

**REPUBLIC OF TURKEY
ISTANBUL GILISIM UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF GRADUATE STUDENTS**

Department of Political Science and Public Administration

**THE PEACE PROCESS IN AFGHANISTAN
(1992-2021)**

Master Thesis

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Supervisor

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Istanbul-2023

THESIS INTRODUCTION FORM

Name and Surname : Mohammad Wajed SHAMS

Language of the Thesis : English

Name of the Thesis : The Peace Process in Afghanistan (1992-2021)

Institute : Istanbul Gelisim University Institute of Graduate Studies

Department : Political Science and Public Administration

Thesis Type : Master/PhD

Date of the Thesis : 06.06.2023

Page Number : 88

Thesis Supervisors : 1. Prof. Dr. Rahmat ULLAH
2. Assoc. Prof. Dr. Name SURNAME (if any)

Index Terms :

Turkish Anstract :

Distribution List : 1. To the Institute of Graduate Studies of Istanbul
Gelisim University
2. To the National Thesis Center of YÖK (Higher
Education Council)

Signature

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SUMMARY

Afghanistan is an important country located almost in Central Asia. Afghanistan borders Pakistan in the East and South and uses the sea route through Pakistan. Afghanistan has been suffering from war since the 1970s. After the atrocities of the civil war, the foreign invasion of the Soviet Union in 1979 and the United States in 2001 devastated Afghanistan and killed thousands of innocent Afghans. Great powers came to Afghanistan to crush the roots of religious extremism, drug trafficking, terrorism and smuggling. But none of the big powers could reduce drug trafficking, terrorism, etc. According to what was said; Although Afghanistan has been involved in devastating internal and external wars for more than four decades, but peace and reconciliation has not been possible in any of the historical periods. The findings of this research show that the peace process during the previous government from 2001 to 2021 was failed for different reasons such as: the lack of interests of Taliban, lack of a clear plan from the previous government, lack of unity between the Afghan government and foreign powers, the existence of corruption in the government...e.tc. The aforementioned concepts caused this process to fail, and the failure of the peace process provided the ground for Taliban to dominate Afghanistan again through the Doha Agreement. According to the lessons that can be learned from the past, now the civil society, the international community and other countries in the region and Afghanistan's neighboring countries should put maximum pressure on the Taliban, so that the Taliban will agree to establish an inclusive government and also ensure the rights of women, minorities, and human rights.

Key words: Peace, Process, Reconciliation, Afghanistan, Taliban

ÖZET

Afganistan Orta Asya'nın merkezinde yer alan stratejik bir ülkedir. Doğu ve güney sınırları üzerinden Pakistan'a komşu olan işbu ülke böylece Deniz yoluna ulaşır. 19 yüzyılın başlarından itibaren İngilizlerin işgaline uğrayan ülke 1973 sonrası iç savaşa doğru gider. Bu iç savaş nedeniyle ülkenin ordusu ekonomisi ve bütün birikimleri zayıflar ve yok olmaya mahkum kalır. Bu da beraberinde 1979 Rus işgalini getirir. Ülkedeki egemenliğini arttırmak isteyen Batı 2001 yılında ABD öncülüğünde ülkeyi işgal eder. Binlerce masum afganistanlı hayatını kaybeder ve binlerce kişi de engelli duruma düşer. İşgalci güçler dini aşırılığın uyuşturucu kaçakçılığının terörizmin ve kaçakçılığı bitirmek üzere ülkeye gelirler. Ancak hiçbir sonuç elde edemezler. Ağustos 2021 tarihinde ülke kendi kadarını terk ediliyor. Son 40 yılda iç Savaş yaşayan ülke huzur ve barış'ın yüzünü görmemiş barış'a giden yollar sebepsiz bahanelerle tıkanmıştır. Bu çalışmada 2001 ve 2021 arası ülkedeki barış süreci ele alınmış ancak Taliban'ın bir tehdit oluşturması ve merkezi hükümetin bir plan üzerine teröristlere karşı savaşmaması barış sürecini başarısızlığa uğratmıştır. Dahası Taliban terör örgütünün Doha anlaşması sonrası ülkeye hakim olmasını sağlamıştır. Taliban iş başına geldikten sonra herkesi kucaklayacak bir hükümet oluşturamamış toplumun her kesiminin gönlüne kazanamamıştır. Bunun gerçekleşmesi için öncelikle komşu ülkeler bölge ülkeler ve uluslararası güçlerin baskı uygulaması ve azınlık haklarının alınmasında destekçi olması gerekmektedir. Aksi takdirde ülkede kalıcı bir barışın yerleşmesi ve gelişmesi pek mümkün gözükmemektedir.

Anahtar kelimeler: Afganistan, barış, süreci, Taliban, uzlaşa.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ANDSF	:	Afghanistan National Defense and Security Forces
AUMF	:	Authorization for the use of military force
BBC	:	British Broadcasting Corporation
CIA	:	Central Intelligence Agency
ECO	:	Economic Cooperation Organization
FTO	:	foreign terrorist organization
HPC	:	High Peace Council
ISAF	:	International Security Assistance Force
ISIS	:	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
NATO	:	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NRP	:	National Peace Program
OFG	:	Operation Freedom Guardian
PDPA	:	People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan
RSM	:	Resolute Support Mission
S.U	:	Soviet Union
SIGAR	:	Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction
TIT	:	Tehreek-e-Islami Talaba
TRC	:	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
TTP	:	Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan
UAE	:	United Arab Emirates
UK	:	United Kingdom
UN	:	United Nation
US	:	United States
USSR	:	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
APRP	:	Afghanistan Peace and Reintegration Program

GIRoA	:	Government of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
UNDP	:	United Nation Development Program
HPC	:	High Peace Council
JS	:	Joint Secretariat
PPCs	:	Provincial Peace Committees
PJSTs	:	Provincial Joint Secretariat Teams
SOPs	:	Standard Operating Procedures
SGPs	:	Small Grant Projects
TA	:	Transitional Assistance
CSOs	:	Civil Society Organizations
LMs	:	Line Ministries
MoF	:	Ministry of Finance
PWC	:	Provincial Works Council
MoPW	:	Ministry of Public Works
FOCS	:	Financial Oversight Committee Secretariat
FRIC	:	Force Reintegration Command

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Praise to be Allah, he is worthy of worship, and is the only one who taught his creatures reading and writing. He is the one who gave me the success to finish another stage of education, and this is the time, I am writing my research paper (master's thesis). Therefore, here I would like to express my sincere thanks and appreciations to all the respected professors of Political Science and Public Administration at Istanbul Gelisim University who have thought and helped me to complete this term of my studies. In fact, I was not capable to complete my research paper without my supervisor's coordination, and this coordination was absolutely under the instruction of my advisor, Assist. Prof. Dr. Rahmat ULLAH that I am indebted of his valuable suggestions, advices, encouragements, useful guides and friendly behaviors, who helped me a lot to prepare my thesis. As it was not an easy job for me to write an academic paper without his cooperation and offer his helps and suggestion resulted many important improvements to do so.

I express my heartfelt gratitude to the esteemed jury members, Assist. Prof. Dr. Fatima Gul GEDIKKAYA, Assist. Prof. Dr. Ahmet SAPMAZ, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Izzetullah ZEKI, and Assist. Prof. Dr. Elnur ISMAYIL, whose unwavering support and expertise were instrumental in resolving numerous intricate challenges embedded within the thesis, transforming it into an exquisite culmination of scholarly excellence.

I would also prefer to thank from my honorable family especially my father, mother, my wife who always sustained lots of problems but let me to keep on my studies, and my daughters that were far away from my paternal love, brothers, and sisters who really supported me realistically and prayed a lot for my success to achieve this valuable goal of my life. In addition to that I am also thankful from my friends specially Mr. Basir Ahmad Joya, who was always available for me, and his comments and suggestions happened useful in completion of this thesis.

Mohammad Wajed Shams

INTRODUCTION

Although Afghanistan is a landlocked country, it has never been isolated. Because this country has been at the crossroads of the Silk Road from China to the Middle East and also the center of trade between India and Europe for centuries. Afghanistan has borders with countries like Pakistan, Iran, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan, and a small border with China. Because Afghanistan is a bridge between India, Central Asia, and Iran, it is extremely important. In other words, Afghanistan is a landlocked country situated on the verge of the energy-rich region of Central Asia. Afghanistan has been in the war for the last forty years.

In 1978 Soviet Forces invaded Afghanistan to support its communist agenda. The withdrawal of Soviet Forces created a vacuum and civil war erupted in the country.

In 1996 Taliban's government in Afghanistan based on exact Sharia law. Planes targeted the World Trade Center and Pentagon in America on September 9/11, 2001. America blamed Al-Qaeda and strongly requested Osama Bin Laden from the leadership of the Taliban. Taliban rejected to hand over Osama Bin Laden to America. America attacked Afghanistan to topple the Taliban regime. American and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) forces have fought with Taliban militants in Afghanistan for the last two decades. The neighboring States also supported the American war against terrorism in different ways and welcomed America and its Allies in Afghanistan (Weinbaum, 2006).

America pressurized Pakistan to occupy serious action against the Taliban militants. Pakistan also defies destructive outcomes by supporting America in the war against the Taliban. The people of Pakistan were not ready to accept the Taliban as a terrorist organization. The Pashtuns majority in tribal areas was a real worry for Pakistan. American pressure and the slogan "Do More" from Pakistan were real worries for the government and military establishment of Pakistan. Most of the Taliban leaders have been the students of Clerics from Pakistan. The deep ties of the Taliban with the military and religious leaders of Pakistan are not hidden from anyone. On the other hand, Pakistan and Iran are two of the countries where the most Afghan immigrants are present in these two countries. In addition to Pakistan, Iran is also one of the main stakeholders in the peace of Afghanistan and influences various sections of Afghan society. Iran welcomed America in Afghanistan and supported America in Afghanistan against Taliban militants. Tehran was worried that the Taliban's militant activities would harm its efforts to pacify the insurgents in Iran's eastern provinces. Later, Iran also supported the Taliban militants against the United States (US) presence near its borders in

Afghanistan. Due to the strained relations with America, Iran does not want the presence of American forces near its borders. Iran also invested a significant amount of money to build infrastructure in Afghanistan (Milani, 2010).

India has also invested a handsome amount in Afghanistan, India without stopping assistance anti-Taliban strength in Afghanistan. India welcomed Soviet Forces in Afghanistan in the 1980s together with later the U.S. Forces after 9/11. The main Indians enemy in the region is Pakistan. For this reason, the Indian government has always supported resistance such as the resistance to the NATO fight against the Terrorism like Taliban. The presence and default of the American Taliban in power gave India a chance to fasten its relations with the people of Afghanistan. India also provides education, health, and other facilities to the people of Afghanistan. In the past, India had good relations with Hamid Karzai and then with Ashraf Ghani, who was the president at that time. India has enhanced its ties with Afghanistan in Security matters and Trade perspectives (Baqai, 2019).

President Obama initiated the Peace Program in Afghanistan and it was the first effort to bring peace to Afghanistan by the Americans. The Afghan government and Taliban met in Pakistan under efforts made by President Obama but could not get success. Taliban wanted the withdrawal of Foreign Forces, this point created a deadlock, and peace talks failed. President Trump took oath after President Obama and pledged with the people of America to end the long war of American history. America started Peace Efforts in 2018 to secure peace in Afghanistan under President Trump. President Trump's efforts also faced a dead end and never led to peace with the Taliban. After Trump, President Biden took office (Thomas, 2018).

Because the war in Afghanistan has become a long war for America and at an infinite cost. The American government decided to leave Afghanistan anyway. Finally, on August 15, 2021, later the withdrawal of American forces from Afghanistan, the Taliban recaptured all of Afghanistan. Then the Taliban, quickly established a monopoly government consisting of their highly religious and extremist leaders.

With the establishment of the mono-ethnic and monopoly government of the Taliban, the Afghan economy completely collapsed, the banking system was destroyed, and the Taliban prevented the education of girls, and violated civil rights and human rights on a large scale. However, even after a year since the Taliban government took office, no country has yet recognized the Taliban government. But the efforts of the United States and Western and Arab countries have not yielded any results and the Taliban continues to kill and loot. The situation

in Afghanistan after twenty years is so dire and scary that no Afghan person feels safe now. The officials of the former government each fled to one of the countries. Documentary reports of the deplorable human rights situation are published. Taliban soldiers attack houses at night and kill many people. The Taliban has completely forgotten the issue of peace and reconciliation. They are not willing to negotiate and make peace with the politicians and people of Afghanistan under any circumstances. All their (Taliban) efforts are to establish and consolidate their government with power, violence, murder, robbery, theft, looting, and looting (Tiwary.s, 2016).



CHAPTER ONE

THE STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

1. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Afghanistan is a country that has always been a place of competition between superpowers. The competitions in the 18th and 19th centuries between the two colonial superpowers, Russia and the United Kingdom (UK) have made an obvious aspect; and more importantly, the separation of the Afghan region of Iranian territory can also be attributed to the United Kingdom's grip. In World War II, Afghanistan declared neutrality, but since the end of this war (World War II), Afghanistan has become a scene of competition between the United States and the Soviet Union (SU). The competition between these two world powers over Afghanistan progressed to the point where they occupied Afghanistan in 1979. Mujahedin, who defeated the S.U was unable to form a powerful government in 1992. Because the Mujahidin's government was mostly an ethnic, linguistic, tribal, and sectarian government. The failure of the Mujahidin to form an orderly government made the people of Afghanistan extremely disappointed and tired. In addition to the lack of a regular central government, sectarian battles between groups and parties continued and killed civilians daily. The failure of the Mujahedeen to form a strong and legal government, the Afghans were desperately waiting for a savior, they did not think about who or how it would be, they only wanted the fall and destruction of the Mujahedeen and their limitless atrocities (Mujdeh, 2011).

The chaotic conditions prevailing at that time caused several Pashtuns who had previously fought against the forces of S.U Socialist Republics (USSR) troops and from 1993 to 1994 during the civil wars in Afghanistan, rumors were heard of the formation of a group of religious students in schools supported by Saudi Arabia in Pakistan. This group called itself Tehreek-e-Islami Taliban (TIT) (Taliban Islamic Movement) and infiltrated Afghanistan from the southern border with the slogan of "Implementing Islamic Sharia" and confronted what it calls evil and corruption in Afghanistan and quickly invaded various cities and provinces. In the middle of that decade, that is, in 1995, the Taliban achieved its biggest victory until then and managed to capture the strategic province of Herat on the border of Iran and Turkmenistan.

A year later in 1996, they managed to capture the capital, Kabul. After the fall of Kabul, Burhanuddin Rabbani, the head of the Mujahedeen government at the time, moved the seat of his government to Mazar-i-Sharif, where it also fell shortly after. One of the first things the

Taliban did in the capital was to kill Mohammad Najibullah, the last president of the Soviet-backed regime, who had taken refuge at the United Nations office.

The Taliban movement initially announced goals for the Afghan people, which were quite ideal. The main goal that the Taliban announced was the destruction and annihilation of all armed and irresponsible groups and ensuring security and justice throughout the country. Provision and implementation of Islamic and Shariah laws. Even the Taliban announced at the beginning that they had no intention of ruling Afghanistan at all (Mojdeh, 2002).

Anyway, experts believe that the Taliban movement is an ethnic movement. Since Afghanistan was founded by Ahmad Khan Abdali in 1947, Pashtuns have always been at the head of this country (Shater, 2003).

Except for Habibullah Kalkani who reigned for six months in 1929 and an uneasy period of Burhanuddin Rabbani, who was a Tajik, has been under the influence of the Pashtuns throughout the rest of Afghanistan's history. Therefore, after the victory of the Mujahidin and Burhanuddin Rabbani's coming to power, the Taliban saw the loss of the monarchy and power that was the historical right of the Pashtuns, and therefore they tried to take back this historical right, and the Taliban did it in 1996. They captured Kabul and declared a government in the name of the Islamic Emirate, which was Mullah Mohammad Omar (Emir of the Faithful).

The Taliban were extremely violent because they were a primitive and violent group from within the tribe. To expand their influence, this group committed serious violations of human rights and killed thousands of civilians and especially more than ten thousand Shiite Hazaras (Rashid, 2000).

From the point of view of the Taliban in the previous period when they ruled Afghanistan, it was that men should grow beards, and girls and women should not go out of the house (Rashid, 1379).

After the Taliban came to power in 1996, the world witnessed the increasing violence of this group, which was confirmed by Al-Qaeda from Afghanistan on September 11th, 2001. After that, the United States entered Afghanistan in 2001 and destroyed the Taliban in a wide and deep way. After 2001, despite all the efforts to answer this question and carry out the peace process in Afghanistan, no significant progress has been achieved in this field. After 2001, the Afghan government adopted various activities to make peace with the Taliban and force them to stop military attacks. Hamid Karzai (former president), 2010, launched the Supreme Peace Council and proposed to the Taliban to sever ties with Al-Qaeda. Although Karzai tried to

bring peace and offered peace to the Taliban, the Taliban rejected Karzai's proposal with extensive and comprehensive operations. After the end of Karzai's presidency, hasty and fraudulent elections were held in Afghanistan, which lasted for more than a year, and the national unity government was formed by the mediation of the US foreign minister.

The National Unity Government, which was established under the leadership of Ashraf Ghani, offered peace to the Taliban with a package of concessions. The concessions that the National Unity Government had given to the Taliban included the cancellation of sanctions, the recognition of the Taliban as a political party, and the revision of the Afghan Constitution to meet the Taliban's views and demands, but the Taliban also rejected the proposal of the National Unity Government and They continued their attacks against the Afghan government.

The Afghan government devoted all its efforts to the dialogue with the Taliban. But the efforts and negotiations with the Taliban in 2018 failed. This was while the Afghan government was also struggling with widespread corruption and complete dissatisfaction. Keeping in mind the internal situation of Afghanistan and the corrupt government, the United States continued its negotiations with the Taliban, and in 2020, the United States and the Taliban signed an agreement in Doha, Qatar, on the withdrawal of American forces from Afghanistan.

The Doha agreement between the Taliban and the United States, which is also known as the peace agreement, was the beginning of the collapse of the Afghan government and the Taliban's rise to power. The strengthening of the Taliban and the weakening of the Afghan government led to the shocking escape of Ashraf Ghani on August 15, 2021, and the complete occupation of Afghanistan by the Taliban.

2. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Although the Taliban claim to ensure general security in Afghanistan, the situation continues to deteriorate. In addition to numerous insecurities and rampant corruption among the Taliban, one of the most serious challenges to the Taliban government is the resistance front led by Ahmad Masood, who is now armed against the Taliban. Countries around the world have also made it clear to the Taliban that they must form a comprehensive government. Therefore, we must continue to pursue peace talks. Therefore, the present study aims to present a reasonable solution to ensure lasting peace in Afghanistan by examining the challenges of the past as well as the opportunities that have been missed in the past.

Therefore, the present study tries to achieve the following goals:

1. Investigating the Roots and Contexts of Afghanistan's long wars.

2. Analyzing peace from the perspective of Afghan leaders and people.
3. Assessing the challenges to achieving peace in Afghanistan.

3. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Although many articles and research have been done on the peace process, none of the research in the past has comprehensively and completely addressed all the dimensions and challenges in Afghanistan. The shortcomings of previous research will be clearly shown in the background section of the present study. But the present study seeks a detailed and comprehensive view of the challenges and opportunities of the peace process from 1992 to 2021 and ultimately provides a sensible and efficient way to ensure lasting peace. Because Afghanistan has been embroiled in civil war for more than four decades and all Afghans are looking for peace and tranquility. Therefore, to achieve peace and tranquility, we need a comprehensive plan that has learned lessons from the past and provides a reasonable solution for the future.

4. METHOD OF THE STUDY

This research is library research, using books and journals as the main sources. Literature study here is a literature study without an empirical test. The method used to collect research data is library data that has been selected, searched, presented, and analyzed.

4.1. Theoretical/Conceptual Framework

Liberal theory, in the field of war and peace, is one of the famous theories that believe that democracies rarely go to war with each other. The famous French philosopher Emmanuel Kant presented a liberal theory in 1795. Kant defended the liberal theory in his research under the title of permanent peace. Liberal democracy believes that war and peace exist in the internal social and political structure of countries, which always emerges. Liberal democracy, unlike realism, explains what factors within the social and political structures of a country can affect war and peace in that country. In a liberal democracy, all the attention is focused on institutions and systematic and deterrent forces of unbridled violence. In the midst of this, the people have been chosen as the biggest and strongest institution that can prevent any kind of disturbance and disorder. For this reason, people's vote in democracies is extremely important. Because the people are the only restraining institution in democracies, all attention should be paid to the people. By empowering the people, democracy is ensured, and because of their cultural and fundamental properties, democracy rarely gets involved with logical arguments and prefers to resolve issues through dialogue and peaceful resolution. It is said that the internal habit of

democratic conflict resolution has been extended to the field of foreign relations as well. According to what was explained, in the present study, our conceptual framework, theory liberal theory peace, and effort to analyze the present research in the framework.

In this regard, it is necessary to be sensitive to the local culture and have a long time frame. This approach emphasizes the creation of peace institutions by the middle classes of the society and their strengthening in order to create peace and support reconciliation. It is assumed that strengthening and empowering the middle class can affect peace building at the community level (Paffenholz, 2009).

The school of conflict change actually originates from the ideas of Johan Galtung and John Paul Lederach. In 1976, John Galtung in her article (Three Approaches to Peace: Peacekeeping, peacemaking and Peace building) pointed out that peacemaking has a different structure than peacekeeping and peacebuilding, emphasizing the type of mechanism that creates peace. The roots and causes of war should be eliminated and in situations where war may occur, it should provide ways to avoid it (Galtung, 1976).

In fact, this definition raised the theoretical foundations of the concept of peacemaking. Based on this, peace building is the concept of trying to create lasting peace by addressing the root causes of violent conflicts and creating local capacities for managing and resolving conflicts.

Followers of John Galtung believe that the goal of peacemaking should be to create a positive peace that frees ordinary people from various forms of structural violence in their societies. Structural violence here is the types of injuries that are inflicted on the society by the poor institutions, systems or economic, social, and political structures (Galtung, 1976).

Since the interpretation provided by Galtung has a wide scope and gives a broad and abstract interpretation of peacemaking, John Paul Lederach, another thinker of peace studies and a more moderate definition of peace he made a correction. By presenting the concept of Sustainable Peace Building, he believes that peacemaking is a concept beyond (physical) reconstruction after conflicts and is actually a comprehensive concept that includes a set of processes, approaches and steps necessary to change the Conflict Transformation conflict into sustainable peaceful relations. Therefore, peace is considered a social construct (Lederach, 1997).

In this theoretical framework, the peacemaking process does not only have hardware aspects such as the reconstruction of political, security and economic institutions, but a social process of participation that restores the broken relations between the people is simulated. In order for the peace process to be sustainable, it should be based on the identification of specific cultural platforms and conflict areas and the active participation of civil society.

In the current research, the evaluation of the reconciliation process in Afghanistan 1992-2021 is discussed within the framework of the school of thought (Conflict Change).

4.2. Questions of The Study

This thesis tries to answer the following questions:

- Where does the foundation of the conflict in Afghanistan come from and what are the roots of the conflict in Afghanistan?
- What is peace from the perspective of the Taliban and the opponents of this group?
- What are the obstacles and challenges to achieving peace in Afghanistan?

4.3. Hypothesis

This study covers the following hypothesis:

- The peace process didn't have any positive result from 1992-2021.
- Taliban militia were the main challenges for the government of Afghanistan.
- Administrative corruption, discrimination and the political parties' ideologies could be another factor to not reach to peace and reconciliation.

4.4. Data Collection

The method of collecting information is qualitative, so the secondary data collection technique is used in order to better understand the policies adopted by the OPEC organization. Therefore, mostly the data collection relies on books, internet, articles, bulletins and monthly reports of the said organization.

4.5. Limitation

The peace process in Afghanistan between (1992-2021), is extremely the title of this research which will focus to find a clear and useful picture of real peace in Afghanistan, but due to the fact that the peace process has exceedingly collapsed and Taliban got the control of Afghanistan. Therefore, there was no hope for peace and reconciliation in the country. This research surely faced a couple of problems, at first and very beginning the majority of the officials and leaders who led the peace process in the previous government are not available to

give the information, and on the other hand, the Taliban officials always refused to provide first-hand sources with the press and newspapers. Because of this, there were many problems to find the first-hand sources to complete the mentioned research title, but it has been tried to complete the thesis with authentic and valuable resources to complete my thesis.



CHAPTER TWO

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF AFGHANISTAN

2.1.AFGHANISTAN BEFORE 1992

In this chapter, we attempted made to address the political and social contexts of conflicts and civil wars in Afghanistan before 1992. Because to understand the depth of conflicts and civil wars, it is necessary to analyze the background of conflicts from a political, social, cultural, and even geographical perspective.

2.1.1. Afghanistan's History

Afghanistan is a mountainous country located at the crossroads of the Asian continent. In general, this country is a part of Central Asia, but sometimes it appears in a region that is not connected to the Middle East or South Asia. It has motivational, linguistic, and geographical ties with the other countries. This country shares borders with Pakistan in the West, South, and East with Durand Line, China in the Northeast, and Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan in the North (Habibi, 2003).

In 1747, Afghanistan was declared a state by Ahmad Shah Baba for the first time, and its borders were determined. Afghanistan is located at the crossroads of the West and the East and is home to different tribes and cultures. It is a very ancient country and from the point of view of history, it has remained a major commercial center and thus it has been invaded and looted by different forces at different times. Throughout history, this area was occupied by Persians, Macedonians, Arabs, Mongols, Turks, and Greeks. New Afghanistan emerged as an independent country for the first time after the Third Afghan-British War in 1919 when foreigners stopped interfering in Afghanistan's affairs. After the Russian invasion of this country, bad security in the country, and civil war, after the September 11 incident, the American invasion destroyed the history of this country. As a result of these misfortunes, Afghanistan is now moving towards reconstruction. The nation has taken steps towards unity and rebuilding the country, but it has not yet succeeded in bringing peace and brotherhood to the country.

Afghanistan is facing many problems, from the collapsed economic system to the return of millions of refugees, drug trafficking, the existence of warlords, and the opposition of different political parties in the existing government, these are all the reasons that The current

government is struggling with it and these are all the problems that Afghanistan is facing in the 21st century (Habibi, 2003).

Afghanistan's economy is based on agriculture, mining, and trade. Agriculture is the primary sector for employment and food supply in the country. Additionally, Afghanistan possesses abundant natural resources, including mineral reserves such as coal, gold, copper, oil, and gas.

Afghanistan has a multi-ethnic society and different ethnic groups such as Pashtun, Tajik, Hazara, Uzbek, Hazara and Baloch.

The area of Afghanistan is approximately 652,864 square kilometers. Afghanistan shares its borders with Iran, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and China.

Afghanistan is a multi-ethnic and multi-religious country and has a lot of cultural diversity. The population of Afghanistan is generally made up of several ethnicities, but several main ethnicities are:

1. Pashtun ethnicity: Pashtuns are one of the largest ethnic groups in Afghanistan and live in the southern and eastern regions of the country. Pashtun language is influential as the mother tongue and culture of Pashtuns.
2. Tajik ethnicity: Tajiks are one of the largest ethnic groups in Afghanistan and live in the northern and northeastern regions of the country. Tajik language, which is a version of Persian, is known as the mother tongue and culture of Tajiks.
3. Hazara ethnicity: Hazaras constitute a significant population in Afghanistan and live in the central regions of the country. The native language of the Hazaras is under the influence of Persian.
4. Uzbek ethnicity: Uzbeks are one of the ethnic groups present in Afghanistan and live in the northern regions of the country. The mother tongue of Uzbeks is also a Turkish language.

In addition, there are other ethnicities in Afghanistan such as Hazara, Baloch, Turkmen, Nuristani, Brahui, etc.

Regarding religion, the majority of Afghanistan's population is Muslim, and the majority of them are Sunni.

2.1.2. Afghanistan During the Communist Era

After the downfall of the moderate government of Daud Khan in 1978, two political groups emerged, namely the People's Party and the Flag Party. Before the coup d'état, the new government, which had more or less popular support, had established good relations with the Soviet Union, but the ruthless cleansing of competitors and the beginning of extensive land and social reforms greatly angered the people (Sheridan. M, 1998).

In the corners and sides of the country, widespread revolts against the government started, and all of this revolt gradually became organized and coordinated and was led by influential people who are called Mujahedin today.

Due to the civil wars and failed coups and other rebellions going on inside Afghanistan, the former Soviet Union was forced to invade Afghanistan in 1979, and sent more than 30,000 troops to this country. The Soviet attack on Afghanistan and the short-term fall of Hafizullah Amin made Babrak Karmel become the president of Afghanistan with the support of the Soviet Union. Babrak Karmel's presence at the head of power in Afghanistan with the support of Soviets led to the formation of groups under the title of Mujahideen. Although the Soviet Union left the suppression of the rebellions to the Afghan army in the beginning, due to the growth of these rebellions, the Afghan army became ineffective against the Mujahideen (Sharifi.S & Adamou. L, 2018).

The Afghan war soon reached a deadlock and the control of cities, especially large cities and strategic areas, fell to the hands of the Soviet forces. The outbreak of rebellions and the ineffectiveness of the Afghan army made the Soviet forces seek to suppress the Mujahideen. They tried to use different tactics to suppress Mujahideen. Even the Soviets bombed and evacuated rural areas. But none of these tactics worked. During the civil wars in Afghanistan, about 2.8 million Afghans applied for asylum in Pakistan and more than 1.6 million Afghans became refugees in Iran. The Mujahideen's war with the Soviet Union lasted for several years until the Cold War enemy, the United States, sent shoulder-fired missiles to the Mujahideen, and with these missiles, the Mujahideen succeeded in defeating the Soviet Union (Shailizi, 2018).

Although many historians consider the victory of the Mujahideen to be their unity, there was no unity among the Mujahideen under any circumstances. The Mujahideen were made up of different and independent groups, each of which fought against the Soviet Union under the banner of a leader. It is better to say that the power of weapons and sufficient equipment that

had flowed to Afghanistan from Pakistan, the United States, and other Muslim countries, made the Mujahideen win this war. Even in this war, many sympathetic Muslims, regardless of ethnicity, race, and religion, participated in this war outside of Afghanistan. All of these factors made Afghanistan free from the hands of the Soviets (Siddique, 2015).

Although many historians today believe that the former Soviet Union collapsed based on inefficiency, some believe that the fallings of the former Soviet Union were the result of the war in Afghanistan. Because the Soviet Union lost more than 15,000 dead and wounded in this war and causing the Soviet forces to be severely weakened on other fronts. Similarly, the United States, Pakistan, and the Soviet Union agreed in 1988, according to which the Soviet Union withdrew from Afghanistan in 1989 and the leadership of Afghanistan fell into the hands of the Mujahidin. Because the Mujahidin were made up of different groups, parties, and factions, they could not form a powerful centralized government for more than five years. Although Burhanuddin Rabbani as president and other groups played a role in key ministries, Afghanistan was still involved in a civil war between parties (Schetter, 2003).

2.1.AFGHANISTAN DURING THE MUJAHEDDEEN STATE

As mentioned, with the withdrawal of the Soviet Union from Afghanistan, the Mujahidin under the leadership of Burhanuddin Rabbani took over and the last government supported by the Soviets, which was the government of "Dr. Najibullah", collapsed. With the collapse of Najibullah's government in April 1992, groups and factions that claimed war against the Soviet Union demanded a share in the government. The government that was established by the Mujahideen was not very similar to a modern government. Although Burhanuddin Rabbani had a presidential claim, influential people like Hekmatyar and many other leaders did not obey him. For this reason, the biggest and most heinous bloody wars took place among the Mujahideen and the economy collapsed. Mujahideen groups were fighting each other every day. A clear and tragic example of that era was the Afshar massacre when the government (Burhanuddin Rabbani's government) mercilessly massacred all the common people and did not respect people's wealth and honor and destroyed everything. The tragedies left over from the Mujahideen regime are extremely disgusting and inhumane (Sharifi., & Adamou, 2018).

2.1.1. About Mujahedeen

The Afghan Mujahideen were various armed Islamist rebel groups that fought against the government of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan and the Soviet Union during the Soviet–Afghan War and the subsequent First Afghan Civil War. The term Mujahideen is used

in a religious context by Muslims to refer to those engaged in a struggle of any nature for the sake of Islam, commonly referred to as Jihad. The Afghan Mujahideen consisted of numerous groups that differed from each other across ethnic and/or ideological lines but were united by their anti-communist and pro-Islamic goals. The union was also widely referred to by their Western backers as the Afghan resistance, while the Western press often referred to them as Muslim rebels, guerrillas, or "Mountain Men". They were popularly referred to by Soviet troops as Dukhi as a derivation from the Dari word Dushman, which turned into short Dukh and also was suitable due to their guerrilla tactics; Afghan civilians often referred to them as the Tanzim (organization), while the Afghan government called them enemy', a term also employed by the Soviets (Sheridan, 1998).

The militants of the Afghan Mujahideen were recruited and organized immediately after the SU invaded Afghanistan in 1979, initially from the regular Afghan population and defectors from the Afghan military, to wage an armed struggle against both the communist government of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan, which had taken power in the 1978 Saur Revolution, and the Soviet Union, which had invaded the country in support of the former. There were many ideologically different factions among the Mujahideen, with the most influential being the Jamiat-e Islami and Hezb-e Islami Gulbuddin parties. The Afghan Mujahideen were generally divided into two distinct alliances, the larger and more significant Sunni Islamic Union collectively referred to as the "Peshawar Seven", based in Pakistan, and the smaller Shia Islamic Union collectively referred to as the "Tehran Eight", based in Iran; as well as independent units that referred to themselves as Mujahideen. The "Peshawar Seven" alliance received heavy assistance from the United States (Operation Cyclone), the United Kingdom, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and China, as well as other countries and private international donors (Sheridan, 1998).

The basic units of the Mujahideen continued to reflect the highly decentralized nature of Afghan society and strong loci of competing Pashtun tribal groups, which had formed a union with other Afghan groups under intense American, Saudi Arabian, and Pakistani pressure. The alliance sought to function as a united diplomatic front towards the international community and sought representation in the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference. The Afghan Mujahideen also saw thousands of volunteers from various Muslim countries come to Afghanistan to aid the resistance. The majority of the international fighters came from the Arab world, and later became known as Afghan Arabs; the most well-known Arab financier and militant of the group during this period was Osama bin Laden, who would

later mastermind the September 11 attacks on the United States. Other international fighters from the Indian subcontinent became involved in terrorist activities in Kashmir and against the states of Bangladesh and Myanmar during the 1990s (Sheridan, 1998).

The Mujahideen guerrillas fought a long and costly war against the Soviet military, which suffered heavy losses and withdrew from the country in 1989, after which the rebels' war against the communist Afghan government continued. The loosely-aligned Mujahideen took the capital city of Kabul in 1992 following the collapse of the Moscow-backed government. However, the new Mujahideen government that was formed by the Peshawar Accords following these events was quickly fractured by rival factions and became severely dysfunctional. This unrest quickly escalated into a second civil war, which saw the large-scale collapse of the united Afghan Mujahideen and the victorious emergence of the Taliban, which established the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan shortly after taking over most of the country in 1996. The Taliban groups were then ousted in 2001 but regrouped and retook the country in 2021 (Sheridan, 1998).

2.2.Civil War: Regional Renewal and Taliban Rise and fall

The Saur Revolution or Sowr Revolution also known as the April Revolution or the April Coup, was staged on 27–28 April 1978 by the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA), and overthrew Afghan president Mohammed Daoud Khan, who had himself taken power in the 1973 Afghan coup d'état and established an autocratic one-party system in the country. Daoud and most of his family were executed at the Arg in the capital city of Kabul by PDPA-affiliated military officers, after which his supporters were also purged and killed. The successful PDPA uprising resulted in the creation of a socialist Afghan government that was closely aligned with the Soviet Union, with Nur Muhammad Taraki serving as the PDPA's General Secretary of the Revolutionary Council. Saur or Sowr is the Dari-language name for the second month of the Solar Hijri calendar, during which the events took place (Ewans, 2002)

The uprising was ordered by PDPA member Hafizullah Amin, who would become a significant figure in the revolutionary Afghan government. At a press conference in New York in June 1978, Amin claimed that the event was not a coup d'état, but rather a "popular revolution" carried out by the "will of the people" against Daoud's government. The Saur Revolution involved heavy fighting throughout Afghanistan and resulted in the deaths of as many as 2,000 military personnel and civilians combined; it remains a significant event in

Afghanistan's history as it marked the beginning of decades of continuous conflict in the country (Ewans, 2002).

When the system of PDPA eventually collapsed in April 1992, after this collapse, the S.U which eventually lied its foreign aid, Afghanistan fell into civil war. Mojahideen failed to form an all-inclusive government in Kabul. The first dissenting voice came from Gulbeddin Hekmatyar, the famous man of the Jihad era and the highest Jihadist power of the tribe who could not tolerate the leadership of Tajik descent. Little by little, ethnic stereotypes and linguistic and regional biases spread and damaged the nature of Jihad and resistance until they made the most scandalous war Afshar's calamity. In the Afshar incident, all involved parties were blamed, and personal or group acquittal is a great punishment for the historical truth. Hezb-i-Wahdat shielded the citizens during the government's order to launch the offensive, which resulted in several civilian casualties and wounds (Haidari, 2023).

The lack of unity of groups and parties and the lack of formation of a strong central government in Kabul, after the withdrawal of the S.U from Afghanistan, opened huge opportunities for regional interventionists and countries. After the collapse of the communist government in Kabul, the major and deep, and destructive interventions of Pakistan and Iran increased sharply. Cities like Herat and Mazar-e-Sharif had a stable government, but the rest of the regions were heavily dominated by the Mujahideen groups, which faced numerous problems and atrocities every day (Saikal, 2012).

In 1993-1994, Afghan Sunni Muslim clerics and students, mostly of rural, Pashtun origin, formed the Taliban movement. Many were former anti-Soviet fighters known as Mujahideen.

After the 1989 Soviet withdrawal and the subsequent collapse of the Soviet-supported Afghan government in 1992, a civil war among mujahideen parties broke out. Those former fighters who had become disillusioned with the civil war formed the backbone of the Taliban. Many members of the movement had studied in seminaries in neighboring Pakistan and chose the name Taliban (plural of Talib, a student, in this case, of Islam) to distance themselves from the Mujahideen (Rashid, 2000).

According to the 9/11 Commission Report, Pakistan supported the Taliban because of the group's potential to "bring order in chaotic Afghanistan and make it a cooperative ally," thus giving Pakistan "greater security on one of the several borders where Pakistani military officers hoped for what they called 'strategic depth'" (The 9/11 Commission Report, 2004).

Taliban beliefs and practices were consonant with, and derived in part from, the conservative tribal traditions of Pashtuns, who represent a plurality (though not a majority) of Afghanistan's complex ethnic makeup and who have traditionally ruled Afghanistan.

The Taliban viewed the post-Soviet occupation government of President Burhanuddin Rabbani as weak, corrupt, and anti-Pashtun. The four years of civil war between the Mujahideen groups (1992-1996) resulted in popular support for the Taliban as they were seen as less corrupt and more able to deliver stability; as Zalmay Khalilzad, later U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan and Special Representative for Afghanistan Reconciliation, wrote in his 2016 memoir, "I, like many, was optimistic about the Taliban" at the outset (Khalilzad, 2016).

The Taliban took control of the southern city of Kandahar in November 1994, and launched a series of armed campaigns throughout the country that culminated in the capture of Kabul on September 27, 1996. The Taliban reportedly received significant direct military support from Pakistan in their offensives.¹

After taking over Afghanistan, the Taliban ruled almost three-quarters of the country from 1996 to 2001 under the name of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan. In these years, only the countries of Pakistan, the United Arab Emirates, and Saudi Arabia recognized the Taliban. After the American attack on Afghanistan, which led to their removal from power, the Taliban fought once again in 2006 by reorganizing themselves as a rebel movement against the American-backed government of Hamid Karzai and the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) led by The North Atlantic Treaty organization (NATO). Following the fall of Kabul on August 15, 2021, the Taliban regained power in Afghanistan.

After the death of Mullah Akhtar Mansour, the current leader of the Taliban is Mullah Hebatullah since 2016. On February 29, 2020, the Taliban and the United States of America signed the Doha Agreement in Qatar on 29 February 2020, the US–Taliban deal, officially titled Agreement for Bringing Peace to Afghanistan, was signed in Doha, Qatar the provisions of the deal included the withdrawal of all American and NATO troops from Afghanistan, a Taliban pledge to prevent al-Qaeda from operating in areas under Taliban control, and talks between the Taliban and the Afghan government (Qazi, Shereena, 2020).

Despite the peace agreement between the US and the Taliban, insurgent attacks against Afghan security forces were reported to have surged in the country. In the 45 days after the

¹ . Crisis of Impunity: The Role of Pakistan, Russia, and Iran in Fueling the Civil War, Human Rights Watch, July 2001.

agreement (between 1 March and 15 April 2020), the Taliban conducted more than 4,500 attacks in Afghanistan, which showed an increase of more than 70% as compared to the same period in the previous year. Talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban began in Doha on 12 September 2020. The negotiations were set for March but have been delayed over a prisoner exchange dispute. Mawlawi Abdul Hakim led the initial negotiations for the Taliban. Abdullah Abdullah was one of the leading figures for the Afghan republic's negotiating team, and the Afghan government team also comprised women's rights activists.

In mid-2021, the Taliban led a major offensive in Afghanistan during the withdrawal of US troops from the country, which gave them control of over half of Afghanistan's 421 districts as of 23 July 2021. By mid-August 2021, the Taliban controlled every major city in Afghanistan; following the near seizure of the capital Kabul, the Taliban occupied the Presidential Palace after the incumbent President Ashraf Ghani fled Afghanistan to the United Arab Emirates. Ghani's Asylum was confirmed by the UAE Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation on 18 August 2021. The remaining Afghan forces under the leadership of Amrullah Saleh, Ahmad Massoud, and Bismillah Khan Mohammadi retreated to Panjshir to continue resistance (Qazi, Shereena, 2020).

2.3.THE PROSPECTS OF CONFLICTS IN THE REGION

During the occupation, the Soviets closed Afghanistan's northern borders with central Asia, which are now open with Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan. For the first time since the Islamic caliphate of the medieval period, a regional economic institution (the Economic Cooperation Organization, or (ECO) provides a forum for these states to discuss matters of regional significance, particularly economic and cultural issues. Though the ECO is still a new and relatively weak organization, its very existence – and its inclusion of Afghanistan-is of great importance to the region and eventually may be the key to securing a regional solution to the conflict in Afghanistan (Schetter, 2003).

2.3.1. Central Asia and the Dismemberment of Afghanistan

The dissolution of a central government in Afghanistan raises the specter of partitioning the country out of existence- what Eden Naby referred to as the dismemberment of Afghanistan. Because of their ethnic homogeneity, the country's various regions could be partitioned among the appropriate neighboring central Asian states – the Shia communities transferred to Iran, the Pashtun south to Pakistan, the Uzbek northwest to Uzbekistan, and the Tajik northeast to Tajikistan. However, none of the key regional states in Central Asia currently

has a strong or compelling interest in such a scenario, nor are they likely to have one soon (though, as we shall see, the central Asian states have differing positions on the point). It is worth examining these states' specific political and economic concerns in Afghanistan to understand their likely positions in the future (Saikal, 2012).

2.3.1.1. Iran

Iran's foreign policy is directed at increasing its regional influence, not just in Afghanistan but among the newly independent Central Asian states. To demonstrate its legitimacy as a regional power, Iran must confront the Afghanistan issue. While Iran may have its interests and concerns regarding the stability of Afghanistan and the potential impact of any instability on its borders, there is no substantiated information to suggest that Iran has actively sought to dismember Afghanistan or supported any actions leading to its fragmentation. (Roy, 2004).

Unlike the other regions of Afghanistan, which are contiguous with ethnically similar states, the Shia communities are not adjacent to Iran. Therefore, in Central Asia, the only Farsi-speaking country in Central Asia, Tajikistan, will be the one which Iran wishes to establish strong cultural relations. Without a land bridge through Afghanistan, the route from Iran to Tajikistan winds through Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. Moreover, dismemberment would likely work to Iran's disadvantage, since it would not automatically result in a stable geographic unit and could put the other regional competitors in a position to annex Afghan territory. At the 2021 October 27, conference hosted by Iran, the Iranian representatives demonstrated their preference for exploring solutions that would maintain Afghanistan as a stable area through which Iran could conduct economic and cultural activity (Sharifi., & Adamou, 2021).

Iran has pursued several policies toward Afghanistan in recent years. Initially, the Iranians backed Hizb-i-Wahdat, the military force of the Shia community in Afghanistan, a policy largely dictated by the ideological establishment in Iran but also consistent with state interests. However, the Shia community and members of Hizb-e-Wahdat in Afghanistan are exclusively Afghan and not Iranian. Until recently, the Iranians were engaged in intense diplomatic dialogue with the Taliban, which quickly turned into bitter antagonism after the fall of Afghanistan, where Hizb-e-Wahdat collapsed by Taliban due to the bitter antagonism. Since then, Iran has pursued a balance of power strategy, supporting anyone fighting against the Taliban, including even Masoud for a while (Baquer, 2016).

2.3.1.2. Turkmenistan

Afghanistan's dismemberment offers compelling political benefit to Turkmenistan. The number of Turkmen in Afghanistan is negligible, and though there are strong ethnic and tribal connections across the border. They will not soon become a powerful force in Turkmenistan's foreign policy. The overriding foreign policy concerns for Turkmenistan are economic-it seeks to encourage investment and gain access to the world market in ways other than those its geographic position would allow. Currently, its domestic market is almost wholly dependent on Russian transit and much less so on the Iranian infrastructure, though Turkmenistan is the only Central Asian state with viable access to the outside world through a non-Russian route (that is, through a new railroad link and other overland contacts in Iran). The expansion of Turkmenistan's access to Iranian transit requires stable routes through Afghanistan. Naby argues that the primary economic incentive for dismemberment arises because Turkmen in Afghanistan live adjacent to the country's border in a region that could provide its plentiful major resources, like natural gas, directly to the international market. It should be noted, however, that most of Afghanistan's natural gas is in the country's Uzbek region (Panda, 2015).

2.3.1.3. Uzbekistan

Uzbekistan has the strongest ethnic and ideological connection to Afghanistan but, so far, the link has not been stridently nationalist. Large numbers of Uzbeks in Afghanistan provide leverage for Uzbekistan as it seeks to extend its trade routes. The ex-communist bureaucrats who run Uzbekistan have maintained economic viability and stability, which they wish to preserve. More importantly, Uzbekistan owns the only bridge (at Termez) that permits trade with Afghanistan to the south. On the other hand, Uzbekistan actively participates in regional efforts to combat terrorism, extremism, and drug trafficking. It cooperates with other Central Asian countries, as well as international partners, to enhance border security, intelligence sharing, and joint counterterrorism operations (Mojdeh, 2002).

2.3.1.4. Tajikistan

For a variety of reasons, Tajikistan is the least likely of the Central Asian states to support dismemberment. First, the stability of northern Afghanistan, along with substantial international support is essential for Tajikistan to secure its most promising route to regional and international markets: a permanent bridge, like the one in Termez, to carry either rail or overland truck traffic across the Amu Darya River. Second, because of its diver sources, the meaning of Tajik ethnic identity is currently a matter of bitter dispute in Tajikistan; consequently, solidarity with the relatively homogenous Persian-speaking Tajiks in

Afghanistan is quite low. Finally, as a result of these internal ethnic cleavages and other regional divisions, Tajikistan is highly unstable politically. Without a strong internal identity or domestic consensus, the Tajiks are in no position to push for anything other than stability in Afghanistan. In summary, most of the region's states share an interest in Afghanistan's territorial integrity and not one has actively sought to dismember it (Maley, 2010).

2.3.1.5. Pakistan

According to Marvin Weinbaum, Pakistan's primary interests in Afghanistan ensuring that Kabul does not ally itself with forces hostile to Pakistan; creating an Afghanistan to which the large community of refugees in Pakistan may someday return, securing a land bridge through Afghanistan for economic, cultural, and political linkage with Central Asia (a goal Pakistan have pursued consistently over the years through economic support of pan Islamic figures Afghanistan). To meet these objectives, Pakistan requires a reasonably peaceful Afghanistan with a central government and a cohesive state. The idea of a federation or economic integration between Pakistan and Afghanistan has been discussed (even at one point by General Zia), but it does not have wide appeal either in Pakistan or in Afghanistan (where there is a widespread fear of Pakistani domination) (Baquer, 2016).

Pakistan's goals in Afghanistan are clear, but it has not settled on a single force or means for attaining them. In the past, it has backed anyone who could provide a minimum of stability in Afghanistan: Gulbuddin Hekmatyar during the attempted coup in 1990, Rabbani and the Mujahideen after the Islamabad Agreement, and recently Dostum in an unsuccessful attempt to create a coalition government (Mojdeh, 2002).

Researchers believe Pakistan's support for the Taliban is a very risky strategy that stems from a misjudgment about Pakistan's ability to control Afghanistan's politics. The Pakistanis were successful in bringing the Jihad parties together and creating an effective base of resistance during the war, but their influence is very limited. They are not carefully considering the unintended consequences of their strategy. For instance, the worst possible outcome for Pakistan would be an incomplete Taliban victory, one that put a de facto Pashtun regime in power and provided a strong impetus to Pashtun separatist sentiments in Northwestern Pakistan. Also, any government to emerge in Kabul will sooner or later turn to New Delhi to counterbalance the influence of Pakistan (Ahadi, 1995).

To many observers, Pakistan's refusal to attend 2021 the October 27 regional conference sponsored by Iran suggests that the Pakistanis are supporting the Taliban to secure

commercial routes through Afghanistan to central Asia and to make sure that Iran does not gain a foothold in Afghanistan and Pakistanis did not wish to encourage Iran's efforts to play the role of regional power, they were also displeased that India had been invited to the conference and that the Afghan combatants had not been (Eide, 2017).



CHAPTER THREE

THE EMERGENCE OF TALIBAN AND AL-QAEDA AND PROBLEMS IN AFGHANISTAN

In this chapter, we try to study the issue of the rise of Taliban and Al-Qaeda in Afghanistan. In this direction, it is tried to study the problems that have arisen from the interaction of the Taliban with Al-Qaeda. Because the emergence of the Taliban and their interaction with Al-Qaeda requires the examination of very complex and intertwined issues that must be studied.

3.1.The Emergence of Taliban and Al-Qaeda

The war of Afghans against the Soviet Union in the 1980s brought nearly 20,000 Jihadists from all over the world to this country with financial and military aid (Chaliand., & Arno, 2007).

A hardline Islamist named Abdullah Azzam was one of the first to arrive in Pakistan and established the Al-Khaimat Al-Ujahin Ularab School, presumably to eliminate the Jihadists in 1984. Azzam supported the school, and after crossing Azzam with a car bomb in 1989, he became a pioneer of the system and renamed it "Al-Qaeda" (Majdeh, 2002).

Finally, the Jihad of the Afghan people against the Soviet Union ended, the Soviets were expelled from Afghanistan, and the Mujahideen captured Kabul in April 1992. As explained earlier, Mujahideen did not succeed in establishing a strong government. In addition to the fact that Mujahideen could not form a successful government, the war between the groups was going on every day. Because of this, the people were deeply dissatisfied with this situation, and this situation caused the Taliban to emerge and occupy all of Afghanistan with the slogan of moderation, peace, and Islam from Kandahar (Majdeh, 2002).

According to Vahid Mojdeh, who was one of the diplomats of the Taliban: "As mentioned earlier, the Taliban introduced goals for themselves in the beginning, which all the people of Afghanistan went towards with interest. Ensuring Islamic justice, preventing lawlessness, and establishing a government based on Islamic Sharia, etc., were among the goals and policies that the Taliban promoted in the early days" (Mojdeh,2002).

Although the Taliban make extravagant claims and give ambitious slogans, from the point of view of analysts, the Taliban is an ethnic group that considers government and power

in Afghanistan to be its right of inheritance. Because as mentioned in the past, throughout the history of Afghanistan, only two periods, one Habibullah Khan Kalkani (1929) and Burhanuddin Rabbani (1992), have been able to take power from the Pashtuns and as it is known they also did not have a regular, centralized and successful government. Therefore, the Taliban and the Pashtuns are not ready under any circumstances to lose the government and power that is the legacy of their ancestors (Ahadi, 1995).

The Taliban ruled for five years in the previous round. During five years, they killed thousands of Hazaras. Women were completely denied the right to education. During their rule, the Taliban unleashed such violence and terror that the people of Afghanistan cried out. Likewise, in 2000, when the Taliban captured Bamyan, they massacred more than 170 Hazara men in 4 days (Human Rights Watch, 2001). Imposed on the people of Afghanistan (Rashid, 2000).

The Taliban had turned Afghanistan into a secluded life and a haven for extremist Muslims and radical Islamists. One of the extreme extremist group was al-Qaeda, the leader of which was present in Kabul at that time, and according to the activities of this group, following the invitation of Osama bin Laden, the American embassies in Kenya and Tanzania were blown up in August 1998. After the explosion of the US embassies, the Al-Qaeda group attacked the Twin Towers in the center of America with airplanes. Osama Bin Laden, who was the main suspect in the murder of 3,000 people in 93 countries, the US demanded from Taliban to immediate handover Osama Bin Laden to them, and the United States also demanded the blocking of all terrorist training camps throughout Afghanistan. This demand of America was rejected by the Taliban, and for this reason, on October 7th, 2001, the United States, with the permission of the United Nations and with the participation of 40 countries, started "Operation Enduring Freedom", in which the Taliban regime fell on December 9th, 2001, and their leaders fled (Frontline, 2006).

By attacking Afghanistan, the US destroyed all the Taliban emirates within two months, and a transitional government was formed in Afghanistan headed by Karzai, NATO and the Afghan government was optimistic about ending the insurgents in the country, but the Taliban insurgents returned as an active group. After 2006, violence, especially from the Taliban group, increased, and the increase in violence and attacks by the Taliban caused the optimism about the end of the war and violence in Afghanistan to be considered a false assessment of the optimistic view. America's preoccupation with Iraq and the growth of corruption in the Afghan government caused the Taliban to grow continuously and systematically. Although serious and

detailed operations were carried out under the leadership of NATO in various regions of Afghanistan to clean up the Taliban groups during the years 2006 to 2008 because the United States was in trouble with Iraq and the Afghan government was extremely unsuccessful, and they could not prevent from the infiltration of Taliban group (Hamid, 2018).

After 2006, Taliban got stronger day by day at that time, Afghanistan's Honesty Watch reported that the Taliban has become extremely powerful compared to previous years and controlled many areas. According to the report of this institution, more than 79% of the respondents had expressed their lack of confidence in the Afghan government (Afghanistan, 2014).

At that time, unfortunately, the security situation was very confused and disorganized. The Taliban, the Haqqani network, Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State (ISIS), and other guerilla factions were practically at war with the Afghan government, while the Afghan government under the presidency of Hamid Karzai did not have a regular plan to maintain security and provide people's livelihood.

Although the Taliban suffered heavy casualties in twenty years, this group never got tired of war and they were constantly at war with foreign forces in the beginning and then with the Afghan army. In 2013, Mullah Muhammad Omar, the leader of the Taliban in Pakistan, died. Although the Taliban hid his death until 2015, practically the opponents of Mullah Omar gathered around the axis of Mullah Akhtar Mansour, which clearly showed that they are no longer the leader of the Taliban. On May 23, 2016, when he was returning from Iran, Mullah Akhtar Mansour was targeted by an American drone attack in Pakistan's Baluchistan and was killed. The Taliban wanted to hide the death of Mansour, but they could not, so they had to introduce Akhundzadeh as the leader of the Taliban. Jalal Uddin Haqqani, who was one of the senior members of the Taliban, started the Haqqani network, and this terrible and barbaric network trained the most suicide bombers between 2004 and 2010, which at that time had about 3000 fighters and supporters. Al-Qaeda group was missing from Afghanistan until recently after the American attacks on Afghanistan, until recently when the Taliban returned, it was revealed that Ayman al-Zawahiri was the leader of Al-Qaeda in Kabul and was killed by an American drone (Katzman, 2016).

For twenty years, the Afghan government believed that the Taliban was an Afghan insurgent network. Because Karzai was a master and did not want the war between Afghans to continue, they entered Hari to make peace with the Taliban. In one of his speeches, he called

the Taliban disaffected brothers and asked them to join the peace process. Karzai continued to say that the Taliban are our unhappy brothers, but Al-Qaeda and ISIS are our enemies (Hamid, 2018; Mortazavi, 2018).

3.2.The History and Background of Taliban

The Taliban are still an unknown phenomenon, not because we cannot explain who they are, why they fought, and why they were so successful? It is unknown because it is not possible to introduce their main intellectual and driving force. The main point here is that a part of Afghan society is the Taliban. It is the Taliban who are rampant, who commit violence and abuse, and who are never ashamed of any type of oppression and cruelty, and the more crimes they commit, the more successful they feel (Vinay, 2018).

In any case, the Taliban believed and still believe that the people of Afghanistan have lost their way and cannot walk in the way that Islam has said and recommended. From the Taliban's point of view, it is obligatory issue for them to guide the people of Afghanistan and lead them on the right path of Mohammedan Islam. Because before the Taliban, due to intra-party and internal conflicts between Mujahideen, all systems had collapsed and major networks of leaders had been formed (Larson, 2015).

A Taliban commentary from mid-1995, about seven months after the expansion began, says: “We saw what happened when there was no Sharia law in the country. One or two years ago, there is a real case of this disaster that a public appearance without law or serious law appeared. There are different views on national and global approach issues within the Taliban, and thinking about development as a gathering is misguided. Indeed, even in their most elaborate demonstrations, there were unmistakable Taliban overtones. All things considered, the message from the Taliban center generally resonated that Afghanistan expects a return to peace and that they have come to offer security and equality based on Islam. For the Taliban, their initial achievement was not based on their unrivaled military power, but rather on the expression of universal displeasure and urgency about the successive conditions of collapse (Murtazawi, 2018).

In 1995, the leader of the Taliban, Mullah Mohammad Omar, announced that he had gone to religious scholars for advice and received permission from all the religious scholars to end the degenerate and oppressive government of Kabul (the Mujahideen government). Although there was no press and media at that time, the Taliban has always quoted Mullah Omar. Mulla Omar stated that “We consider the development and provision of security and

justice as our responsibility according to the Islamic Sharia law, and we have started our actions to consolidate the Islamic system and provide Sharia justice” (Eide.K. 2017).

For this reason and with the same propaganda, the Taliban group started their attacks from the Spen Boldak area of Kandahar and captured Kandahar very quickly, and proceeded to conquer other areas. Although the Taliban were weak and disorganized in the beginning, after the capture of Kandahar, this group became cohesive until they overthrew the Mujahideen government in 1996, and a centralized and powerful government based on the foundations of an extreme reading of Islam, their government established. Within four months of beginning, they had not just figured out how to grow their scope to inside a couple of kilometers of Kabul, yet had likewise settled boards of trustees and offices that, anyway inadequately they performed practically speaking, were intended to satisfy government elements of universal tact, social insurance, and monetary improvement nearby the development's center objectives of giving security and equity (Felix, 2015).

3.3.Fall from Power and Uprising

World powers and countries in the region worried long ago that the Taliban might establish a strong and dark relationship with extremist Islamist groups, especially Al-Qaeda. These concerns have arisen since the Taliban appeared in Kandahar and focused their slogans on the provision of Sharia in an extreme style. The concerns of the world and the region peaked when the behavior of the Taliban relying on financial resources through opium and also their inhumane restrictions on the rights of women, children, and youth, and finally the presence of Bin Laden in Afghanistan was observed (Jackson, 2019).

The Taliban's sheltering of Al Qaeda leader Osama Bin Laden eventually became the central issue affecting international views of relations with the Taliban. In 1996, Bin Laden moved from Sudan to Afghanistan, where he had previously spent most of the 1980s as a high-profile financier and organizer of efforts to aid the Mujahideen. Bin Laden established an alliance with the Taliban whereby he provided millions in financial aid to the group (and military support for Taliban efforts to complete their conquest of the country), and the Taliban provided a haven for Al Qaeda recruits and training camps. Over 10,000 Al Qaeda fighters may have trained at Al Qaeda camps in Afghanistan. U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Bill Richardson visited Kabul in April 1998, the highest-ranking U.S. official to do so in decades. In response to Richardson's request that the Taliban expel Bin Laden, the group “answered that

they did not know his whereabouts. In any case, the Taliban said, Bin Laden was not a threat to the United States.” (Jackson, 2019).

In response to the August 1998 Al Qaeda bombings of U.S. embassies in Africa, the United States launched cruise missile attacks on Al Qaeda targets in Afghanistan. They were unsuccessful in either killing Bin Laden or persuading the Taliban to expel him. U.S. pressure on Saudi Arabia and Pakistan (which, along with the United Arab Emirates, formally recognized the Taliban government) to use their influence to convince the Taliban to expel the Al Qaeda leader proved equally unsuccessful. The United States and United Nations imposed sanctions on the Taliban as well (see “Sanctions,” below). Taliban leadership was unmoved; their relationship with Bin Laden was “sometimes tense” but “the foundation was deep and personal (Jackson, 2019).

On September 11, 2001, Al Qaeda operatives conducted a series of terrorist attacks in the United States that killed nearly 3,000 people. In a nationwide address before a joint session of Congress on September 20, 2001, President George W. Bush demanded that the Taliban hand over Al Qaeda leaders, permanently close terrorist training camps, and give the United States access to such camps, adding that the Taliban “must hand over the terrorists, or they will share in their fate.” Taliban leaders refused, citing Bin Laden’s status as their guest and what they characterized as a lack of evidence of his involvement in the attacks (Washington Post, 2001).

Pursuant to an Authorization for the Use of Military Force (AUMF) against the perpetrators of the attack as well as those who aided or harbored them (P.L. 107-40), U.S. military action in Afghanistan began on October 7, 2001, with airstrikes on Taliban targets throughout the country and close air support to anti-Taliban Afghan forces (known as the Northern Alliance). Limited numbers of U.S. Army Special Forces, Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) paramilitary forces, and conventional ground forces began deploying in Afghanistan less than two weeks later (RAND Corporation, 2015).

By November 13, the Taliban evacuated Kabul, which U.S.-backed Afghan forces soon retook. In late November 2001, the United Nations (U.N.) convened Afghan opposition leaders in Bonn, Germany, to form a transitional government, even as Taliban forces were still fighting in their final redoubt, Kandahar. The Taliban were not included in those talks, at which Afghan opposition leaders selected Hamid Karzai as the interim leader of the country. Taliban leader Mullah Mohammad Omar and others reportedly offered to recognize Karzai and surrender their

arms and Kandahar to Afghan opposition forces in December 2001, in exchange for being allowed to return to their homes (Anand Gopal, 2014).

At a December 6, 2001, press conference, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld said an arrangement where Omar could live “in dignity” would not be acceptable, and he cast doubt on the prospects for a negotiated settlement. Some Taliban leaders were arrested and detained; others, like Omar, escaped to Pakistan, where many Al Qaeda leaders also fled. Some observers assert that U.S. forces, lacking Al Qaeda targets to combat, focused on low-level Taliban fighters “because they [were] there,” sometimes becoming involved in local disputes that were unrelated to terrorism and contributing to the growth of the insurgency (Gopal, op, 2018),

U.S. officials declared an end to major combat operations in Afghanistan on May 1, 2003, though Rumsfeld said that “pockets of resistance in certain parts of the country remain.” By 2005, scattered Taliban forces had begun to regroup in southern and eastern Afghanistan, as well as in Pakistan, where many observers suspected they were being tolerated by, if not receiving active support from, Pakistan’s security and intelligence services (Waldman, 2010).

By 2006, Taliban forces were reported to be clashing “daily” with U.S. and coalition forces and administering areas of southern Afghanistan under their control. To combat the growing insurgency, U.S. troop levels in Afghanistan were increased after 2006, supplemented by a comprehensive nation-building effort. By 2009, the Taliban had expanded their presence in the north, reaching areas far from the south and east. While U.S. observers judged that the Taliban did not have significant popular support, a combination of factors, including widespread Afghan government corruption and the Taliban’s provision of some basic services (including justice) allowed it to make inroads in local communities; it also extended its influence through intimidation. The group also adjusted its tactics, focusing on coordinated assaults against remote outposts of U.S. and coalition forces, as well as the use of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) (Evans, 2010).

In response, the United States increased its counterinsurgency efforts, with President Obama announcing in 2009 an additional increase in U.S. military and development personnel and funding for Afghanistan, a “surge” of resources that peaked with the deployment of nearly 100,000 U.S. troops in Afghanistan in 2010 along with other international forces. The surge of international forces reduced Taliban control in the south and east but did not eliminate it. Afghan forces began assuming security responsibilities from international forces as scheduled in mid-2011. These forces were weakened by high casualty and attrition rates and a corrupt

chain of command and remained largely dependent on the United States for logistical and tactical support. In contrast, the Taliban possessed a large and effective intelligence network, its fighters remained highly motivated, and the group adopted a flexible range of tactical and strategic approaches to expand their influence and combat U.S. and Afghan forces (such as infiltrators or “green on blue” attacks). Successful Taliban operations often both sapped the Afghan government’s capabilities and undermined the Afghan public’s confidence in the government and its security forces. As the surge of U.S. forces ended in September 2012, U.S. officials expressed confidence that it “broke the Taliban’s momentum” as they continued to transfer responsibility for security to Afghan forces. The Obama Administration came to assess that the conflict had no military solution and began low-level negotiations with the Taliban as early as late 2010. The talks centered largely on confidence-building measures, including the opening of a short-lived Taliban political office in Doha, Qatar. The refusal of the Taliban to engage with the Afghan government, and the Afghan government’s opposition to U.S. negotiations with the Taliban at which the government was not represented, constrained and eventually led to the dissolution of talks in 2014 (Evan MacAskill et al, 2010).

Throughout 2021, Afghan officials sought to downplay the potential detrimental impact of the U.S. troop withdrawal while emphasizing the need for continued U.S. financial assistance to Afghan forces. In May 2021 press conference, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Mark Milley said “bad outcomes” were not “inevitable,” given what he characterized as the strengths of the Afghan government and military. In its 2021 annual threat assessment, the Office of the Director of National Intelligence reported that “the Afghan Government will struggle to hold the Taliban at bay if the Coalition withdraws support.” An external assessment published in January 2021 concluded that the Taliban enjoyed a strong advantage over the Afghanistan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF) in cohesion and a slight advantage in force employment and that the two forces essentially split on material resources and external support (Gen. Milley Press Briefing, July 21, 2021).

The one ANDSF advantage force size was assessed as much narrower than often assumed. The author concluded in his net assessment that the Taliban enjoyed a narrow advantage over the government. The Taliban had also come to control significant territory: in October 2018, the last time the U.S. government made such data publicly available, the group controlled or contested as much as 40% of Afghanistan and the group continued to make gradual gains in subsequent years. In early May 2021, the Taliban began a sweeping advance that captured wide swaths of the country’s rural areas, solidifying the group’s hold on some

areas in which it already had a significant presence. The Taliban's seizure of other districts was more surprising: some northern areas had militarily resisted the Taliban when the group was in power in the 1990s, making their 2021 fall to the Taliban particularly significant. One source estimated that the Taliban took control of over 100 of Afghanistan's 400 districts in May and June 2021 (Gen. Milley Press Briefing, July 21, 2021).

The speed of the Taliban's advance reportedly surprised some within the group, with one commander saying that his forces were intentionally avoiding capturing provincial capitals before the departure of U.S. forces. In July, the Taliban began seizing border crossings with Tajikistan, Iran, and Pakistan. On July 21, 2021, General Milley estimated that the Taliban controlled over 200 districts, but emphasized that the Taliban had not seized any provincial capitals, where Afghan forces had been consolidated (Gen. Milley Press Briefing, July 21, 2021).

On August 6, 2021, the Taliban captured the provincial capital of Zaranj. The Taliban's capture of half of Afghanistan's provincial capitals in the following week shocked many observers and, reportedly, U.S. officials (Zeke Miller et al., 2021).

By August 13 2021, U.S. officials were reportedly concerned that the Taliban could move on to Kabul within days. With the fall of Jalalabad in the east and Mazar-eSharif in the north, the Taliban captured the last major cities and eliminated the final outposts of organized Afghan government resistance. On the morning of August 15, 2021, the Taliban began entering Kabul, completing their effective takeover of the country. The central province of Panjshir, where some former Afghan leaders attempted to establish an armed resistance to the Taliban (see more below), was reportedly captured by Taliban forces in September 2021 (Susannah George, 2021).

While the Taliban faced stiff, if ultimately unsuccessful, resistance from government forces in some areas, some provincial capitals and other areas were taken with minimal fighting. In many of these areas, the Taliban reportedly secured the departure of government forces (and the handover of their weapons) through payments or through the mediation of local elders seeking to avoid bloodshed (Susannah George, 2021).

On September 7, 2021, longtime Taliban spokesperson Zabihullah Mujahid made his first official appearance in public. He announced the names of 33 individuals who were described as "acting" ministers that fill a "caretaker cabinet" to administer the country. The Taliban refer to this government, as they have for decades referred to themselves, as the Islamic

Emirate of Afghanistan. It is unclear by whom and why these individuals might be replaced going forward or in what sense these “caretaker” positions differ from permanent positions. The Taliban’s government in the 1990s reportedly was also “nominally interim.” The Taliban reportedly intends to “implement” the 1964 constitution of the former Afghan monarchy “without any content that contradicts Islamic law and the principles of the Islamic Emirate,” leaving unanswered larger questions about how the group intends to deal with the 2004 constitution, Afghanistan’s parliament, and other elements of the post-2001 political system (S. K. Khan, 2021).

3.4. NATIONAL TRIUMPH OF AFGHANISTAN

The fundamental objectives of the Taliban were strongly informed by what they saw as a prerequisite for the development of a reasonable Afghan government that is, having a deterrent infrastructure. Although they expanded their territory and new territories mostly through fuses and exchanges, the Taliban believed that as long as there was an alternative to war, there would be war, or the whole of Afghanistan would be broken. As Mullah Ghous, the Taliban's first spiritual person to external organizations, explains, “The Taliban are confronting enemies who must expand their favorable military position through war. There are many weapons in Afghanistan. For this reason, you will not be powerless, and without weapons, this war of women will not end, even if it does not end. For this reason, the Taliban continued the war until all the involved parties, especially the Afghan nation, became extremely weak (Tasrah, 2018).

With too much of the outside world, it seems less likely than the Taliban to force all Afghan groups to lay down their arms and surrender. The Taliban's view, however possible, was remarkably extreme. Instead of viewing them from afar as some other Afghan groups did, the Taliban did not believe they were involved in the joint war of the mid-1990s. They were part of the arrangements as a separate gathering. This mission, as the Taliban suggests, was not about banning people. An incredible reversal, as they frequently emphasized, they did not line up in any gathering, were not affiliated with an ethnicity or political program, but followed Islam alone (Stewart, 2018).

Islam gives the system that others should work on. From this point of view, they provided and implemented an Islamic government, which was and still is questionable. Because Mujahideen and other ruling groups in Afghanistan have also thought of such a thing and even all of them have chanted. As mentioned, many groups used this tactic even against

the S.U and armed and united the people of Afghanistan against the S.U Mullah Mohammad Omar, the former leader of the Taliban, also said in 1995 that: “The Taliban are trying to develop Islam and in this way, they do not spare any cost and do everything possible”. Maybe these words of Mullah Omar were not understandable to the world at that time, but this was something that existed and they were seeking to spread extreme and radical Islam, which they only want and accept (Siddique, 2015).

In September 1996, the Taliban captured Kabul. Mullah Omar announced that "After this, an Islamic government will dominate Afghanistan without fraud." (Carlotta Gall, July 30, 2015). The Taliban will continue to form a government that includes the total restoration of past services and encouraging people to return to their workplaces. In any case, the Taliban did not control Afghanistan at the time of Mullah Omar's announcement. The priests who were elected at that time were "functional": their government was transitional, and the future of Afghanistan was to be chosen after the end of the war. In the meantime, the Taliban will focus on their primary mission of preventing chaos and harvesting the hard-earned fruits of Jihad (Siddique, 2015).

Kabul, which was the engine of development and innovation in Afghanistan for a long time, according to a significant part of the Taliban, was the breeding ground of bad things. All things considered, it was in the capital that undesirable belief systems, for example, Communism and Islamism revived by the Muslim Brotherhood, saturated society. This part of the famous deal, known as the Ministry of Education and Virtue, was carried out shortly after the fall of Kabul - which had just been built as part of it (Eide, 2017).

In line with some of the central tenets of the Hanafi School, a large part of the Taliban initiative accepted that Sharia was meant to create a common people that would enable people to grow. The fusion of rural town culture and religious teachings that formed the socio-educational foundations of the senior Taliban pioneers organized a deeply ritualistic and external religious understanding: if something can degenerate people, it should not be allowed. Between 1996 and part of the arrangement in mid-2002, the Taliban continued to try to change the main issues that they saw as the purpose behind the Afghan emergency. While they were involved in various trade routes to make part of the resistance deal, none of them worked. The Taliban saw this as desperate, so the war continued as the resistance forces either consolidated around Ahmad Shah Massoud or fled the country. The issues the Taliban faced in trying to create a functioning state and government were similar to what many hopeful organizations

had experienced before creating both an expert on a fiercely autonomous population and a brutality syndicate inside the ruling suburbs (Siddique, 2015).

It was their understanding of the underlying causes of Afghanistan's emergency and their response to them that isolated them from the past rulers. In contrast to their orientation toward Western countries that promote modernization or adhere to external belief systems, the Taliban carried with them a combination of provincial Pashtun traditions and religious education that they believed needed to be changed (Siddique, 2015).

3.4.1. US Invasion on Afghanistan

In late 2001, the United States and its close allies invaded Afghanistan and toppled the Taliban government. The invasions aimed to dismantle Al-Qaeda, which had executed the September 11 attacks, and to deny it a safe base of operations in Afghanistan by removing the Taliban government from power. The United Kingdom was a key ally of the United States, offering support for military action from the start of invasion preparations. The invasion came after the Afghan Civil War's 1996–2001 phase between the Taliban and the Northern Alliance groups, resulting in the Taliban controlling 80% of the country by 2001. The invasion became the first phase of the 20-year-long War in Afghanistan and marked the beginning of the American-led War on Terror (Sarabi, 2018).

After the September 11 attacks, US President George W. Bush demanded that the Taliban hand over Osama bin Laden and expel Al-Qaeda; Bin Laden had already been wanted by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) since 1998. The Taliban declined to extradite him and ignored demands to shut down terrorist bases or extradite other suspected terrorists. The US launched Operation Enduring Freedom on October 7, 2001, with the United Kingdom. The two were later joined by other forces, including the Northern Alliance. The US and its allies rapidly drove the Taliban from power by December 17, 2001, and built military bases near major cities across the country. Most Al-Qaeda and Taliban members were not captured but escaped to neighboring Pakistan or retreated to rural or remote mountainous regions during the Battle of Tora Bora (Sarabi, 2018).

In December 2001, the United Nations Security Council established the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) to oversee military operations in the country and train the Afghan National Security Forces. At the Bonn Conference in December 2001, Hamid Karzai was selected to head the Afghan Interim Administration. Taliban leader Mullah Omar reorganized the movement, and in 2002 it launched an insurgency against the government and

ISAF. In 2021, while international forces were withdrawing from the country after nearly 20 years of conflict, the Taliban succeeded in overthrowing the Afghan government and re-establishing their rule across much of Afghanistan (Sarabi, 2018).

3.4.2. Roles of Anti-Taliban Leaders

There were a number of political leaders specially Mujahideen who were actively in war with Taliban before the invasion of the United States and its alliance to Afghanistan. And of course these leaders had an important and key role in removing Taliban from Afghanistan. But it was extremely happened by the help of international forces specially U.S. of which supported these leaders which were involved under a specific resistance that was enormously headed by professor Burhanuddin Rabbani (Haqyar, S, Personal communication, 2023).

Here are some important key figures:

3.4.2.1. Professor Burhanuddin Rabbani

Burhanuddin Rabbani, an Afghan politician, leader of Jamiat-e-Islami, and former President of Afghanistan before 2001 while Taliban arose against his government. He made a military coalition (Northern Alliance) against Taliban and later on changed to National Resistance front of Afghanistan which was headed by the National Hero of Afghanistan Ahmad Shah Masood who was killed in 2001 before Al-Qaeda attacked on the World Trade Center of America. After that, Marshal Mohammad Qasim Fahim took the responsibility of National Resistance against Taliban. Rabbani continued to be influential in the post-invasion period. He played a significant role in the political transition and the establishment of a new Afghan government. He was appointed as the Chairman of the Afghan High Peace Council in 2010 by Hamid Karzai. Rabbani actively engaged in efforts to achieve peace and stability in Afghanistan. He advocated for national unity and reconciliation among different ethnic and political factions. As the Chairman of the Afghan High Peace Council, he worked towards negotiating with armed groups and encouraging them to join the political process. On the other hand, Rabbani worked towards fostering national unity and reconciliation among different ethnic and political factions in Afghanistan. He aimed to bridge divides and promote stability in the country (Haqyar, S, Personal communication, 2023).

3.4.2.2. Marshal Mohammad Qasim Fahim

Marshal Mohammad Qasim Fahim was a prominent military leader and commander of the Northern Alliance after the martyrdom of Ahmad Shah Masood, played a crucial role in the security sector after the invasion of America to Afghanistan. He was appointed as the Defense

Minister of Afghanistan and was responsible for rebuilding and restructuring the Afghan National Army. Fahim worked closely with the international coalition, particularly the United States, in efforts to stabilize and secure Afghanistan. He collaborated with foreign military forces, coordinated operations, and supported counterinsurgency efforts. Marshal Fahim also held political influence as a leader within the United Front (Northern Alliance) and later in the Afghan government. His presence helped maintain a balance of power and representation among different factions in the country (Haqyar, S, Personal communication, 2023).

3.4.2.3. Marshal Abdul Rashid Dostum

Marshal Abdul Rashid Dostum played a significant role during the invasion of Afghanistan by the United States in 2001. Dostum is an ethnic Uzbek leader and military commander who has been involved in Afghan politics and conflict for many years. He, along with other Afghan warlords and factions, formed an alliance with the United States after the invasion in October 2001. This alliance aimed to overthrow the Taliban regime, which had provided a safe haven to Al-Qaeda, the terrorist group responsible for the 9/11 attacks. Dostum's forces, known as the Northern Alliance or United Islamic Front for the Salvation of Afghanistan, played a crucial role in the ground campaign against the Taliban. He led his Uzbek-dominated militia, which had a strong presence in northern Afghanistan, to capture key cities and strategic locations.

Dostum's forces, supported by U.S. Special Forces and airstrikes, played a pivotal role to capturing Mazar-i-Sharif, a major city in northern Afghanistan. The fall of Mazar-i-Sharif was a turning point in the campaign, as it opened up a northern front and allowed for the rapid advance of anti-Taliban forces toward Kabul. General Dostum worked closely with U.S. and coalition forces, particularly with Special Forces and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). He received support of airstrikes, intelligence sharing, and military advisors. The cooperation between Dostum's forces and the international coalition helped in achieving military objectives and weakening the Taliban (BBC Farsi, August 4, 2009).

3.4.3. Afghanistan after the USA Invasion

The mutual dependence of the American and Afghan governments and the excessive and unexpected weakness of the Afghan government in managing affairs had already ruled out the possibility of an easy, orderly, and cost-free exit. Of course, staying a part of the US military forces until the complete departure of US citizens and their Afghan allies could reduce the deterioration of the situation, which seems to be the very quick collapse (less than a week) of

the Afghan government, which was not predicted in the official reports of the US security institutions, the main reason be it.

The Afghan government had outwardly democratic characteristics, but it could never attract people's trust and be effective. Ashraf Ghani's second government came into being with less than 10% of the votes of the Afghan society. Widespread corruption, the intervention of racial discrimination, and favoritism of the former warlords did not allow the benefits and services of the new post-Taliban government to include the majority of the Afghan people.

Of course, there are many debates in the field of corruption and inefficiency in Afghanistan, and it cannot be viewed as zero or a hundred. Afghanistan has seen significant growth in terms of development and anti-corruption indicators in the last two decades, which is beyond the scope of this Research, but its results were not distributed in a balanced and fair manner in the society, and management of expectations was not done (Ameri, 2011).

Also, the continuation of the civil war and the continuation of instability played an undeniable role in the failure of the democratic government of Afghanistan. Most of them were indecisive about the war with the Taliban or emptying the back of Ashraf Ghani's government, but again, this is a secondary factor, not the main one.

This question is still raised and may remain in history, how did an army with 350,000 soldiers and equipped with more advanced weapons suffer a heavy defeat against a partisan and irregular military force of 75,000 people who had inferior weapons? The quick answer of "lack of motivation" cannot answer the whole problem, but at the same time, it is a variable that cannot be ignored.

Observing the events in Afghanistan in the last four months showed that there was no desire to resist and fight against the Taliban in an effective way, and this issue fundamentally paralyzed Afghan society. Also, considering that more than half of the current population of Afghanistan is under 20 years old and had no idea about the Taliban government, this factor played a role in reducing sensitivities.

In general, the negative view of the Taliban among the people of Afghanistan is not as strong as it was 20 years ago. The reason is not known and is still the subject of investigation and study. The Taliban also made some differences and did not take revenge and kill the Afghan opponents as before and tried to show themselves inclined to agreement and compromise.

Of course, it is not clear whether this change is a tactical trick or reflects a permanent transformation. At the same time, it should be noted that the Taliban still adheres to the discourse of Salafi-Jihadist Islamic fundamentalism, which conflicts with democracy, modernity, and the fundamentals of human rights. Their adjustment is the maximum reduction in the scope of extremism, which of course can be significant in the current life of people, especially women, in the current conditions of Afghanistan. The fact that women cannot go to work at all, or get a permit with a hijab, or that the Hijab is not limited to the Burqa, in a situation where there is no prospect for changes aimed at the discourse of modernity and women's rights in Afghanistan, will relatively reduce the severity of hardships for Afghan women (Anwary, 2011).

Some experts, such as Daron Asimovaoglu, professor of economics at MIT University in the United States, have considered the problem in the "wrong way of state-building" which, in his opinion, should not have been implemented from the top down. But considering the historical developments and how democratic and powerful governments are formed, doubt the correctness of this claim. Bottom-up state-building was not possible in Afghanistan. The difference between the center and the periphery of the big cities and the centers of the provinces in terms of the world of life, belief system, and lifestyle is great. It was difficult for America to communicate directly with the provinces without the mediation of the central government. But the biggest obstacle is that it was not known and is not known that the people living in the provinces had a positive view of democracy or accepted cooperation with them.

The main identity in Afghanistan is the religion (Sunni-Hanafi Islam), which has a traditional attitude of the upper hand. The idea that the Americans have the authority of "infidels" that they should not dominate Afghanistan, was not and is not only the intention of the Taliban and its followers. In addition, independence and fighting against the "occupying" foreign government were one of the factors that helped the Taliban in Afghan society.

The discursive and cultural system of the Taliban has wide supporters in Afghanistan, especially regarding the necessity of implementing the rules of Islamic Sharia. What has caused this attitude to not find the decisive majority is the severity of the implementation, and in some places, the government's intervention has been objected to, and the families should be left to deal with the "denials". One of the mistakes is to establish the same thing between the modern and innovative part of the people of Kabul and the entire people of Afghanistan, while they do not even represent the population of Kabul.

Successful state-building requires the existence of preconditions, the most important of which is the formation of the nation in the modern sense. While Afghanistan did not have and does not have such conditions. Tribal relations still rule this country and the sense of collective belonging is weak.

There has never been an agreement and reconciliation between the chiefs of different clan's strikethrough and no comprehensive national discourse has been formed. The 40-year reign of the last king of Afghanistan, which is referred to as the "golden period", although it had apparent stability, was a period of stagnation, conservatism, and the spread of poverty. Every Afghan ruler who has tried to bring about great and positive changes has lost his power. Afghanistan has been involved in a devastating civil war for more than 40 years. This instability and fear of the consequences of political changes have caused conservatism in society so that people adapt to the conditions. A part of the Afghan society that has a fluid behavior and adapts to the established situation is relatively higher than normal.

This factor plays an important role in the continuation and consolidation of instability in Afghanistan. On the other hand, the Afghan government and army had somehow relied on and got used to the direct support of the United States. This reliance did not allow them to function and take root in their way. From this point of view, maybe the Afghan military, when they saw that the American army could not eradicate the Taliban after two decades of war and only drove it to the mountains and valleys, did not see themselves in a position of resilience against the Taliban's invasion and did not have the necessary self-confidence.

Therefore, the principle of "democratic state building" in Afghanistan was facing big and insurmountable obstacles. Afghanistan's situation in the last two decades was not normal and it was caused by a doping situation in the field of a world superpower (Aneshmand, 2012).

3.5.Afghanistan's Political Circumstance

From 2001 until 2021, the country's political scene saw considerable transformations and complications. Following the collapse of the Taliban administration in 2001, a new political system was established to support democracy and stability. The United Nations played a crucial role in facilitating the formation of an interim government led by Hamid Karzai, which was held by presidential elections in 2004 and 2009.

During this period, Afghanistan faced numerous challenges, including the resurgence of Taliban insurgency, widespread corruption, ethnic tensions, and the influence of neighboring

countries. The country also grappled with the cultivation and trafficking of illicit drugs, hindering its progress toward stability and development (Whitlock, 2021).

International military forces, primarily led by the United States, were deployed to Afghanistan to support the government and combat the Taliban. However, despite efforts to establish security and rebuild the nation, the insurgency persisted, particularly in rural and border areas.

In 2014, the presidential elections took place, resulting in Ashraf Ghani assuming office as the new president. A key development during this time was the signing of the Bilateral Security Agreement (BSA) between Afghanistan and the United States, allowing for the continued presence of international forces in Afghanistan (Gopal, 2014).

The fractured region of Afghanistan's governance issues is a major confounding factor for ongoing exchanges. The coalition government (referred to as the Government of National Solidarity) between President Ashraf Ghani and Chief Executive Officer (Chief Executive) Dr. Abdullah Abdullah, led by the United States after 2014 contest, has experienced problems. However, a pattern in Afghan culture and governance that emphasizes a small number of eyewitnesses widens the political divide along ethnic lines (Bijan, 2017).

Such divisions have existed in Afghanistan for a long time, but they remained somewhat silent during Hamid Karzai's rule (New York Times, February 18, 2014). These divisions are sometimes seen as the main driver of some of the political changes that have tested Ghani's legislature (Azoy, 2012).

In 2020, negotiations between the Afghan government and the Taliban began in an attempt to find a political solution to the conflict. These talks faced various hurdles but eventually led to the signing of the U.S.-Taliban agreement in February 2020, which outlined a timetable for the withdrawal of foreign troops in exchange for Taliban commitments to peace and counterterrorism efforts (Jacobsen, 2022).

However, despite these diplomatic efforts, the security situation remained volatile, with the Taliban launching numerous attacks and gaining territorial control. In August 2021, the Taliban intensified their offensive, leading to the rapid collapse of the Afghan government and the return of the Taliban to power. This marked a significant turning point in Afghanistan's political trajectory, raising concerns about human rights, governance, and the future of Afghanistan (Whitlock, 2021).

Overall, Afghanistan's political circumstances from 2001 to 2021 were characterized by a delicate balance between democratic aspirations, security challenges, and the influence of regional dynamics, culminating in the Taliban's return to power in 2021.

3.6. Military and Security Situation

Since mid-2015, NATO's mission in Afghanistan of 17,000 troops, known as the "Resolute Support Mission" (RSM), has focused on training, encouraging, and assisting Afghan government forces. Combat missions by US powers also continued and have increased in number since 2017. These two "cross-missions" included Operation Freedom Guardian (OFG). There were about 14,000 US troops in Afghanistan, of which about 8,500 were part of the RSM. The remaining 8,400 RSM soldiers from 38 countries were complicit (Chailand, 2007, p. 10).

However, as of mid-2017, US military officials have freely stated that the dispute has "largely reached an impasse". Perhaps complicating this assessment was the amount of territory controlled or contested by the Taliban, with most recent actions steadily expanding. In a report on January 30, 2019, the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) announced that the share of areas under government control or influence decreased to 53.8 percent by October 2018. The US military "will no longer provide its regional power assessment of the control and influence of the Afghan government and extremists," the report said. The data, which was included in each of SIGAR's last quarterly reports through January 2016, assessed the extent of Taliban control and influence in the region and population (Bose, 2014).

The Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction reports that the US military told them that because "this was a limited fundamental leadership drive for the (US) commander, this assessment will never be made again." (www.sigar.com) while the Taliban were capable of leading prominent urban attacks, they also demonstrated significant strategic capabilities. Reports suggested that National Security Forces casualties averaged 30 to 40 per day, and President Ghani stated in January 2019 that more than 45,000 security forces had died since he took power (BBC, January 25, 2019).

In addition, insider attacks on US and coalition forces by Afghan nationals were a sporadic yet consistent issue, in October 2018, General Miller was at the center of a Taliban infiltration attack on the Kandahar parliament complex that executed various officials.

Including the amazing police Chief Abdul Razaq. Miller was unhurt, but another American general was wounded (Pasban, 2018).



CHAPTER FOUR

PEACE THEORY AND THE CONCEPT OF RECONCILIATION

Every scientific and academic research needs a theoretical and conceptual framework. Because no research outside the theoretical framework can be established as normative and scientific research, for this reason, in this chapter, an attempt is made to present the theoretical framework of the current research, keeping in mind the conditions and contexts of the research.

4.1.DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

In this section, we examine some key definitions and modifications of research, which include the following key terms.

4.1.1. Reconciliation

There are many different suggestions about the definition of reconciliation and yet the main problem is the notable lack of any agreed use of these definitions. Reconciliation has been portrayed as a procedure that enables the general public to move from an isolated past to a mutual future. It is a method by which previous adversaries can figure out how to live next to each other, without essentially preferring or excusing one another, and without overlooking the past' (Hazan, 2009).

According to another simple definition by Merriam-Webster dictionary reconciling is "to restore to friendship or harmony." Reconciliation plans to change connections to make a general public where previous adversaries can calmly exist together (Coburn.N. and Larson, A., 2014).

Normally, this procedure will come in various shapes and structures in various social orders at the same time, as a rule, and absolutely as John Paul Literacy (1999) recognizes the procedure includes four components:

1. Truth - the truth about what occurred previously.
2. Mercy - the capacity and readiness to excuse the individuals who committed wrongs to modify connections in the public arena.
3. Justice - this is empowered through responsibility and social rebuilding Peace - the imagined objective is a typical eventual fate of prosperity and security for all gatherings included.
4. Peace - the imagined objective is a typical eventual fate of prosperity and security for all gatherings included.

As the authors of Mongabi and Delshia's final verdicts continue: in peace there is a kind of reconciliation. Which is also the most important part of peace. The peace that comes with reconciliation eliminates the differences and hostility that exist between ethnic, religious, regional, or political groups. The biggest winner is a matter of reconciliation with peace (Heiner, 2011).

Given what has been said, a matter of reconciliation is what a country like Afghanistan has required for years. Because political peace among the groups of individuals and political leaders will not be much useful for Afghanistan without national reconciliation (Collins, 20011).

4.1.2. Peace

As it turns out, the word peace has different definitions, but one of the fundamental definitions of peace that scholars, especially Kant have emphasized, is very simple and comfortable, the lack of hostile involvement between ethnic and religious groups. And it is political. The following definitions are in the valid English Dictionary of Oxford:

- "Freedom or cessation of war or hostilities.
- Freedom from chaos and civil disorder...
- Freedom from disturbance.
- Getting rid of quarrels or disputes between people.

According to World Citizen World Government (2011), peace is "the result of a codified social contract between human beings living in a geographical environment." The Greek word for peace is Irene, which seems originally to mean a state of non-war and actual existing conditions (Gerardo Zampaglione, 1973).

Some ideologies like pacifism which are now embedded worldview of humanity and human relations refuse violence at any cost believe in the positive nature of peace and think that no end justifies violence (Donati, 2018).

4.2. COMPONENTS OF RECONCILIATION

4.2.1. Forgiveness

Despite the different arguments about reconciliation are some core concepts which are frequently discussed and identified in the theoretical framework of reconciliation. Forgiveness is the first and most popular component which has its opponents. Among these opponents is Bloomfield, who believes that separating forgiveness from reconciliation makes it more

realistic to work with victims who do not think about forgiveness as much as possible (Bloomfield, 2006, 25).

In addition, a person named Oscar (2011) believes that if social wounds and hostilities between groups and individuals in a society are too deep, forgiveness is not enough and cannot solve these issues rooted. Although over time the "forgiveness" may erase hostility, it never happens as many people expect. In contrast, Bloomfield et al. (2004) believe that the process of national reconciliation from top to bottom and from the national level is interpersonal and small social groups that can lead to the desired results (Bloomfield, 2006, 28-29).

From a psychological point of view, to be in a peace and reconciliation community, a series of prerequisites must be met. For example, victims must be positively advertised and their feelings about criminals change. Although it is extremely difficult for victims to change their feelings for criminals and oppressors, it is not impossible. That means it is possible. And in addition, there must be public confidence and the victims can forgive the perpetrators and the criminals (Korzynski, 1998).

4.2.2. Acknowledgement

As Corn Tassel et al. (2009) have argued that truth-telling must be accompanied by community-based actions for stories and truths to have meaningful effects. Such a focus on "actions beyond stories" can facilitate the move from truth-telling to an acknowledgment of harm, the second stage of reconciliation. Admitting the damage can lead to different strategies, one of which is a formal apology. For example, in 2008, the Canadian government apologized to Aboriginal people for its residential school system. Likewise, the Australian government (also in 2008) apologized to the Stolen Generations (Johnson, 2011).

Acknowledgment is a guarantee that mistakes will not be repeated. Appreciation is a prerequisite for trust. Without acknowledging and regretting the past, "the gap between victims and perpetrators can only widen, making it even more difficult to communicate impartially between the two." (Andrew, 2009) The importance of the reconciliation process is its ability to change political relations. However, the conditions for this kind of transformation are hope and acknowledgment of the need for repair (Murphy, 2010).

4.2.3. Apology

Apologies are very important for reconciliation and lead to clear definitions of the crimes of the survivors and show the willingness of the perpetrators to leave the past and commit to new values and the flourishing of society (Nagy, 2002).

Apologies to institutional and political representatives are very important for reconciliation. However, it is important to note that they should not be interpreted as an invitation to forgiveness. Instead, a formal apology acknowledges a mistake and shows a commitment to correcting that mistake. It should represent the prevention of future crimes and should follow the process of rebuilding trust and respect in a community (Nagy, 2002).

A political apology is always related to a government, company, church, or other institution or organization in civil society that shows their willingness to accept and admit that a mistake has been made. Its purpose is to hide the past from oblivion (Griswold, 2007).

Rapport (2009) considers apology as one of two types: either claiming knowledge or claiming responsibility. As a knowledge claim, an apology is a rather vague concept because there is a statement of apology, however, the feelings of both parties are not clear and mostly overlap. On the other hand, an apology as a claim of responsibility expresses an awareness of the actions taken that both parties are sure would have been happier if the same had not happened. At the same time, the apologizing party shows his willingness to establish new relationships by accepting responsibility (Collins, 2011).

There are many examples of this, but the most famous is National Sorry Day in Australia, where every March 26, people get together and even have the opportunity to write sorry books. Sorry Day refers to so-called stolen Aboriginal Australian children who were forcibly removed from their original families and given to white Australians. The political apology is not as simple as it seems. Before it can happen, it must meet several criteria or norms, namely (a) know the truth; (b) state clearly and unequivocally that a breach has occurred, identify the guilty party and whom, and assume responsibility for it; and (c) clearly state that an apology has been made. (Griswold, 2007). It should be noted that an apology is only a sufficient condition for forgiveness, and it cannot be bought, empowered, and convinced by just expressing regret. During the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) in South Africa, many amnesty announcements were accompanied by preconditions that the perpetrators must meet to receive amnesty: confess, express remorse, or pay medical expenses for the individuals in question (Farrell, 2017).

4.2.4. Truth

Our memory of the past greatly influences the process of reconciliation, so if we do not use it in the right way to improve our future, it can turn into revenge. The process of reconciliation and realization of justice is very difficult without finding the truth. Truth cannot

be discovered or forgotten. Rather, it should be lived and repeated in a certain society (De Groschi, 2002).

This means that truth needs to be studied and explained, not allowed to change. The most important part of the reconciliation process is expressing the concept of truth that cannot be changed in a short period. Interpretation of the past helps to create unity in one way. On the other hand, if we have different interpretations of past events, it is impossible to achieve unity and reconciliation, because none of the parties in this process can perform their duties properly: teachers, scholars, and politicians (Pingel, 2009).

De Groschi (2002) in his discussion of reconciliation states that it is not a question of whether the truth should be told, but rather a question of how to tell it, when to tell it, and for what purpose the truth should be told to reconcile the past and its application to current problems is essential. The truth of the past is the foundation of a healthy society. However, this is a concept that is difficult to reach a consensus on after conflict. To determine a date acceptable to all parties involved, the truth must be researched and written. Even if everyone is aware of this fact, "leaders are unwilling to risk systematic investigation or culpability of wartime activities." (Lingis, 2008).

4.2.5. Justice

Reconciliation without justice was unstable. It sought harmony without effectively promoting more equitable relationships. On the other hand, justice without reconciliation risks endless cycles of blame and punishment, allowing the past to limit the possibilities of the future. Furthermore, a one-sided emphasis on justice (or human rights) at the expense of conciliatory measures means a potential reduction of the kinds of victims of truth that need to be pursued (Du Toit, 2009).

It is clear from these words that justice must be explained to achieve reconciliation between conflicting parties and vice versa. Various authors propose the characteristics and features of justice. The most important component of realizing justice is forgiveness, which at the same time represents a critical moment for reconciliation (De Groschi, 2002).

I agree that forgiveness in itself is really important, but at the same time, it should not be considered a key moment in the reconciliation process. The key moment in the reconciliation process should be the confession of the perpetrator's crime and an apology, after which the possibility of forgiveness increases greatly (Ferris, 2018).

4.3.Reconciliation and Peace as a Process

Reconciliation and peace must be effectively looked after; they are not normally happening movement during the time spent in compromise. Also, they once in a while create in a straight way of constant alter in the course of peaceful relations; rather, they are communicated in a progression of relapses and advances. At the point when and how responsibility and reconciliation activities during a peace procedure contrast the destiny of one post-struggle society to another and rely upon variables including the idea of the contention, the sort of offenses executed during it, the degree to which the different sides in the contention were in charge of its flare-up; and the historical backdrop of relations between the different gatherings engaged with the contention and their particular culture. The particular strategies for building up peace and accomplishing reconciliation might be settled on during peace exchanges and incorporated into peace understandings. There is no set-in-stone manner to do this, yet the topic of peace and reconciliation must be raised, talked about, and settled upon by all sides engaged in the peace exchanges. In light of this, specific angles should be remembered when peace and reconciliation are examined during peace arrangements (Fields, 2011).

To make a maintainable peace process it is significant to guarantee the compelling execution of peace and reconciliation endeavors in a post-struggle society. During peace dealings, it may in this way be progressively imperative to concentrate on the setting up of comprehensive procedures to structure the instruments instead of looking to set up the systems on the spot. The plausibility of the peace and reconciliation components proposed should likewise be considered. Adjusting universal experience and chronicles of utilizing various peace-production instruments can help the nations which are at their beginning stage of peace exchanges and endeavors to arrive at a steady state and evade inadequately planned peace arrangements. Another significant point is to focus on the requirements of various gatherings like ladies and youngsters who had encountered various degrees of savagery and violence (Galtung, J, 1981).

CHAPTER FIVE

RECONCILIATION AND PEACE PROCESS IN AFGHANISTAN

Afghanistan has been involved in civil wars and extremely disturbing disasters for more than four decades. As it was explained in the previous chapters, it was seen that since 1992, when Dr. Najibullah, the president of the communist government of Afghanistan, announced the policy of national compromise and national reconciliation, until Hamid Karzai established the Supreme Council of Reconciliation and for many years, continuous efforts were made to ensure peace and reconciliation. Therefore, in this chapter, we try to study and examine the process of national reconciliation and the peace process with the Taliban.

5.1. The History of Reconciliation and Peace in Afghanistan

As mentioned, Galtung believed that peace and reconciliation can be achieved over time (Galtung, 1981). Therefore, according to the theoretical framework, we are forced to study the historical issues and historical contexts of peace and reconciliation in Afghanistan. Dr. Najibullah, an educated and democratic person, offered national peace and reconciliation in the 1980s to resolve intragroup and ethnic conflicts. Because the Kremlin was trying to bring about the government to reduce its forces in Afghanistan. This organization joined the traditional socio-political methods of Afghanistan in the interview and basic leadership with a uniform political approach to create housing assistance and global credibility (Andishmand, 2012).

The national reconciliation and Peace (NRP) had a multilayered way to deal with consulting with resistance gatherings. Exchange hoped to build up nearby non-hostility or peace convention agreements. These would be talked about at the area level, and after that town and ancestral seniors would be acquired to encourage usage. Talks occurred straightforwardly and through the United Nations (Corwin, 1992).

NRP biggest problem was time. Although Najibullah continuously tried to provide a national reconciliation program in the country, the global developments and the subsidence of the Cold War between the United States and the S.U greatly weakened the chances of the success of Najibullah's program did with the dramatic reduction of the Cold War, Afghanistan gradually lost its importance from the point of view of many countries, especially the S.U, and caused the Russians to not pay much attention to this country, and on the other hand, there was a domestic political will from the people. There was no need to satisfy the national appetite (The Fall of Kabul, April 1992).

National Reconciliation Program of Najibullah, devoted all their efforts to finalizing the war with the armed gatherings of the Mujahideen. This happened exactly at the time when signs of the collapse of the S.U were observed in the mid-1980s. With the signs of the collapse of the S.U, the Mujahideen in Afghanistan also found the courage to fight and resist the Moscow-backed government in Kabul with more thirst. The strengthening of the Mujahideen groups in Afghanistan and the weakening of the central government in Kabul destroyed the possibility of implementing the national reconciliation program (Andishmand, 2018).

Although the political and social conditions of Afghanistan during the Cold War were completely different from the contemporary era, no one could claim that these two eras are different from each other or in which other places. Whether we liked it or not, Afghanistan was, and Afghanistan is. The global situation has changed, but the people of Afghanistan still consider themselves religious and supporters of Islam. During the Cold War and the collapse of the government of Najibullah, the Mujahideen destroyed Afghanistan in the name of religion and the name of Islam and expelled millions of displaced persons and immigrants, but during the American presence in Afghanistan, the Taliban, like the Mujahideen of 1992, a barbaric and mostly incompetent group that lacks any qualities of humanity, razed Afghanistan to the ground (Anam, 2017).

Therefore, the similarities that existed deeply in these two eras could be seen. Both during the Cold War and during the American presence in Afghanistan, foreign governments were trying to make Afghanistan safe, stable, and strong, but the Mujahideen in the previous era and the Taliban in the current era, the leaders of these two groups were mostly small, and they were known as "beardless children" (i.e. young boys who are used sexually), they were mostly complex and crazy.

All the leaders of the Taliban, without exception, were affiliated with foreign countries, and, like the Mujahideen of 1992, they were a destructive and criminal group that destroyed the peace and tranquility of Afghanistan (Larson, 2018).

5.2. Peace Initiative from 1992-2001

As mentioned in the previous discussions, in April 1992, Dr. Najibullah was quickly removed from power after the collapse of the S.U After Najibullah, the coalition that was formed between Mujahidin could not form a central and independent, powerful, and successful government. Chaos reigned not only in Kabul but throughout Afghanistan, and heavy taxes

were collected from trucks and other travelers and businessmen. Inter-faction wars still displaced millions of Afghans (Lord, 2010).

In such a situation where the people were extremely tired and disintegrated, in 1994 the Taliban emerged from the Kandahar region in southern Afghanistan. The Taliban also received early support from senior Pakistani officials-including members of Pakistan's ISI-who, along with companies involved in cross-border trade, were eager to secure a road route through Afghanistan to Central Asian markets. But the great success of the Taliban was due to the fatigue of the Afghan people from the Mujahideen government (Mukhopadhyay, 2014).

From 1992 to 1996, the Mujahideen could never take a decisive strategy and decision about peace, even peace among themselves. Rabbani, as the president, and Ahmad Shah Massoud as the minister of defense, had formed an ethnic government for themselves and had completely deprived other ethnic groups. Gulbuddin Hekmatyar from the Pashtun tribe claimed to be the prime minister and they attacked Kabul from Jalalabad. Therefore, during Mujahidin's rule, no decision was made under any circumstances regarding peace, Dr. Najibullah's national reconciliation program was completely silenced, and no one listened to the Najib reconciliation program (Najibullah, 2017).

After the collapse of the Mujahideen in 1996 and the victory and domination of the Taliban in Afghanistan, the Taliban did not say anything about peace under any circumstances. The Taliban ruled from 1996 to 2001 in a way that was considered as one of the darkest periods in Afghanistan. At that time, the Taliban did all kinds of oppression and all kinds of persecution. But under no circumstances they didn't say anything about peace and reconciliation and they did nothing about peace (Najibullah, 2017).

With the emergence of the Taliban, other social structures changed. The peace process was forgotten and practically what was mentioned in Galtung's perspective in the theoretical framework was removed from the social and political structure of Afghanistan. The suspension of the peace process from 1996 to 2001, according to the conceptual framework of this research, occurred when there was no hope of securing peace and reconciliation in Afghanistan.

During this period, there were no traces of the basic components and elements that (Bloomfield, 2006) had explained, in the social and political scene of Afghanistan, on which the foundations of peace and reconciliation could be based. Therefore, during the years 1996 to 2001, there were no elements such as forgiveness, sacrifice, justice, truth and reality, etc., which were essential in ensuring peace and reconciliation according to (Bloomfield, 2006).

5.3. Peace Process during Hamid Karzai and Ashraf Ghani (2001-2021)

As (Donati, 2018) believed and we also mentioned it in the "methodology" discussion, peace must be ensured in any situation and no end for peace should be considered. For this reason, with the fall of the Taliban and the coming to power supported by the United States and the West, Hamid Karzai and Ashraf Ghani, in their turn, tried to ensure peace, and in fact, a peace process in Afghanistan since Hamid Karzai's era has been independent and purposeful. The aid of neighboring countries, the region and the world actually started working.

With the collapse and escape of the Taliban in 2001, prominent Afghan leaders gathered in the city of Bonn German under the umbrella of the United Nations. The Bonn Agreement was aimed at forming an inclusive government that would represent all the people of Afghanistan. In this agreement (Bonn), a provisional government was formed which included 30 members led by Hamid Karzai. In 2002, the Loya Jirga was replaced by the Interim Assembly of Afghanistan. Similarly, the first presidential election was held in 2004. Hamid Karzai was elected as the president of Afghanistan in this election (Sajed, 2011).

Kabul's government always had little influence in the rural part of the country. The chief of the tribes had power in the villages. They used power to their advantage. Most of the non-governmental organizations in Afghanistan worked to help the local people. After Karzai came to power, the problems of warlords created problems for Karzai's government. He tried his best to bring peace at the local level but could not get the best results (Goodson, 2003).

In 2005, Afghan President Hamid Karzai announced a general amnesty for all militants in Afghanistan. He first announced that the senior leadership of the Taliban could benefit from this action of the Afghan government. In Brussels, he refused to grant amnesty to the Taliban leadership. He tried his best to bring peace to Afghanistan to talk with the warlords of this country. Hamid Karzai met with the warlords of different regions of Afghanistan. In his first term in office, he tried to boost Afghanistan's war-torn economy but failed to get good results. Hamid Karzai announced direct talks with the Taliban in September 2007. He wanted to meet Taliban leader Mullah Omar and Hizb-e-Islami leader Gulbuddin Hekmatyar for peace. But the Taliban spokesman rejected his offer. He said that Hamid Karzai is a fake president. He could not do anything of his own free will. The Taliban did not talk to a fake president. The withdrawal of foreign forces is necessary to start peace talks with the Afghan government (Achakzai, 2007).

US President George W. Bush said that no one will talk to terrorists with clear objectives. America's policy was against Hamid Karzai's peace policy. President Barack Obama announced in March 2009 that he would hold talks with Taliban militants. This was the first time that America announced the good Taliban period. This approach of President Obama was criticized in the United States. Obama said America will not win the war in Afghanistan. The United States should talk to those elements who were going to surrender Barack Obama said that this policy may be applied in the region of Afghanistan and Pakistan (Copper & Stolberg, 2007).

In 2010, the United States started its new policy toward Afghanistan. America started providing money for Taliban foot soldiers. Its primary goal was to disarm Taliban fighters, but in other ways, it was a US strategy to weaken the Taliban's power. President Bush did nothing for peace talks in Afghanistan, Bush wanted to destroy the Taliban by force but it was impossible. Obama came to power in 2009, and his administration began work to empower Afghan security forces to fight terrorists in the country. Obama said that the US wants a conditional withdrawal from Afghanistan at the end of 2011. Obama hired former CIA officer Bruce Riddle to review US policy towards Afghanistan. America, under the leadership of Obama, was trying to establish peace in Afghanistan and withdraw American forces from this country. For this reason, Obama was trying to make the Afghan security forces organized and strategic with extraordinary expertise and to acquire the necessary skills to fight against terrorist groups. At that time, America was trying to establish a stable government in Afghanistan that could rule all parts of Afghanistan and supervise all of Afghanistan (Muzaffar et al. 2019 and Fair, 2010).

In Afghanistan, domestic measures and practical steps were taken to ensure peace between the Taliban and the Afghan government. The Supreme Peace Council was established for this purpose. All efforts were aimed at bringing the Taliban to the negotiation and peace table. In the same way, many Taliban leaders accepted the peace terms and gradually entered the peace talks. Sibghatullah Mujadadi was an educated person and he received his education from Al-Azhar University and was the founder of this program (Ruting, 2009).

In October 2010, this peace plan was replaced by the High Peace Council to bring the Taliban to the peace table, the Supreme National Reconciliation Council in Afghanistan promoted a peace issue in Afghanistan. In this Supreme Council, the program was titled Peace and Reconciliation Program. The initial talks between the Americans and the Taliban were held in November 2010. Germany and Qatar arranged the negotiations between the Taliban and the

Americans. However, the first meeting and discussion between the Americans and the Taliban took place in Munich, Germany, and then in 2011 in Doha, Qatar. In the first actions and talks, the Taliban asked the Americans to release their leaders from Guantanamo. The American government also adopted the policy of purifying the Taliban and tried to purify the dirty face of the Taliban in American society and convince the people that the Taliban leaders were not their enemies. This program could not be prepared for further discussion. Peace talks with the US and the Taliban were suspended in March 2012 (Burger, 2012).

In December 2012, Pakistan and Afghanistan met in TURKEY. In TURKEY, the road map of the peace process until 2015 prepared by the Supreme Peace Council of Afghanistan was discussed. Taliban leaders could rule the South and East of the country based on new peace initiatives. According to this road map, Pakistan was Considered as the main ruler of facilitating the peace process (Kiriimi, 2011).

In May 2012, little progress was made in the negotiations with the Taliban. American President Obama announced the Sustainable Strategic Partnership Agreement (SPA). With Hamid Karzai, the President of Afghanistan. Although it was not a formal treaty, but according to the SPA, the United States is forced to endure financial, economic, and military. The country's spending on the strategic partnership agreement was a guarantee that America will not leave Afghanistan without a proper road map. A senior member of the Obama administration said that America will break the safe Taliban shelters after December 2014, and America will not leave this country. The US ambassador in Afghanistan once again emphasized that America will not withdraw from Afghanistan without proper peace (Rubin, 2012).

In August 2012, Pakistan gave permission Afghan government to meet Taliban leaders in Pakistan as Mullah Baradar one of the Taliban leaders has been detained in Pakistan since 2010. Mullah Baradar and Others were key Taliban leaders after Mullah Omar (Ebrahimi, & Georgi, 2012).

Pakistan was supposed to begin the release of a prisoner at the request of Afghan government officials and members of the Supreme Peace Council. Pakistan believed that the release of key Taliban leaders would be useful in peace talks, and Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar was a key figure in the Taliban's cabinet who was better to facilitate the peace process with the help of Pakistan. America was also putting pressure on Pakistan, and Afghan government was trying hard to help the peace talks with the Taliban before the withdrawal of NATO forces from Afghanistan in order to establish peace in the country at the end of 2014 (Malek, 2012).

The Taliban were brutal, they talked with the Americans with open eyes and knelt before the Americans like slaves, but they were never willing to talk to the Afghan government. The situation was extremely fragile. The Taliban, who were afraid of the United States, accepted any American demand but were not ready to negotiate with the Afghan government under the leadership of Hamid Karzai. However, in May 2012, the Taliban came down from some of their positions and little progress was made in the talks. At the same time, Karzai and the President of the United States announced a sustainable strategic partnership agreement (SPA) with Karzai. In this regard, the United States assumed all the costs of Afghanistan. On the other hand, in this agreement, the United States pledged that the United States would not leave the country without guaranteeing Afghanistan's future. However, America gradually tried to pressure Pakistan to release key Taliban leaders, and Pakistan released many Taliban leaders to secure their interests (Ebrahimi and Georgi, 2012).

Pakistan was supposed to begin the release of a prisoner at the request of the Afghan authorities. Afghan government officials and members of the Supreme Peace Council believed that the release of key Taliban leaders will be useful in peace negotiations. Mullah Abdul Ghani was a key figure in the Taliban cabinet. With the help of Pakistan, the situation would have improved. The US was also pressuring Pakistan to help negotiate peace with the Taliban. The Afghan government was struggling to restore peace in the country before the withdrawal of NATO forces from Afghanistan at the end of 2014 (Malek, 2012).

The main problem was to convince the Taliban to talk with the Afghan government. The Taliban were not willing to sit down with the Afghan government. The government of Afghanistan is a puppet government of America. The Taliban refused to sit down with the coalition government. The US always urged the Taliban to talk to the Afghan government, but the Taliban refused every time. Without the presence of the Afghan government, America will not be in a position to talk directly with the Taliban (Latifi, 2013).

In July 2015, direct talks between the Taliban and the Kabul government were officially held for the first time in Murree with the help of Pakistan. Pakistan tried its best to play its role as per the peace process roadmap (Khan, 2016).

After the Murray talks in 2015, there was complete silence on peace talks from both sides. The years 2016-2017 did not show any significant progress in peace initiatives except for the increase of US troops in Afghanistan. There were also minor positive developments

toward peace. The first big step towards peace was the deal between the Kabul government and Hizb-e-Islami in September 2016. It was considered the biggest event since 2001.

This deal provided a way for Hizb-e-Islami rebels to live their lives in peace. The Kabul government announced that it had helped Hizb-e-Islami rebels and allowed them to serve as security personnel in Afghanistan. The Afghan government also announced the release of Hizb-e-Islami prisoners. It has also been said by the Afghan government that refugees living in Pakistan and associated with Hizb-e-Islami will be resettled in Afghanistan. The most important thing was Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's return to Kabul after almost twenty years of exile (Johnson, 2018).

Another very important development that occurred in 2018 was the behavior of the United States towards Afghanistan and especially towards the Taliban. America has changed its policy towards the Taliban and has accepted the Taliban's request for direct talks. America has always emphasized the Taliban to sit with the Afghan government to establish peace in this country. The Trump administration took concrete steps to negotiate with the Taliban. America met with Taliban leaders in Qatar without the presence of Afghan government officials. The United States appointed its former ambassador to Afghanistan as a special envoy for reconciliation. This was the biggest advance to end this long war in American history (Sheikh, 2017).

5.4. Afghanistan Peace and Reintegration Program Between (2011-2015)

The Afghanistan Peace and Reintegration Program (APRP) is a national initiative led by the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIROA) that aimed to pursue peace through political means, reconcile and reintegrate ex-combatants, build the capacity of key institutions to carry out peace-building activities, guarantee security and freedom of movement for those who have been reintegrated and their communities, and consolidate peace by supporting community recovery programs and social service programs. Community Reintegration, Demobilization and Weapons Management, and Community Development were the project's three key pillars (UNDP, 2017).

Over the past five years, several significant lessons have been learned from the implementation of the APRP. These lessons could guide the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in defining its goals and best practices as it develops a new peace and reconciliation program (UNDP, 2017).

The lessons learned from each year of the program can be categorized into general lessons and more focused lessons, as outlined below:

- 1. Longer Term Focus:** The long-term goal of all parties involved should be to realize the Afghan Government's higher aim, which was to put an end to the deadly war via political engagement. Although it was reasonable to expect progress and results, such as the formalization of the peace talks, programmatic and strategic decisions, high-level leadership appointments, and outcomes from existing program components like reintegration, incremental or short approaches did little to help resolve the primary drivers of a protracted violent conflict and provide the necessary support for significant institutions like the APRP. It was crucial to keep in mind that this was a lengthy procedure that calls for all parties involved to have a patient, consistent, and committed stance. The stakeholders were often consulted as part of the APRP-UNDP Support Project to assist the peace process, the difficulties it faces, and the need for a long-term strategy.
- 2. Reconciliation first:** Reconciliation ought to have been given more attention from the start of the APRP. Insurgent reintegration would have happened spontaneously when political discussion established the required circumstances.
- 3. Reintegration is Dependent on Agreements:** The successful implementation of a reintegration program was highly dependent on the parties to the conflict first negotiating a cease-fire, and/or peace agreement.
- 4. It is an “Afghan Owned, Afghan Led” Process:** Understanding and respecting the fact that bringing about peace in Afghanistan was a "Afghan-owned, Afghan led process" was essential for the international community's stakeholders.
- 5. Regional Support and Coordination:** There was no structure at the regional level; the APRP structure was formed at the national level (HPC and JS) and the provincial level (PPCs and PJSTs). To enhance assistance at the local level and improve coordination and communication between the national and provincial levels, the Program required support at the regional level. This gap was filled by the APRP-UNDP Assistance Project, which provided vital assistance, communication, and coordination for and between these levels (UNDP, 2017).

Here is a general review about Afghanistan’s peace and reintegration program between (2011-2015):

Year 2011

- 1. Need to Fully Utilize SGPs in Support of Reintegrees:** The Programme's initial design lacked provisions for reintegrates needs. Medium-term livelihood support for reintegrates and communities became apparent after short-term TA distribution. Large-scale Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for Small Grants Projects (SGPs) were created to solve this. Discussions with local government representatives and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) led to the incorporation of localized and participatory methodologies for project identification and execution.
- 2. Importance of Decentralizing the Programme's Implementation:** Initially, centralization in Kabul hindered the delivery of the Programme's activities at the sub-national level. Decentralized decision-making bolstered provincial and regional organizations, enabling swift responses to opportunities for peace, reintegration, and community rehabilitation. Accelerated selection for provincial-level positions fostered capable local organizations.
- 3. Field inputs:** The central-level design and strategy of the program benefited greatly from field and province-level learning. To guarantee project design and relevance to reintegration, the APRP acknowledged the importance of bottom-up planning and cooperation between Kabul and provincial ministries as well as between LMs and APRP.
- 4. Security for Reintegrees and APRP Members/Staff:** The inadequate security for reintegrates, PPCs, PJSTs members, and others involved in peace efforts posed a significant challenge for the Program. It was essential to prioritize the development of improved security arrangements for individuals engaged in the peace process (UNDP, 2017).

Year 2012:

- 1. Settlement of Provincial Transfer:** The Ministry of Finance's (MoF) provincial office, Mustofiat, received advance payments called provincial transfers. Salary payments for project workers employed by the Provincial Works Council (PWC) and the Ministry of Public Works (MoPW) were made easier between provinces. The settlement of the advance account in the accounting system didn't happen until the end of the fiscal year, delaying the reporting of costs and the request for additional funding. The Financial and Operational Control System (FOCS) manually gathers permitted documentation

from provinces to settle the advance account in order to remedy this. To tackle this problem, FOCS investigated several options, such as direct compensation to employees.

2. **Delivering Peace Messages:** LMs implemented community recovery programs in low-reintegration areas. Awareness of APRP funding and its connection to peace and reintegration was lacking among project participants and host communities. Efforts were made to strengthen the link between LMs' programs and peace and reintegration support. Intensive outreach during Peace Week in September effectively delivered peace messages. LMs prioritized APRP districts with reintegrates for project implementation in coordination with JS and PJSTs.
3. **Sustainable Livelihood Options:** Expanding community recovery projects for more reintegrates and community members were crucial as the Program grew. Linking with other development programs provided sustainable livelihood opportunities. Major development projects in certain provinces offered collaboration opportunities. Dialogue and partnership with provincial authorities, civil society, and the private sector were critical for forging connections with these initiatives (UNDP, 2017).

Year 2013:

1. **Training needed to be More Effectively Targeted:** The JS, FOC, and ISAF/FRIC coordinated some training and capacity-building events. The materials, however, did not match the requirements or profiles of the participants, which occasionally diminished the effect of these activities. Varied learner abilities and uncertainty regarding enrollment criteria contributed to this issue. Through proper assessment and attendance categorization, capacity-building sessions made more successful.
2. **Lack of Good Data Affects the Programme:** In 2013, the lack of reliable data and empirical information from the field posed a significant challenge for post-2014 planning of peace and reintegration. Discussions relied on anecdotal evidence instead of objective analysis due to the absence of clear facts and evidence-based assessments of APRP operations and the economic status of reintegrated households. Including evidence on the impact of community recovery initiatives and their correlation with recidivism rates would have strengthened discussions on the future of peace, reintegration, and reconciliation efforts (UNDP, 2017).

Year 2014:

- 1. Improved Coordination with Stakeholders:** From 2014 onwards, the UNDP-APRP Support Project team actively engaged with the JS and donors, leading to improved communication, programmatic problem-solving, and coordination. This collaboration fostered a shared understanding and approach to Programme implementation, including discussions on future funding and programming. Continued enhancement of coordination will positively impact the overall coordination and delivery of the Programme.
- 2. APRP Focus versus Election Focus:** The APRP-UNDP Support Project collaborated closely with donors and the JS leadership during the election period to maintain attention on APRP and the peace process. This approach led to a favorable strategy for advancing the Programme. The lesson learned is to avoid allowing a single issue to monopolize attention and overshadow other programs (UNDP, 2017).

Year 2015:

- 1. Critical Support for APRP:** To enhance understanding of upcoming challenges, improve coordination, and maintain stakeholder focused on supporting the APRP, the sole Afghan Government institution dedicated to peace and reconciliation, the APRP-UNDP Support Project actively engaged with key actors, such as the Afghan Government, International Community, JS, HPC, and civil society. Regular communication with the JS, donors, and other partners allowed for addressing new political and technical issues in APRP implementation while emphasizing the importance of preserving the Government's infrastructure for peace efforts. The involvement of complex and politically sensitive individuals may prioritize immediate needs over the central mechanism supporting the peace process (UNDP, 2017).

5.5.SOURCES OF THE CONFLICT

According to a theory Johan Galtung and John Paul Lederch, war is always the result of disagreement between leaders and politicians who consider their private interests in the first stage and then think of public interests in the second stage. Therefore, according to this principle, it is necessary to analyze and investigate the sources of conflict in Afghanistan. In other hand, the conflict in Afghanistan is multi-dimensional and involves Afghan, regional,

and global actors. Due to the complexity, no actor held the key to solving the crisis, and therefore the interests and concerns of these actors must be taken into account.

5.5.1. Domestic Sources of the Conflict

The emergence of the Taliban was in a chaotic situation caused by the civil war between the various Mujahideen, and they promised to restore peace and security. In the same way, the failure of the Afghan government after 2001 to provide good governance, and maintain security in all parts of the country, and local corruption have provided the reason for their reappearance (Hamid, 2017; Majdeh, 2018; Sarabi, 2018).

Admitting this failure, Kai Aideh, the former UN representative in Afghanistan believed that it has worsened the security situation. Corruption in the government has become endemic, and the country was politically and ethnically divided (Idea, 2017).

Afghanistan is one of the most corrupt countries in the past years, which had widespread corruption in all branches of government. According to a 2016 Afghanistan Integrity Watch report, “There has been a significant increase in both the percentage of the population admitting to paying bribes and the total amount of money lost due to bribery. More than 26 percent of Afghans say they have had to pay a bribe in the past 12 months, and the total economic loss was more than \$2.8 billion, far more than the estimated \$2.17 billion the Afghan government expected to generate this year in domestic revenue (Afghanistan Integrity Monitor, 2015).

The Taliban held more regional control than at any time since their system was overthrown in 2001. A BBC report in January 2018 showed that the Taliban were in full control of 14 districts (4 percent of the country) and were dynamic and physical. In the other 263 (66%) countries, only 122 regions (30%) remained under the influence of the legislature. However, this did not mean that they were free of violence (Sharifi and Adamu, 2018).

The Taliban appointed several commissions, including welfare, agriculture trade and duty, education, military, power, and legal commissions (Majda, 2018).

Taliban officials collected the expenses and electricity bills, and their judges handle civil and criminal cases (Jackson, 2018).

5.5.2. Outside Wellsprings of the Contention

The external factor was so compelling in the Afghan conflict that a large portion of Afghans, including government officials, agreed that the Taliban could not survive without remote guidance. According to Habiba Sarabi and Abdul Rahman Hamid, Afghanistan is the battlefield of mediation of different nations. The competitions of Pakistan, India, Iran, and

Saudi Arabia will be held in Afghanistan. The Taliban were supported by Pakistan, Iran, and Russia, which seek influence in Afghanistan (Sarabi, 2018; Hamid, 2018).

Pakistan has consistently tried to ensure that a failed and pro-Pakistani government is installed in Kabul to understand the arguments of its periphery, so that Islamabad could gain more influence over its rival India. After the start of the joint Mujahideen war in 1992, Pakistan saw its arrangements futile, but the expansion of the Taliban in 1994 hit them, and Pakistan supported the Taliban, which was portrayed by the then Interior Minister of Pakistan (Rashid, 2002).

Islamabad authoritatively recognized the Taliban as Afghanistan's de facto legislature in May 1997 and called on the rest of the world to do the same (Sykel, 2012).

After the 9/11 attacks, Islamabad was forced to break away from the Taliban and joined the US-led coalition (Stas, 2013).

Pakistan provided data and strategic assistance to the United States to help drive out the Taliban. In any case, following the military suppression of the Taliban regime, a large number of people and Al-Qaeda fighters crossed the borders of Pakistan and took refuge in the native lands of this country. The existence of this protected area for the Taliban was a real danger to the adjustment of Afghanistan. Although Islamabad had initiated a few measures against radical gatherings in its sphere, they did not help to complement the oppressive fear-based arrangements. The real frustration with Pakistan was due to the judicial arrangements between the "grand aggressors" and "terrible activists" which has been a focal point to add to the deterioration of the situation (Spenta, 2017).

Kabul accepted that Pakistan has an inevitable task of bringing the Taliban to the negotiating table, as the Taliban have been at war for too long and could not continue without the support of a nation. The Taliban's dependence on Pakistan for military coordination, medical considerations, and shelter for the guerrillas was as fundamental as ever, and Islamabad continued to take the lead in bringing the Taliban to the negotiating table (Kaura, 2018).

According to Mortazavi, "the Taliban administration room, which was known as the Quetta Council, is in Pakistan; they recruited from Pakistanis in marginal areas; they're wounded were treated in Pakistani medical clinics and their pioneers live in Pakistan" (Mortazawi, 2018).

Islamabad facilitated the first round of direct talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban in July 2015. Of course, Islamabad has said so far that it can only convince the Taliban and cannot lead them to consult with the Afghan government (Majda, 2018).

Many NATO and American reports accused Iran of supporting the Taliban. According to Mojdeh, Tehran was currently in a better position in terms of its influence over the Taliban because most of the families of Taliban leaders lived in Iran (Mojdeh, 2018).

Despite the ideological difference, Iran had established relations with the Taliban in order not to lose ground completely and also to avoid the possible security threat of ISIS (Giustozzi, 2013).

Similarly, Russia has been open about its relationship with the Taliban, claiming that this relationship was to prevent any threat to their interests in Afghanistan. In addition, Moscow was eager to have closer ties with the Taliban as the group fights ISIS, which poses a serious threat to Central Asia and Russia's security (Sarabi, 2018).

5.6.THE U.S.-TALIBAN PEACE DEAL

After an intense review of Trump's administration, Afghan peace process by the new Biden administration, President Biden finally declared his plan for Afghanistan. The US was resuming the Afghan Peace Process through Doha Agreement which Trump left (Ward, A. 2021).

In a letter to the Afghan government, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken outlined a four-step proposal that the US believes will help in accelerating the stalled peace process (Blinken, 2021).

In July 2018, the Trump Administration entered into direct negotiations with the Taliban, without the participation of Afghan government representatives, reversing the long-standing U.S. position prioritizing an “Afghan-led, Afghan-owned reconciliation process.

Though regional countries such as Pakistan, Iran, China, and Russia have been actively involved in the Afghan Peace Process a new emerging actor in the peace process was TURKEY which was to host the Intra-Afghan meeting in April 2021. As part of the peace process, two peace treaties have been signed so far. On September 22, 2016, the first treaty was signed between the Afghan government and the Hezb-e Islami Gulbuddin militant group (BBC News, 2016).

On February 29, 2020, after more than a year of official negotiations between U.S. and Taliban representatives, the two sides concluded an agreement laying the groundwork for the withdrawal of US armed forces from Afghanistan, and for talks between Kabul and the Taliban (Congressional Research Service, 2020).

5.6.1. Agreement for Bringing Peace to Afghanistan Doha, Qatar

On February 29, 2020, the United States and the Taliban signed a peace agreement in Doha, Qatar, officially titled the Agreement for Bringing Peace to Afghanistan. The provisions of the deal included the withdrawal of all American and NATO troops from Afghanistan, a Taliban pledged to prevent al-Qaeda and other groups from operating against the security of the United States and its allies, and talks between the Taliban and the Afghan government (Lamothe, S. D., Susannah George, Dan. 2020).

The comprehensive peace agreement was made of four parts:

- 1) Guarantees and enforcement mechanisms that prevented the use of the soil of Afghanistan by any group or individual against the security of the United States and its allies.
- 2) Guarantees, enforcement mechanisms, and announcement of a timeline for the withdrawal of all foreign forces from Afghanistan.
- 3) After the announcement of guarantees for a complete withdrawal of foreign forces and timeline in the presence of international witnesses, and guarantees and the announcement in the presence of international witnesses that Afghan soil was not used against the security of the United States and its allies, the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan which was not recognized by the United States as a state and was known as the Taliban started intra-Afghan negotiations with Afghan sides on March 10, 2020, which corresponds to Rajab 15, 1441 on the Hijri Lunar calendar and Hoot 20, 1398 on the Hijri Solar calendar.
- 4) A permanent and comprehensive ceasefire was an item on the agenda of the intra-Afghan dialogue and negotiations. The participants of intra-Afghan negotiations discussed the date and modalities of a permanent and comprehensive ceasefire, including joint implementation mechanisms, which announced along with the completion and agreement over the future political roadmap of Afghanistan.

5.6.2. Intra-Afghan Dialogue

As per the Doha agreement, the Afghan government and Taliban entered into Intra-Afghan negotiations to decide the modalities of a permanent and comprehensive ceasefire,

including joint implementation mechanisms along with the completion and agreement over the future political roadmap of Afghanistan (Hussain. Abrar. 2021).

In March 2020 talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban were meant to begin but were repeatedly delayed by a dispute over prisoner exchange arrangements, as well as violence in the country.

On September 12, 2020, historic talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban began in Doha, Qatar. It was the first time both parties were meeting after the Doha Peace Agreement for Afghanistan.

On January 5, talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban resumed in Doha, Qatar. The talks so far not met the expectations and were moving slowly, beset by widely different priorities and continued violence in Afghanistan. The Afghan government negotiating team insisted that a ceasefire must be a priority in the talks, while the Taliban wanted discussion of a ceasefire to come after an agreement on the shape of a future government (Putz, C. 2021).

On March 6, 2021, Afghanistan's President Ashraf Ghani expressed that his government would be taking forward peace talks with the Taliban, discussing with the insurgent group about holding fresh elections and democratically forming a government (Greenfield, H. S., Charlotte. 2021).

On March 12, 2021, Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu announced plans to host Afghanistan peace talks in Istanbul in April 2021.

On March 18, 2021, Moscow Conference on Afghan Peace was held. Representatives of the Afghan government, Taliban, United States, Russia, China, India, and Pakistan participated in the conference.

On March 27, 2021, TURKEY and US Officials met in Dolmabahce Palace, Istanbul in which recent developments in Afghanistan and the details of Afghan peace talks that TURKEY plans to host in Istanbul were discussed.

More than a year after the US and the Taliban signed an agreement in Doha to pave the way for a reduction in both Taliban violence and the American troop presence, progress on intra-Afghan talks remains limited and the security situation remains fragile (Anadolu Ajansı, 2021).

5.7.The Role of Pakistan and Other Neighbors in Afghanistan's Peace

According to the explanation (Hazan, 2009), peace in today's world has many friends and enemies. Friendship and enmity with peace is also formed due to the interests of countries. Therefore, in relation to the Afghan peace process, there are certain friends and enemies. The

biggest enemy of the Afghanistan peace process was the government of Pakistan, and the best friend and supporter of the peace process was TURKEY. TURKEY, with all the troubles and problems they had, spent a lot of interests and resources in securing peace. Now here we have to address the friends and enemies of the Afghan peace process.

Local elements and the presence of foreign forces were vital to the conflict in Afghanistan. The neighboring country, which was generally considered the most important country in this field, was Pakistan, which worked in Afghan companies for a long time and had many negative records. President Trump rightly blamed Pakistan for "harboring the terrorists we fight." Afghan pioneers, along with US military commanders, accounted for a significant portion of the insurgency's capacity and longevity, either directly or via a route to Pakistan.

Experts derided the extent to which Pakistan focuses on stabilizing Afghanistan or trying to exert control in Afghanistan through ties to guerrilla groups, mainly the Haqqani network, a US-designated foreign terrorist organization (FTO) that has become semi-autonomous Part of the Taliban (for more information, Thomas, 2018). American officials repeatedly identified insurgent sanctuaries in Pakistan as a threat to Afghanistan's security. Pakistan may see a weak and unstable Afghanistan rather than a strong and unified Afghan government (especially one led by a Pashtun government in Kabul; Pakistan had a large and restive Pashtun minority). In any case, several Pakistani pioneers probably expressed that the tremors in Afghanistan could backfire on Pakistan. Pakistan struggled with its domestic Islamist activists. Afghanistan-Pakistan relations have been further strained by the large population of Afghan refugees in Pakistan and the long-standing border dispute over which brutality has occurred on several occasions. Pakistan knew that Afghanistan is likely to provide critical leverage against India, but it may likewise have assumed that improved relations with the Afghan government could limit Indian influence in Afghanistan. India's interest in Afghanistan was largely due to India's broader territorial rivalry with Pakistan, which hindered India's efforts to establish more direct and substantial trade and political ties with Central Asia (Najibullah, 2017).

In August 2017 speech, President Trump outlined what he described as another way to deal with Pakistan, saying, "We can never talk about sanctuaries in Pakistan for fear of criminal organizations, the Taliban and various groups that are a threat to Pakistan." The area was calm and past." However, he also praised Pakistan as a "respectable ally", referring to the US-Pakistan military relationship. In January 2018, the Trump administration announced plans to suspend security assistance to Pakistan, which was a choice. In February 2019, General Joseph

Votel, commander of the CENTCOM Center, stated that "Pakistan has not taken decisive action against the sanctuaries of violent extremist groups in its vicinity." It has not made "positive steps" in assisting reconciliation efforts (Nixon, 2011).

Afghanistan generally enjoys cordial relations with its various neighbors, including in post-Soviet Central Asia, although some caution that increased instability in Afghanistan may strain these relations (Safranchuk, 2017).

In the past two years, many US officers have warned against large-scale aided and perhaps even material aid to the Taliban from Russia and Iran, both of which pointed to the proximity of ISIS in Afghanistan to legitimize their exercises. The two countries opposed Taliban rule in the late 1990s, but saw it as a valuable leverage target against the United States (Rottig, 2018).

President Trump did not mention Iran and Russia in his August 2017 speech, and it was unclear how, if at all, the way the United States treated them has changed as a central aspect of the new system. In his speech, President Trump encouraged India to play a more important role in Afghanistan's financial development. This, along with other information from the government, has raised Pakistan's concerns about India's action in Afghanistan. India has been the biggest provincial sponsor of Afghan entertainment. However, New Delhi has shown no desire to seek deeper security ties with Kabul (Ivan, 2017).

5.8. Turkey's Role in the Afghan Peace Process

The relationship between Turkey and Afghanistan dates back several centuries, with Turkic and Afghan rulers governing vast regions of Central Asia and the Middle East. The historic alliance between the two countries was formalized with the Turkey-Afghanistan Alliance Agreement in 1921. Turkey has actively engaged with Afghanistan, providing support in various sectors such as military training, development, and reconstruction. As the first Muslim country to join the U.S.-led military campaign in Afghanistan, Turkey has played a significant role in maintaining security, training Afghan personnel, and undertaking reconstruction projects (Hussain, 2021).

Turkey has been actively involved in the restructuring and development of Afghanistan since 2002, providing significant financial aid for security, infrastructure, health, and education. It has established educational institutions in Afghanistan, which remained functional even during the Taliban regime. Turkey launched the Heart of Asia - Istanbul Process (HoA-IP) initiative in 2011, aiming to promote regional security and cooperation centered on

Afghanistan. At the international level, Turkey, as a global actor and the rotating president of the Security Council in 2010, has planned to play a more active role in Afghanistan. The avoidance of Turkish forces from conducting military operations in Afghanistan, the approach based on maintaining peace in 2001 and 2014, and Ankara's efforts to provide energy to this country since 2005 are other noteworthy points in this topic.

Turkey has become a vibrant peacebuilding player in recent years, supporting state building, peacemaking activities, infrastructural projects, educational initiatives, and religious undertakings. Given Turkey's geographical, political, religious, ethnic, and historical connections, it is well-suited to play an active and important role in the Afghan peace process. The choice of Turkey as a neutral host for peace talks was interesting, considering its close alliance and strengthened military cooperation with Islamabad, an important actor in the Afghan peace process (Mehmet Seyfettin EROL, & Emrah KAYA, 2021).

Turkey supported the national reconciliation and unity of different groups in Afghanistan with a strategic approach, and in this regard, it made continuous efforts to bring the Taliban group to the negotiation table and stop the violence and accept the ceasefire by this group. Also, due to its good relations with Kabul and Islamabad, Ankara took the initiative and mediated to resolve the dispute between Afghanistan and Pakistan over the many bases of the Taliban group in this country and other tense issues between the parties (Turkey from the Bonn conference to the Istanbul meeting, 2021).

Turkey played a crucial role in mediating tensions between Pakistan and Afghanistan in 2006-2007. It has close cultural relations with both countries and is part of the US-led NATO force in Afghanistan. Turkey's international standing has been elevated by hosting high-level diplomatic events in the region. As the host for Intra-Afghan talks, Turkey was acceptable to both the Afghan government and the Taliban. It also maintained stable ties with other regional and global actors, such as Iran, China, and Russia. Turkey's status as a Muslim-majority nation, NATO member, and significant donor and troop contributor to Afghanistan made it a strong neutral third party in the Afghan peace process. Recognizing Turkey's potential as a mediator was important, as it reflected its economic development, regional influence, foreign policy realignment, and shifting global power dynamics (Hussain, 2021).

The Intra-Afghan peace talks face numerous obstacles, including the reconciliation of values between democracy and sharia, issues of permanent ceasefire, and the future political roadmap. The announcement of a possible delay in the withdrawal of international troops, increased violence, and challenges of power-sharing further complicate the process. The

limited involvement of international organizations added to the vulnerability of the peace process. Turkey's role as the host of the talks demonstrated its importance in mediation efforts, given its past involvement in conflicts such as the Israel-Palestinian conflict and the Astana process. Turkey's favorable relations with Western countries and acceptability in the Muslim world contribute to its significance in global affairs. Hosting the talks prompted a reassessment of Turkey's relationship with Washington. This offers Turkey a crucial chance to strengthen its position as a regional and global force in resolving the protracted and complicated conflict in Afghanistan (Mehmet Fatih Ceylan, & Zalmay Nishat. (March 31, 2021).

Turkey always emphasized the change of Washington/NATO policy in Afghanistan. From Ankara's point of view, regional initiatives for Afghanistan should be pursued with a trans-Atlantic focus and through multidimensional international platforms. The holding of important regional meetings in Istanbul was a sign of the increasing convergence of the positions of Turkey and the West towards Afghanistan. This success could be seen as the result of their active and effective presence in two conferences in January 2010 in London and December 2011 in Bonn. The Turkey government announced its readiness and plans to maintain peace in Afghanistan, even after the withdrawal of NATO forces from this country.

Turkey also integrated the Istanbul Summit in April 2021 for the Afghan peace process a few months before Doha agreement. It brought together key stakeholders, including the Afghan government, the Taliban, and international partners, to accelerate peace negotiations and achieve a comprehensive political settlement. The summit addressed critical issues like a permanent ceasefire, power-sharing, and the future political roadmap. It highlighted group efforts for security and prosperity and showed the commitment of the international community to a peaceful conclusion in Afghanistan. The summit was essential in promoting communication, reaching agreements, and expressing support for the peace efforts (Daily Sabah, 18 April, 2021).

5.9. Peace as the Absence of Violence

At the past, basic research was part of the transaction, as Galtung showed, was negative peace (Galtung J., 1967).

Each partner acknowledges that war was not an arrangement, the issue was not resolved by war. The Taliban were questioning the legitimacy of their war, as in June 2018, about 3,000 religious ministers declared the war treasonous and called on the government and the Taliban initiated a ceasefire and exchange views.

In this regard, the Taliban sought approaches for part of the deal, (2018). US government officials have also stated that war was not an arrangement. As of late, General Joseph Dunford, chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff, said during a security briefing in Halifax. He clarified that the Taliban would not be defeated in Afghanistan and that a military arrangement alone could never establish peace. General also said that the United States and its NATO allies were using military, political, and financial pressure to convince the Taliban. It was in their interest to organize political responses to emergencies (Crawford, 2018).

While the Afghan legislature and its global partners wanted peace talks with Afghanistan as the center (Hamid, 2018).

The Taliban have reported that the Afghan government did not have an official conclusion on peace issues in the country, and therefore they have continuously called for legitimate dialogue with the United States (Kaura, 2018).

Washington has backed Ghani's peace proposal with its ambassadors and senior officials emphasizing a political response to the conflict. The Ghani peace proposal was planned in three stages, which are as follows:

1. This document shows that in the first phase, Ashraf Ghani wants to reach a consensus on a political agreement and establish a ceasefire under the supervision of international organizations.
2. The second phase will include the holding of presidential elections and the establishment of a "government of peace" as well as the implementation of arrangements for moving towards a new political system.
3. Drawing the framework of the constitution, the resettlement of refugees, and the development plan were also considered as the third and final phase of the plan proposed by Ashraf Ghani.

However, with the Taliban rejecting the Afghan government as a misunderstanding and asking for a trade-off with the United States, the Trump administration advised its ambassadors in July 2018 to seek direct talks with the Taliban. Since then, several meetings between US officials and Taliban operatives have taken place in Doha, Qatar, led by Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Alice Wells and Special Envoy for Afghan Reconciliation Zalmay Khalilzad (Al Jazeera, 2018).

5.10. Conflicting and Ambiguous Instances in Peace Negotiation

As the Afghan government said, these meetings were to start peace talks and the two sides have not reached an agreement. However, stakeholders had different demands. The Taliban had not been clear about their demands, and beyond citing Sharia law, the Taliban's vision for governance after the withdrawal of foreign forces is incomplete and ambiguous. Their messaging campaign has failed to provide a viable solution or alternative to the current situation. However, Majdeh lists the Taliban's demands as follows:

- The Taliban demands compliance with Sharia, which includes all government laws and policies.
- The Taliban have realized that the monopoly of political power is not realistic and leads to war. Therefore, they accept other political groups.
- They accept the constitution, but they will demand that it be written and ratified by Afghans without foreign interference.
- The network will demand reform of the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF).

The Taliban do not support democratic institutions such as elections and parliament. Instead, they refer to the Qur'an, which says: "Hal satori al-the yin-ya lampoon wa al-the-yin la you'll-moon" (Are those who know equal to those who do not know?) They demand a settlement consisting of clerics.

This network would demand the release of its prisoners and the removal of the names of its leaders from the terrorist blacklist. The Taliban demanded the withdrawal of American and NATO forces based on the timetable. The Taliban were not seeking to isolate Afghanistan as they did in the 1990s. They would seek to establish and maintain a relationship with the outside world (Majdeh, 2016).

However, insisting that the Taliban is a religious-political group, Mojdeh believed that the Taliban Ulama Council will make a decision on this matter, and even if there was an agreement, they might ask Kabul to send a delegation of clerics to this council to negotiate with them. Although government officials have always stated that there are no preconditions for the start of negotiations and that all meetings have been preliminary, the HPC representative says that they were ready to accept the demand for the withdrawal of foreign forces, but it must be implemented. To a timeline (Hamid, 2018).

The Afghan government, like the Taliban, has not presented a clear peace plan with the Taliban. According to Mojdeh, Kabul did not have a specific peace plan and follows the US in this regard (Mojdeh, 2018).

However, at the domestic level, the government had held meetings with various stakeholders, including representatives of civil society, women, and clergy, resulting in the creation of a "Peace Advisory Board." The government had also formed a 12-member negotiating team led by the president's chief of staff. In his speech at the Geneva Conference on November 28, 2018, on Afghanistan, President Ghani announced the roadmap for peace talks. He said: "I am happy to report today that after several serious interviews with the residents of the country, we have defined the guidelines for peace arrangements. We have formed the bodies and components needed to reach a peaceful understanding. We were working on this is what we were talking about. Advancing the next part of the peace process" (President Ashraf Ghani's speech at the Geneva Conference on Afghanistan, 2018) Pay attention to the accompanying instructions:

- The rights and duties of the constitution, all equal, especially women, are guaranteed.
- To recognize the constitution or to propose amendments through established arrangements.
- National defense and security forces of Afghanistan and joint administrative capacity specified in the law.

No armed groups associated with transnational repressive systems based on fear or transnational criminal organizations, or with state/non-state actors seeking influence in Afghanistan, would be allowed to join the political process (President Ashraf Ghani's remarks at the conference Geneva) (About Afghanistan, 2018).

The latest article showed the contradiction in the government's peace plan. The Afghan government has always accused its neighbors of supporting the Taliban and even believed that this group could not continue its war in Afghanistan unless it is supported by others, especially Pakistan. The Deputy Spokesman of the President argued that the Taliban leadership council was in Pakistan. They employ Pakistanis in the border areas. Their injured members are being treated in Pakistani hospitals. And their leaders lived in Pakistan (Mortazawi, 2018).

Meanwhile, they were seeking peace with this group, which is supported by Pakistan and other countries. Internationally, the government has tried to convince neighboring

countries that a peaceful Afghanistan is in their interest. If Afghanistan became a haven for rebel groups, these countries would also suffer from insecurity (Hamid, 2018).

The Taliban continued to deny that the Afghan government is a real entity to talk to or worth talking to, the Taliban had reliably denied reports of mysterious gatherings between its representatives and representatives of the Afghan government outside Afghanistan. They demanded a dialogue with the Americans as their real enemy (Othman, 2014).

Although the U.S. stanced toward direct talks with the Taliban has raised the prospect of a negotiated end to the conflict, Mojdeh believed that no progress has yet been made in peace talks and that U.S. representatives had only listened to the Taliban. He highlighted the Taliban's concern about America's goals and ads: "After America's withdrawal from the agreement with Iran, the Taliban are hesitant to negotiate. They have said that if America did not pay attention to this agreement, the possibility of negotiation will be lost forever" (Mojdeh, 2016).

Recalling the peace agreement with Hizb-e-Islami Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, the HPC representative argued that "it gives the Taliban hope that they can start a normal life like any other Afghan." It also questioned the Taliban war and shows that the Afghan government was sincere in calling for peace with any rebel group" (Hamid, 2018).

Hizb-e-Islami was one of the militia groups that fought against the Afghan government. International forces, after years of negotiations, representatives of Hekmatyar and the Afghan government signed an agreement on September 22, 2016, according to which Hizb-e-Islami declared that it would no longer continue its rebellious actions against the Afghan government and citizens. The United States government had lobbied in the United Nations for the cancellation of international sanctions against Hekmatyar, who was recognized by Washington as a global terrorist for his links with Al-Qaeda and the Taliban. He returned to Kabul after the cancellation of international sanctions. It gave immunity to Hekmatyar and his followers for past actions and gave them full political rights, but Alexei Yusufov believed that the agreement was very symbolic. And it could not do anything to bring peace to the country, because Hizb-e-Islami's presence on the battlefield was almost non-existent (Afghanistan: Ghani, Hekmatyar to sign peace agreement, 2016).

On 22 September 2016, the government of Afghanistan signed a draft peace deal with Hezb-i-Islami. According to the draft agreement, Hezb-i-Islami agreed to cease hostilities, cut ties to extremist groups, and respect the Afghan Constitution, in exchange for government

recognition of the group and support for the removal of United Nations and American sanctions against Hekmatyar, who was also promised an honorary post in the government (Afghanistan: Ghani, Hekmatyar to sign peace agreement, 2016).

The agreement was formalized on 29 September with both Afghan President Ashraf Ghani and Hekmatyar who appeared via a video link into the presidential palace, signing the agreement. The Afghan government formally requested the UN in December 2016 the removal of sanctions against the group's leaders. The sanctions against Hekmatyar were lifted by the UN on 3 February 2017 (Afghanistan: Ghani, Hekmatyar to sign the peace agreement, 2016).

On June 14, 2018, 180 individuals tied to Hezbi Islami were released from prison. Peace negotiator Ghairat Baheer addressed the men, on their release, telling them the party expected them to be peaceful, law-abiding citizens. Tolo News reported that this was the fourth release of individuals tied to Hezbi Islami, and it brought the total number of released men to 500.

On the other hand, the main factors behind the failure of the peace process with the Taliban could be discussed in three areas. First, global factors, such as the big powers and NATO, caused the collapse of this process with their irresponsible withdrawal. Second, regional factors such as the countries of Pakistan and Iran also supported the Taliban to follow their interests for their countries, and this failed the process. Third, the key factors were internal factors such as corruption, selfishness, and power-seeking of Politian leaders.

The Afghan government was optimistic about reaching a peace agreement with the Taliban. Mojdeh also believes that if the demands of the Taliban were taken into account, negotiations could lead to peace (Mojdeh, 2018).

Meanwhile, the HPC representative argued that the agreement with the Taliban may not end the conflict in the country, but it will certainly reduce the war (Sarabi, 2018).

5.11. CHALLENGES

Despite the popular demand for peace, the fragmentation among the Taliban and the lack of consensus among the leaders of the previous government challenged this process. The most important challenges that prevented peace in Afghanistan are as follows:

5.11.1. Divided Taliban

The Taliban insurgency was internally divided into at least four main groups: Quetta Shura, Mashhad Shura, Northern Shura, and Rasool Shura. Because of this fragmentation, there was wide regional autonomy between the various Taliban councils. Although the Quetta

Council was the main leadership council of the Taliban, competition dictated that none of the three councils recognize the authority of Sahil Quetta. In fact, between 2015 and 2017, Shura Rasool and Shura Qita were engaged in fighting each other (Kaura, 2018).

Mojdeh believes that after the death of Mullah Omar, none of the Taliban leaders were considered Amirul Momineen because the Jirga Ulama did not elect them. Their choice was strategic. Therefore, they did not have the authority of Mullah Omar and it has caused fragmentation (Majda, 2016).

Despite this, the HPC representative stated that they were ready to negotiate with all rebel groups regardless of which faction they represent (Hamid, 2018). Furthermore, if Taliban forces on the battlefield felt that their leadership has been ignored in peace talks, peace talks could be costly for the Taliban. Majdeh believes that if Taliban members feel neglected, they may join other militant groups such as ISIS. Therefore, the Taliban leadership had been careful in confirming their meetings with representatives of the American and Afghan governments (Majda, 2018).

5.11.2. Absence of Consensus among Government Actors

The lack of agreement among the public figures of the government on the compromise with radical methods and the lack of a reasonable system to implement it greatly hampers the peace process (Galvanek, 2014).

The concentration of different powers in the Afghan government did not speak with one voice about the peace process. This was shown by the high peace council (HPC) representative as he said, that the HPC has a similar problem as people on the council could not agree on an issue. According to HPC advisor Mohammad Ismail Qasimyar, HPC could not continue peace talks. In addition, the efforts of the Supreme National Security Council and the government have not been successful.

The Supreme Peace Council was established as a manifestation of the will of the people of Afghanistan according to the orders of the National Peace Consultative Jirga and by the decree of the Supreme, Presidential Authority dated 2009. This council, which had 70 members, consists of the general assembly, which was the highest decision-making and leading authority of the council and was also the executive board of the council. The Executive Board of the Supreme Peace Council, as a permanent active organ of the Council, consisted of the President of the Supreme Peace Council, the Vice-Presidents of the Council, the Secretary and the Deputy Secretary, the Head of the Secretariat, the heads of the special committees, the

spokesperson and advisors of the Supreme Peace Council. Since its establishment, the Supreme Peace Council has been able to create a remarkable movement at the national, regional, and global levels to restore peace and stability in the country, keeping in mind the political climate of Afghanistan and the region.

National Security Council in most countries, including Afghanistan, the National Security Council takes the most important decisions in the field of foreign policy, defense, and security affairs of the country, and other matters (Sarabi, 2017).

5.11.3. Afghan Shareholders

The most important challenge was how to achieve power-sharing in Afghanistan which the Taliban will agree to. Because the Taliban was a puppet of Pakistan and Pakistan will never take any action about Afghanistan until their interests are satisfied. Pakistan did not yet exert its full influence on the Taliban to force them into a political solution. Afrasiab Khattak, a former Pakistani senator, and human rights activist, said that the Taliban still maintains ties with Al-Qaeda and other regional terrorist groups and that the group's sanctuaries in Pakistan remain intact. This, he said, is what disincentives the Taliban for a power-sharing deal. Also, if things go south, Pakistan cannot avoid spillover effects. Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) was returning to its soil. Both China and the United States played an important role in changing Pakistan's behavior towards the Taliban. Pakistan's relations with China, despite being "iron brothers", could not compensate for Western aid and bailout packages from global lenders. Despite ending its military involvement in Afghanistan, the West, especially the United States, remains the most important factor in Afghanistan. Ludin thinks that the Taliban's quest for legitimacy, the lifting of sanctions, and future aid will make it more difficult for the group to resist international pressure. The Taliban were oblivious to the fact that this situation may plunge Afghanistan into a long and attrition war, which was why they continued to defend Sharia and slowly return to their first round (Shrada, 2022).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CONCLUSION

The comprehensive presence of international forces in Afghanistan to fight terrorism without understanding the structure and texture of the society was only accompanied by the realism resulting from the increase in militarization and the suppression of rebels. Misunderstanding of the outsiders about society and the position of the opposing groups destroyed the relative stability of society. On the other hand, the establishment of a democratic government and the influence of rival regional powers have turned Afghanistan into their conflict arena.

Peace processes used to negotiate between the government and Mujahideen included non-aggression or other peace agreements with local commanders, discussion of the proposed agreements at the district level, and proposals such as disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration of fighters into their local communities.

The concept of "National Reconciliation Policy" was introduced in 1986 by Dr. Najibullah, the former president of Afghanistan and the leader of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan at that time. The Watan Party was named, it entered the political dictionary of the world. On January 1, 1987, Najibullah made the plan of ceasefire, national reconciliation, and the formation of a coalition government the basis and center of his propaganda and politics. But unfortunately, this peace process failed and Dr. Najib's government fell and Afghanistan entered into Civil war. The 2001 Bonn Agreement, signed during the December 2001 Bonn Conference, was widely seen as a "victor's peace" since it excluded the Taliban and was constrained by United States (US) military aims. Several peace processes took place during the presidency of Hamid Karzai (2004–2014), including local peace processes in Helmand province, the emergence of grassroots nonviolent resistance movements in the mid-2010s, and the successive and weakly effective disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and Disbandment of illegal armed groups programs. The Afghanistan Peace and Reintegration Program started in 2010. Transitional justice was not included in peace processes during the Karzai presidency. Several peace processes took place during the presidency of Ashraf Ghani (2014–2021), including the termination of APRP, the transfer of authority from the Afghan High Peace Council to the State Ministry for Peace, the Gulbuddin agreement, and the three-day government–Taliban ceasefire in June 2018 that accompanied the Helmand peace convoy of the People's Peace Movement. The US–Taliban deal, resulting from negotiations starting in

2018 in Doha, led to the withdrawal of US forces from Afghanistan, the collapse of the Afghan Army, and the August 2021 fall of Kabul to the Taliban.

While local peace deals had been signed in 2006 and 2010, on 22 September 2016, a national-level draft peace deal was signed between the Afghan government and the Hezb-e Islami Gulbuddin militant group. From April to June 2018, the People's Peace Movement held a peace march, called the "Helmand peace convoy", across Afghanistan, in reaction to a car bombing on 23 March 2018 in Lashkar Gah that had killed 14 people. The marchers called for a ceasefire at least two days long. They marched through Taliban-controlled territory. Arriving in Kabul on 18 June, they protested outside UNAMA offices and nearby embassies and met with President Ashraf Ghani. On 5 June 2018, Ghani announced an unconditional ceasefire with the Taliban until 20 June, the end of Ramadan. During 16–18 June, both sides simultaneously held to the ceasefire. On 5 September 2021, Ahmad Massoud, leader of the National Resistance Front of Afghanistan involved in the Republican insurgency in Afghanistan that started following the Taliban takeover, called for a mutual ceasefire between the insurgency and the Taliban, to be mediated by the Ulema Council of religious scholars, and this meeting also didn't result. Finally, if we look back to the peace process of Afghanistan between 1992-2021, unfortunately we don't find any positive point regarding to peace and reconciliation and any kinds of peace agreement with different opposites did not cause stopping war and guarantying peace in Afghanistan.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To achieve positive relaxation, the following are considered:

- Adopting a policy of peaceful coexistence and balanced relations with neighboring countries in the peace process.
- Create a peace discourse and real investment in this field.
- Determining the relevant persons of the parties in the Afghanistan peace process.
- To achieve short-term peace, the first step should be a permanent ceasefire.
- In the intra-Afghan discourse, the freedom and status of women and the issue of minorities should be considered and protected.
- In the peace process, inter-power organizations should be used to monitor this process.
- In the peace process, the parties should avoid personal requests.
- As Afghanistan has experienced many kinds of governments including of: Kingdom, republican, communism, Mujahideen, and Taliban government, but unfortunately none of them has been effective. To achieve peace and stability, it is better to have a federalism government that all people could find their rights on it.

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