



Alternative Perspective on Afghanistan Endgame

Zulfiqar Shah

Inter-disciplinary Research, IASE Deemed University, Sardar Shahar, Rajasthan, INDIA

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Abstract

Amid politics of global interests over Afghanistan and ongoing withdrawal process of International Security Assistance Forces (ISAF), matters in Afghanistan yet need to be appropriately settled. Poverty, in its various forms, is the mother of all terrorism. The huge war expenditure in Afghanistan by the various developed and developing countries equals maximum financial requirement to downtrend poverty around the globe. Moreover, it is the difference between, and among the engaged international and regional players, which has led Afghanistan to the matrix of political, strategic and security chaos. A comparative review based on integrated set of intervention in future is needed to revisit Afghanistan intervention as well as gradual ISAF withdrawal. Until and unless an integrated approach is not adopted towards Afghanistan, the grand issue of the human interests in single country since last two centuries may not get resolved.

Keywords: Afghanistan War, ISAF withdrawal from Afghanistan, cost of Afghanistan war, economic impacts of Afghanistan war, state building in Afghanistan, security issues in Central and South Asia.

Introduction

At least two centuries long attempts by the world powers of their times remained futile to achieve their targets and interests in Afghanistan. They have succeeded, however, in creating an expansive cloud of anarchy, chaos and disorder casted from the land of Afghans and now is looming large over South as well as Central Asia and Middle East. It seems that Afghanistan have become a centre of gravity for the global interests. The earlier two failures of the Afghanistan adventures by the British and Soviet Union have marked an academically much discussed end of expansionism in the nineteenth and twentieth century respectively. The announced gradual withdrawal of International Security Assistance Forces (ISAF) in 2014 is an entirely peculiar phenomenon. It cannot be measured in the judgmental terms of 'success' or 'failure' because the impacts of international community's intervention, battling as well as reconstruction and now their planned pullout have a wide range of impacts not only on Afghanistan and its surrounding but also on the global security and political order.

The ongoing Afghanistan war has some extreme aspects similar to the previous wars on the tough mountainous terrain. A mountainous land and harsh weathered people once were known as the most modern nation of South Asia have now been retrogressed towards almost paganism. In yesteryears of cold war, it was horned amid the wrestling between the so-called socialist and the capitalist camps. The first world war on Afghanistan began in 1979 and concluded in 1991 causing a decisive defeat of Soviet Union. If seen in the context of people's history, almost 2.802 billion people suffered the direct, indirect, and post-direct burns of Afghan drama in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran, China, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Azerbaijan, and

India and later on in post 9/11 in US, UK and European Union. Today, the world powers and stakeholder states are planning to wind-up from Afghanistan in 2014 in hasty manner, which ultimately will unfold a new arena of global conflicts and complexities. The process of ISAF withdrawal is the appropriate solution; however, the post withdrawal strategy is the key towards its sustenance. Moreover, eventually sustenance comes only through the will and strengthening of local population.

Afghan depth: The clash of Interests

World is eyeing Afghanistan at least since early eighteenth century because of its strategic beauty and resource abundance. Rich in the minerals like copper, iron-ore, hydrocarbon, gold, lithium, granite, petroleum, natural gas and others but landlocked amid high altitude mountains with a harsh weather, the country is positioned midst the geopolitical, geo-economic and therefore geostrategic important regions of the world. This has natural resources, human resources, powerful armies, promising as well as old regional, and world powers aspects.

Afghanistan is the point of common action between and among the international interests like United States of America (USA), United Kingdom (UK), Canada, Germany, India, Russia, Australia, China, and the Central Asian States. The country, geopolitically, can also connect Eurasia with the Middle East, South, and East Asia and vice versa. At the helm of such a geo-economic reality, Afghanistan is potential to facilitate much hounded energy resources to the global energy corporate sector and finally in the form of end user citizens of various countries, which unfortunately still are unsuccessful in becoming citizens of the world.

If the monetary, fiscal and financial expenditure of the first and second world wars on Afghanistan is compared with the global monetary requirement for eradicating poverty, terrorism, and dearth of opportunities for unemployed youth, it become visible that people are paying opportunity cost on behalf of their states in selecting war over the development and broader human security paradigm. It gives an impression that almost all states on the globe are at a higher degree of the statecraft-deception towards their own peoples' interests on the pretext of national security paradigm.

Every country has its own stakes in Afghanistan. Therefore, everyone wants the regional and global politics that tilts to serve its interests. This has become a genuine cause of non-consensus over Afghan solution between and amongst almost all the countries as well as regional groups of the countries.

Russia will have to keep a check on formidable economic rivals in Afghanistan like (the one) China¹. Pakistan has been tossing the counterfeit coin of barbaric Taliban, whose interpretation of Islamic Shariah is of dark ages, in bid to gain centrality in Afghanistan in comparison to the Indian influence and role in the reconstruction of Afghanistan. Iran was at ease when NATO forces toppled the Taliban but later on, it went into the diplomatic row with USA over the nuclear issue. Iran's disagreement with Taliban and consequently with Pakistan was multipronged. Taliban were Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates (UAE) supported through Pakistan and rooted Salafi / Wahabi school of thought. Iran has historical conflicts with Arabs and ideological antagonism with Salafism. Besides, Taliban massacred Persian speaking Shia Afghani in South Afghanistan and Mazar-e-Sharif in 1990s. However, Iran's difference with USA further brewed when U.S. troops stationed in Qandhar and Mazar-e-Sharif, which Iran termed security threats. Although the recent developments in Iran in which moderates have won the elections has enhanced the chances of positive dialogue between US and Iran in which India might play a bigger role. China and USA are not on the same page on Afghanistan since China has adopted a highly calculated and low profile approach towards Afghan affairs.

USA itself is increasingly focusing on a region, which is referred to be as 'Greater Central Asia' or the...(especially) the idea of a 'New Silk Route' initiative – reviving the old trade routes of the Silk Road – has been central to the American discourse². Canada wants an absolute withdrawal of troops in 2014. Germany and Turkey have been playing a role of catalyst in the engagements between conflicting interests along with Riyadh and Abu Dhabi, however the later both toe a pro Taliban line in comparison with the earlier. Amid all this matrix of diverse as well conflicting interests, ISAF withdrawal of 2014 poses to be an issue of high concern.

Matrix of the Interests

There is a bottomless sea of interests, concerns, and competitions of almost all countries regarding Afghanistan, which needs to be understood one-by-one.

Declining strategic value of Pakistan: Pakistan's stance on Afghanistan is apparently of ethnicity based, but its strings are deeply rooted in the country's extreme Islamist state doctrine as well as Punjabi dominated security establishment. It endocrines not only the Pashtun dominated Afghan government, but also is sub-ethnic selective on the bases of friendly and unfriendly clans and sub-clans of Afghani Pshtuns. Hamid Karzai, brought up in Pakistan as an Afghan refugee, has been least favorable for Pakistan as it belongs to the 'Durrani clan, which is almost unacceptable to Pakistan³' and consequently Taliban due to their tribal construct. Meanwhile, Durand line, a dividing imagery boundary, which was agreed between Afghan King Amir Abdul Rehman Khan and the British in 1893 on the issue of British India, held Pashtun-Afghan areas and Afghanistan has remained a security concern for Pakistan. Afghan government claimed the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) province of Pakistan (previously NWFP) in 1947 in the United Nations (UN) during the partition of India 1947.

Besides, Pakistan's Afghanistan policy is the integral part of its India policy due to internal and external reasons⁴, however Arab and most probably to some extent China's strings are attached with that. It is therefore imperative to see the Pakistan's Afghan policy in the broader South Asian and Middle East matrix. Pakistan's reluctance to accept current Afghan set-up as well as backing Taliban resistance against ISAF's lethal supply has pushed USA for opting other ways out. The issue was to some extent resolved between both onetime long-term allies much later on; however, the counters of Pak-USA relation indecisiveness will keep on threatening the future security and stability in Afghanistan.

The possibility of alternative transport routes to Central Asia involving Indian and Iranian cooperation that will reduce Pakistan's centrality in the Afghan conflict as well as affect its regional status is another worry for Pakistan⁵. The situation may possibly further strengthen India-USA relationships if not India-Iran-USA timothy. It means that Pakistan's future course of strategic actions regarding Afghanistan will be based on India-USA relation subsided by the Arab-Pakistan nexus, at the helm of which the silent role of China cannot be ruled out.

Pakistan housed the largest number of Afghan refugees during the *Mujahideen* guerrilla war against Soviet Union, out of which "5.3 million returned until 2002⁶" Pakistan and Afghanistan were largest importers to each other until 2010. Pakistan has 'opened up Gwadar (Balochistan) and Qasim Ports' in Karachi for Afghan merchants' export towards Asian world⁷.

In early 1990s, Islamabad, Riyadh, and Abu Dhabi recognized Taliban, meanwhile Taliban were recently facilitated by Abu Dhabi to open office for carrying negotiations with USA and rest of the world. Karzai government in the June 2013 has labeled Taliban office a 'proxy Embassy of Taliban and have demanded US for no role of Taliban in future Afghanistan'⁸.

In his article, 'Waziristan: no man's land?' published in monthly Herald, Pakistan in April 2006, Pakistani analyst Intekhab Amir wrote⁹ that Pakistani government was intervening to protect Taliban commanders, especially those connected to the Afghan insurgency, whilst all the while targeting military operations but only against foot soldiers. It is a clear indication of the multipronged play by Pakistan regarding Afghanistan as well as War on Terror. Pakistan is also said to have tacitly facilitated militants in the Pashtuns areas of northeastern Pakistan. The internalization of Taliban in Pakistan is the outfits called Punjabi Taliban, hailing from southern and northern Punjab and consist mainly of the militants who previously were engaged in so-called Jihad in Indian Kashmir, which have added, according to some researchers, the tactics *Fidayeen* terror attacks, suicide bombing and mass killings within and outside Afghanistan.

Until 2011, Pakistan has received \$18 billion aid from the US, most of which according to claims by Pakistan has gone to the war engagement. However, various reports indicates that a considerable part of that despite focusing Taliban and Al Qaida on Pak-Afghan borders the support was to certain extent used in crushing freedom movements in Sindh and Balochistan provinces causing a massive human rights violations as well as brutal acts similar to ethnic cleansing of Sindhi and Baloch people. This led USA to legislate over an amendment bill on June 19, 2013 in the US Congress conditioning military aid for Pakistan with the human rights violation against Sindhi, Baloch and religious minorities¹⁰. It seems that Pakistan in this situation wants to continue strengthening the destabilizing factors in Afghanistan and elsewhere in Asia, and thereby maintain its geopolitical and geostrategic importance in the continent. Meanwhile, it has carried the economic engagement with Afghanistan simultaneously through 'Afghanistan-Pakistan Transit Trade Agreement 2010 committed to increasing trade to \$5 billion by 2015'¹¹.

Iranian uncertainty: Iran and Pakistan remained engaged and disengaged in Afghanistan due to their peculiar nature, interests, realities, and reasons. Pakistan had the strategic strings attached with Taliban; however, Iran an anti-Taliban in its approach has mostly remained isolated in the Afghanistan realm.

The massacre of Shiites (2000 approximately) in Mazari-e-Sharif and the 'martyrdom' of nine Iranians (8 diplomats and 1 Iranian TV correspondent) by Taliban forces moved Iran-Taliban relationship into a critical state; and, even led the two countries of Iran and Afghanistan to the threshold of war on September 1998¹².

If Iran had to select, it would have selected US over Taliban, however since US included Iran into the axis of evils along with Iraq and North Korea, the Iran preferred to become a non-party out of both Taliban and the USA. Iran has been in an awkward position while terming both the US and Taliban enemies. It had to act in ways, which 'guarantee that neither the U.S. nor the Taliban would win the war'¹³. It was supposed that Iran would have been cooperating with ISAF, but due to USA-Iran, conflict minimized the chances for Iranian support. 'Iran wants to make sure that Afghanistan would not be a base for American operations against Iran'¹⁴. According to Haji Yousif, the US military bases in Kandahar and Mazar-e-Sharif are considered as threat for Iranian security. The realities of Afghan theatre have proved that Afghan issue cannot be appropriately resolved without the support of the majority of the neighboring and regional countries.

It has also been feared by Iran that the 'substitute the Iranian influence in Afghanistan and (holding) Mecca meeting in October 2008 in which Afghan authorities were said to have negotiated with Taliban for political settlement was considered as an effort to eliminate Iran from the future equations of Afghanistan'¹⁵. The Iranian uncertainty of its Afghanistan policy is based on the strategic security concerns regarding the presence of USA in Afghanistan or any possible Taliban takeover after 2014.

In the context of six-plus-two proposition, which includes Afghanistan's neighboring Iran, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, India and Pakistan along with old interveners USA and Russia, Iran has been supporting the UN to find Afghanistan solution. If Iran's over all approach towards Afghanistan is reviewed, one concludes that it has remained at the bay of the affairs with self-centric non-aligned policy. It never recognized Taliban government in past; had ideological differences with Al-Qaida; aspired ISAF withdrawal although earlier it asked Northern Alliance to facilitate the USA war against Taliban and it have been cooperating with Pakistan for coalition government in Afghanistan.

Iran has an important economic engagement with Afghanistan. Its export to Afghanistan amounts to \$500 million annually, while Iran has made itself obliged to reconstruct Afghan infrastructures. Such reconstruction includes multimillion dollar plans to secure the power supply of Afghan western regions with the help of Turkmenistan, and to secure the natural gas supply of Herat¹⁶.

Emerging soft-power India: India has played a vital role in the reconstruction and key infrastructure development of Afghanistan besides being the fifth largest donor there. 'Electricity transfer from Central Asia to Afghanistan, the Zaranj and Dellaram road that connects Afghanistan to Iran and the Chahbahar sea port in Iran to be used for exports/imports between India-Afghanistan-Central Asia as part of a 2003 trade agreement are important strategic programs'¹⁷. India has

historical cordial relations with Afghanistan, which further have strengthened during Karzai government. India is amid a triangle of competition formed by the challenging Pakistan and economically dominating China. This has created a competition of regional power-hood between India and China. Both have similar characteristic in Afghanistan, as they have preferred the reconstruction and development of Afghanistan to the military engagements.

The Taliban – US talks has enhanced the concerns of Delhi regarding the non-friendly elements collaborating or replacing friendly Karzai government. ‘Indian military capabilities have made a foray into Central Asia through the establishment of the first airbase outside India in Farkhor, Tajikistan’¹⁸. Afghan president Karzai has paid its twelfth visit to India on May 20-22, 2013 during the visit of Chinese Prime Minister Li Keqiang. It seems that in post ISAF scene, India will enhance its bilateral military cooperation with Afghanistan.

China’s selfish wisdom: China is highly calculated on Afghanistan. Its internal security interests are involved through a small border with Afghanistan in Xinhua province, which is unstable due to increasing Islamist militancy. Besides, China wants maximum possible economic benefits from the Afghan scene. China was reluctant to send Red Army units to join ISAF and played a limited role in the economic development there through infrastructure support especially in irrigation, health, and human resource development. ‘It also plans \$ 4 billion investment in mineralogical plans’¹⁹.

China mostly relies on Pakistan in order to make strategic inroads into South and Central Asia, and thereby sideline the rising India in the region. Its Afghanistan interest is highly selfish because it neither contributed in the military engagement nor played a major role in the economic development; however, it only concentrated the resolution of Xinhua province instability and wanted to keep limited development intervention in Afghanistan. According to Hausheng, China believes in Afghan led and owned peace process and reconciliations.

China’s internal security issues are connected with the regional stability. China and Central Asia have close economic ties; however, China has security concerns over the secessionist militancy in its western part that has connections with Islamist militant groups in Afghanistan and Central Asia. The similar internal security concerns leads Russia and China on the same page.

Beijing is...responding favorably to the requests (of Karzai) for economic co-operation, technical training, and preferential tariffs for Afghan exports²⁰. It has been professing widely six-plus-two formula for the permanent resolution of Afghanistan. Although a passive partner in Afghanistan war, China has been open to almost all possibilities and equations by actively engaging with all concerned deliberations. If summed up, based on the analysis of Hausheng, China have pentagonal position on

Afghanistan that essentially includes the (i) construction of sovereign Afghan state; (ii) sustainability of autonomous Afghan rule that should be (iii) friendly to the neighborhood, in which (iv) UN should play a major role, and finally (v) peace could only be achieved through political reconciliations.

Eurasian strategic niche: The strategic concerns of Russia and Central Asian States regarding Afghanistan are similar and interdependent; therefore, they should be clubbed into one interest group. They have four major common concerns. First is due to possible Taliban takeover of Kabul, their friendly Northern Alliance may skew to the limited territory, thereby destabilize access of the Eurasian countries to the Arabian Sea via Iranian or Pakistani ports. Second is the strong possibility of infiltration of Islamist militants in the Eurasian countries through western borders of Afghanistan. Third is the in-accessibility to exploit natural resources in the Pashtun areas of Afghanistan in case of Taliban takeover. Fourth is the resistance to the narcotics supply. Attaining these major strategic interests, civil wars and armed conflicts in Afghanistan are not in the interests of Russia or Central Asian States.

According to the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), in 2006 the share of Afghan opiates passing through the Northern (“Silk”) route was less than 15 percent of the total, while more traditional routes were more heavily utilized (53 percent through Iran and 33 percent through Pakistan). The share of heroin in Russia’s opiate consumption has also marginally declined²¹ during the ISAF intervention period (however to unsatisfactory level). Russia’s broader Central Asian policy places Afghanistan at the center.

The socio-cultural ties between Northern Afghanistan and Central Asia are also of interest to Russia as ethnic Tajiks, Uzbeks, and Turkmen dominate these regions. The support of Central Asian countries and Russia to the Northern Alliance, an alliance of Tajiks, Uzbeks and Turkmen against the Taliban, is borne out of this socio-cultural affinity²². Although Russia, China, and Central Asian States have been on the same page over their strategic concerns and interests in Afghanistan, their competition of economic interests has separated both into two different groupings. China wants inroads through Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and Russia through Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO).

After July 2009 ... allowing the US military to cross its territory has allowed Russia to revive its relationship with NATO, while deemphasizing disagreements in the South Caucasus and keeping NATO largely away from post-Soviet Central Asia. The increase in military transit through Russia also financially benefits certain state²³. Moscow has always been dwindling to select one out of two, whether to cooperate with NATO on broader intelligence sharing, rout support and narcotics control mechanism or to remain within the minimum framework of cooperation. In post ISAF withdrawal, it has either to restrict itself mainly with Northern Alliance along with supporting

current coalition government or in the form of dialogue with the so-called moderate Taliban to further the Russian and Central Asian interests. The hitherto failure of Afghan government and NATO in curbing narcotics trafficking towards Central Asia, Russia as well as Iran has further raised the concerns of these countries in the post-ISAF scenario.

Russia, after international forces pullout has been concerned about the strengthening of the 'security system in the strategic southern area, including its military component, emphasizing the need for close cooperation with fellow members of regional security alliances'²⁴. According to Akulov, 'international forces have done practically nothing to root out drug production in Afghanistan and ignored Russian proposals for more efforts to eradicate crops of poppies used to make heroin. As a result there is every reason (for Russia) to believe that in the near future' they may face a worsening of the situation.

On the other hand, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said in May 2013 after a meeting with UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon that Russia is counting on the UN to develop proposals regarding the international presence in Afghanistan after 2014. He also reiterated that international presence would remain in Afghanistan after 2014. Besides, Russia is also thinking to avoid any instability at the eastern borders of Central Asian States; therefore, CSTO is thinking to install strengthened security particularly on the Tajik-Afghan borders. It means that any ISAF failure in Afghanistan would further push Russia to engage with the Central Asian States that will ultimately change the overall security paradigm in the Central Asia.

From the Bonn I to Bonn II Conference, Russia's involvement in Afghanistan has come a long way. Russia's support for the Northern Distribution Network (NDN) by allowing supplies through its territory alludes to its strategic interest in the region. With mounting tensions between Pakistan and the US - after US unilateral action against Osama, Pakistan's allegedly support to the Haqqani Network against NATO troops, and Pakistan's shutting down of supply routes through its territory - the NDN has become a sort of a trump card for Russia²⁵. Although the recent postponement of Russian-USA Presidential Summit earlier scheduled in September 2013 has created the situation of uncertainty, however it is time for USA to not allow minor irritants to adversely affect the matter of the global responsibility and importance. Any future understanding between the both, especially after or during USA-Iran possible talks would prove to be more fruitful

Canada, USA, and NATO: A unity of different approaches:

In the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) summit in Chicago, the leaders reached the decision to hand over transferring the security control of Afghanistan to Afghan security by mid 2014. This has harbored the serious questions about the objectives, interests, and vision of NATO and the West as well as their level of successes, achievements, and failures. Although majority of EU and North America together

form NATO, however in Afghanistan terrain, Canada has played major role besides USA. Meanwhile, there have also been some differences of approach between European countries plus Canada and the US.

The Canadian interest in Afghanistan has two dimensions – one, it has the deep economic and energy interests in the region; two, it has always been a part of broader USA policy framework, and has recently wanted to further deepen it. There have been widely reported that majority of ISAF military casualties after US has been of the Canadian troops because in Kabul they were under USA command; however in Southeastern Afghanistan they were leading in the Kandahar. Most of the Canadian soldiers in Kabul were engaged in three sorts of works – peacekeeping, war making, reconstruction, and administrative support. Earlier, Canada was of the opinion that a considerable number of its soldiers would remain as a part of the small multinational brigade of ISAF that would be in Afghanistan under the process of gradual withdrawal, however the Canadians changed their decision and declared, 'there would be no Canadian boot on the Afghan land.' Yet, Canada will continue supporting Afghan government through paying \$110 million every year²⁶.

It is estimated that it will cost \$4.1-billion a year for Afghanistan to run its security forces once the NATO-led coalition pulls out in 2014. Canada had been asked to consider leaving some soldiers in Afghanistan post-2014 to continue to help with training. However, (Canadian Prime Minister) Harper says the deadline is firm. He says it is not an abandonment of Afghanistan but a transfer of responsibility to the Afghans²⁷.

Canada assumed a major role in Afghan because US needed to concentrate on Iraq in early 2000s. According to 2006 Echech a la Guerree report, 'in addition to their own defense of the Kandahar airfield, Canadian troops embarked on three large-scale, battalion-sized offensive operations in pursuit of the al-Qaeda, one such operation being the first combat air assault in the history of the Canadian army into the Shal Kot Valley, in March 2002.' Since October 2001, Canada took part in the missions of Apollo, Altair, Sirius, Athena, Archer, Argus, and others. The Canadian Forces website mentions that since October 2001, Canada has deployed 22 warships and more than 18,000 Army, Navy, and Air Force personnel in the international campaign against terrorism. According to estimates by some Canada based research institutes, the country has spent approximately 4.1 billion Canadian dollars on the military operations in Afghanistan.

In fact, the Canadian people were building pressure on the government to withdraw its physical presence in Afghanistan due to the increasing number of casualties. Canadian troops, during mid 2014, will be handing over their responsibilities in Kandahar to the local Afghan security under the supervision of a smaller number of ISAF troops, which most probably would be operating under US command. It is widely feared that the issues

like capacity of the local security as well as human rights violations especially in the prisons in Kandahar may emerge. Although Canada has joined Afghan intervention to deepen its alliance with US, however at the end of the war the approach change within the camp of NATO has been visible. US has been more aggressive in Afghanistan and Canada in association with Europe believe in less aggressive and focusing more on the development, restructuring and reconstruction in Afghanistan.

The US has a foresight for its own future interests in Asia, which it cannot attain without the support of Asian as well as Western partners. Such a vision includes the creation of a new route for world economic interventions in which Afghanistan may play a role of central importance by connecting the Central Asia with Middle East as well as South and East Asia, thereby initiating a new channel for global economy of the USA led broader stakeholders. Such a notion amid existence of SCO, CSTO, and SAARC in the Asia and EU in Europe would ultimately face the turbulent time in the form of differences and clash of interests. NATO shares, no doubt, this vision of USA, however it is the difference between Europe and USA over the offensive and less offensive mode of interventions especially after pullout that has yet to be finalized in the light of post 2014 scenario.

Cost of the war

Stiglitz, the recipient of the 2001 Nobel Prize in economics, and Bilmes, a professor at the Harvard Kennedy School have said that the direct cost of the (Afghan) war (for US) has already topped \$600 billion. Ongoing military operations will bring that total to at least \$700 billion through 2014. They also highlight some of the big costs, like caring for the veterans of the Afghanistan war (total estimated cost: \$1 trillion); supporting the Afghan security forces (\$5 billion to \$8 billion per year). Besides, US Congress has already appropriated close to \$90 billion — over \$50 billion for security assistance and close to \$40 billion for economic and humanitarian reconstruction²⁸. The US is projected to have 32,000 troops in Afghanistan at the end of February 2013 and the U.S. may keep as many as 8,000 - 10,000 troops in advisory and support roles in Afghanistan for some years beyond the withdrawal of combat forces after 2014²⁹. According to the research project 'Costs of War' by Brown University's Watson Institute for International Studies, the final bill (of the Afghan war for US) will run at least \$3.7 trillion and could reach as high as \$4.4 trillion³⁰.

In the terms of humanitarian crises, 224,000 to 258,000 people have died directly from warfare, including 125,000 civilians in Iraq. Many more have died indirectly, from the loss of clean drinking water, healthcare, and nutrition. An additional 365,000 have been wounded and 7.8 million people³¹. The U.S. has already agreed to pay \$2.6 billion per year through 2024 for the Afghan security forces. Add to that some \$8 billion — that Department of State request for war-related operations in 2013 — and (that is) already over \$10 billion, without even looking at

the Department of Defense (DoD) budget. DoD's reset account —funds to repair and replace equipment used in combat operations — came to \$13 billion in 2012³².

UK: By the end of March, 2012 Afghan operations had cost taxpayers a total of £17.3 billion on top of the core defense budget. Britain's military engagement of 9500 troops has also bore 414 British lives until early 2012. It was estimated in UK that the war would cost it between 2012 -14 at least another £800 million. According to the estimates by ministry of defense, mentions Kirkup, each container of gear transported along the central Asian route will cost the department £20,000. Under the severe economic pressure, France also took decision to pull back 3300 troops from Afghanistan, on which UK pledged here to reverse its decision.

The independent estimates are different claiming that the war has a cost of at least £37bn and the figure will rise to a sum equivalent to more than £2,000 for every taxpaying household, according to a devastating critique of the UK's role in the conflict³³. By 2020, according to Norton-Taylor's report, Britain will have to spend at least £40bn on its Afghan campaign, enough to recruit over 5,000 police officers or nurses and pay for them throughout their careers. It could fund free tuition for all students in British higher education for 10 years.

Canada: According to initial government estimates for the period 2001 to 2009 the cost of war was CAD\$9 billion but later on government estimates of the incremental cost of the conflict increased to CAD\$5 billion in March 2008 due to equipment purchases. The independent estimates of the total cost of the conflict range as high as CAD\$18.5 billion by 2011, according to the Parliamentary Budget Officer³⁴.

Pakistan: Pakistan's economy has suffered direct and indirect losses of up to \$67.93 billion since 2001. Since 2006, during war on terror, the religious terrorism along with the war at Afghanistan-Pakistan borders has claimed the lives of over 35,000 civilians³⁵. According to Economic Survey of Pakistan, reports daily Dawn, Pakistan's investment-to-GDP ratio has declined from 22.5 percent in 2006-07 to 13.4 percent in 2010-11 with serious consequences for the job creating ability of the economy. The economy was subjected to enormous direct and indirect costs, which continued to rise from \$2.669 billion in 2001-02 to \$13.6 billion by 2009-10, projected to rise to \$17.8 billion in the current financial year, and moving forward, the direct and indirect costs to the economy are most likely to rise further.

Germany: German share of the net present value of the total costs of the war ranges from 26 billion Euro to 47 billion Euro. On an annual basis, (it is estimated) that the German participation in the war costs between 2.5 and 3 billion Euro³⁶.

Australia: Each soldier out of the 1550 in Afghanistan is costing Australian taxpayers \$1 million. The cost of the war hit

\$1.6 billion for the past financial year. By June 2013, the overall outlay for the Afghanistan campaign will reach more than \$7.4 billion, including \$1 billion for enhanced measures to better protect soldiers from roadside bombs and rocket attacks. In its budget forward estimates, the government only assumed costs of the Afghanistan war at \$299 million for 2012-13, but the true cost will be at least \$1.2 billion plus another \$200 million in budgeted force protection costs. The government is also halfway through a five-year \$200 million program of donations to the Afghan National Army Trust Fund³⁷.

Russia: According to Krupnov, Chairman of the Society for Friendship and Co-operation with Afghanistan, Russia would need \$50bn (£32bn) for accelerated industrialization in Afghanistan through 2020, of which Russia's contribution could reach \$7bn. UNESCO could be in charge of raising the money. According to Russian experts, the money is needed to launch pipeline transit projects from Turkmenistan to India and from Iran to India via Afghanistan, as well as for the electrification of the country³⁸.

Japan: According to Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) Japan would further fund \$117 million for development projects in Afghanistan. It said that four main projects would be funded by the new aid: road maintenance, water supply network of New Kabul Project, the development of Kabul International Airport, and fuel purchases for government organizations. The ministry officials mentioned, "We promised \$3 billion at the Chicago meeting from 2012 up to 2016 for five years." Japan has also signed a MoU of \$281m with the UN, which totals Japan's support in Afghanistan through UN become around \$400 million. Japan is the second largest development donor in Afghanistan as US stands first³⁹. Japan has implemented approximately USD 1.6 billion of assistance until 2011 around governance support, security, infrastructure development, basic human needs, agricultural and rural development, and culture⁴⁰.

Multilateral Aid: In 2002, China formally announced to the world that on the basis of the respective financial aid of RMB 30 million and US\$1 million, China would further provide Afghanistan with assistance of US\$150 million⁴¹.

According to the estimate made by the UN, World Bank and Asian Development Bank, mentions People's Daily Online, during 2001, at least US\$15 billion were needed for the forthcoming decade regarding Afghanistan's reconstruction. It also segregated that US\$10 billion were needed for the first five years of the decade alone. It was reached at by the donors that only with this aid would it be possible for Afghanistan to restore and maintain its normal operation. The US\$4.5 billion worth of funds collected at the conference was beyond Kazai's own expectations. Japan also donated US\$500 million. Iran readily promised US\$560 million, 'Saudi Arabia, as a Muslim brother' took out US\$220 million. EU extended an amount of US\$495 million.

Japan, the second-largest donor in the reconstruction and development aid to Afghanistan, is eyeing it for the 'Central Asia plus Japan' framework – a political initiative to promote dialogue and cooperation between Japan and Central Asian states⁴².

According to Ambassador Wang on the founding of the Afghan provisional government, China provided Afghanistan with 30 million Yuan for emergency humanitarian material aid. At the Tokyo conference, the Chinese government again announced that it would further provide Afghanistan with US\$1 million in spot exchange as funds for starting the functioning of the Afghan provisional government. This amount of US\$1 million has been transferred to the account of the Afghan interim government. Chinese President Jiang Zemin, in meeting with Kazai, again announced China's offer of reconstruction aid worth US\$150 million⁴³.

Having pledged more than \$2 billion in various aid and developmental programs, India is Afghanistan's fifth largest bilateral donor⁴⁴. India has already contributed for the reconstruction and development of Afghanistan an amount of US\$ 10.8 billion as of 2012. More such projects are likely to come up after NATO's withdrawal. This includes setting up Iron ore mines, a 6 MTPA steel plant (by SAIL), a 800 MW power plant, Hydro-electric power projects, transmission lines, roads etc., India and Iran are set to ink a transit agreement on transporting goods to landlocked Afghanistan. The Indian government is investing more than US\$100 million in the expansion of the Chabahar port in southeastern Iran, which will serve as a hub for the transportation of transit goods⁴⁵. Ahead of Afghan President Hamid Karzai's June 2012 visit, New Delhi cleared \$100 million aid for the third phase of the Small Developmental Projects (SDPs) for Afghanistan as part of its commitment on a \$2 billion aid program. The SDPs were earlier implemented in two phases. The first phase in July 2006 comprised 50 projects worth \$11,216,179 and the second phase in June 2008 comprised 51 projects worth \$8,579,537⁴⁶.

It is assumed that the decade long war in Afghanistan has roughly exceeded the war cost, its direct and indirect aspects, as well as impacts beyond \$10 trillion.

Civil aid deficit: Richard Norton-Taylor in his report published in daily Guardian on March 25, 2008 writes that Afghanistan is being deprived of \$10bn (£5bn) of promised aid, and 40percent of the money that has been delivered was spent on corporate profits and consultancy fees. Referring to a report of aid agencies by ACBAR (an Afghan NGO), which says that the international community has pledged \$25bn to Afghanistan since 2001 but only \$15bn has been delivered. It further mentions that the US is the biggest donor to Afghanistan but is also responsible for one of the biggest shortfalls. The US delivered only half of the \$10.4bn it committed between 2002 and 2008, according to the Afghan government, the report says. Over the same period, the European Commission and Germany

distributed less than two-thirds of their respective \$1.7bn and \$1.2bn commitments while the World Bank distributed just over half of the \$1.6bn it committed. Britain pledged \$1.45bn and distributed almost all, \$1.3bn.

The report estimated that 40percent of the aid money spent in Afghanistan has found its way back to rich donor countries such as the US through corporate profits, consultants' salaries, and other costs, significantly inflating the cost of projects. The report cites example, of a road between the centre of Kabul and the international airport, which cost over \$2.3m per kilometer in US aid money, is at least four times the average cost of building a road in Afghanistan. It mentions that most full-time expatriate consultants working for private companies in Afghanistan cost between \$250,000 and \$500,000 a year, including salary, allowances, and associated costs, the report adds. "Spending on tackling poverty is a fraction of what is spent on military operations. While the US military is currently spending \$100m a day in Afghanistan, aid spent by all donors since 2001 is on average less than a tenth of that - just \$7m a day.⁴⁷"

Global poverty under the shadow of war: The world faces the 'urgent challenge' of creating 600 million productive jobs over the next decade in order to generate sustainable growth and maintain social cohesion⁴⁸. According to an International Labor Organization (ILO) report, after three years of continuous crisis conditions in global labor markets and against the prospect of a further deterioration of economic activity, there is a backlog of global unemployment of 200 million. It further points out that 400 million new jobs will be needed over the next decade to absorb the estimated 40 million growth of the labor force each year. The world faces the additional challenge of creating decent jobs for the estimated 900 million workers living with their families below the US\$ 2 a day poverty line, mostly in developing countries. Report indicates that 3 million were unemployed for 2012, rising to 206 million by 2016. It mentions that 74.8 million youth aged 15-24 were unemployed in 2011 around the globe. Indicating the deteriorating world economy, it points out that since 2007 an increase of more than 4 million unemployed was witnessed.

ILO report also mentions that 30 per cent of all workers in the world – more than 900 million – were living with their families below the US\$2 poverty line in 2011, or about 55 million more than expected based on pre-crisis trends. Of these 900 million working poor, about half were living below the US\$1.25 extreme poverty line. It indicates that the number of workers in vulnerable employment globally in 2011 is estimated at 1.52 billion, an increase of 136 million since 2000 and of nearly 23 million since 2009. Among women, 50.5 per cent are in vulnerable employment, a rate that exceeds the corresponding share for men, which are 48.2. It has mentioned that the output per worker in the Developed Economies and European Union region was US\$ 72,900 in 2011 versus an average of US\$ 13,600 in developing regions.

In an earlier report of 2011, ILO also mentioned that more than 1.5 billion people – half the global working population – is vulnerable or jobs insecure. It said that although the developed economies of the West account for only 15percent of the earth's working population, they accounted for 55percent of the increase in unemployment between 2007 and 2010. The report further said that equally unsettling is the outlook for youth unemployment, which the ILO categorizes as the number of people aged between 15 and 24 who are actively seeking work but unable to find it. There was a slight reduction in youth unemployment last year from 79.6 million to 77.7 million but the jobless rate for the young still stands at 12.6percent. It exclusively mentioned, "In some countries, the outlook is even worse. Spain has youth unemployment of 40percent, while young people in Southeast Asia and the Pacific are 4.7 times more likely to be unemployed as adults. One of the root causes of the revolution in Tunisia was the unrest caused by having a growing number of young people without jobs. The ILO estimates that in North Africa as a whole 'an alarming' 23.6percent of economically active young people were unemployed in 2010.

Although over a million youth currently is out of work in Britain that forms 21percent of the population. The 'arc of unemployment' ... cuts across southern Europe through the Middle East to South Asia. Almost half of the world's young people live along this arc. South Asia is home to the largest proportion of unemployed and inactive youth in the developing world, which forms a 31percent of the global youth⁴⁹. According to ILO, the youth unemployment rate in North Africa is very high, at 23.7 per cent in 2012. The unemployment rate for young women is even higher, at 37.0 per cent, compared with 18.3 per cent for young men in 2012. The outlook for the coming years remains bleak, with youth unemployment projected to remain close to 24 per cent until 2018⁵⁰. According to the ILO 2013 report, the region has by far the highest rate of working poverty, estimated at 40.1 per cent in 2012 at the US\$1.25 per day level, and working is a necessity for many young people. At the US\$2 per day level, the working poverty rate rises to 64 per cent; only South Asia has a working poverty rate at comparable levels (although the working poverty rate at the US\$1.25 per day level is significantly lower in South Asia).

The World with the population 7 billion people, have 870 million people who face hunger. Approximately 98percent of the world's undernourished people live in developing countries. China, India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh form 60 percent of the world poor⁵¹. The region wise details of worst form of hunger include 578 million in Asia and the Pacific; 239 million in Sub-Saharan Africa; and 53 million in Latin America and the Caribbean. Approximately 60 percent out of them are women⁵². Malnutrition is the key factor contributing to more than one-third of all global child deaths resulting in 2.6 million deaths per year.⁵³ Almost every five seconds, a child dies from hunger-related diseases⁵⁴. Almost 1.4 billion people in developing countries are living on \$1.25 a day or less⁵⁵. Three out of every

four people are living on less than \$1.25 a day in the rural areas⁵⁶. Almost 22,000 children die each day due to conditions of poverty⁵⁷. At least 75 percent of the poor on the globe counts 1.4 billion and depend on agriculture activities. Besides, 50 percent of hungry people are farming families.⁵⁸ South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa is the centers of global hunger and poverty.

Central Asia and Europe: According to a World Bank report of 2009⁵⁹, almost 30 percent of people in the Central Asia and Europe either live in poverty or are at risk of living in poverty; and increases are expected by approximately five million people for every one percent decline in gross domestic product (GDP). Meanwhile, according to regional MDG Report 2011⁶⁰, some six million people in Central Asia live in poverty and recent United Nations predictions estimate that the number of people in Europe and Central Asia living on less than \$1.25 per day increased by one million in 2009. It further says if high commodity prices persist, it is estimated that an additional 5.3 million people could slip into poverty (measured at \$2.50 per day) because of higher food and fuel inflation, increasing the rate of extreme poverty from 5.5 to 6.7 percent over 2000 levels. According to ILO Report of 2011⁶¹, Central and South East Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States youth unemployment declined to 9.6 percent, after peaking in 2009 at 10.4 percent - the highest regional rate in the world.

USA and Canada: The child poverty rate has likely risen to at least 12percent, an increase of 160,000 children compared to 2007. In October 2009, this meant 777,400 unemployed Canadians were not receiving benefits⁶². Poverty in Canada has increased because of the recession in the post Afghanistan and Iraq war. The poverty rate in Canada has rose 2007-2009 to 11.7percent in 2009, an increase of over 900,000 Canadians compared to 2007.

In USA, the poverty is about to hit highest level since 1965. According to the 2012 report of RT website, it is assumed that by the end of 2014, the poverty in US would be more than what it was at the end of Second World War. According to a survey conducted by the Associated Press in 2010, a family of four with a pre-tax income of \$22,314 was considered below the poverty line, while an individual with a pre-tax income of \$11,139 would have the same status. In 2010, poverty rate (in USA) was 15.1 per cent would only need to increase by 0.1 per cent to surpass what Americans faced in 1965 – but this year, the poverty level is estimated to grow to 15.7 percent. The poverty in USA poverty reached 22.4 percent in the late 1950s, and steadily declined throughout the 1960's. (It is) predicted that unemployment will still be at 7 per cent or higher by the end of 2014, and that the average increase in new jobs has been shrinking by about 75,000 per month since April. The unemployment rate (in USA) for 16- to 24-year-olds has rose sharply, from 15percent in 2008 to 19percent in 2009 and then to 20percent in 2010. It was 12percent in 2004. Averaging across 2008 to 2010, the unemployment rate was higher for

young men than for young women: 20percent compared with 15percent⁶³.

European Union and UK: Approximately 18 million were unemployed in European Union (EU) in 1994, almost 11percent of the workforce; this has witnessed a sharp decline in the later decade⁶⁴. Meanwhile, the unemployment rate for 16- to 24-year-olds in UK has become highest in the West which 22 percent⁶⁵.

China: Although poverty has decreased in China from 85percent in 1981 to 13.1percent in 2008, however, the income disparities have increased...In China 172 million people live below the line of poverty. The urban unemployment rate in China reached 11.6percent in 1999 and was a major cause of urban poverty. China is facing every year the higher rate of urban poverty⁶⁶.

Australia: Two million Australians - or one in 10 - live below the poverty line. Approximately 54 per cent of adult unemployed people cannot afford at least three essentials of life, such as dental treatment. Around 74 percent of people below the poverty line are from jobless households⁶⁷. The long-term unemployment rate was, like general unemployment, at an all-time low throughout most of late 2007 and 2008 (0.6percent), although both increased going into 2009. While unemployment started to decline again in late 2009, long-term unemployment has not shown the same pattern, appearing relatively stable over the 12 months to June 2011 (at 1.0percent)⁶⁸.

Afghanistan: Even after huge international intervention, 36 percent population of Afghanistan is unemployed and live below poverty line. The under-five mortality is 257 in every 1,000 live births. An overall life expectancy is 43. The country has adult literacy 28percent out of which youth literacy ratio for male is 51percent and for female is 18percent⁶⁹.

Conclusion

There is a wide arena of inter as well as intra-allies disagreements, contradictions, policy gaps, and governance as well as implementation fall-outs. The solutions to the Afghan crises can only come out amid these gray areas and fall-outs.

Pakistan has been the important cornerstone for the destabilization. While assessing Pakistan's destabilizing role in the region particularly in Afghanistan, ISAF was correct in reaching the conclusions that Pakistan was behind almost every resistance in Afghanistan. 'A report by General McChrystal in August 2009 directly linked all major Afghan insurgent groups to Pakistan; their senior leadership purportedly resided in Pakistan and was connected to al-Qaida. Furthermore, he alleged that elements within ISI aided these groups'⁷⁰. Pakistan's destabilizing role in Afghanistan led it to conflict with US. The three years of antagonism (2009-2012) between US and Pakistan created a situation of uncertainty in the region. The conflict peaked when 'in September 2010 US forces killed

two Pakistani border guards who were allegedly protecting *Haqqani* (reportedly Pakistan supported Afghan Taliban) fighters escaping to Pakistan. The situation led Pakistan to shut down the Torkham Gate border – through which 25percent of ISAF’s non-lethal cargo is transported daily – reminding the world community of Pakistan’s importance in the war on terror⁷¹.

There is a perception disinformation issue as well. Most of the opinion polls and surveys have been faulty reading the opinion Pakistani people towards USA. The fault laid in the selection process of demography of the respondents. One Gallup Survey conducted in 2009 revealed that 59percent of Pakistanis believed the US to pose the greatest threat to their nation, while only 11percent thought the Taliban to be a risk⁷². However, the material reality is entirely different. Majority of the ethnic Sindhi, Baloch, Siraki and Pashtuns dislike Taliban and have no particular disliking towards USA.

Apart from militant movements and terrorism, Gwadar – Karachi (Pakistan) and Abass (Iran) ports competition over access to the Central Asia has a vital role in the destabilization of Afghanistan. US had a different kind of perception about Iran vis-à-vis Taliban. USA might have been thinking of possible involvement of Iran in any kind of proxy war with US in Afghanistan especially in the context of technical and financial facilitation to the insurgents. Since the moderates have won the elections in Iran, and India has deeply engaged with Iran over roadways linking Tajikistan to the Indian Ocean through Iran, USA may still have an opportunity to engage with Iran.

Three things collide together: the transition of power in Afghanistan, general elections, and negotiations with Taliban. The transition essentially requires a broader cooperation among all parties; however, the de-stabilizing factors like Pakistan may want to take an advantage of the vacuum. Although the policy of gradual withdrawal of ISAF is important, however there are chances of Taliban gradual inroad in post-ISAF situation. The role of capability in Afghan National Army and security system would be at real test.

USA backing of recent Kabul–Taliban talks and its openness to allowing some Taliban to join the Afghan government has led New Delhi to threaten forming a coalition with Iran, as well as Russia and Central Asian states who are averse to seeing the Taliban poised to takeover⁷³.

The basic drawback of the situation is that the international community has given lesser importance to local capacity for governance over last eleven years engagement in Afghanistan. Had Afghanistan moved gradually towards self-rule since 2001-2002, the international forces might not been surmounted in the failure-like endgame. Besides, if indigenously initiated mechanism of electoral system had been in place since the beginning, there would not have been local support for the insurgency. Moreover, the ethnic composition of governance

structure and the balance of power between central, provincial and local / tribal tiers have always played the role of key importance in the fragile states like Afghanistan. The investment and strengthening of local governance in Afghanistan is a matter of prime importance in the pre and post pullout scenario.

There is, also, an important role of the regional alliances like SCO and CSTO in the situation, which requires a greater coordination between Russia, China, and India as leading regional forces as well as between India, Iran, and Tajikistan as strategic cornerstones. The much touted ‘regional solution’ for Afghanistan is nothing but a wavelength and commitment by all or major regional countries and groups for the sustainable self-rule and stable economy in Afghanistan.

It has been an ill excuse that Indo–Pak rivalry is the reason behind the new proxy war theatre in Afghanistan. In fact, there is a deep thought in the Islamist circles of Pakistan and Middle East that Pakistan can cause a defeat to USA with the economic support by Arabs and its allies similar to what Soviet Union had in 1991. This notion has so many strings attached.

Once again, after ISAF withdrawal, Russia would be the looser most following USA. The situation will leave Russia alone to deal with the Taliban threat. In case of Taliban return in power, drug trafficking and Islamist militancy in Central Asian States and Russia would destabilize ex-Soviet states and economies. It is therefore niche for US and Russia to create a commonly agreed equation on the post ISAF pullout.

Russia has already contributed some 12,000 paratroopers to the CSTO; it has an air base in Kyrgyzstan and more than 6,000 soldiers in Tajikistan, its largest deployment abroad. Tajikistan, which shares a long border with Afghanistan, has not yet ratified an October agreement extending Russia’s lease on the base where the troops are stationed beyond the end of this year... These forces will be used exclusively outside Russian territory, including in UN-mandated operations. The CSTO has already announced the decision to establish a combined air force formation of SU-25 fighters and SU-27 attack aircraft located in Kant, Kyrgyzstan. According to Bordyuzha, the mission is to support peacekeeping ground forces fighting terrorists, especially in mountainous terrain⁷⁴.

The next two years will be decisive for Afghanistan, with the US and its Western allies relying on a combination of financial assistance, the presence of a smaller military contingent in the country, a political dialogue within Afghanistan, and the growing assumption of responsibility by regional actors⁷⁵.

Almost all stakeholders of Afghanistan war excepting Pakistan are agree on the following grounds: i. Majority countries intend supporting Afghan government, ii. Pakistan is the sole supporter of Taliban and Saudi Arabia and UAE are their facilitators, iii. Majority of the Afghan population is liberal and secular, iv.

Withdrawal of ISAF itself will finally end the pretext for Taliban against foreign forces

The ISAF pullout and Afghan elections coincide. The contemporary situation demands transparent most elections so that the process of transition may further strengthen stability there. Besides, there is a major aspect of ethnic composition of Afghan state and the interests of various ethnic groups. Pashtun aspire a more central form of governance, while Tajik and Uzbek ethnic groups want a loose centre and powerful provinces. Therefore, a balanced federalism is essential for Afghanistan with special focus on the proportionate ethnic construct of Afghanistan state particularly its security aspect.

Unless, a three tier balanced mechanism of federal, provincial and local governments is not adopted according to Afghan society and culture, the sustenance of peace and stability there would remain a dream. In this matter, the initiatives like local governance and empowerment of the communities are of prime importance. Besides, Afghanistan has yet to select a mode of state-society interaction as well as secularization and liberalization of the country, especially in its Pakistan neighboring provinces in the post pullout scenario

Apart from the greater lobbying for the strategic interests, it has always been in Afghanistan's interests that these interest groups play a greater role of economic development there. The CSTO and NATO joining in economic projects would be a logical step for everybody's benefit. Still NATO rejects the very idea of dealing with the CSTO, be it security or economy. No matter, the time is ripe for the countries involved to be united and address the regional security agenda, there is not much time left. Russia and its SCO-CSTO allies are doing just that⁷⁶.

There is another as well as highly important viewpoint in the world, mostly tabled by the broader left as well as rights and anti-war activists. It is based on the basic notion that no country has right to invade any other country on any pretext. Based on the principles, this school of thought professes, 'the war in Afghanistan is not a just war; the invasion of Afghanistan was never authorized by the Security Council and cannot be justified by invoking self-defense'⁷⁷. Many are of the view that 'reconstructions' and 'democratization' in Afghanistan are mere tools of occupying it. A considerable number of activists believe that Afghan War has caused more civilian damages through 'shock and awe' campaigns, missile showers, the use of cluster and phosphorus bombs, napalm, and depleted uranium weapons.

In the words of Canadian Major General Andrew Leslie, according to Echech a la Guerre, explaining that Canada's military intervention in Afghanistan could last twenty years: Every time you kill an angry young man overseas, you're creating fifteen more who will come after you. British Chief of Staff General Dannatt made a similarly revealing statement to the effect that the presence of British soldiers in Iraq only exacerbates security problems rather than solving them.

Besides, given the economy of war in Afghanistan in comparison with the human development as well as increasing poverty and unemployment in the world, it seems that despite serving the interests of the citizens that fall under the human security zone of the various nations, the contemporary states are emphasizing more on the corporate interests. It is also an important fact that war making is the essential characteristic of states, which they utilize sometimes in the favor of highly modern forms of virtual colonialism. However, the phenomenon of Afghan war if seen from the perspective of Afghan neighboring populations, it is highly evident that the people living in the neighboring countries have been drowning into the increasing Muslim fanaticism.

Historically, the people around the all borders of Afghanistan are unwillingly facing so-called Islamism since 1970s. A minority of armed or states supported religious extremists have dominated the liberal, secular, and progressive majority. The worst impacts of Talibanization have been especially on the three liberal and secular majority provinces of Sindh, Baluchistan, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa of Pakistan; Xinhua province of China and on Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. It is therefore important to undone the dominance of Islamists in the region. If such a noble task is achieved through the ISAF intervention and strategically cohesive withdrawal, the possibility of new politics may begin in the region with minimizing chances of military dictatorships as well as dominance of security regimes on the civilian populations especially in Pakistan and broaden space for still surviving voice of liberal, secular and progressive majority.

Besides, it is important to focus on the role of UN in such kind of global interventions. The issue of Afghanistan has many aspects but essentially, from the structural point of view it is the issue of appropriate ethnic accommodation in the state field there. A similar situation is also prevailing in Pakistan, where dominance of ethnic Punjabi in association with Urdu-speaking privileged community has perverted society in name of *Islamization* so that Punjab may carry on its colonization of Sindh, Baluchistan, and KP in Pakistan. In so many manners, if the chemistry of statecraft Pakistan is not changed, the issue of Afghanistan will never get resolved.

The viewpoint of the broader left and anti-war activists is appropriate; however, the solution to the Afghanistan issues can only come at this stage through the reassessed engagement of the global powers. This requires the thinking in which Afghan people are the centre, which in turn would lead to the global human and strategic security as well.

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