Political Stability of Afghanistan:
A Prerequisite for Stability of Pakistan and South Asia

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Abstract

Political stability of Afghanistan is a prerequisite for peace in South Asia in general and Pakistan in particular. Afghanistan's political situation directly impinges on the security of Pakistan. The continued wars and civil wars in Afghanistan for last three and half decades have badly damaged the political institutions of Afghanistan and caused unimaginable losses, both in men and material, not only to the people of Afghanistan but also to the people of Pakistan, particularly in the areas located in the proximity of Afghanistan. In the wake of planned drawdown of NATO in 2014, an atmosphere of uncertainty looms large on the political horizon of Afghanistan, with the apprehensions expressed that this country may plunge once again into the abyss of lawlessness and civil war. The study in hand aims at distillation of Afghanistan's existing political and security systems and chances of their survivability after NATO's drawdown, besides analyzing the current frictions between Pakistan and Afghanistan on various issues. The underlying assumption of this study is that the political and security situation of Afghanistan has a direct linkage with security and political stability of Pakistan. The key findings of this study are that political and security systems of Afghanistan have too fragile structures and institutions, which are heavily dependent on foreign assistance. Afghanistan could not develop trustworthy relations with neighboring states, particularly Pakistan, by removing various irritants. The Government of Afghanistan needs to recognize Durand Line and work out, in collaboration, with Pakistan, an effective border management and surveillance mechanism, to wipe out the infrastructure of drug- traffickers, saboteurs and terrorists from both sides of Durand Line. The international community needs to work towards peace and prosperity of South Asia, as the people of this region deserve much needed respite and let-up from violence and bloodshed.

Key words

Afghanistan, Politics, Pakistan, NATO, South Asia, Peace.

Introduction

Political stability of Afghanistan is a prerequisite for peace of South Asia in general and Pakistan in particular. It is the most unfortunate tragedy of contemporary history that the state of Afghanistan and its people have been seething under perpetual political unrest, violence and human sufferings for the last more than three and half decades. Afghanistan is virtually a war-ravaged and fragmented country. Generations after generations of Afghan people have been witnessing nothing but violence, bloodshed and chaos in their society, both when they were fighting against former USSR and now when they are involved in GWOT. No let-up from this violence seems to be in the sight for Afghanistan and its neighbors, at

least in the foreseeable future. Afghanistan's political situation directly impinges upon the security of Pakistan. Both these states share a long and porous border, stretching over 2590.4 kilometers, without any effective surveillance system, which becomes a major cause of cross-border movement of terrorists and criminals. Since the NATO's planned drawdown is fast approaching, fears and apprehensions loom large on our national horizon about likely fallouts of Afghanistan's instability and frictions. It is assumed that the political and security situation of Afghanistan has a direct linkage with the security and political stability of not only Pakistan but also the entire South Asia. This paper aims at distillation of Afghanistan's existing political and security system and chances of their survivability after NATO's drawdown, besides analyzing the current frictions between Pakistan and Afghanistan on various issues. The paper also proffers certain policy recommendations for various stakeholders.

Political Stability of Afghanistan – Defining the Criteria

The subject of political stability is one of the most intractable concepts in modern academic debate.[1] Hurwitz defines political stability as "the absence of violence, governmental longevity, the absence of structural change, legitimacy and effective decision-making".[2] The key indicators of political stability, according to Hurwitz, therefore, would be:

- Absence of violence

- Governmental longevity

- Absence of structural change

- Legitimacy

- Effective decision- making

A number of empirical studies were conducted subsequently to further distil the themes related to political stability. The most common theme, related to degree of violence and strife and their intensity, was undertaken by Russet and Bunselmayer, in which they used a very rudimentary way of counting the number of deaths directly as a result of inter-group violence per 1,000,000 units of population.[3] This technique was, however, considered as an insufficient indicator to assess political stability, because there could be many political actions that may not result in the loss of life but which can be detrimental to the stability of any country.[4]

Claude Ake elucidated this concept further by observing that members of any society strengthen or undermine political system to the extent that they obey or disobey the laws produced by that system. Obedience to the law constitutes political behavior just as much as contesting elections does," he opined. He further states, "if the incidence of violations of law continues to increase, political authority eventually atrophies; that is axiomatic."[5]

Another study was conducted by Ivo K. Feierabend and Rosalind Feierabend, who introduced a scale of 0 (extremely stable) to 6 (extremely unstable) ratings of eighty four nations over a time span of seven years (1955-1961).[6] They defined the concepts of stability and instability as:

> "The degree or the amount of aggression directed by individuals or groups within the political system against other groups or against the complex of officeholders and individuals and groups associated with them. Or, conversely, it is the amount of aggression directed by these officeholders against other individuals, groups or other officeholders within the policy."[7]

These both the writers opine that aggressive behavior of individuals is caused by 'system frustration', which in turn, causes instability. System frustration stems from a system's inability to satisfy social demands as against 'social wants'. The system, in our case the political system, should have the ability to meet the demands and the needs of the society, apart from its ability to adapt to the changing circumstances.[8] An important inference drawn by Feirabends is that aggressive behaviors might be inhibited by coercive mechanisms, such as punishments; however, a polity where coercive methods are the primary means of resolving the crises is not a stable polity. A stable society would be capable of relieving system despondency (frustration) through constructive methods. A number of political, administrative, entrepreneurial and other instruments would be available in a stable society to induce non-aggressive and non-violent behaviors.[9]

If the situation of political stability in Afghanistan is analyzed in the light of first indicator, suggested by Hurwitz, there can hardly be any denial that Afghanistan is one of the most unstable countries in the world. Afghanistan's internal politics have been characterized by coercive and violent means of problem solving in most part of contemporary history.[10] The impact of this violence on the people of Afghanistan and, thereby, on Pakistan is an important subject of this paper.

The second element of political stability, as per definition of Hurwitz, is the longevity of the governments. There is a great deal of academic debate about this criterion to judge the stability of any political system.[11] The dictatorial regimes, for instance in Middle East, have very long periods of rule, whereas, the democratic governments frequently change. Therefore, Hurwitz suggests that distinction should be made between legal and illegal successions of the heads of the government or states i.e. chief executives. Application of this criterion to assess political stability in Afghanistan may sound too simplistic, as only 17 heads of the states changed in Afghanistan since 1919. But how these governments were changed is a more relevant question with reference to the study of political stability of Afghanistan than the question 'how often'. Edmund Burke, thus, justifiably argues that 'a state without the means of some change is without the means of conservation."[12]

As regards the legitimacy of a political system, as a criterion of its stability, some writers believed that it was an important an element for sustainability of any political structure. The stability of a system is related not only to its legitimacy but also to its effectiveness, as opined by many writers.[13] Ernest Duff and John McCamant state, "in a stable political system, the members of the system consider it to be both legitimate and effective."[14] In the words of another writer, Martin Lipset, "Legitimacy involves the capacity of the system to engender and maintain belief that existing political institutions are the most appropriate one for the society."[15] But linking legitimacy with political stability has been criticized by a number of writers as well.[16] The application of legitimacy criterion to Afghanistan reveals that there was hardly any period in history of Afghanistan when all powerful leaders and common citizens could have accepted the legitimacy of the political system. Afghanistan remained in most part of history the hub of foreign interventions and internal strifes. In recent times, the Governments were frequently changed on gun point and the rulers were assassinated. Each successive ruler challenged the legitimacy of the previous one.

Yet another criterion to the study the concept of political stability is the 'basic structural arrangements in a society and their durability'. Hurwitz accepts the relevance of this criterion, but also highlights imprecision in its application. He also questions as to what is meant by basic structures and to what extent the changes should occur, which might determine that the structures had been changed.[17] The concept of structural arrangements crystallizes through the study of Dessauer's analysis of 'foundations of a society': "stability has to depend on the actual changes being few, slow and not fundamental".[18] It can be inferred from this discussion that the frequent changes in the fundamental structures or the foundations of the society indicate its instability and few, slow and infrequent changes indicate the inverse trends. Once tested on the anvil of this criterion, Afghanistan emerges conspicuously as a country, which has witnessed frequent changes in its political structures. Prior to 1919, Afghanistan was under the British suzerainty, followed by Amanullah's Government, which was reformist in nature. Thereafter, a succession of bloody changes, including PDPA's communist regime, Islamic State of Afghanistan after Soviet withdrawal, Taliban's extremist government and now the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, all indicate towards frequent fundamental changes in the structures of Afghan politics.

Finally, there is a need to make a mention of another approach to study the stability of any political system and that is the relationship between the political structures (rulers) and the members of the society (ruled). Eckstein finds a number of overlapping factors, which contribute, towards stability of any system. "They include: continuity of the political system including its ability to adapt to changing

circumstances, legitimacy of the system, effective decision-making, which demonstrates the political system's ability not only to make consensus-based policies but also implement them competently, and finally the genuineness rather than superficiality of the participatory institutions and processes of the political system."[19]

There are different other sets of criteria suggested by a number of writers, but for the purpose of this paper, the criteria set by Hurwitz are being used primarily to undertake study on the political stability of Afghanistan and its impact on Pakistan.

The Existing Political System of Afghanistan and its Fragility

Political stability in Afghanistan has been the dream of Afghans as well as their neighbors in most part of modern history. "The country's history is replete with long but intermittent periods of instability that alternated and diluted the achievement of each period of relative calms in which the inhabitants of this region tried hard to rebuild their lives."[20] The people of Afghanistan have been living under the shadows of wars and violence, particularly for last three and half decades. From 1979 to 1991, Afghanistan was manifestly under Soviet occupation, followed by factional feuds and civil war and a relative interlude of peace during Taliban's regime. The present political set-up, introduced under US and NATO tutelage, seems to be as weak and fragile as a spider's web. Stability in Afghanistan has eluded not only the Afghans but also concerned foreigners and neighbors like Pakistan, since the establishment of modern Afghan state in the first quarter of nineteenth century.[21] Applying the criteria enunciated above, an extremely dismal picture of the state of Afghanistan emerges, as discussed in the succeeding paragraphs.

The Constitutional Framework of the State of Afghanistan

The present political system of Afghanistan got its legitimacy through Emergency Loya Jirga and Bonn Conference. The Constitution of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan was framed by a Special Constitutional Body formed for the purpose i.e. Constitutional Loya Jirga on 14 December 2003, which managed to present the Constitution in January 2004[22] and, consequently, it was signed on 28 January 2004. The Constitution consists of twelve chapters, spreading over one hundred sixty one articles. The broader contours of the Constitution are as under:-

- Afghanistan is an Islamic Republic, independent, unitary and indivisible state.[23]

- The President is the head of the State and Chief Executive of the country, who is elected for five years, through direct vote. He has two Vice Presidents, who are nominated by the President.[24]

- The National Assemble of Afghanistan consists of two houses: Wolesi Jirga (the House of People) and Meshrano Jirga (the House of Elders).

- Wolesi Jirga is elected for a term of five years. The total number of seats of Wolesi Jirga will vary from 220-250, distributed among various regions as per the proportion of the population. At least two female candidates shall be elected from each province.[25]

  The Members of Meshrano Jirga are elected as under:-

  ➤ Each Province Council elects one person to serve as the member of Meshrano Jirga for the period of four years.

  ➤ Each District Council elects one person for a period of three years to serve as the member of the Meshrano Jirga.

  ➤ Remaining 1/3 members of the Meshrano Jirga are appointed by the President from amongst experts, experienced persons, including two disabled persons and two representative of Kochis for a period of five years.[26]

- Loya Jirga is the highest manifestation of the people's will in Afghanistan. It consists of Members of the National Assembly, Chairpersons of the Provincial and District Councils. The Ministers, the Chief Ministers and Members of the Supreme Court can participate in its sessions but cannot vote. This constitutional body is to be convened in the following situations:-[27]

  ➤ To take decision related to independence, national sovereignty, territorial integrity and the supreme interest of the country.

  ➤ To amend the provisions of the constitution.

  ➤ To impeach the President.

- Provincial Councils are elected for a period of four years through direct and secret ballot.

- District Councils are elected for a period of three years.

- All Federal Ministers are the nominees of the President.

Structures of Afghan Government – The Weak Areas

The Constitution of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan was, by all means, an interim arrangement. It is far from being the final document. There are a number of areas which need definite improvement. Some of the structural shortcomings of Afghan political system are being highlighted in this paper. All Governors of the Provinces are again nominated by the President.

1   Ethnic Divide

The diversity of cultural make-up of nations, on the bases of ethnicity, language and religious, is considered as a normal phenomenon in most parts of the world, provided other factors such as common culture and politico-economic interests homogenize the populace. At the dawn of modern times, the territory of what is now Afghanistan was inhabited by a variety of ethnic groups, which apart from Muslim faith, had little in common.[28] Ethnic factor is so strong in the affairs of Afghanistan that it plays central role in the making of political parties, elections, formations of Governments and recruitment and commissioning of public servants. The ethnic groups in Afghanistan are solid, cultural units which have been divided by boundaries and have been engaged in conflict for years.[29] Historically, however, ethnicity had never been played up, as it is done today. Most of the top level leadership positions, including kings were held by Pashtuns, who had always been in majority as compared to other groups. The war in Afghanistan has vastly changed the traditional balance and power equation. Non-Pashtun minorities are more dominating today, particularly in post-Taliban Afghanistan, than they were two decades ago.[30] Dr. Rasul Bakhsh Rais says, "the United States, in its war against Taliban after the 9/11 tragedy, tried the time-tested strategy of courting the enemies of the enemy. Northern Front came forward, as the natural ally of the super power, by offering every possible help, as the interests of both the US and Northern Alliance were common in crushing the Taliban, which increased the apprehensions among Pashtuns about their representation in the post-Taliban power arrangements".[31]

The Constitution of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan recognizes more than fourteen ethnic groups in Afghanistan.[32] In the absence of an accurate population census, the demographic composition of Afghanistan always remained controversial and unreliable. However, most of the analysts cite the following figures:-

Table I: Ethnic Configuration of the State of Afghanistan[33]

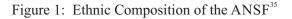| Ethnic Group	Percentage
Pashtuns	42 – 48 %
Tajiks	19 – 25 %
Hazaras	9 %
Uzbeks	9 %
Aimak	3 – 4 %
Turkmen	3 – 4 %
Balochi Tribes	2 %
Others	4 %

Despite being majority, the Pashtuns feel marginalized in the existing political dispensation. In the light of Bonn Agreement, the Central Executive was formed as per following representation of ethnic groups:-
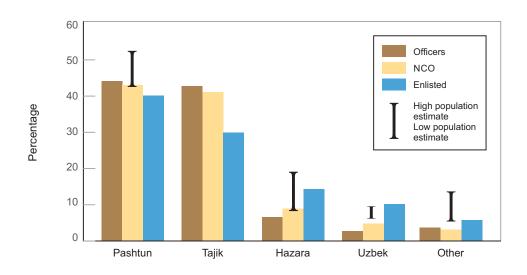
Table II: Ethnic Composition of the Government of Afghanistan[34]

Ethnic Group	Representation	Percentage
Pashtuns	11 Ministers	36%
Tajiks	8 Ministers	26%
Hazaras	5 Ministers	16%
Uzbeks	3 Ministers	10%
Others	3 Ministers	10%
Total	**30**	

Though a Pashtun origin President, Hamid Karzai, took over as the President, but to date the Northern Alliance's domination of Afghan government is conspicuous, as it holds 64% of the overall Cabinet slots. Apart from above the representation of Panjshir group in the ASNF and civil services is disproportionately high, particularly in the officers' cadre; as indicated in the following graph:

Figure 1: Ethnic Composition of the ANSF[35]

It is rightly argued, therefore, that neither Bonn Agreement nor the government it chose was very representative of the demographic and traditional power centers of Afghanistan.[36] The subsequent developments in the central governmental structure could not correct this imbalance, due to strong influence of Northern Alliance and their ties with NATO and ISAF commanders. Ethnicity is more than ever a prominent factor in Afghan politics.[37]

2   Highly Centralized System of Government

Extensive powers seem to be concentrated in the office of President. The concentration of power is stunning, in fact. There is no oversight of the President's actions, which are unconstrained by any check and balances.[38] One can understand the rationale of powerful executive during the times of crises, but for a country like Afghanistan which has dispersed centers of power, based on regional, linguistic, sectarian and ethnic tendencies, the devolution of authority at local levels could be prudent approach. Similarly, a set of supporting institutions like Executive Office of U.S. President would be required to assist such a strong Presidential Office, which Afghan economy can hardly afford.

3.   Electoral Process

Afghanistan's electoral process is highly controversial. Both the presidential elections of 2005 and 2009 as well as the parliamentary elections were criticized for lack of transparency, massive irregularities and manipulations. A major issue of elections was the participation of over three and half million refugees, residing in Pakistan and Iran. Afghanistan's democratic structure lacks institutionalization.[39] Some of the structural shortcomings are:

- Weak Election Commission, consisting of hand-picked loyalists or protégés of powerful elite.

- Political factions and interest groups, dominated by warlords and drug barons, functioning as political parties. Political parties serve as nurseries for training and education of citizens in political skills, but such parties with strong democratic credentials do not exist in Afghanistan.

- Lack of democratic culture, political skills and empowerment of the citizens to actively participate and monitor the political process.

- Ethnic, sectarian and linguistic influences.

- Cumbersome procedure of elections which puts huge financial burden on Government exchanger, which a fragile economy of Afghanistan is in no position to sustain.

Steward Smith, an expert on Afghanistan, has aptly drawn these conclusions about the election system of Afghanistan: "Looking back at the significant transformations in Afghanistan over the past eight years-transformations that have yielded both positive and negative changes – one is stuck by two conclusions: the utter lack of progress made in building democratic institutions despite hundreds of millions of dollars spent on democratic processes, and holding of now four elections (including the second parliamentary elections in 2010), and fact that the enduring disconnect between the citizens of Afghanistan and their Government – precisely what democratic democratization efforts were supposed to mend – is one of the biggest factors behind the growth of insurgency. Many discrete tasks have been done well, and the key electoral events have been held, but they did not seem to add up to democratization."[40]

Another report compiled by the experts at BOOKINGS Foreign Policy desk contains the following conclusions by Afghan think tanks themselves: "In the eyes of most Afghans, elections are being used to legitimize or rubber stamp the control of powerful and elections are compounding the distrust of institution."[41]

4.   Judicial System of Afghanistan

Chapter-7 of the Constitution of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan deals with the Judiciary. There are three tiers of Afghan Judiciary: The Supreme Court (in the centre), Courts of Appeal (in the provinces) and Primary Courts at District levels. These courts in most parts of the country are still in formative stage, for lack of qualified judges and supporting staff. Then, there is a considerable controversy about applications of various sets of laws. Islamic Sharia Laws, Anglo-Saxon Criminal and Statutory laws are applied in the courts. The qualified judges in Islamic Sharia, who can give balanced interpretations of Islamic laws, are hard to come by. The Afghan Judicial system could not develop confidence in the people. Consequently, the disputes are still referred to and adjudicated by local Jirgas and tribal heads. This arrangement allows tribal chieftains to maintain their clout and weld their strong power bases.

5.   Donors -Dependent Economic Structure

One of the major concerns expressed by the experts about post 2014 Afghanistan is the sustainability of its economic structure, which is totally dependent on donations. How this huge political, security and administrative structure would be maintained, once the international donors pull out, is a big question mark. The widespread corruption from top to bottom further compounds the problem. Although a number of donor countries pledged to continue their financial aids, at least through the years 2015 and 2017, yet there

is no likelihood that Afghan economy would stand on its own feet in the foreseeable future. It does not auger well for a sovereign nation. It is, perhaps, the reason that the successive governments in Kabul are ready to become willing stooges even to the states like India, which have hardly anything common with the people of Afghanistan, except the vested interests of power elites. "Afghanistan's transition from armed conflict to a stable, secure and developing society depends on its capacity to overcome a fundamental conundrum: economic development cannot take place in the absence of a secure environment, at the same time, a secure environment cannot long be sustained without progress in economic development."[42]

6. Administrative Arrangements

State of Afghanistan has 34 provinces (Walayat, plural Walayaat)) and over four hundred Districts (Ulaswali). The elections to District Councils could not be held so far, due to serious controversies about district-boundaries. It entails, in turn, the non-completion of Mashrano Jirga (Upper House) of the National Assembly, where district Councils are required to send their representatives. Similarly, the Chairpersons are ex-office members of Loya Jirga, which also remains incomplete in the absence of elections of the district councils. There is also a disconnect between elected provincial councils and the nominated Governors. Provinces and districts are primary units, which need to take care of public welfare, maintenance of law and order and as well as developmental work. But existing Government structure of Afghanistan seems to converge on the precincts of Kabul. Whereas, there is hardly any influence of the central Government on far flung areas, which still remain under the influence of tribal warlords and clergy.

Afghanistan's Existing Security Apparatus and the Issue of its Survivability

Afghanistan has unfortunately been functioning as a security state for last four decades. The level of violence that Afghan society has gone through cannot be conceived about any other part of the world. When a house is on fire in a neighborhood, the other neighbor cannot be expected to remain unaffected. Hence, the people of Pakistan are equal sufferers of Afghan tragedy. It is time that now all regional and global players must look at Afghanistan and Pakistan situation as a human tragedy. The chess board of power politics must not be laid on the corpses of innocent people, who are slaughtered day in and day out in proxies. Since Afghanistan has yet to find political and security stability, being a war torn country, there is hardly any credible data available about Afghanistan and adjoining areas of Pakistan, in terms of losses to men and material. Even the data presented about post

9/11 period is highly unreliable, as it has been compiled by various organizations and institutions, with specific objectives. It will take time, when truth will unfold itself and we will come across ghastly stories. But whatever data is available, it is enough to tell us that security situation is far from being satisfactory. Our concern in this paper is to analyze the existing security structure of the state of Afghanistan, the level of violence in Afghanistan and the strength and capacity of Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) to withstand the challenges of national security after NATO's draw down in 2014.

Table III: Major Security Related Indicators[43]

Force	Current Level
Total Foreign Forces in Afghanistan	About 95,000 US: 63000 Other Allies: 32000
Total Number of U.S. Security Contractors	109,564 Employed by U.S. companies, but not necessarily Americans. These figures only count those employed by the U.S. Department of Defense.[44]
Afghan National Army (ANA)	About 190,000, close to the target of 195,000 planned by ISAF/NATO and about 5,300 Commands trained by US Special Forces
Afghan National Police (ANP)	About 150, 000 close to the target of 157, 000. 21, 000 are Border Police, 3,800 Counter-Narcotics Police and 14400 Civil Order Police (ANCOP)
ANFS Salaries	About $ 1.6 billion per year, paid by donor countries.
Number of Al-Qaeda Fighters	"Less than 100" or so, according to General Petraeus in April 2011.
Number of Taliban Fighter	Upto 25,000
Reintegration	About 7, 000 re-integrated since 2010

It can be inferred from the existing state of security structure in Afghanistan that it would be extremely difficult for ANSF to face the daunting task of peace and stability in Afghanistan, once such a huge strength of foreign forces pulls out of this country in 2014.

Table IV: US and NATO Causalities (7 October 2007 to 15 July 2013)[45]

	All Fatalities	Hostile	Non - Hostile
U.S.	2,244	1,795	449
Others	1,095	919	176
Total	3,339	2,714	624

Level of Violence in Afghanistan:

Death Toll for Last Five Years (2007-2012)[46]

It needs to be re-emphasized that reliability of all figures pertaining to war casualties in Afghanistan is highly questionable, as UN started reporting casualties as late as in 2007. The period from 2001 to 2007, when heavy death toll took place due to massive onslaught of NATO/ISAF on Taliban militants, is conspicuously missing from most of the statistics compiled by US and the Western institutions as well as researchers about casualties in GWOT. But whatever figures are available from 2007 onwards are enough to indicate the level of violence in Afghan society, as depicted in the following table:-

Table V: Afghan Casualties[47]

Group	Period	Number of Casualties	
		Killed	Injured
Civilians	Upto 2007 to the end of 2011	11,864	-
	2007	1,523	-
	2008	2,118	-
	2009	2,412	3566
	2010	2,777	4,343
	2011	3,021	4,507
	2012	1,145	1,954
Afghan National Army	2007	278	750
	2008	259	875
	2009	292	859
	2010	821	775
	2011	511	256
	2012	173	327
Afghan National Police	2007	688	1,036
	2008	724	1,209
	2009	639	1,145
	2010	1,292	743
	2011	569	552
	2012	349	418

Surge in Civilian Casualties in Afghanistan in 2013

An alarming rise in the civilian casualties has been reported in Afghanistan in the first half of year 2013. The UN report depicts a bleak picture: "Despite Afghan forces leading almost all military operations countrywide, a permanent structure does not exist in relevant ANSF [Afghan National Security Forces] bodies to systematically investigate allegations of civilian casualties, initiate remedial measures and take follow-up action."[48]

Table VI: Afghan Civilian Casualties in 2013

Year	Killed		Injured	
2013	1,319		2,533	
	Women	Children	Women	Children
	106	231	241	529

Majority of analysts, researchers and scholars do not find much hope in the existing security system of Afghanistan. The composition and make-up of Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) is based more on ethnic influences than on professional selection or competence. The literacy rate of ANSF is very low; therefore, their capacity to achieve the level of modern fighting machine is limited. There are also apprehensions that ANSF may dissipate and fall back to regional militias and warlords. General Shaukat expresses his apprehensions about post NATO drawdown in these words: "Afghan Institutions are still too fragile; security structures are still ineffective and too unwieldy. Loosely controlled community police looks disasters….. It is perceived by most of the power players and stakeholders that Afghanistan is likely to once again experience civil war of nineties after departure of US forces in 2014.[49]

The Major Irritants in Afghanistan and Pakistan Relations and their Impact on Regional and Global Security

Once Afghanistan is recognized as one of the sources of insecurity, not only for the peace of South Asia but also the entire world, it may not be a prudent policy for the US and NATO to abandon this volatile region once again, without showing any seriousness   or commitment for durable peace in the long run. It needs to be appreciated and understood by all regional and global players that stability and peace in South Asia would remain a far cry, if real irritants among South Asian nations, particularly Pakistan and Afghanistan and Pakistan and India, are not

removed. This paper will particularly focus on major irritants between Pakistan and Afghanistan. The following are the major issues between Pakistan and Afghanistan which cannot be settled without active role of US, NATO and UN:-

- Unrealistic Approach of Successive Afghan Governments about Durand Line Agreement.

- Cross Border Movement of Drug-traffickers, Terrorists, Saboteurs and Criminals.

- Indian Factor in Afghan.

- Narcotics.

- Refugees.

1. Durand Line Controversy

The Durand Line Agreement was reached between the Government of Afghanistan and Great Britain in 1893 and was signed by the then Amir of Afghanistan Abdul Rehman Khan and the British representative Sir Henry Mortimer Durand. Pakistan inherited this Agreement on its independence in 1947, which stands recognized by UN and all regional and global countries, including US, UK, NATO and ISAF countries as well as successive Afghan governments, barring a few. It was, in fact, a part of series of agreements reached between the Great Britain and the Tsars of Russia, which resulted in the creation of modern state of Afghanistan. Today's Afghanistan owes its identity to those agreements.[41] The attitude of Afghan rulers has been described well by Ahmad Shayeq Qassem: "The processes which determined the Afghan borders are all open to controversy, yet the Afghan Government has only challenged its border with South Asia. The selective way in which the Afghan government treats borders is related more to considerations of domestic politics and transit trade with an impact on the country's political stability rather than the validity of its case".[42] Durand Line treaty was ratified by successive Afghan Governments in 1905, 1919 and 1930. US, ISAF and NATO Forces recognize this border as an international one, but could not convince the Government of Afghanistan to give it a 'de jure border' status.[43]

The Government of Afghanistan needs to realize that it is better to play on 'positives' rather than on **'negatives'** to negotiate the issues of transit-trade and make a serious effort to help itself and Pakistan secure their borders. It also needs to understand that 'securing border' does not imply 'closing of borders'. "The modern world requires secure borders, but does not require closed borders. In the 21st century, international investment, and the cross border movement of ideas, people, goods and services are necessary components of

both economic and political development in any country. In landlocked Afghanistan, relations with neighboring countries define in many aspects the interactions with the outside world as a whole"[44]. The cost of this unnecessary controversy is not being paid only by Pakistan and Afghanistan but the whole world. The so called 'safe havens' for terrorists are located in the areas, which fall on either side of Durand Line. Afghanistan needs to share the responsibility of these safe havens, if it is not ready to make Pakistan-Afghanistan border secure, by fencing and developing effective joint surveillance system, clearly demarcating the mutually agreed exit and entry points. The earlier it is done the better it would be for the peace of the world in general and South Asia in particular.

2.   Cross-Border Movement of Terrorists, Saboteurs and Criminals

A natural corollary to the border controversy is the cross – border movement of terrorists, saboteurs and criminals. Hundreds of kilometers of border between Pakistan and Afghanistan, passing through extremely rugged terrain / mountains, are free for all. Making this border secure is really a herculean task, but nevertheless, it has to be done, if these both the countries and the world at large want an enduring peace. The hideouts and terrorist network of all known Al-Qaeda and TTP elements have been reported to be located on either side of Durand Line. It is beyond comprehension, why the international community did not impress upon Afghanistan to help Pakistan secure this border and, thereby, secure the borders of both the countries. How much Pakistan has suffered due to this cross border terrorism, once gauge from the following tables.

Table VII: Casualties in Pakistan in Terrorist Activities (2003 - 2013)[45]

Year	Civilians	Security Forces Personnel	Terrorists / Insurgents	Total
2003	140	24	25	189
2004	435	184	244	863
2005	430	81	137	648
2006	608	325	538	1471
2007	1522	597	1479	3598
2008	2155	654	3906	6715
2009	2324	991	8389	11704
2010	1796	469	5170	7435
2011	2738	765	2800	6303
2012	3007	732	2472	6211
2013	1985	427	1263	3675
Total	17140	5249	26423	48812

Table VIII: Suicide Attacks in Pakistan from 2002-2013[46]

Year	Attack	Fatalities
2002	2	27
2003	2	65
2004	8	82
2005	4	83
2006	9	161
2007	57	842
2008	61	940
2009	90	1090
2010	58	1153
2011	44	625
2012	32	243
2013	9	511
Total	376	5,822

3. Indian Factor in Afghanistan

The presence of a widespread network of Indian intelligence agencies, in the garb of trainers and contractors / builders, is a matter of serious concerns for Pakistan. No country can understand the Indian hegemonic designs better than Pakistan. Indian policy-makers could not and would not rise above their jingoism, to evolve the policies which may be directed to integrate this entire South Asian regime into a peaceful and prosperous place in the world to live in, as the Europeans leaders did. Instead, India is still playing up with the militarist and coercive politics, which the European leaders of 1890s were passing through. Indians just want to surround and strangulate Pakistan. Their presence in Afghanistan bespeaks of nothing but this fact and the Government of Afghanistan needs to understand it.

4. Narcotics

Afghanistan is the world largest producer of opium, which is around 80% of the total global production. The criminal gangs, drug-traffickers and terrorists thrive on black-marketing and sale of opium. It has been reported that 1, 54,000 Hectares of land were filled by opium- poppy crops by the farmers in the year 2012, more than 131,000 hectors in 2011. It is amazing that the Taliban regime had been remarkably successful in eradicating the drugs from the society, whereas, the NATO and ISAF Forces kept a blind eye to this menace, for obvious short term military gains. Their belated actions now are yielding no positive results. 177 attacks have been reported so far on the Afghan Security Forces, who tried to destroy poppy crops, killing 102 soldiers. Narcotics are easily being infiltrated to various parts of the world. Pakistan is the worst victim of this menace, as a large number of Pakistani youth are fast turning into addicts. The effective border management and monitoring are a few of the means to eradicate or at least control this menace, which is extremely dangerous for the humanity as a whole.

5. Refugees

One of the irritants between Pakistan and Afghanistan, but not the least important one, is the presence of around three million Afghan refugees in Pakistan. These refugees, who entered Pakistan after Soviet invasion of 1979, did not return back to Afghanistan despite the lapse of more than three and half decades. Majority of them still lives in refugees' camps. They are a big source of cross- border movement of criminals, narcotics, arms and ammunition. Their continued presence has badly impacted the societal set-up of KPK and FATA in Pakistan. It is time that the government of Afghanistan should make effective arrangements for their repatriation.

Recommendations

The author of this paper, after dispassionately studying various aspects of political stability in Afghanistan, proffers the following policy recommendations for all stakeholders:-

1. The Constitution of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan needs re-visiting, in order to devolve powers to the provinces and lower levels. Seeing the demographic and geographical configuration, it would be appropriate to work out more consensus-based central model of governance than an all powerful presidential model.

2. The governors in the provinces should also be elected, instead of being presidential nominees. It would add to their influence and effectiveness in the governance.

3. The factional politics in Afghanistan need to be gradually replaced by genuine representative political parties, based on clear policy-agendas and ideological foundations. Ethnic-based politics can only be changed into developmental and issues based politics through strong political parties.

4. Electoral system of Afghanistan needs complete re-vamping and institutionalization, in order to ensure transparent and credible election in future.

5. Judicial system of Afghanistan has also to cover a lot of ground, to provide justice to the people even in the remote areas. Pakistan may extend assistance to the Government of Afghanistan for the training of judicial officers.

6. Afghanistan and Pakistan both should work out together joint programmes for economic development of the most affected regions. The issue of Afghan transit-trade may also be settled amicably, so that an atmosphere of trust and confidence is promoted in both the countries.

7. The Government of Afghanistan should take bold steps to recognize Durand Line, so that the borders of both the countries can be secured, both from the movements of terrorists, saboteurs/ criminals as well as the flow of narcotics to Pakistan and the rest of the world.

8. The Government of Afghanistan should take immediate steps for repatriation and rehabilitation of more than three million refugees, residing inside Pakistan. It is now over more than three and half decade that Pakistan is shouldering this burden.

9. The Government of Afghanistan should take concrete steps to provide exact information about Indian activities inside Afghanistan and address the concerns of Pakistan in this regard seriously, particularly at this point in time, once the Indians are again escalating activities on LOC and working boundary.

10. Pakistan-Afghanistan should work together to find out regional solutions to all the problems, with an extensive consultation with other neighboring countries i.e. Iran, China, CARS and Russia. Turkey, being the mutual friend of all these countries, can play a lead role.

11. Since the political stability of Afghanistan directly affects the neighboring state of Pakistan, it would be unrealistic to work out any models of Afghan security in post- 2014, without effective and meaningful consultation and involvement of Pakistan.

12. The US, NATO, ISAF and UN should renew their focus on the peace and stability of South Asia and help resolve all issues, which endanger the peace and stability of this region. The political stability of Afghanistan cannot be ensured without making all its neighbors at peace. The people of Afghanistan and Pakistan deserve much needed respite from violence, bloodshed and lawlessness. All regional and global players need to work in this direction.

Conclusion

Afghanistan and Pakistan are inseparable neighbors, which cannot be dissected by any machinations. The political stability of each of these neighbors is contingent upon each other. No other country in the world has suffered, in terms of losses to men and material, more than Pakistan, due to continued spade of violence in Afghanistan for last three and half decades. The proliferation of narcotics, arms and ammunition to each nook and cranny of Pakistan is the gift of successive Afghan wars and civil wars since 1979. Now, when the final drawdown of NATO and ISAF is fast approaching, Pakistan's worries about the political stability of Afghanistan are but natural. The central argument of this study is that peace in South Asia in general and Pakistan in particular hinges on political stability of Afghanistan. Similarly, the peace and political stability of Afghanistan cannot be realized without effective collaboration of its neighbors. It is, therefore, logical that Afghanistan and all its neighbors should sit together, to honestly address the irritants and work out pragmatic recovery, re-construction, economic development and security plans, in which all of them find 'a win-win situation', and in turn, the people of this region live in much needed peace and tranquility. Afghanistan cannot be stabilized by quick fixes. A long term commitment of UN, NATO and particularly neighboring countries would be required for an enduring political stability of Afghanistan.

End Notes

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[2]Leon Hurwitz, 'Contemporary Approaches to Political Stability'. Comparative Politics, Vol-5, April 1973, p.463.

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[8]Ernest A. Duff and John F. McCamant, 'Measuring Social and Political Requirements for System Stability in Latin America'.The American Political Science Review, Vol- 62, December 1968. p.1125.

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[13]Seymour Martin Lipset, 'Political Man: The Social Bases of Politics (London, 1960), p.77.

[14]For study of differing views, one may go through introductory chapter of Afghanistan's Political Stability, written by Ahmad Shayeq Qassem in his book 'Afghanistan's Political Stability: A Dream Unrealized'.op.cit.p.7.

[15]Leon Hurwitz, 'Contemporary Approaches to Political Stability', op.cit. p. 457.

[16]Frederick Dessauer, 'Stability' (New York, Macmillan 1949), pp., 125-126.

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[19]21 Ibid, p.1.

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[21]Article-1, Chapter-1 of Official Afghanistan Constitution, p.2.

[22]Ibid, Articles 60-63, p.16.

[23]Ibid, Article-83, p.24.

[24]26 Ibid, Article-84, p.25.

[25]Ibid, Articles 110-115, p.33.

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[32]BROOKINGS' Afghanistan Index, 20 September 2012.p.8.

[33]Ibid.p.8.

[34]Muhammad Saleem Mazhar et al. op. cit.p.2.

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[38]Ibid, p-276.

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