

International Intervention and State-building in Afghanistan

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Abstract

Historically, Afghanistan has remained a fragile and destabilized region due to its strategic geographical location. State-building efforts are not new to the Afghan people, but various governments and international forces have experienced this several times. Some tried to build a strong centralized state on the model of secular and western democracy, others tried to impose a theocratic political system based on Islamic law. All failed due to consistent international intervention and the idea of a strong centralized government. International interventions are seen in dominant Western literature as a tool for state-building in Afghanistan; however, it turned out to be catastrophic. The state-building project in the post 9/11 intervention has made Afghanistan a rentier state. Afghanistan's economic and military dependence upon international powers forced the Afghan government to pursue policies in the light of international dictation. Problems of government's legitimacy, corruption and insurgency were also the factors arising from international intervention. All this leads to the conclusion that international intervention in Afghanistan continues to be the dominant factor in the failure of state-building processes and not an instrument of state-building.

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Key Words: State-building, failed state, international intervention, dependency, rentier state, government legitimacy, sovereignty, decentralized political system.

Introduction

The review of the historical efforts of state-building in Afghanistan reveal that political leadership has continuously failed to establish and maintain legitimate government within the territories by the misuse of force and a system of accountability. Experiments failed to use Islam as a tool to mobilize citizens for the creation of national unity through reforms. The secular model of government also failed in the country and resulted in violence. The sectarian and ethnic divides in the country are the leading factors in causing the failure of state-building projects in all times. The external interventions remained a continuing menace in the country, which led to the civil wars and crises of central power. The British influence, Soviet interventions, Taliban's attempt to mobilize people through Islam and lastly, the intervention by the United States are all the attempts of state-building in Afghanistan, which failed.²

Afghanistan has never existed as a full-fledged established state in its history. Throughout its history, the country faced international interventions and civil wars. Various ethnic and power groups continuously tussled for power, which resulted in the absence of a strong central government in Afghanistan. Various experiments of state-building on religious, secular and western models failed in Afghanistan. The reasons for the failure of the state-building projects in Afghanistan are numerous. The major international intervention and subsequent state-building efforts in Afghanistan can be observed in the aftermath of the 9/11 incident.

² Mohammed Nuruzzaman, "Revisiting the category of fragile and failed states in international relations." *International Studies* 46, no. 3 (2009): 271-294.

Subsequent to the US-led intervention in Afghanistan to change the current regime, the international interveners stepped up with regards to making a democratic structure for the country in the post-Taliban rule. The outrageous dependence of the new Afghan state on outside aid gave a huge role to international political players, yet the contrariness of the arrangement of goals prompted a contention over the policies. Considerably more evident was the strain between political reforms and security issues, which offered ascendancy to the commonplace dilemma of inclusion or exclusion during the time spent over democratization. To secure the procedure, the Afghan establishment perceived the inclusion of various groups into parliamentary politics as a vital strategy. However, the Afghan establishment was not autonomous in their decisions, the international powers insisted on the exclusive strategy and the establishment of a strong central government. This inclusion was expected to help move social clash from the military to the political stage and foresee a conceivable more boundless war that would be a stage in reverse in the primary objective of the US-driven coalition: to dispose off the Taliban and the Terrorists. Practically this has never been done though.

Early Efforts of State-building in Afghanistan

Historically, Afghans have inhabited the same territory for centuries, but de jure nation-state existed only after 1919.³ The foreign rule and domination ended in 1747 when Ahmed Shah laid the foundations of the Durrani Empire in Afghanistan. Since 1747, the native people have never come under the direct rule of foreign states and the local rulers managed to deter the external interventions of Persian, British and Russian invaders. The cost of countering foreign invasion was so high that Afghanistan remained

³ Amin Saikal, AG Ravan Farhadi, and Kirill Nourzhanov. *Modern Afghanistan: a history of struggle and survival* (Ib tauris, 2012), 43-220

underdeveloped and isolated. Foreign interventions were not the only problem, rather civil war, revolution and terrorism, all added in shaking the national unity in Afghanistan.

Afghanistan is a mountainous region, where different regions are governed by local traditions through the feudal system. This is the main reason, why a central legitimate rule is difficult to be established in Afghanistan. Islam is a widely common factor throughout Afghanistan, which can possibly bind the divided Afghans; however, the sectarian factor within Islam prohibits this unity as well.⁴

Habibullah Khan was the key person in securing the independence of Afghanistan and establishing a centralized government through an inclusive approach, where local tribal lords were given a share in the local governance. The inclusion of local tribal leaders in the country's politics had greater influence in lowering military conspiracy at the local level; however, the formula went wrong. The local tribal leaders started undermining the rights of minorities and started blocking unpopular decrees. On average, the Habibullah reforms were beneficial and to some extent, the local problems were resolved at the local level by the political elite, who were part of the government. Habibullah also resisted against the encroachment of the British Empire from India and secured an independent foreign policy in Afghanistan. The era of Habibullah came to an end, with his assassination in 1919. This event led to the deterioration of the political atmosphere in Afghanistan.

Habibullah was succeeded by his son, Amanullah. Amanullah had a clear set of goals to build and modernize Afghanistan on secular lines. He was inspired by the Turkish Kemal Ataturk model of governance and hence initiated a gross nation-

⁴ Saikal, Farhadi, and Nourzhanov. *Modern Afghanistan*, 71-111

building effort on similar grounds. Along with many challenges, he mainly wanted to separate politics from religion. This was indeed one of the most difficult challenges for his government in a conventional Afghanistan. It was only the Amanullah rule when Afghan women were openly allowed to appear in the public and travel for their needs with no fear. Women were encouraged to get an education and come in the employment sectors. Another important effort was to alienate the justice system from religious scholars and establish an independent western style court system. For this, new civil and criminal laws were formulated and penal codes were set for different cases. Amanullah was of the view that military spending is counter-productive and hence reduced their salaries and other incentives. He failed to realize that such large-scale changes in the country will result in the rebellious reaction. Only the military could have saved him against the rebellious actions which his policies already undermined by initiating major cuts in their pays and incentives. Strong conventional religious personalities in Afghanistan started accusing him of anti-Islamic sentiments and abandoning Islam from politics. Amanullah imprisoned and executed some key *mullahs* and *peers*, including the chief religious judge in Kabul and Hazrat Sahib of Shor Bazaar.

The reforms of Amanullah were hard to accept in the religious community and hence, large-scale resistance movements started in Afghanistan. The movements were so strong and wide that, Amanullah had to free all political prisoners and allowed his half-brother, Inayatullah Khan to take over the government. Irrespective of this change, the resistance movements kept on gaining momentum and resulted in the exile of the royal family. The military of the country had no capacity to stop the anti-Amanullah movements and hence resulted in the fall of the government, leaving space for Habibullah Kalakani to take over. Kalakani cabinet

comprised of his family and friends and expanded the network along Afghanistan.⁵

The support and promotion of patronage networks in the country had further widened the gap along with ethnic, sectarian and tribal groups in the country. The government reversed many of Amanullah reforms; abolished the court system and transferred it back to the religious scholars, closed many girls' schools and libraries were burned. Many female students, who were studying in Turkey on scholarships, were called back, thus leaving their education unfinished. Unlike Amanullah, Bacha mainly used religion to mobilize and unite the country. However, the ethnic and tribal division in the county never allowed his government to establish a strong central government with the consensus of the majority.

Nadir Shah, who was a military general, had taken over the government by overthrowing Kalakani. He again tried to modernize Afghanistan through the promotion of education and by the establishment of educational institutions. The first university in Afghanistan was also established during the reign of Nadir Shah. He also introduced a set of rules and procedure for the accession to the throne in the country. Along with modernization, he tried to promote the Hanafi school of Sunni Islam in the legal orders of the country. A *Loya Jirga* was authorized to bring the Sunni Islamic provisions in the Constitution of Afghanistan and also to decide on the legitimacy of the ruler. Nadir Shah had made very careful and democratic efforts for state-building in Afghanistan by the creation of a more representative government; however, the efforts never proved fruitful. The established constitution in Nadir Shah Government had little room for minorities' participation. The government was overrepresented by his family and friends, which undermined the idea of creating a participatory and representative

⁵ Saikal, Farhadi, and Nourzhanov. *Modern Afghanistan*, 197-210

government. Irrespective of the Nadir Shah's intentions to create a democratic form of government in Afghanistan; his tyrannical form of rule disallowed it. The end of World War II was the start of the cold war between the United States and the Soviet Union. This period has also impacted the state-building process in Afghanistan.

During the cold war, both the Soviet Union and the United States supported Afghanistan through economic aid and infrastructural projects to win its support. The dual aid helped in the democratization of Afghanistan from 1950 to 1960. A more liberal constitution was implemented in the country after stepping down of Mohammed Daoud Khan by the royal family. The power was decentralized to resolve the autocracy of the central government. The reforms towards achieving democracy in the country have again brought traditional forces in conflict with the new authorities. In a ten years period, from 1950 till 1960, students at Kabul University and those studying abroad were given incentives to work with the government ignoring the illiterate traditional stakeholders.⁶ Apart from that, the new constitution had a clause, which prevented Daoud to retain power again. He allied with the Soviet Union and staged a coup in 1973 to reclaim its power in Kabul. After that, he made many reforms with the purpose to build Afghanistan on the footprint of representative democratic governance. During the regimes of Daoud and Shah, power was greatly decentralized but in a non-democratic way. Daoud was not democratic in nature and hence adopted autocratic practices in giving representation to the population across the country. The government failed to establish neither federative nor integrative mechanisms for the participation of the population.⁷

⁶ Saikal, Farhadi, and Nourzhanov. *Modern Afghanistan*, 197-210

⁷ Sultan Barakat, H. Atmar, and A. Strand. *From Rhetoric to Reality: the role of aid in local peace building in Afghanistan* (York University Toronto, 1998), 8-14

Although the state-building and democratization efforts in the 1960s were on a small scale, they created a loop of intellectual individuals who propagated the idea of modernizing Afghanistan through promoting education. Many scholars within and outside Afghanistan promoted the idea of the necessity of education for both Afghan boys and girls. The 1960s era witnessed the propagation of western ideas of governance in the main cities of Afghanistan, which raised concerns in the religious groups. However, this time the modernization of Afghanistan was different from the earlier attempts. This time, instead of making Afghanistan completely secular state, modern Islamic scholars tried to find the compatibility of the Western democracy with the Islamic principles. The modern Islamic individuals in Afghanistan tried a coup in 1975 but failed. In the next couple of years, the modern Islamic faction remained disappeared in Afghanistan and the ruling elite adopted the policies of repression and kept the population away from political participation. After the failed Islamic modernist coup, Daoud made large-scale imprisonment of the communist leaders and other educated individuals. The actions were counter-productive, as the supporters of communism made a violent takeover in 1978, followed by the Soviet Union's invasion in 1979. The pro-Soviet rulers tried to introduce large-scale modernization reforms in the country, which were not acceptable to the traditional Islamic leaders in the country. The religious leadership in the country called upon a war (*Jihad*) against the Soviet invasion and the existing government. The long, violent war between Soviet troops and *Mujahedeen* has greatly devastated the already weakened Afghanistan. From 1979 onwards, the state-building efforts in Afghanistan were stalled.⁸

⁸ Astri Suhrke, "Reconstruction as modernization: the 'post-conflict' project in Afghanistan." *Third World Quarterly* 28, no. 7 (2007): 1291-1308.

Summarizing all, it can be concluded that the state-building efforts in the early times were unstructured and lacked a general public consensus. The will of the people was not taken into consideration before introducing new reforms in the country. All efforts made to create national unity in the country have further widened ethnic, tribal and sectarian divisions. Efforts were made on two different extremes; to establish a secular Afghanistan and to make Afghanistan a religious country on the basis of Sunni Islam. The decentralization of power was not based on the true federalist principles and hence led to the rise of local insurgencies. All of these things contributed to the crisis of legitimacy of power in the politics of Afghanistan, which allowed the foreign powers to come and execute an international agenda of state-building in the country.

Efforts of State-building during the Taliban's Rule

After the Soviet troops faced a deadly defeat from the traditional religious groups (*Mujahedeen*/ Taliban), the Taliban established their de facto government in Afghanistan.⁹ During the Taliban's rule, the state-building efforts continued, which were mainly based on religion. Islam gained more and more influence in both national and local politics of Afghanistan. The Taliban leader, Mullah Omer adopted coercive measures to force people to obey the religious obligations in the country. Generally, the overall emphasis in the Taliban government was on theology, rather than state-building. Islamic teachings were spread to purify the Afghan nationals. The challenge of unity in the country was tackled through the program of Islamization, both through peaceful and violent means. Mullah Omer was at the top of the Taliban's ranking and was instrumental in making directions for the policymakers. The only source of legitimacy for his supremacy and rule was Islam. To avoid disunity

⁹ Ibid, 1304

and fragmentation of the local politics, the Taliban's used coercive measures to silence voices and bring people under their organizational structure.

The coercive approach of Taliban's resulted in the brain drain, where educated individuals with technical minds left the country. Thus, in an effort of state-building, the Taliban's government further destroyed the country through the implementation of strict Sharia laws. Women were again deprived of modern education, limiting them to the boundaries of the house. The Taliban rule was self-destructive to the overall state-building efforts in the county. They not only undermined the democratic model of state-building but also hindered international assistance. The non-governmental organizations were already rare in the country, which further packed up after the strict regulations of the Taliban's. The Taliban's were also hostile to the UN state-building mission and even refused negotiations on the matter with the international community.

The Taliban rule was self-destructive for the state-building efforts because large-scale ethnic conflicts emerged in Afghanistan over the issue of power. The Taliban's did not adopt an inclusive strategy to bring all ethnic, sectarian and tribal groups in confidence rather influenced their own agenda through forceful means. Simultaneously, their rule was seriously challenged by the world powers for the large-scale human rights violations and failure to fulfill international obligations. Thus, the overall period of the Taliban's rule in Afghanistan proved ineffective, rather destructive for the state-building process. The 9/11 attacks and the refusal of Taliban's to detach themselves from Al-Qaeda leader, Osama Bin Laden has brought them in direct conflict with the world powers, leading to the intervention of NATO in Afghanistan in 2001.¹⁰

¹⁰ Suhrke, "Reconstruction as modernization", 1305-08

Post 9/11 International Intervention and State-building Efforts in Afghanistan

The post 9/11 time is considered to be very complicated in the history of state-building efforts in Afghanistan. The state-building process in the post 9/11 era is mainly comprised of three basic areas; the political, military and the security sector reforms.

The primary tool used by the Western powers in Afghanistan was the military operation under the banner of operation enduring freedom (OEF) through the International security assistance force (ISAF). The important factor of the OEF was the authorization of ground forces to fight the Taliban. The fight against the Taliban was carried out through assistance to the local disparate Tajik groups with cash and military tools to fight the Taliban. The airstrikes against Taliban's outlets further strengthened the American influence in Afghanistan. After securing a stronghold in Kabul, the Americans started large-scale reforms and efforts towards state-building in Afghanistan. The first and important move was the Bonn framework.¹¹

Many international political leaders led by the United States, United Nations representative and certain local Afghan political elites met in Bonn on December 2001, to discuss the framework for state-building in Afghanistan. Discussions and negotiations among these leaders concluded with the signing of an agreement on setting the provincial arrangements in the country and the re-establishment of the government institutions. In short, the Bonn agreement was the initiation of the US-led state-building process in Afghanistan.

¹¹ Lucy Morgan Edwards, "State-building in Afghanistan: a case showing the limits?." *International Review of the Red Cross* 92, no. 880 (2010): 967-991.

The agreement looked forward to establishing an interim government in Afghanistan, with a subsequent call for *Loya Jirga* to establish a transitional administration until the regular elections for the presidency and parliament in 2004.¹² The interim government was established which set a constitutional drafting committee with a purpose to make arrangements for the constitutional *Loya Jirga*. The proposed constitution of the country was intended to be based on the three branches of government; the executive, legislative and the judiciary. The new criminal justice system was to be set in accordance with the Islamic principles, modern international standards, and the local traditional values.

The results of the Bonn process were not so convincing due to the fact that its major Pashtun leaders, including the Talibans, were not included in the entire course of the agreement. The agreement sowed the feeling of distrust and alienations among the Pashtun groups against the mainstream government. The Bonn process tried to resolve all problems in Afghanistan through a top-down approach but the no or less participation of the important actors undermined the desired results. The influence of specific groups in the *Loya Jirga* resulted in their empowerment and thus secured ministerial positions in the country with international political legitimacy. The group in power maintained to secure the interest of their own elite groups throughout the country and lacked the support of the major Pashtun warlords. The Karzai government, thus failed in the complete reformation of the government structure and the judicial system, as agreed in the Bonn agreement.

The international community was quite optimistic about the elections in Afghanistan and was enthusiastic about the positive change in the county; however, the security of the country

¹² Edwards, "State-building in Afghanistan", 987-989.

remained poor. The Taliban continued to fight with the government and international troops, resulting in the destruction of property and precious lives as collateral damage. The government was even not able to control the illegal Narco trade in the country, which served as the main financing source for various militant groups. The ministers and other government officials were busy in making money through corruption in every possible way.

Alongside the Bonn process, the second important thing in the state-building efforts was the security sector reform in 2002. The G8 member countries divided responsibilities in the greater security sector reforms. Germany was assigned to help Afghanistan in making large-scale police reforms throughout the country. The United States took the responsibility to bring in the military reforms. Italy had the judicial reform agenda. The United Kingdom was mainly tasked to introduce reforms in countering narcotics activities in Afghanistan. Last but not the least, Japan took the responsibility to demobilize, disarm and reintegrate the militants in the country. The security sector reform was also meant as a last resort to state-building process in Afghanistan so that the external powers can safely exit from Afghanistan.¹³

The security sector reforms were also known as the Afghan new beginnings program. Through this program, the government aimed to disarm, demobilize and reintegrate (DDR) the militants in mainstream politics with the assistance of international organizations. The program failed to achieve its goals, which is evident from the fact that the targeted number of DDR was reduced from 1, 40,000 to 10000.¹⁴ The unofficial militias continued to operate under the leadership of various strongmen throughout the country. The military reforms under the security sector reforms

¹³ Edwards, "State-building in Afghanistan", 985-989

¹⁴ Sayed Zia Sais, *Who is Winning the War in Afghanistan?* (Xlibris Corporation, 2011), 11

badly failed and were criticized for making ethnic imbalances in the Afghan national army. The Afghan national army was mainly dominated by the Tajik sect of the country and Northern Alliance generals, undermining the dominant Pashtun sect.

Apart from the failure of the military reforms, the judicial reforms were also not satisfactory. The targeted deadlines for the desired reforms in the judicial sector were not met. Some of the leaders in the government ministries were having fundamentalist leanings, who resisted the reforms in the judiciary on secular grounds. For instance, Abdur Rashid Saif was part of the government, who was formally the part of *Mujahideen*. He had a fundamentalist ideology and thus played a key role in the appointment of Mullah Shahrani, as the chief justice of Afghanistan highest court. Similar incidents resulted in the failure of security sector reforms in the country. The security sector reforms would have been the game changer in the state-building efforts in Afghanistan; however, lack of required attention by the international community and the influence of local strongmen hampered the process.

Priorities of Bonn Agreement and its Outcomes

The main emphasis of the Bonn agreement was the establishment of a strong centralized government. It was intended to establish a strong national institution with the representation from all regions and groups. However, the intentions to establish a strong central government has marginalized some ethnic groups, while selected warlords and a political elite dominated the national institutions. Thus, the agreement was merely Kabul-centric, which undermined the basic democratic principle of inclusive participation.¹⁵

¹⁵ Tonita Murray, "Police-building in Afghanistan: A case study of civil security reform." *International Peacekeeping* 14, no. 1 (2007): 108-126.

From the organization of *Loya Jirga* to the first democratic elections in Afghanistan in 2004 and 2005, the international financial, political and other technical support from the international community was critical in the state-building process.¹⁶ With this support, the Bonn agreement intended to shift the traditional governance model in Afghanistan to new modern democratic governance through the establishment of institutions. For instance, the first *Loya Jirga*, held in 2002 under emergency circumstances proposed a hybrid model for the selection, representation, political transition and governance processes in Afghanistan. The hybrid model was aimed to accommodate the existing traditional practices with the new modern democratic model. The divergence of the Bonn agreement on a single political strategy led to the arrangements for elections and creation of some new institutions. It was considered a victory of the Bonn agreement agenda; however, the new institutions were weak and fragile, which did not demonstrate the complete vision of the state-building through democratization.

It is worth noting that during the course of four years from the Bonn conference to the London conference (2006), significant changes in the governance system were taken. Establishment of the interim government, working on the new constitution and the election process for the president were some of the evident achievements. After the presidential elections in 2004, the election for the members of the parliament was held in 2005, adding more value to the achievements of the Bonn agreement. In 2006, the London conference was held in Afghanistan by the Afghanistan compact and interim national development strategy (I-ANDS) (Compact, 2006). The conference was mainly held to establish new relationships between the Afghan government and international partners and donors. The London conference was also aimed at

¹⁶ Andrew Reynolds, "The curious case of Afghanistan." *Journal of Democracy* 17, no. 2 (2006): 104-117.

analyzing the achievements and shortcomings in the state-building efforts since 2001. The conference was convinced at the fact that the establishment of new institutions and governance practices in the country has lacked the participation of all groups within the country, thus limiting the achievement of the end goal.

The US intervention in Afghanistan towards the end of 2001 carried with it a procedure of formal democratization and state-building, the formation and declaration of another constitution, and the election of a parliament and a president on the basis of Western models.¹⁷ However, the United States and other international participants disregarded the fact that this was additionally a diversion of the past. Afghanistan definitely comprehended what it was to have a constitution, actualized six of them in the vicinity of 1923 and 1990, and generally, they made a national assembly and there were elections in some form as well. All things considered, this time the level of outside support was something new and the procedure of reform of the new state was set apart by its outrageous reliance on international financial and military aid. The outcome was a procedure described by strain, which gave more frame than democratic substance and which had the counter-productive results for the country.

The US-led intervention and subsequent state-building projects resulted in tensions, which emerged primarily for a few reasons.¹⁸ To start with, the fundamental purpose behind the US-driven intervention in Afghanistan had not been to introduce a political majority rules system, but rather to take out terrorists and to build up a steady and helpful administration for the "War on Terrorism" (WoT). The prerequisites forced by this technique did

¹⁷ Antonio Giustozzi, "Respectable warlords? The politics of state-building in post-Taliban Afghanistan." *Crisis States Research Centre working papers series 1*, no. 33 (2003)

¹⁸ Hamish Nixon and Richard Ponzio. "Building democracy in Afghanistan: The state-building agenda and international engagement." *International Peacekeeping* 14, no. 1 (2007): 26-40.

not generally concur with the advancement of the vote based system; one of the most referred to illustrations is the power that the United States provided for associated warlords in their battle against the Taliban and Al Qaeda. Second, after the destruction of Afghanistan following quite a while of fierce battling, enormous international aid came into the country to modify the state and economy, and reestablish security. The predominant international part in such manner and, in the meantime, the extraordinary reliance on the outside military finances and powers to which the government was subjected dissolved the very premise of the majority rules system as a framework in which the national institutions set the needs, implement approaches and consider themselves responsible to their citizens.

The complexity between the truth of high dependence on international powers and the theory of majority rule government was additionally underlined by the rhetoric of democratization that went with the post-Tamil international initiative in Afghanistan. The individuals who offered validity to this rhetoric believed that reforms were a joke. Be that as it may, the rhetoric of democratization was not just a system of legitimization. Albeit driven by US security interests, the 2001 regime change in Afghanistan must be set inside a more extensive structure of democratization. It mirrored the overarching technique of the UN after the end of the Cold War for "post-struggle" recreation, which was to present (or re-build) institutions of the liberal majority rules system. There were additionally some particular conditions in Afghanistan. The principle elucidation so far had been the West's relinquishment of Afghanistan taking after the withdrawal of Soviet troops, trailed by common war, the run of a fundamentalist Islamist development and the disappointment of state facilitating international terrorists. This grouping of occasions proposed the requirement for a dynamic international responsibility to build up another request for peace and soundness. In such a manner, the

delegate government was viewed as the focal fixing and was particularly specified in a few UN Security Council resolutions in the 1990s.¹⁹

Factors for failed State-building Efforts

International Intervention

International intervention in Afghanistan is always looked and analyzed in the perspective of a tool to the state-building projects, rather than a cause of the failure of state-building. The international intervention in Afghanistan created a rentier and dependent government, which never has the capability to build a strong state.²⁰ The main tool employed by the interveners was to provide military and economic assistance for the state-building project in Afghanistan. However, the international assistance further weakened the government and subsequently the state by creating internal tensions within the groups. It made Afghanistan dependent on the assistance that the government's ability to establish self-sustained institutions was diminished.²¹ An important negative impact of the international intervention on the state-building projects in Afghanistan was the weak legitimacy, which caused the lack of efficient utilization of international aid.²²

¹⁹ Andrew Moravcsik, and Robert O. Keohane. "Legalized dispute resolution: Interstate and transnational." In *Power and Governance in a Partially Globalized World* (Rutledge, 2003), 166-204.

²⁰ Sultan Barakat and Anna Larson, "Fragile States: A Donor-serving Concept? Issues with Interpretations of Fragile Statehood in Afghanistan," *Journal of Intervention and State-building* 8, no. 1 (2013): 15-40

²¹ Hamish Nixon, *Aiding the State?: International Assistance and the State-building Paradox in Afghanistan* (Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek Sachsen-Anhalt, 2007), 3-18.

²² Jonathan Goodhand, "Aiding violence or building peace? The role of international aid in Afghanistan." *Third World Quarterly* 23, no. 5 (2002): 837-859.

The terrorist attacks in Washington and New York that occurred on September 11, 2001, have produced an extremely solid outfitted response from the United States (and, to a lesser degree, from the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) against Afghanistan. Afghanistan was a hideout for the Al-Qaeda leader Osama Bin Laden, which has even gone similar to replacing the political administration in power in that nation. The international forces have supported international intervention by invoking collective self-defence or the natural right of the individual in the light of article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations.²³

The international mission in Afghanistan comprised of the United Nations and its agencies, NATO through ISAF, international financial institutions, especially the World Bank, Japan, European Union and other regional actors as well.²⁴ This international unity was referred to as the international community. All of these international actors differently participated in the state-building project in Afghanistan; however, the result of the internationally driven state-building project can best be illustrated by the public admission of formal President Hamid Karzai in May 2005 that, if the foreign forces leave Afghanistan, the country will go into chaos, and the country may not be able to stand on its own feet. Among different consequences of intervention in Afghanistan, economic dependency stands the most prominent one.

Economic Dependency

Initially, foreign donors paid high priority to the provision of humanitarian assistance, and in 2002, the government received

²³ Timor Sharan, "The Network Politics of International State-building: Intervention and Statehood in Post-2001 Afghanistan." *University of Exeter* (2013): 40-105.

²⁴ Thomas Ruttig, *Some Things Got Better-how Much Got Good? A Review of 12 Years of International Intervention in Afghanistan*. (Afghanistan Analysts Network, 2014): 2-13.

almost no tax revenue, which is less than 10% of the national budget. In three years, the collection of taxes on the domestic market has approximately doubled and amounted to about 280 million dollars. The ratio of income to GDP was only 5%, which was far below the level even in other very poor countries. The overall level of expenditure has also increased, as a result of which it is expected that domestic receipts will account for only 8% of the total national budget for 2004-2005. In other words, the ratio of domestic and external sources of funding was almost the same as in 2002. According to President Karzai and the IMF, it was assumed that this trend will continue, at least during the next five-year period.²⁵

The economic dependency on foreign powers went to the extent that 90% of the country's budget for 2004-2005 was based on the international assistance fund.²⁶ Although the international financial institutions tried to increase the national revenue but the saturations till the recent past are not optimistic. In the post-2004 time, the budget structures in Afghanistan got changed; now there were two types of budgets for the country, an international and an external budget.²⁷ The international budget was primarily controlled by the national financial institutions but the external budget was used under the auspices of international donors. The internal budget of the Afghan government was much less in comparison to the external budget. The external budget was \$ 2.5 billion in 2004 and 2005, which was much more than the budget controlled by Afghanistan at that time (\$865 million for operational

²⁵ Fatima Ayub and Sari Kouvo. "Righting the course? Humanitarian intervention, the war on terror and the future of Afghanistan." *International Affairs* 84, no. 4 (2008): 641-657.

²⁶ Jonathan Goodhand and Mark Sedra. "Who owns the peace? Aid, reconstruction, and peace building in Afghanistan." *Disasters* 34 (2010): 71-90.

²⁷ Richard Hogg, Claudia Nassif, Camilo Gomez Osorio, William Byrd, and Andrew Beath. *Afghanistan in transition: Looking beyond 2014* (The World Bank, 2013), 75-92.

and development costs). The external budget comprised both operational costs for the army, health, education, police, some national programs, such as the National Solidarity Program, electoral costs, and some other development projects. From the perspective of the Afghan government and IMF, these sectors were not in the financial control and were recorded as extra-budgetary positions in the key planning documents, which induced the Afghan National Development Strategy for 2006-2010.²⁸

Questions arise as, how this income ratio is compared to the indicators of modernization regimes in the country over the past decades. The Afghan political leaders have depended on international aid for a long time; however, in the past two decades, the level of dependency increased enormously. In the 20th century, the time of Mohammed Daoud Khan and communist rule in Afghanistan were the periods, when international funding was on the rise. These periods are the best illustrations for comparison with the Karzai government. Right from the start till the end of Daoud's presidency, the domestic revenue remained unsatisfactory and it accounted for just over 60% of total government expenditure, although Daoud launched mega schemes of development that were largely financed by the US and the USSR.²⁹ Statistical data for the first years of the Communist regime existence indicates the same range (52% to 71%), although the government's dependence over the USSR has significantly increased due to the invasion and escalation of the war with the *Mujahidin*, who were supported by the West.³⁰ For comparison, four years later the government of the post-Taliban state was able

²⁸ Hogg, et al., *Afghanistan in transition*, 47-66.

²⁹ Shahida Aman and Shagufta Aman. "Building Capacity to Build Dependency Institutional Paradoxes in Post 2001 State Building in Afghanistan." *Journal of Political Studies* (2015): 5-11.

³⁰ Morgan Edwards, Lucy Helen. "Western support to warlords in Afghanistan from 2001-2014 and its effect on Political Legitimacy" *University of Exeter* (2015): 593-619.

to collect sufficient domestic revenues to contribute 8% of the total budget and about 30% of another small core budget (Edelstein, 2009). The smaller core budget basically covered the wages for government officials, more often also officials at the provincial and local level, but none of the projects was of significant development.

Both the Government of Afghanistan and the World Bank recommended that the allocation of more external aid via the core budget of the government would only reduce the state's dependence on foreign donors. Thus, it would be very difficult to close the gap in sovereignty, as called by the former finance minister of Afghanistan. Until the money for help remains the main source of income, the main dependence on donors will continue, and the conditions of quasi-sovereignty will prevail.³¹

In the literature, the consequences of dependence on external aid for the survival of the state were widely discussed with respect to the state-building in Africa, in the notion of Jean-François Bayart "extraversion."³² The dependence on external aid is also understood in another political phenomenon, known as the rentier state. The state of rentier is the complete opposite of what can be called the goal of the process of state-building, and Afghanistan case is expressed in the formal objectives of the policy expressed in the documents, particularly the Bonn agreement.³³

As mentioned above, the rentier state is a familiar concept in the history of Afghanistan. President Daoud rule usually stands out as an ideal rentier state, however; their modernist's rulers also gained significant foreign aid. The British imperial officers supplied Afghan rulers with funds at the end of the nineteenth century of foreign foundations. Rentier, as manifested in Afghanistan and elsewhere, has been carefully studied and has come to a clear

³¹ Aman and Aman, "Building Capacity to Build Dependency", 15-21.

³² Willemijn Verkoren and Bertine Kamphuis. "State building in a rentier state: how development policies fail to promote democracy in Afghanistan." *Development and Change* 44, no. 3 (2013): 501-526.

³³ Verkoren and Kamphuis, "State building in a rentier state", 207-209

conclusion, does not contribute to economic development and the evolution of democratic government accountability.³⁴

Arguing for democratic development, accountability is linked to the flow of resources. Since Afghanistan's national budget is mainly financed by the international governments as well as institutions, the main responsibility of the Afghan government for accounting for these funds rests with donors, not with its own people. A similar observation was made with regard to the formal Afghan regimes, which largely depended on external financing. Barnett Rubin in his fundamental research on the political development of Afghan concludes that Daoud's finance from the foreign aid and revenues from the sale of natural gas had adequate administrative consequences. The external revenues freed Daoud from any incentives that he could make his government answerable to the Afghan citizens. He changed very little the way of the government to match the means that he mastered.

Many of the donors insisted on the inclusion of democratic reforms in the new government in Afghanistan after the fall of the Taliban. In the long term, democratic responsibility for the contribution to stability, legitimacy, and order is expected, and this has given rise to the fact that the new Constitution and Bonn Agreement (2003) were provided for the Parliament.³⁵ The new parliament elected in 2005, straightaway began to flex its muscles. Nevertheless, it is not clear what his sources of power would be if he did not have the power of a purse which historically made kings to a thorough study of the productive and propertied classes. Following this background, large flows of aid, especially if they make up 90% of the total Afghanistan budget, will tend to sideline the parliament, as the donors will play a crucial role, at least de

³⁴ Ibid, 215-300.

³⁵ Jennifer Hove Kathleen. "A Struggle for Hearts and Minds: State-building and Origins of Political Legitimacy in Post-2001 Afghanistan." PhD diss., 2015.

facto, in the policy definition and implementation.³⁶ The government is accountable for its use of funds. The strength of donors in this regard was highlighted in the Afghanistan Compact, which was accepted in 2006 at the London conference.³⁷ The effective use of enormous aid flows can lead to the strengthening and stability of economic development to some extent. This however, is clearly at probabilities with the long-term objective of establishing democratic practices and endorsing a democratic government in Afghanistan. The democratization of Afghanistan is also central to the state-building agenda, and less strengthens the legitimacy and authority of the current government.³⁸

Two factors are extremely important to comprehend the effect of extensive foreign aid flows over government legitimacy: the extreme disintegration of the political power and the poppy economy. When the new government of Karzai was established, the central state turned out to be only one among many armed groups. Although the government exercised control over the capital, the first two years were heavily fractionated and had only a minor impact on the provincial official administration. The central government phenomenally survived the years of unrest and war. It was not only the Karzai government that had the great advantage of being an internationally recognized party and hence received international aid, but rather many other groups within the country also had outside supporters and an added advantage to exercise authority and control on their different areas. They have an access to the important capitals through the illegal opium trade. As the production and trade of poppy rapidly grew and extended to new extents, it created a number of corresponding structures of

³⁶ Op.Cit, Goodhand and Sedra, (2010), 34-61.

³⁷ Op.Cit, Kathleen, (2015)

³⁸ Siân Herbert, "State legitimacy in Afghanistan and the role of the international community." *Helpdesk report. Birmingham: GSDRC* (2014).

authority and power.³⁹ This decreased the ability of external aid to obtain the support for the central government. Although the government has the ability to utilize its resources in order to provide assistance and receive political backing, it can also compete with groups that have additional sources of wealth. In the talks on political alignment and support, the fact that the government depended on foreign money was undoubtedly weak in two respects. The external element was a responsibility in the political climate, increasingly characteristic of anti-government and anti-trust protests. This is also problematic when observed from the rational point of view. The heavy dependency on foreign aid highlighted the government weakness as an independent and sovereign subject.⁴⁰ This increased the risks and uncertainty for other participants in the rapprochement with the government, resulting in a noticeable hedging effect in the negotiations between the center and local authorities.

The Afghans are keenly conscious of their past history; international donors often turned out to be unstable or acted in contrast to the interests of the local population.⁴¹ The politics have traditionally been based on convenient links and the change in alliances. The early Karzai administration was not an exception. The parties to the Afghanistan situation at the central as well as local levels raised questions about how long the United States will keep supporting the Karzai government. If Karzai accomplishes the deal and the foreigners violate it, the other local party to the agreement has few opportunities for circulation. The anti-government factions use the same logic, based on the lack of development and the

³⁹ Antonio Giustozzi, *The Resilient Oligopoly: A Political Economy of Northern Afghanistan, 2001 and Onwards* (Kabul: Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit, 2012), 5-9.

⁴⁰ Stephen D Krasner, "Sharing sovereignty: New institutions for collapsed and failing states." *International security* 29, no. 2 (2004): 7-112.

⁴¹ Philipp Münch, "Local Afghan Power Structures and the International Military Intervention" *AAN Report*, 12 (2013).

constant presence of government forces in areas in which they do not feel themselves. Hedging often adds to the manifesto the reluctance to pay the government taxes and neglect of the ban on cultivation and trade in poppy. Whenever the government seeks compliance, it is usually temporary and is a spot contract. An illustrative example is a case in early 2005 of ceasing the production of poppy in Nangarhar province.⁴² There was a strong pressure from the central as well as provincial governments compelled Nangarhar's governor and the local silovik to introduce a temporary ban on the production of the poppy.⁴³ Resultantly, the production fell by 96% which had a significant impact on official statistics, as Nangarhar was the main poppy growing area.⁴⁴ However, this reduction was temporary and after the end of one season, the poppy farmers again started cultivation. The exact reasons for the re-growing of poppy are not clear, but the main argument was indicating the decline in foreign aid.⁴⁵ Representatives of donors, in turn, argued that the provincial population harbored unrealistic expectations. Assistance is in any case necessary for proper training and project cycles. Karzai was silent. He signed a contract and did not fulfill it, and the foreigner's role eclipsed the deal. The farmers also complained about the non-cooperation of "the other side" which led them to reconsider the ban on the cultivation of poppy.⁴⁶

While aid provides resources in the short term that enable it to fulfill some of the functions of the government, excessive economic dependency on external aid results in the political weakness that negatively impact the state-building processes. In economic dependency, the rentier government actually acts as an

⁴² Op.Cit., Giustozzi, (2012), 5-9.

⁴³ Op.Cit., Philipp, (2013)

⁴⁴ Roger Mac Ginty, *International peacebuilding and local resistance: Hybrid forms of peace* (Springer, 2011), 107-130

⁴⁵ Ibid

⁴⁶ Ginty, *International peacebuilding*, 122-124

agent, not just one patron owner, to use the statistical demands of the institutional economy, its authority with regard to the implementation of political agreements in the long-term with potential rivals, supporters and participants are being questioned. In spite of this, the spot contracts predominate-special arrangements that are subject to a sudden shift. Such arrangements may well be typical of customary Afghan politics. Nevertheless, this, of course, differs from the predictable relations and development of stable rules that constitute the essence of organizational construction and are associated with the creation of an efficient state marked by "honesty and competence", as stipulated in the Bonn Agreement.⁴⁷

Military Dependency

In the post-2001 era, the state-building project in Afghanistan is primarily based on military intervention, which managed to replace the Taliban government with a new regime. The new regime under the leadership of Hamid Karzai was so dependent on the international interveners that, they rarely had any self-generated agendas. The international military in Afghanistan used the government in Afghanistan to fulfill their own agendas.⁴⁸ The state-building project in Afghanistan starting from 2001 to the present time has not succeeded in bringing stability and peace in the country. The internationally driven state-building efforts during this long period prove that international intervention is not a solution for building states; it is rather a dominant factor in the failure of state-building projects.

Afghanistan cannot stand by its own military forces; rather it is dependent on the foreign military for security purposes. A government cannot be expected without an active army to protect territories of the state. The military really played a decisive role in

⁴⁷ Anthony King, *Coalition challenges in Afghanistan: the politics of alliance*. Ed. by Gale Mattox and Stephen Grenier (California: Stanford university press, 2016): 298-345.

⁴⁸ William Maley, *Transition in Afghanistan: Hope, Despair and the Limits of State-building* (Routledge, 2018).

state-building after the fall of the Taliban regime, but it was also a fact that the military troops were not national. They were rather international. At the local level, the new Afghan National Army (ANA) was established, however, its making and building up process was slow. The number of soldiers in ANA reached only 22,000 by the mid-2005.⁴⁹ This number was less in comparison to the presence of international forces, which at that time were around 30,000. Building up the national military capabilities of Afghanistan was initiated by the interveners, where ISAF sought to accomplish the three main goals of the state-building project; disarming the militants, limiting rivals and unleashing a militant opposition to the central state.

The basic aim and objective of the ISAF mission were to deter its rivals and make conditions to encourage the disarming of the militants. After the fall of the Taliban regime, ISAF secured the capital and worked for the prevention and resumption of the military rivalry between different Afghan groups over the capital. Different small teams of ISAF were deployed around the capital to realize the local authorities that external powers are fully backing Kabul in their civil and military affairs. The United States tried to deter the militant groups by ensuring the presence of a much more powerful US military force. They used B-52 diplomacy, at strategic points of the conflict to inform that potentially much larger forces could be attracted to Afghanistan. However, the deterrence strategy of the international forces proved counter-productive in the state-building project. The policy of decentralization through the help of regional strongmen failed due to the deterioration of the regional warlords of the US deterrence approach, especially Ismail Khan in the West and Dostum in the North.⁵⁰ Regional integration was crucial for the state-building in Afghanistan, as the country was divided over the

⁴⁹ David M Edelstein, "Foreign militaries, sustainable institutions, and postwar state-building." In *The Dilemmas of State-building* (Routledge, 2009), 95-117

⁵⁰ Matilka Krow, "A State in Limbo: Afghanistan, Warlords and International Intervention (1979-1992, post-2001). *Dalhousie University Halifax* (2011).

share of power and authority in the government for decades. Any attempt to deteriorate the provincial integration and unity was fatal for the future of Afghanistan.⁵¹

Initially, the presence of the international military troops was seen as a blessing and shield against the militant groups, and their contribution to safeguard the capital and help the central government was welcomed. However, with the passage of time, the anti-US forces demonstrations started throughout the country due to their failure to control terrorist activities and safeguard the lives of common citizens. Further, the collateral damages as a result of the ISAF actions against the Taliban proved fatal for their presence in Afghanistan. The situation kept worsening to the extent that, the people missed the Taliban rule and showed the willingness to welcome their rule again. The core reason for the shift in people's sympathies from the foreign troops was the worsening insurgency in the country.⁵²

The US military forces were primarily focused on the destruction of Al-Qaeda network in Afghanistan and the subsequent defeat of the Taliban. The results were mixed; the Taliban were removed from the government, and were pushed into mountainous regions of Afghanistan. On the other hand, the Taliban and Al-Qaeda started offensive attacks against the international as well as local military forces. When the military became a difficult target for the militants due to increased precautionary measures, they started targeting the soft targets, such as the civilians, workers, and humanitarian agencies. The more the NATO initiated offensives against the Taliban, the more civilians were killed. The system continued and the Afghan forces remained dependent on the foreign troops. One of the major drawbacks of the increasing dependency on foreign troops was that the local traditional

⁵¹ Ibid

⁵² Najibullah Lafraie, "Resurgence of the Taliban insurgency in Afghanistan: How and why?" *International Politics* 46, no. 1 (2009): 102-113.

societies did not show acceptance to them. Consequently, the state-building process in Afghanistan was more disturbed by the dependency on international military forces, rather than any improvements.⁵³

The increased insurgency in the country due to the presence of international forces was not possible for the national forces of Afghanistan to control. Therefore, reliance on international forces increased. The operations of the international forces continued to intensify the hatred within the local population. The local military forces remained weak and dependent on the international forces, thus leaving a major gap in the future state-building process. The failure of ISAF forces in building a local Afghan military force, strengthening democratic institutions and overcoming insurgency proves that the international intervention failed in its goals to build a strong and stable Afghanistan.⁵⁴

Conclusion

The main agenda of the US state-building project in Afghanistan was to create a strong central executive power that would unite the nation under a unified government or a strong parliament that could unite through the principle of separation of power. However, in Afghanistan, in addition to the executive branch, parliament has now shown itself to be a weak body, which reflects its constitutional restrictions, stagnant political parties with little power, and much more in accordance with the constitutional framework and social environment that favors clientelistic governmental issues. A much more significant limitation arises from the structure of international power and basic leadership on issues that are central to the state, for example, in economy and security. The country's almost excessive

⁵³ Michael J Williams, "Empire lite revisited: NATO, the comprehensive approach and state-building in Afghanistan." *International Peacekeeping* 18, no. 1 (2011): 64-78.

⁵⁴ Williams, "Empire lite revisited", 71-73

dependence on international donors for money undermined the autonomy of the government as a whole or, according to Stephen Krasner, forced “to share sovereignty”. For a few, this is basically undemocratic.

A government that has no influence over its financial plan or over the armed force merits the term 'majority rules system. More prominent national control over the financial plan and the armed force would build "sovereignty," yet not really "vote based system." The executive body of the Afghan government has to some extent a few prerogatives to consult with outside donors, the terms of monetary and military exchanges. In any case, Parliament is for all intents and purposes prohibited from this exchange. It additionally has exceptionally restrictive powers to control the executive, including the prospering military chain of importance, and to impact political issues, for example, economy and security. In such a manner, the democratic institutions of Afghanistan have been obliged by the international powers.

In oddness of destiny, the international group has empowered democratization, yet in the meantime making a state so reliant on foreign aid that it denies the governing body of its centrality, an essential foundation of the liberal vote based system. The coherent reaction of the assembly has been to bargain generally with typical subjects or just serve to annoy. The bargains made and the solid international intervention in the political reforms were opposing with the guarantee of self-governance, portrayal and reasonable procedures offered by the democratization and state-building program. By verifiably undermining or devaluing the institutions it tried to advance the state-building procedure which has had conceivably counter-productive impact.