shall occupy the seat of Afghanistan at the United Nations and in its specialized agencies, as well as in other international institutions and conferences.

4) An Emergency Loya Jirga shall be convened within six months of the establishment of the Interim Authority. The Emergency Loya Jirga will be opened by His Majesty Mohammed Zaher, the former King of Afghanistan. The Emergency Loya Jirga shall decide on a Transitional Authority, including a broad-based transitional administration, to lead Afghanistan until such time as a fully representative government can be elected through free and fair elections to be held no later than two years from the date of the convening of the Emergency Loya Jirga.

5) The Interim Authority shall cease to exist once the Transitional Authority has been established by the Emergency Loya Jirga.

6) A Constitutional Loya Jirga shall be convened within eighteen months of the establishment of the Transitional Authority, in order to adopt a new constitution for Afghanistan. In order to assist the Constitutional Loya Jirga prepare the proposed Constitution, the Transitional Administration shall, within two months of its commencement and with the assistance of the United Nations, establish a Constitutional Commission.

II. Legal framework and judicial system

1) The following legal framework shall be applicable on an interim basis until the adoption of the new Constitution referred to above:

2) i) The Constitution of 1964, a/ to the extent that its provisions are not inconsistent with those contained in this agreement, and b/ with the exception of those provisions relating
to the monarchy and to the executive and legislative bodies provided in the Constitution; and

3) ii) existing laws and regulations, to the extent that they are not inconsistent with this agreement or with international legal obligations to which Afghanistan is a party, or with those applicable provisions contained in the Constitution of 1964, provided that the Interim Authority shall have the power to repeal or amend those laws and regulations.

2) The judicial power of Afghanistan shall be independent and shall be vested in a Supreme Court of Afghanistan, and such other courts as may be established by the Interim Administration. The Interim Administration shall establish, with the assistance of the United Nations, a Judicial Commission to rebuild the domestic justice system in accordance with Islamic principles, international standards, the rule of law and Afghan legal traditions.

III. Interim Administration

A. Composition

1) The Interim Administration shall be composed of a Chairman, five Vice Chairmen and 24 other members. Each member, except the Chairman, may head a department of the Interim Administration.

2) The participants in the UN Talks on Afghanistan have invited His Majesty Mohammed Zaher, the former King of Afghanistan, to chair the Interim Administration. His Majesty has indicated that he would prefer that a suitable candidate acceptable to the participants be selected as the Chair of the Interim Administration.

3) The Chairman, the Vice Chairmen and other members of the Interim Administration have been selected by the participants in the UN Talks on Afghanistan, as listed in Annex IV to this agreement. The selection has been made on the basis of professional competence and personal integrity from lists submitted by the participants in the UN Talks, with due regard to the ethnic, geographic and religious composition of Afghanistan and to the importance of the participation of women.

4) No person serving as a member of the Interim Administration may simultaneously hold membership of the Special Independent Commission for the Convening of the Emergency Loya Jirga.

B. Procedures

1) The Chairman of the Interim Administration, or in his/her absence one of the Vice Chairmen, shall call and chair meetings and propose the agenda for these meetings.

2) The Interim Administration shall endeavour to reach its decisions by consensus. In order for any decision to be taken, at least 22 members must be in attendance. If a vote becomes necessary, decisions shall be taken by a majority of the members present and voting, unless
otherwise stipulated in this agreement. The Chairman shall cast the deciding vote in the event that the members are divided equally.

C. Functions

1) The Interim Administration shall be entrusted with the day-to-day conduct of the affairs of state, and shall have the right to issue decrees for the peace, order and good government of Afghanistan.
2) The Chairman of the Interim Administration or, in his/her absence, one of the Vice Chairmen, shall represent the Interim Administration as appropriate.

3) Those members responsible for the administration of individual departments shall also be responsible for implementing the policies of the Interim Administration within their areas of responsibility.

4) Upon the official transfer of power, the Interim Administration shall have full jurisdiction over the printing and delivery of the national currency and special drawing rights from international financial institutions. The Interim Administration shall establish, with the assistance of the United Nations, a Central Bank of Afghanistan that will regulate the money supply of the country through transparent and accountable procedures.

5) The Interim Administration shall establish, with the assistance of the United Nations, an independent Civil Service Commission to provide the Interim Authority and the future Transitional Authority with shortlists of candidates for key posts in the administrative departments, as well as those of governors and uluswals, in order to ensure their competence and integrity.

6) The Interim Administration shall, with the assistance of the United Nations, establish an independent Human Rights Commission, whose responsibilities will include human rights monitoring, investigation of violations of human rights, and development of domestic human rights institutions. The Interim Administration may, with the assistance of the United Nations, also establish any other commissions to review matters not covered in this agreement.

7) The members of the Interim Administration shall abide by a Code of Conduct elaborated in accordance with international standards.

8) Failure by a member of the Interim Administration to abide by the provisions of the Code of Conduct shall lead to his/her suspension from that body. The decision to suspend a member shall be taken by a two-thirds majority of the membership of the Interim Administration on the proposal of its Chairman or any of its Vice Chairmen.

9) The functions and powers of members of the Interim Administration will be further elaborated, as appropriate, with the assistance of the United Nations.

IV. The Special Independent Commission for the Convening of the Emergency Loya Jirga
1) The Special Independent Commission for the Convening of the Emergency Loya Jirga shall be established within one month of the establishment of the Interim Authority. The Special Independent Commission will consist of twenty-one members, a number of whom should have expertise in constitutional or customary law. The members will be selected from lists of candidates submitted by participants in the UN Talks on Afghanistan as well as Afghan professional and civil society groups. The United Nations will assist with the establishment and functioning of the commission and of a substantial secretariat.

2) The Special Independent Commission will have the final authority for determining the procedures for and the number of people who will participate in the Emergency Loya Jirga. The Special Independent Commission will draft rules and procedures specifying (i) criteria for allocation of seats to the settled and nomadic population residing in the country; (ii) criteria for allocation of seats to the Afghan refugees living in Iran, Pakistan, and elsewhere, and Afghans from the diaspora; (iii) criteria for inclusion of civil society organizations and prominent individuals, including Islamic scholars, intellectuals, and traders, both within the country and in the diaspora. The Special Independent Commission will ensure that due attention is paid to the representation in the Emergency Loya Jirga of a significant number of women as well as all other segments of the Afghan population.

3) The Special Independent Commission will publish and disseminate the rules and procedures for the convening of the Emergency Loya Jirga at least ten weeks before the Emergency Loya Jirga convenes, together with the date for its commencement and its suggested location and duration.

4) The Special Independent Commission will adopt and implement procedures for monitoring the process of nomination of individuals to the Emergency Loya Jirga to ensure that the process of indirect election or selection is transparent and fair. To pre-empt conflict over nominations, the Special Independent Commission will specify mechanisms for filing of grievances and rules for arbitration of disputes.

5) The Emergency Loya Jirga will elect a Head of the State for the Transitional Administration and will approve proposals for the structure and key personnel of the Transitional Administration.

V. Final provisions

1) Upon the official transfer of power, all mujahidin, Afghan armed forces and armed groups in the country shall come under the command and control of the Interim Authority, and be reorganized according to the requirements of the new Afghan security and armed forces.

2) The Interim Authority and the Emergency Loya Jirga shall act in accordance with basic principles and provisions contained in international instruments on human rights and international humanitarian law to which Afghanistan is a party.

3) The Interim Authority shall cooperate with the international community in the fight against terrorism, drugs and organized crime. It shall commit itself to respect international law and
maintain peaceful and friendly relations with neighbouring countries and the rest of the international community.

4) The Interim Authority and the Special Independent Commission for the Convening of the Emergency Loya Jirga will ensure the participation of women as well as the equitable representation of all ethnic and religious communities in the Interim Administration and the Emergency Loya Jirga.

5) All actions taken by the Interim Authority shall be consistent with Security Council resolution 1378 (14 November 2001) and other relevant Security Council resolutions relating to Afghanistan.

6) Rules of procedure for the organs established under the Interim Authority will be elaborated as appropriate with the assistance of the United Nations.

This agreement, of which the annexes constitute an integral part, done in Bonn on this 5th day of December 2001 in the English language, shall be the authentic text, in a single copy which shall remain deposited in the archives of the United Nations. Official texts shall be provided in Dari and Pashto, and such other languages as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General may designate. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General shall send certified copies in English, Dari and Pashto to each of the participants.

For the participants in the UN Talks on Afghanistan:

Ms. Amena Afzali
Mr. S. Hussain Anwari
Mr. Hedayat Amin Arsala
Mr. Sayed Hamed Gailani
Mr. Rahmatullah Mousa Ghazi
Eng. Abdul Hakim
Mr. Houmayoun Jareer
Mr. Abbas Karimi
Mr. Mustafa Kazimi
Dr. Azizullah Ludin
Mr. Ahmad Wali Massoud
Mr. Hafizullah Asif Mohseni
Prof. Mohammad Ishaq Nadiri
Mr. Mohammad Natiqi
Mr. Aref Noorzay
Mr. Yunus Qanooni
Dr. Zalmai Rassoul
Mr. H. Mirwais Sadeq
Dr. Mohammad Jalil Shams
Prof. Abdul Sattar Sirat
Mr. Humayun Tandar
Mrs. Sima Wali
General Abdul Rahim Wardak
Mr. Azizullah Wasefi
Mr. Pacha Khan Zadran

Witnessed for the United Nations by:

Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi
Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan

ANNEX I
INTERNATIONAL SECURITY FORCE

1. The participants in the UN Talks on Afghanistan recognize that the responsibility for providing security and law and order throughout the country resides with the Afghans themselves. To this end, they pledge their commitment to do all within their means and influence to ensure such security, including for all United Nations and other personnel of international governmental and non-governmental organizations deployed in Afghanistan.

2. With this objective in mind, the participants request the assistance of the international community in helping the new Afghan authorities in the establishment and training of new Afghan security and armed forces.

3. Conscious that some time may be required for the new Afghan security and armed forces to be fully constituted and functioning, the participants in the UN Talks on Afghanistan request the United Nations Security Council to consider authorizing the early deployment to Afghanistan of a United Nations mandated force. This force will assist in the maintenance of security for Kabul and its surrounding areas. Such a force could, as appropriate, be progressively expanded to other urban centres and other areas.

4. The participants in the UN Talks on Afghanistan pledge to withdraw all military units from Kabul and other urban centers or other areas in which the UN mandated force is deployed. It would also be desirable if such a force were to assist in the rehabilitation of Afghanistan's infrastructure.

ANNEX II
ROLE OF THE UNITED NATIONS DURING THE INTERIM PERIOD

1. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General will be responsible for all aspects of the United Nations' work in Afghanistan.

2. The Special Representative shall monitor and assist in the implementation of all aspects of this agreement.

3. The United Nations shall advise the Interim Authority in establishing a politically neutral environment conducive to the holding of the Emergency Loya Jirga in free and fair conditions. The United Nations shall pay special attention to the conduct of those bodies and administrative
departments which could directly influence the convening and outcome of the Emergency Loya Jirga.

4. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General or his/her delegate may be invited to attend the meetings of the Interim Administration and the Special Independent Commission on the Convening of the Emergency Loya Jirga.

5. If for whatever reason the Interim Administration or the Special Independent Commission were actively prevented from meeting or unable to reach a decision on a matter related to the convening of the Emergency Loya Jirga, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General shall, taking into account the views expressed in the Interim Administration or in the Special Independent Commission, use his/her good offices with a view to facilitating a resolution to the impasse or a decision.

6. The United Nations shall have the right to investigate human rights violations and, where necessary, recommend corrective action. It will also be responsible for the development and implementation of a programme of human rights education to promote respect for and understanding of human rights.

ANNEX III
REQUEST TO THE UNITED NATIONS BY THE PARTICIPANTS AT THE UN TALKS ON AFGHANISTAN

The participants in the UN Talks on Afghanistan hereby

1. Request that the United Nations and the international community take the necessary measures to guarantee the national sovereignty, territorial integrity and unity of Afghanistan as well as the non-interference by foreign countries in Afghanistan's internal affairs;

2. Urge the United Nations, the international community, particularly donor countries and multilateral institutions, to reaffirm, strengthen and implement their commitment to assist with the rehabilitation, recovery and reconstruction of Afghanistan, in coordination with the Interim Authority;

3. Request the United Nations to conduct as soon as possible (i) a registration of voters in advance of the general elections that will be held upon the adoption of the new constitution by the constitutional Loya Jirga and (ii) a census of the population of Afghanistan.

4. Urge the United Nations and the international community, in recognition of the heroic role played by the mujahidin in protecting the independence of Afghanistan and the dignity of its people, to take the necessary measures, in coordination with the Interim Authority, to assist in the reintegration of the mujahidin into the new Afghan security and armed forces;

5. Invite the United Nations and the international community to create a fund to assist the families and other dependents of martyrs and victims of the war, as well as the war disabled;
6. Strongly urge that the United Nations, the international community and regional organizations cooperate with the Interim Authority to combat international terrorism, cultivation and trafficking of illicit drugs and provide Afghan farmers with financial, material and technical resources for alternative crop production.

ANNEX IV

COMPOSITION OF THE INTERIM ADMINISTRATION

Chairman: .......................... Mr. Hamid Karzai

Membership (of whom 5 will be Vice-Chairs)
Department of Defence:
Department of Finance:
Department of Foreign Affairs:
Department of the Interior:
Department of Planning:
Department of Commerce:
Department of Mines & Industries:
Department of Small Industries:
Department of Information & Culture:
Department of Communication:
Department of Labour & Social Affairs:
Department of Hajj & Auqaf:
Department of Martyrs & Disabled:
Department of Education:
Department of Higher Education:
Department of Public Health:
Department of Public Works:
Department of Rural Development:
Department of Urban Development:
Department of Reconstruction:
Department of Transport:
Department of Water and Electricity:
Department for the Return of Refugees:
Department of Agriculture:
Department of Irrigation:
Department of Justice:
Department of Air Transport & Tourism:
Department of Border Affairs:
Department of Women's Affairs

Annexure II

The International Afghanistan Conference in Bonn
5 December 2011

Afghanistan and the International Community:
From Transition to the Transformation Decade

CONFERENCE CONCLUSIONS

1. We, the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the International Community, met today in Bonn to mark the 10th anniversary of the 2001 Bonn Conference, which laid the foundation of the ongoing partnership between Afghanistan and the International Community, and to renew our mutual commitment to a stable, democratic and prosperous future for the Afghan people. We honour all those, from Afghanistan and abroad, who have lost their lives for this noble cause. Afghanistan expressed its sincere gratitude for the steadfast commitment, solidarity and the immense sacrifices of its international partners.

2. Afghanistan and the International Community expressed deep appreciation to the Federal Republic of Germany for hosting this Conference. Germany is a longstanding friend of Afghanistan and, in particular over the past ten years, alongside other members of the International Community, has been a steadfast partner in Afghanistan’s stabilization and development.

3. Ten years ago today at the Petersberg, Afghanistan charted a new path towards a sovereign, peaceful, prosperous and democratic future, and the International Community accepted the responsibility to help Afghanistan along that path. Together we have achieved substantial progress over these ten years, more than in any other period in Afghanistan’s history. Never before have the Afghan people, and especially Afghan women, enjoyed comparable access to services, including education and health, or seen greater development of infrastructure across the country. Al Qaeda has been disrupted, and Afghanistan’s national security institutions are increasingly able to assume responsibility for a secure and independent Afghanistan.

4. However, our work is not yet done. Shortcomings must be addressed, achievements must be upheld. Our shared goal remains an Afghanistan that is a peaceful and promising home for all Afghans, at the centre of a secure and thriving region; an Afghanistan in which international terrorism does not again find sanctuary and that can assume its rightful place among sovereign nations.

5. In today’s conference, chaired by Afghanistan, hosted by Germany and attended by 85 countries and 15 International Organisations, the International Community and Afghanistan solemnly dedicated themselves to deepening and broadening their historic partnership from Transition to the Transformation Decade of 2015-2024. Reaffirming our commitments as set out in the 2010 London Communiqué and the Kabul Process, this renewed partnership between Afghanistan and the International Community entails firm mutual commitments in the areas of
governance, security, the peace process, economic and social development, and regional cooperation.

GOVERNANCE

6. Afghanistan reaffirms that the future of its political system will continue to reflect its pluralistic society and remain firmly founded on the Afghan Constitution. The Afghan people will continue to build a stable, democratic society, based on the rule of law, where the human rights and fundamental freedoms of its citizens, including the equality of men and women, are guaranteed under the Constitution. Afghanistan recommits to upholding all of its international human rights obligations. Acknowledging that on this path Afghanistan will have its own lessons to learn, the International Community fully endorses this vision and commits to supporting Afghanistan’s progress in that direction.

7. We have taken note of statements by Afghan civil society organisations, including today’s statements by two of their delegates at this meeting. We all reaffirm that the human rights and fundamental freedoms enshrined in the Afghan Constitution, including the rights of women and children, as well as a thriving and free civil society are key for Afghanistan’s future. Therefore, we underscore the further promotion of civil society participation, including both traditional civil society structures and modern manifestations of civic action, including the role of youth, in the country’s democratic processes.

8. We recognise that building a democratic society above all entails enabling legitimate and effective civilian authority embodied in a democratically elected government and served by transparent and strong, functioning institutions. Despite significant achievements, Afghanistan needs to continue its work to strengthen state institutions and improve governance throughout the country, including through reforming the civil service and strengthening the linkage between justice reform and development of its security institutions, including an effective civilian police force. Strengthening and improving Afghanistan’s electoral process will be a key step forward in the country’s democratization. Afghan government institutions at all levels should increase their responsiveness to the civil and economic needs of the Afghan people and deliver key services to them. In this context, the protection of civilians, strengthening the rule of law and the fight against corruption in all its forms remain key priorities. We will move this agenda forward, in accordance with our commitments under the Kabul Process in line with the principle of mutual accountability.

9. Consistent with Transition, we reaffirm that the role of international actors will evolve further from direct service delivery to support and capacity-building for Afghan institutions, enabling the Government of Afghanistan to exercise its sovereign authority in all its functions. This process includes the phasing out of all Provincial Reconstruction Teams, as well as the dissolution of any structures duplicating the functions and authority of the Government of Afghanistan at the national and sub-national levels.

10. We support the crucial role of the United Nations in Afghanistan. We express our gratitude to the UN Secretary General’s Special Representative Staffan de Mistura for his dedicated service, and welcome the Secretary General’s decision to appoint Jan Kubis as his new Special
Representative for Afghanistan. We note that the UNAMA mandate is currently under review in line with the increased capacity and ownership exercised by the Government of Afghanistan and consistent with the process of Transition that entails the assumption of leadership responsibility by the Afghan Government. We also take note with appreciation of the close collaboration of the International Contact Group with the Afghan Government and their work, and encourage them to continue their joint efforts.

SECURITY

11. We welcome the determination of the Afghan people to combat terrorism and extremism and take responsibility for their own security and for protecting their homeland. We share Afghanistan’s vision for its national security forces to be built to modern standards and adequate capacity, so that they can effectively and independently defend Afghanistan.

12. We welcome the successful start of the Transition process. Afghan authorities are assuming full security responsibility for their country and will complete this process by the end of 2014. Correspondingly, the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), authorized by the UN Security Council, has begun a gradual, responsible draw-down to be completed by that time. With the conclusion of the Transition process, our common responsibility for Afghanistan’s future does not come to a close. The International Community, therefore, commits to remain strongly engaged in support of Afghanistan beyond 2014.

13. We underscore that the international support for sustainable Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) needs to continue after 2014. In assistance to the ANSF, the International Community strongly commits to support their training and equipping, financing and development of capabilities beyond the end of the Transition period. It declares its intent to continue to assist in their financing, with the understanding that over the coming years this share will gradually be reduced, in a manner commensurate with Afghanistan’s needs and its increasing domestic revenue generation capacity. In this context, we look forward to define a clear vision and appropriately funded plan for the ANSF, which should be developed before the forthcoming NATO summit in Chicago in May 2012.

14. We recognise that the main threat to Afghanistan’s security and stability is terrorism, and that this threat also endangers regional and global peace and security. In this regard, we recognise the regional dimensions of terrorism and extremism, including terrorist safe havens, and emphasise the need for sincere and result-oriented regional cooperation towards a region free from terrorism in order to secure Afghanistan and safeguard our common security against the terrorist threat. We reiterate our common determination to never allow Afghanistan to once again become a haven for international terrorism.

15. The production, trafficking and consumption of narcotics equally pose a grave threat to Afghanistan’s security and the growth of a legitimate economy as well as to international peace and stability. Recognizing their shared responsibility, Afghanistan and the International Community reiterate their determination to counter, in a comprehensive manner, including by crop eradication, interdiction and promoting alternative agriculture, the menace of illicit drugs,
including drug precursors, which causes widespread harm and suffering. We recognise that the narcotics problem is a global challenge which also requires tackling the demand side.

**PEACE PROCESS**

16. We stress the need for a political solution in order to achieve peace and security in Afghanistan. To ensure enduring stability, in addition to building up Afghanistan’s capacity to defend itself, a political process is necessary, of which negotiation and reconciliation are essential elements. In addition, the process of reintegration will pave the way for post conflict rehabilitation of Afghan society through improvement of security, community development and local governance.

17. We condemn in the strongest terms the assassination of Professor Burhanuddin Rabbani, former President of Afghanistan and Chairman of the High Peace Council. The International Community welcomes and supports the undeterred peace efforts of the Afghan Government, particularly through the High Peace Council and the Afghanistan Peace and Reintegration Programme. We also take note of the recommendations of the consultative Traditional Loya Jirga of 16-19 November 2011, which provided a new impetus to the peace process.

18. Mindful of the relevant UN resolutions, the International Community concurs with Afghanistan that the peace and reconciliation process and its outcome must be based on the following principles:

   (a) The process leading to reconciliation must be truly Afghan-led and Afghan-owned; as well as inclusive, representing the legitimate interests of all the people of Afghanistan, regardless of gender or social status.

   (b) Reconciliation must contain the reaffirmation of a sovereign, stable and united Afghanistan; the renunciation of violence; the breaking of ties to international terrorism; respect for the Afghan Constitution, including its human rights provisions, notably the rights of women.

   (c) The region must respect and support the peace process and its outcome.

   An outcome of the peace process respecting the above principles will receive the full support of the International Community.

**ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

19. The International Community shares Afghanistan’s aim of achieving self-reliance and prosperity through developing its human and resource potential on its path towards sustainable and equitable growth and improved standards of living, and welcomes the Afghan Government’s economic Transition strategy as elaborated in the document *Towards a Self-Sustaining Afghanistan*. Shifting the strategy from stabilisation to long-term development cooperation, the International Community will continue to support Afghanistan, including in the areas of rule of law, public administration, education, health, agriculture, energy, infrastructure development and job creation, in line with the Afghan Government’s priorities as specified in the National Priority Programmes framework under the Kabul Process.
20. As the Afghan government sets priorities, embraces reform and meets its Kabul commitments, including strengthening transparent and accountable public financial management systems and improving budget execution capacity, its partners recommit to meeting the minimum targets set in London and Kabul for aligning international assistance with Afghanistan’s priorities and channeling a growing share of development aid through the government budget. We welcome the Government of Japan’s intention to host a ministerial conference in July 2012 in Tokyo, which will address, in addition to the coordination of international economic assistance through the Transition period, Afghanistan’s strategy for sustainable development, including aid effectiveness and regional economic cooperation.

21. As Transition gathers momentum, we recognise the economic risks identified by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, including the economic impact tied to the reduction of the international military presence. We intend to mitigate this effect, including by increasing aid effectiveness, consistent with the Kabul Process. The International Community shares Afghanistan’s concern that a strategy to address the near-term effects of Transition must also facilitate the goal of attaining a sustainable market economy in line with the social needs of the population.

22. The intensive international effort in Afghanistan over the last decade represents a unique engagement. The International Community’s commitment, both to Afghanistan and to its role in international security, lasts beyond Transition. Transition will reduce the international presence and the financial requirements associated with it. We recognize that the Government of Afghanistan will have special, significant and continuing fiscal requirements that cannot be met by domestic revenues in the years following Transition. Therefore, during the Transformation Decade, the International Community commits to directing financial support, consistent with the Kabul Process, towards Afghanistan’s economic development and security-related costs, helping Afghanistan address its continuing budget shortfall to secure the gains of the last decade, make Transition irreversible, and become self-sustaining.

23. Afghanistan’s long-term economic growth will, above all, depend on the development of its productive sectors, notably agriculture and mining. The International Community commits to supporting the development of an export-oriented agriculture-based economy, which is crucial for Afghanistan to achieve food security, poverty reduction, widespread farm-based job creation, and expanding the Government’s revenue generation capacity. Concerning mining, we welcome the growing interest of international investors in Afghanistan’s mineral wealth but emphasise the need for a regulatory framework to guarantee that this mineral wealth directly benefits the Afghan people. The International Community supports Afghanistan’s efforts to develop a transparent and accountable regulatory regime, consistent with international best practices, for collecting and managing public resources and preserving the environment.

24. We recognise that a vibrant, private sector-led economy in Afghanistan will require the development of a competitive service industry and a stable financial system, and achieving regional integration through expanding Afghanistan’s trade and transit networks, as well as its regional connectivity. The International Community commits to support Afghanistan’s efforts to put in place and enhance the infrastructure and the relevant regulatory frameworks for the development of trade and transit.
25. We emphasize that attracting private investment, including from international sources, are key priorities for activating Afghanistan’s economic potential. The Afghan Government commits to improving conditions conducive to international investments, inter alia, by implementing the recommendations of the EUROMINES International Investors Forum in Brussels on 26 October 2011.

REGIONAL COOPERATION

26. We believe that a stable and prosperous Afghanistan can only be envisioned in a stable and prosperous region. For the entire region, the rewards of peace and cooperation outweigh those of rivalry and isolation by far. We endorse Afghanistan’s vision for building strong, sustainable bilateral and multilateral relationships with its near and extended neighbours. Such relationships should end external interference, reinforce the principles of good neighbourly relations, non-interference and sovereignty, and further Afghanistan’s economic integration into the region.

27. We welcome the outcome of the “Istanbul Conference for Afghanistan: Security and Cooperation in the Heart of Asia” of 2 November 2011. In particular, we take note of the principles concerning territorial integrity, sovereignty, non-intervention and the peaceful settlement of disputes contained in the Istanbul Process, which we support as a valuable step towards building greater confidence and cooperation in the ‘Heart of Asia’ region. We call for strict adherence by Afghanistan and its regional partners to these principles, and look forward to the follow-up Ministerial Conference in June 2012 in Kabul.

28. With a view to the long-term prospects for Afghanistan’s development, we share Afghanistan’s vision of a well-connected, economically integrated region, where Afghanistan can serve as a land-bridge connecting South Asia, Central Asia, Eurasia and the Middle East. We support enhanced trade connectivity along historical trade routes to utilize Afghanistan’s economic potential at the regional level. In this context, we recognize the importance of early implementation of sustainable projects to promote regional connectivity, such as the TAPI gas pipeline, CASA-1000, railways and other projects. In this context, we look forward to the 5th RECCA conference to be hosted by the Republic of Tajikistan in Dushanbe in March 2012.

29. We acknowledge the burden of Afghanistan’s neighbours, in particular Pakistan and Iran, in providing temporary refuge to millions of Afghans in difficult times and are committed to further work towards their voluntary, safe and orderly return.

THE WAY FORWARD

30. With a view to the future, we underscore that the process of Transition, which is currently underway and is to be completed by the end of 2014, should be followed by a decade of Transformation, in which Afghanistan consolidates its sovereignty through strengthening a fully functioning, sustainable state in the service of its people. This Transformation Decade will see the emergence of a new paradigm of partnership between Afghanistan and the International
Community, whereby a sovereign Afghanistan engages with the International Community to secure its own future and continues to be a positive factor for peace and stability in the region.

31. At today’s meeting, Afghanistan laid out its vision of the future: a country that is a stable and functioning democracy, a strong and sustainable state in the service of its people, and a prospering economy. Embedded in a region that is conducive to prosperity and peace, and enjoying friendly relations with all of its near and extended neighbours, Afghanistan aspires to becoming a contributor to international peace and security.

32. With a view to realizing the above vision, the International Community and Afghanistan make firm mutual commitments to continue to working together in a spirit of partnership. Afghanistan reiterates its commitment to continue to improve governance, while the International Community commits to an enduring engagement with Afghanistan through and beyond 2014.

33. Today in Bonn, we solemnly declare a strategic consensus on deepening and broadening the partnership between Afghanistan and the International Community founded at the Petersberg ten years ago. Building on the shared achievements of the past ten years, and recognising that the security and well-being of Afghanistan continue to affect the security of the entire region and beyond, Afghanistan and the International Community strongly commit to this renewed partnership for the Transformation Decade.