



Review Paper

Political economy of unconventional warfare in Afghanistan

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Abstract

Looking at the contemporary International Community the Republic of Afghanistan is a country like no other in the world. As the country is acting as a catalyst in the great ideological warfare of twenty first century. Afghanistan has undergone several phases of transitions that proved to be failures and has also been passed through conflict cycles since the end of nearly two centuries old monarchical order in the early 1970. Among all the political transitions none of the political transitions- be it the one attempt by Sardar Mohammad Daud in 1973, by Afghan communists in the late 1970s and 80s, by Anti Soviet resistance leadership in the early 1990, or by Taliban in the mid 1990 no one could prove to be more problematic than the transition which happened after 9/11 when the US decided to invade Afghanistan in order to weed out the antisocial elements there. The Incident of 9/11 puts US into a new position of warfare. The war was the starting of the Unconventional Warfare. In which the target become less and less defined and better dispersed. In this context the study would attempt to access that how War on Terror change the phase of war from Conventional to Unconventional one. The Study is significant in understanding that how the event of 9/11 changes the means of warfare. How it is fought in Afghanistan. It is thus significant in analyzing the impact of the Unconventional Warfare to International Community especially the regional powers.

Keywords: 9/11, Conventional Warfare, Political Economy, Unconventional warfare, United States.

Introduction

The Republic of Afghanistan has undergone several phases of transitions¹ that proved to be failures and has been also passed through conflict cycles since the end of nearly two centuries old monarchical order in the early 1970. The transitions have an impact on the socio-political order, it has successively de-structured the old socio-political order and has failed to restructured and establish an alternative sustainable political order within the country. Among all the political transitions none of the political transitions- be it the one attempt by *Sardar Mohammad Daud* in 1973², by Afghan communists in the late 1970s and 80s, by anti Soviet resistance leadership in the early 1990, or by *Taliban*³ in the mid 1990⁴ could prove to be more problematic than war after 2001. Some appears to be the case with developments after 2001, which in turn could be under threat from a possibly another inclusive or failed transition in 2014-2015⁵. The Country after 9/11⁶ was the particular focus of the US and its allies⁷.

The team of Special Operation Forces and other group of Operations related to the field, worked to fell down the *Taliban Regime*. The *Taliban Regime* according to West had been backed by *Al-Quada*. The unconventional Warfare in Afghanistan had been wholly carried out by US and its Allies. All the Operational Forces which are active are roughly about 350 SOF and 110 Interagency Operative along with 15,000 Afghan irregulars. As a result of all those operations the *Taliban*

Regime fell down within a short period of time. What followed were the challenges of Unconventional Warfare⁸.

The US was the only country in twenties which possesses the most powerful Conventional military force and the strongest Nuclear Deterrent in the world. But with the change of the warfare the country now posses the strongest weapons of Unconventional warfare the scholars are not hesitant to call the name of Unconventional warfare as irregular warfare, hybrid warfare, 4th Generation Warfare, and of course the Post 9-11 rediscovery of insurgency and counterinsurgency. All these are the Unconventional forms of warfare, on which the country has a strong grip.

Definition: United States Department of Defense defines Unconventional Warfare as “activities to enable a resistance movement or insurgency to coerce, disrupt or overthrow a government or occupying power through and with an underground, auxiliary, and guerrilla force in a denied area⁹”. In this warfare the target becomes less and less defined and better dispersed, the relevance of attrition also declines¹⁰.

Political Economies and Unconventional Warfare

Political Economy is an interdisciplinary subject¹¹. It relies on other subjects as economics, political science, law, history, sociology. The subject explores the role of political factors in determining economic outcomes¹².

It is also that study area which permits a variety of ideological perspectives and theoretical paradigms. With the growing of behavioural approach in Political Science political economy especially encouraged¹².

Whether economics and politics are related is a long standing questions and it had been puzzled numerous scholars around the world. According to the modern literature of the 1950s and 1960s shared, that what Seymour Martin Lipset called that economic development can lead to democratization. It concentrates more on the political development than economic structure because according to them a stable democratic structure can bring better economic conditions as Lipset, Friedrich and Brzezinski; Huntington; de Schweinitz. However there are some scholars who see the bleak future of democracy as Moore, Schedler; Zakaria. However the scholars always study democracy outside the economic structure. With the end of Ideologies age it emerged as strong form of government putting back the communist ideology. However, the equation failed in many developing countries. As they remain verbose about the goals of democracy and capitalism, but in practice established authoritarian regimes with strong patronage networks although more liberal domestic markets. In spite of using the market economy model they go for mixed economy model. In these countries the state can perform major role in bringing economic development to the country¹³.

In case of Afghanistan a the major role are also played not by the state but after 2001 by US as country is a theater of war and disputes were created as a Buffer State, its stability always meant stability of entire region. The Policy of US in Afghanistan was to defend itself against insurgency and also to govern the country effectively. The approach they adopted help to enhance the governmental capacity also strengthen National Security forces. However, all these steps does not help to curd the insurgency completely. The security problems are still the great concerns. After the year 2013 the role of security mission changed. The 95 districts under coalition command were transferred to ANSF. The Afghan National Army is the leading combat operations about 80-90% are carried by them¹⁴. After twenty three of war almost the vital infrastructure of the country was destroyed, which should be estimated by the fact that about six million citizens were suffering from hunger and scarcity of food and water lead to widespread malnutrition¹⁵. A well known analyst Michal O' Hanlon estimated that between \$15 billion and \$50 billion is needed for rebuilding of Afghanistan in over 10 years⁷.

The Unconventional Warfare in Afghanistan endangers other forms of security as Human Security. In modern context we can define Human Security as the availability of basic opportunities for the well being of a person. In the year 2007 Afghanistan ranked 176th in terms of the Human Development Index, an estimate of about seven million people are vulnerable to hunger, poverty, life expectancy is 44 years, and 20% of children die before reaching the age of five. The impacts of it economy is

estimated by the fact that about 32 provinces are impacted. Out of 329 districts, 259 districts are infested with APMS. According to the Landmine Survey, till 2005, 38% of the flat land is mine contaminated¹⁶.

Geopolitics of Afghanistan

Looking at the map of Afghanistan, it is surrounded by Muslim countries. In the north lies the Central Asian Republics, xingiang province¹⁷ of china in the North-East touching the narrow strip of the Wakhan Corridor¹⁸, to the East, South, and Southwest lies Pakistan and the west is Iran. The second major observation is that it is central to the critical and unstable regions of west Asia and South Asia. It is land locked country and serves as the rich gas and oil resources in the Central Asian Republics to the Arabian Sea. On the other hand, it also gives access to the market in Central Asia and therefore a country of great interests for regional and world powers¹⁹. The strategically location of Afghanistan is such an important that all its neighbours got affected by it. The violent and the failed state is a source of instability and disorder in three Asia's: Central, South and West⁷.

The first time when the country was invaded was in sixth century BC, when Darius I of Perssia brought it under control. Then the process continues from then. While as in the modern conquest the country entered into "Great Game" with the introduction of European colonialism in Asia. In the context of 'Great Game' the Russian's were the first who are involved in the imperialistic policies in case of the country is concerned²⁰. Thus the country was structurally sandwiched during the Great Game, and then the country never managed to come out of that⁷.

Growing Unconventional Warfare: Regional and International Implications

The War on Terror in the region has changed the entire Geo-Political landscape in the region. In this scenario all the Republics of Central Asia got affected from it. The countries of Central Asia share a lot of global and regional geo-political concerns because the stability of Afghanistan has a larger meaning to them.

The motive of the US intervention in the Central Asia was only to solve the Afghan Problem. The involvement of US compels Russia to maintain a long term presence. Because of the long term interests of Central Asian oil and gas reserves and that Moscow could end up having NATO on its borders. Although the Central Asian countries welcomed the US military assistance in Afghanistan and economic assistance since 2001. But off late, these Republics seemed to have raised their price of cooperation with US and they look critical and suspicious about US strategic design. The Republic of Tajikistan has strong ties with Afghanistan in terms of both ethical and cultural. The country always felt the threat of religious extremism from Afghanistan. So, the country welcomed the US operations in Afghanistan²¹.

After 9/11 the strategically security of Pakistan changed towards Taliban in Afghanistan and their tribal areas. The country started the campaign against the radical elements by fighting against the terrorists through military operations. The military operations are more in the areas of Waziristan. The examples of such operations are that the Pakistani Army Infiltrated the South Waziristan in 2002 and fought with the militants there. The army entered the *Mehsud* area in 2004 that resulted in a peace agreement with *Baitullah Mehsud*²².

India is expanding its role in the south Asia region. In the South East Region the major target is Afghanistan. Which is shown by the fact that the country is showing positive interest in rebuilding peace efforts in Afghanistan, India is showing a great interest in creating a regional body which will oversee the economic and security situation in Afghanistan? India has also expressed interests in the large natural gas reserves in Iran, and may decide to build a natural gas pipeline through Afghanistan.

India is also interested to prevent the corruption in the Afghanistan, and to strengthen democracy institutions there. India is also showing its interest in abolishing the illicit drug cultivation. The profit of which is used to explore the extremist activities¹².

Conclusion

In recent years, the world is watching the Unconventional Warfare. It affects not only the political, economic, and social development of world, but also the state's relationship with its neighbors and the wider International Community. The country which is mostly affected by it in the present context is the Afghanistan it affects on every aspects particularly the human one. It is that form of insurgency in which grievances are exploited for some revolutionary purposes. Unconventional Warfare, conducted by any state in the International System of states whether United States or Russia has a reason that those countries want to advance National Interest.

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