

A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE SECURITY SITUATION IN AFGHANISTAN: A WAY FORWARD

Masood Ur Rehman Khattak* & Summar Iqbal Babar**

Abstract

Afghanistan is facing multipronged challenges mainly by the surge in Afghan Taliban insurgency, the emergence of Islamic State-Khurassan Province, fragile Afghan security forces, upsurge in Afghan Drug Trade and discord among Pakistan, Afghanistan and India. All these factors are responsible for the mayhem and turmoil in Afghanistan and would have far reaching implications for Pakistan and Central Asia. It is imperative for the regional and global powers to support reconciliation and negotiation process with Afghan Taliban and other reconcilable groups to settle this issue amicably and open the gates for cooperation and development in the region. India and Pakistan must end their proxy war, resolve their outstanding issues, and collectively work for the stability of Afghanistan. Moreover, Pakistan and Afghanistan must overcome their differences, settle the border dispute, secure the border and collectively work for the regional connectivity and collaboration. The United States of America, China, Russia and European Union must support Afghanistan in rebuilding and reconstruction. Politically and economically stable Afghanistan would connect the land locked Central Asian states with rest of the world and pave the way for better connectivity and economic development.

Key Words: Terrorism & Extremism, Insurgency, Afghan Taliban, Resolute Support Mission

* Assistant Professor, Department of Politics and International Relations, International Islamic University Islamabad. (Email: masood.rehman@iiu.edu.pk)

**Lecturer, School of Politics and International Relations, Quaid-I-Azam University Islamabad.(Email: summar.rao@gmail.com)

Introduction

Afghanistan is passing through the toughest phase of its history. Terrorism and extremism has plagued its society and seriously hampered the peace and security in Afghanistan. It is facing multi-faceted challenges which includes, insurgency led by the Afghan Taliban and their affiliates Haqqani Network, Al-Qaeda and other terrorist groups. The rise of Islamic State Khurasan Province- (IS-KP), regrouping of other terrorist groups like Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan-(IMU), East Turkestan Islamic Movement- (ETIM), Tehrik- I- Taliban Pakistan-(TTP) and their splinter groups would seriously challenge the peace and security of Afghanistan and its neighboring states including China, Central Asia, Iran and Pakistan which may hinder the connectivity of Afghanistan with rest of the world. The drug trade in Afghanistan is also one of the major issues which need an urgent attention. The drug trafficking in Afghanistan funds the militants and it is considered as the backbone of Afghan insurgency.¹

Another major challenge to Afghanistan is the proxy war between Pakistan and India. Afghanistan's overwhelming tilt towards India has complicated its relationship with Pakistan. The policy makers in Pakistan view India's role in Afghanistan as negative and they believe that it is averse to their economic and strategic interests in Afghanistan and beyond.² Unless, Afghanistan is unstable, it is impossible for Pakistan to fully connect its economy, people and trade with that of the Central Asian States. Afghanistan's inability to defeat Taliban insurgency greatly depends on the ability and capacity of their security forces.

The Afghan National Security Forces- (ANSFs) are weak and fragile. They are newly established force. They would require continuous training and mentorship by the foreign advisors and trainers to become an effective and agile force against highly trained, well organized and robust insurgents. The withdrawal of the US led alliance in 2015, presence of a meagre force under Resolute Support Mission- (RSM) and failure of the ANSFs to contain the Afghan Taliban has further complicated the security situation in Afghanistan.³ The Afghan impasse needs a holistic solution to its issues. The first thing which could be considered is the all-inclusive reconciliation

¹ Vanda Felbab-Brown, "Afghanistan's opium production is through the roof—why Washington shouldn't overreact" *Brookings Institution*, November 21, 2017, (<https://brook.gs/2jL1Kkm>, December 30, 2018).

² Mary Gloria C. Njoku, Christian C. Anieke, *Stories of Peace Volume II: Creating and Sustaining Peace through Social Responsibility and Education, Volume 2* (UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2016), 81.

³ Ashley J. Tellis, Jeff Eggers, "U.S. Policy in Afghanistan: Changing Strategies, Preserving Gains", *Carnegie Endowment*, July 22, 2017. <https://bit.ly/2SnqL1u>, (December 30, 2018).

process between Afghan Taliban and government. It is imperative that all stake holders with the support of key regional and global actors must initiate meaningful dialogue process with the Afghan Taliban and other reconcilable warring groups and incorporate them in government machinery to end this violent conflict.

Pakistan, Afghanistan and India must resolve their bilateral disputes and work together to stabilize Afghanistan and connect themselves with energy rich Central Asia States to overcome their energy woes. Pakistan and Afghanistan must manage their porous border effectively and check the movement of militants and collectively curb any terrorist group roaming in these areas. The opium trafficking is the major source of funding for all sorts of militant groups in Afghanistan.

It is vital for Afghanistan to curb this funding through an effective cooperation with the neighboring transit states including Pakistan, Iran, and Central Asia. The role of religious scholars/Ullemas cannot be ignored. There is an urgent need of counter narrative to shun the propaganda of the militants. This is the duty of religious elite to spread the true teachings of Quran and Sunnah and convey this message that Islam is the religion of peace and tranquility, it rejects all forms of violence in society. It encourages forgiveness, brotherhood and peacefulness and discourages transgression, offense and viciousness against other human beings.

Moreover, the major powers must come forward and start reconstruction and development in Afghanistan and Tribal areas of Pakistan. It is prerequisite for a better society, that government on both sides of the border must build more schools, colleges, universities, hospitals, establish industries and provide basic necessities to the aggrieved population living in border areas. For long term peace and stability we need to stabilize Afghanistan, only then we can connect it with energy rich Central Asia. This paper aims to analyze the threat matrix in Afghanistan and how it is considered as a nuisance towards regional connectivity. It seeks to explore ways to resolve Afghan impasse in an amicable way to bring long lasting peace and stability in Afghanistan.

Threat Matrix in Afghanistan: An Appraisal

Afghanistan is marred by the worst kind of violence in its history. Before 9/11 there was only one major terrorist organisation- (Al-Qaeda) in Afghanistan but after seventeen years many other ferocious militant outfits have emerged in Afghanistan. This part of the study would discuss the threat matrix in Afghanistan and highlight the major terrorist organisations on Afghan soil and other issues challenging the regional and global security.

The Afghan Taliban/Haqqani Network

The Afghan Taliban are undeniable force in Afghanistan. The United States along with other allies dismantled Taliban regime and established a government led by Hamid Karzai after 9/11 incident. At that time Taliban were about 45,000 in number.⁴ But in 2003 the US opened another front in Iraq and diverted its military machine and resources from Afghan front to Iraq. Which gave the Afghan Taliban an opportunity to get regrouped and today they have become a potent force of about 60,000 men.⁵ Many areas in Afghanistan are under Taliban control and they are running shadow government in those areas.⁶ The US led alliance withdrew most of their troops from Afghanistan in 2015 and carried out Bilateral Security Agreement- (BSA) with the Afghan government.⁷ Under BSA, the US have stationed about 16,919 troops as Resolute Support Mission- (RSM) force to help ANSFs in countering terrorism, advice and training.⁸ The reduction in foreign forces helped the Afghan Taliban and their affiliates Haqqani Network and Al-Qaeda to get reorganized and increase their terrorist activities in Afghanistan to put more pressure on the Afghan government to succumb to their demands.

Since 2015, the Afghan Taliban carried out many terrorist attacks in which thousands of Afghan soldiers and civilians lost their lives. The Afghan Taliban have increased the intensity of attacks in recent times. They have shown their capacity and outreach to carry out some of the deadliest attacks deep inside Afghan capital, military bases, and other strategic installations controlled by the US and their allies. According to the United Nation Assistance Mission in Afghanistan- (UNAMA), in first six months of the year 2018, Afghanistan have witnessed more than 5,122 civilian casualties (1,692 deaths and 3,430 injured).⁹

⁴ Luke Harding, "Taliban forcing thousands into army" *The Guardian*, 04 October 2001. <http://bit.ly/2rLwsLU>. Accessed on November 12, 2017.

⁵ "U.S. General to Congress: War in Afghanistan is at stalemate and local troop deaths unsustainable" *Japan Times*, December 05, 2018. <https://bit.ly/2CFawr7>, accessed on December 30, 2018.

⁶ Alex Strick van Linschoten and Felix Kuehn, *An Enemy We Created: The Myth of the Taliban-Al Qaeda Merger in Afghanistan* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 272.

⁷ Gale Mattox and Stephen M. Grenier, (Ed.), *Coalition Challenges in Afghanistan: The Politics of Alliance*. (California: Stanford University Press, 2015), 10-11.

⁸ "Resolute Support Mission (RSM): Key Facts and Figures" *North Atlantic Treaty Organisation*, July 18, 2018. <https://bit.ly/2GhE6H5>, accessed on December 30, 2018.

⁹ "Mid- Year update on the protection of civilians in armed conflict:1 January to 30 June 2018" *UNAMA*, July 15, 2018. <https://bit.ly/2LEyKo3> (access on December 30, 2018).

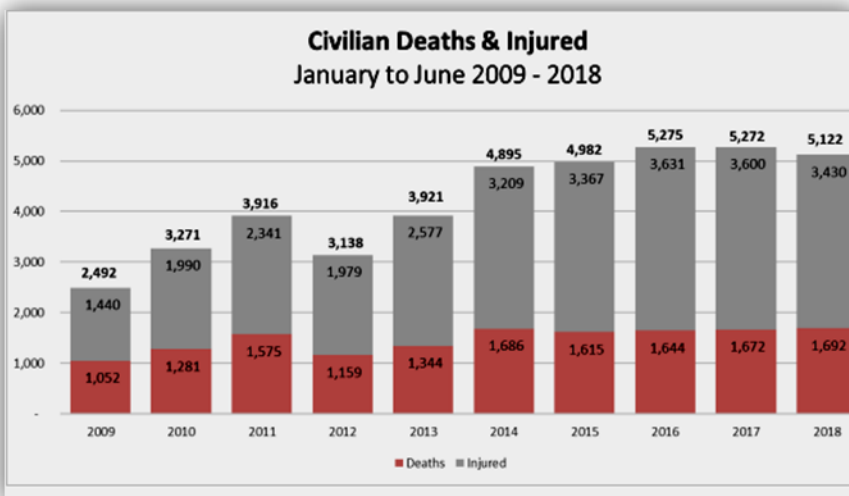


Source: Author's own description

In the recent times the Afghan Taliban have intensified their attacks against the Afghan and NATO forces in which they have imposed heavy damages on both. The trend may continue in coming months until the government in Afghanistan and the US come to a negotiated ceasefire followed by a long term political settlement. The Afghan Taliban are now well equipped, they possess more than \$2 billion of funds, enough to prolong this insurgency for many years.¹⁰ The Afghan Taliban are stronger than ever before with robust command & control structure, innovative tactics and strategies.¹¹

¹⁰ Joseph V. Micallef, "How the Taliban Gets Its Cash" *Huffington Post*, <http://bit.ly/1X03MUO>. accessed on March 24, 2017.

¹¹ Peter Eichstaedt, *Above the Din of War: Afghans Speak about Their Lives, Their Country, and their future, and why America should listen* (Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books, 2013), 240.



Source: UNAMA Mid-Year Report-2018. <https://bit.ly/2LEyKo3>

Their morale is high and they believe that the withdrawal of the allied forces from Afghanistan is their victory. It seems that the US led alliance and Afghan troops are unable to fight, lack the will or capacity to eliminate Afghan Taliban from Afghanistan. The US President Donald Trump have recently indicated that the US may pull out half of the deployed troops in Afghanistan.¹² However, the report has been rejected by the White House.¹³ But in the wider context the US have accepted this reality that they cannot win this war and the ultimate solution is to negotiate with the Afghan Taliban. But the Afghan Taliban have preconditioned the talks with the US withdrawal. It seems that the US have agreed to the Taliban demand of phased withdrawal, which may start in coming months.

However in recent times, the Afghan Taliban, Haqqani Network and IS-KP have carried out high profile attacks against civil and military installations in Afghanistan with greater impunity, which shows their suppleness and outreach. The intensity and ferociousness of these attacks increased in recent times. Especially in 2018, some of the deadliest attacks were carried out by the Afghan Taliban and they threaten about 70% of the

¹² Thomas Gibbons-Neff and Mujib Mashal, "U.S. to Withdraw About 7,000 Troops from Afghanistan, Officials Say" *New York Times*, December 20, 2018. <https://nyti.ms/2EHhgGX>, accessed on December 30, 2018.

¹³ Morgan Gstalter, "Trump hasn't ordered Pentagon to withdraw troops from Afghanistan" *The Hill*, December 29, 2018. <https://bit.ly/2s1IQYs>, accessed on December 30, 2018.

Afghan territory¹⁴ which shows the gravity of the fragile security situation in Afghanistan, which may impede any connectivity with resource rich Central Asia with rest of the region and beyond. The instability and turmoil in Afghanistan would have far reaching implications for Pakistan.

Recurrence of Al-Qaeda in Afghanistan

The United States of America soon after 9/11 incident, attacked Afghanistan to eliminate Al-Qaeda's safe heavens and erode their ability to strike the US homeland or their allies again. In initial years, the US with the support of Pakistan eliminated Al-Qaeda sanctuaries from Af-Pak region. Most of the Al-Qaeda militants after the US attack on Afghanistan moved to Pakistani tribal areas and got refuge under the patronage of local tribes.¹⁵ Which led Pakistan Army to launch military operations in its tribal belt.¹⁶

After years of sustained military operations in FATA and urban areas, the Al-Qaeda network was dismantled, many high profile leaders were either killed or nabbed by the Pakistani security forces.¹⁷ As of today after the operation Zarb-I-Azb in North Waziristan Agency, Pakistan army controls tribal belt and has deployed more than 200,000 troops to deny sanctuary to any militant outfit there.¹⁸ The Operation Zarb-I-Azb and operation Khyber-I-II-III compelled Al-Qaeda and other terrorist groups to take refuge in Afghanistan.¹⁹ All sorts of militants left Pakistan's tribal region and took shelter in Afghanistan, including Al-Qaeda and their affiliates. According to different estimates there are about 300-500 Al-Qaeda operatives in Afghanistan.²⁰ They are expert in the manufacturing of improvised explosive devices- (IEDs) and Guerrilla warfare tactics. The Al-Qaeda operatives in

¹⁴ Shoaib Sharifi and Louise Adamou, "Taliban threaten 70% of Afghanistan, BBC finds" *BBC*, January 31st 2018. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-42863116>, accessed on December 30, 2018.

¹⁵ Usama Butt and N. Elahi, (Ed)., *Pakistan's Quagmire: Security, Strategy, and the Future of the Islamic Nuclear Nation*. (New York: The Continuum International Publishing Group, 2010), 158.

¹⁶ Christophe Jaffrelot, (Ed)., *Pakistan at the Crossroads: Domestic Dynamics and External Pressures* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016), 228.

¹⁷ Eamon Murphy, *The Making of Terrorism in Pakistan: Historical and Social Roots of Extremism*. (New York: Routledge, 2013), 143.

¹⁸ "Kashmir diplomacy: "LoC tension can impact Pak anti-terror efforts" *The Express Tribune*, 09 October 9 2016, <http://bit.ly/2rtd5qo>.

¹⁹ Ismail Khan, "Military operation in Khyber ends successfully" *The Dawn*, Islamabad, 03 July, 2015, <http://bit.ly/2qOmGFi>.

²⁰ Kenneth Katzman and Clayton Thomas "Afghanistan: Post-Taliban Governance, Security, and U.S. Policy" *Congressional Research Service*, 19 May 19, 2017. <http://bit.ly/2kK7mcV>, 17.

Afghanistan are primarily playing an advisory role and helping the Afghan Taliban and Haqqani network in their fight against RSM and ANSFs.²¹

Though, Al-Qaeda linked operatives in Afghanistan are in meagre size but their counselling role in militancy cannot be ignored. It is necessary to eliminate this group from Afghanistan for long lasting peace and stability. To achieve this goal, there must be a political settlement between the Taliban and Afghan government. Because, Al-Qaeda in Afghanistan, is deriving its power from Taliban, they are providing them safety and sanctuary in Afghanistan. There are many ungoverned areas where the Afghan government has no writ.

The Afghan Taliban are capitalizing on the weaknesses of ANSFs and controlling those areas where the Afghan Army has minimal presence and established their IED factories, training centers and safe heavens to reorganize, coordinate and execute their operations in Afghanistan. If the settlement takes place between Afghan government and Taliban, then it is a possibility that Al-Qaeda would face pressure and may relocate to other countries.

The Emergence of Islamic State- Khurassan Province- (IS-KP)

The emergence of Islamic State- (IS) in Middle East had far reaching implications for the global peace and security. The IS has global agenda and it is not confined to one country or a region. They want to establish global caliphate especially in those areas where Muslims once ruled.²² To achieve their objectives in this region, the IS militants established their foothold in Afghanistan to institute Khurasan province under the patronage of IS in Iraq and Syria.²³ The IS militants call this region as Khurasan, which covers parts of South Asia and Central Asia. The IS-KP is in small number and centered in Nangarhar province of Afghanistan.²⁴

They are composed of Pakistani Taliban, Uzbeks, Tajiks and disgruntled ex-Afghan Taliban militants. According to recent estimates their numbers have shrunk from 3,000 men at peak in 2015 to around 1,000 fighters in 2017 because of the consistent military operations, drone strikes and air strikes by the ANSFs and RSM.²⁵ The IS-KP have faced significant losses in these operations and lost most of its men and resources. In the recent past, the US drone strikes have taken out four most important figures of IS-KP,

²¹ Matthew Bugeja, *Al-Qaeda in Afghanistan: Nation-building and Combating Al-Qaeda's Ideology* (Hamburg: Anchor Academic Publishing, 2014), 33.

²² Dr. Adil Rasheed, *ISIS: Race to Armageddon*. (New Delhi: Vij Books India, 2015), 66.

²³ Brian Glyn Williams, *Counter Jihad: America's Military Experience in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2016), 291.

²⁴ Seth G. Jones et al, *Rolling Back the Islamic State*. (Santa Monica California: Rand, 2017), 159.

²⁵ Hollie McKay, "ISIS threat in Afghanistan shows no end in sight" *Fox News*, 31 May, 2017. <http://fxn.ws/2rknsym>. Accessed on March 11, 2018.

including Mullah Rauf, governor of the IS-KP Saeed Khan, Shahid Ullah Shahid- (former spokesperson of TTP) and Gul Zaman a key leader of IS in Afghanistan.²⁶

The US is seriously hunting the IS militants in Afghanistan, and it looks they are not taking any chances as far as IS emergence in this region is concerned. This is the reason that consistent drone and missile strikes have taken out many IS commanders and foot soldiers in Afghanistan. In recent times, the US has dropped the most lethal non-nuclear weapon, the Mother of All Bombs- (MOAB) on the IS-KP hideouts in Nangarhar province of Afghanistan (which is close to the border with Pakistan), in which the IS-KP lost more than 92 of its fighters and their hideouts were also destroyed which imposed significant damage to their morale and degraded their potential to launch attacks against ANSFs or civilians in Afghanistan.²⁷

The IS-KP is facing three pronged challenges in Afghanistan, first from the US led RSM, second from the ANSF and lastly from the Afghan Taliban. The ANSF may not defeat the Afghan Taliban but they can seriously impose heavy damages on the IS-KP in Afghanistan. On the other hand, the Afghan Taliban are undeniable force in Afghanistan. It is their playground, they would never allow the IS-KP to establish their foothold in Afghanistan.

This is the reason that the IS-KP faced stiff resistance from the US, ANSF and Taliban in Afghanistan. It seems that the IS-KP may not survive much longer in Afghanistan, but despite all these challenges they have the ability to carry out high profile terrorist attacks against the US and Afghan government in Afghanistan. Which shows that they possess the ability to disrupt peace and stability in Afghanistan.

The Afghan Drug Trade- Backbone of Terrorism/ Insurgency

Afghanistan is the largest producer of opium in the world and the money generated from this Drug trade goes to different militant groups in Afghanistan. According to one such estimate, the Afghan Taliban generate about 50% of their funds from drug trafficking and protection money. Despite spending more than \$8 billion on counter narcotics since 2002, the US has been miserably failed to curtail the production of opium in Afghanistan. The major causes of record increase in the opium production are endemic corruption at lower and higher level in Afghan political circles,

²⁶ Carlo Munoz, "Head of Islamic State in Afghanistan killed in U.S. drone strike" *The Washington Times*, 12 August 2016. <http://bit.ly/2boMN3k>. Accessed on August 24, 2018

²⁷ "US drops largest non-nuclear bomb in Afghanistan" *CNN*, 14 April 2017. <http://cnn.it/2obPUfw>. Accessed on April 24, 2018

lack of political will, fragile security forces and quick monetary benefits for the Afghan farmers.²⁸

A Triangle of Drug Trafficking in Afghanistan



According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime- (UNODC), the opium production in Afghanistan decreased by 29% in 2018 as compared to the production of opium in 2017 because of the severe drought in the country. In 2017, the area under poppy cultivation was close to 328,000 hectares. However, in 2018 it has shrunk to 263,000 hectares. Helmand province has been on top of the list in the production of opium in Afghanistan.²⁹ The Illicit Afghan drug economy is around \$604 million which is 3% of the Afghanistan's total GDP³⁰ and the estimated total value of the Afghan opium in international market is more than \$61 billion.³¹ This is the reason that makes the drug trade in Afghanistan lucrative and highly

²⁸ "Afghanistan's Booming Poppy Harvest Feared to Boost Taliban Militancy" 17 May 2017. *Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project- OCCRP*, <http://bit.ly/2qYm8wg>. Accessed on August 26, 2018

²⁹ Prof. Salamat Azimi et al, "Afghanistan Opium Survey 2018: Cultivation and Production" *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime*, November 2018. <https://bit.ly/2OPNH73>, accessed on December 30, 2018), 5.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 7.

³¹ Justice Tetey et al, "World Drug Report 2011" *UNODC*, (<https://bit.ly/1kPK7bH>, accessed on December 30, 2018).

profitable business not only for the farmers, drug mafia but also for the regional and global drug cartels.

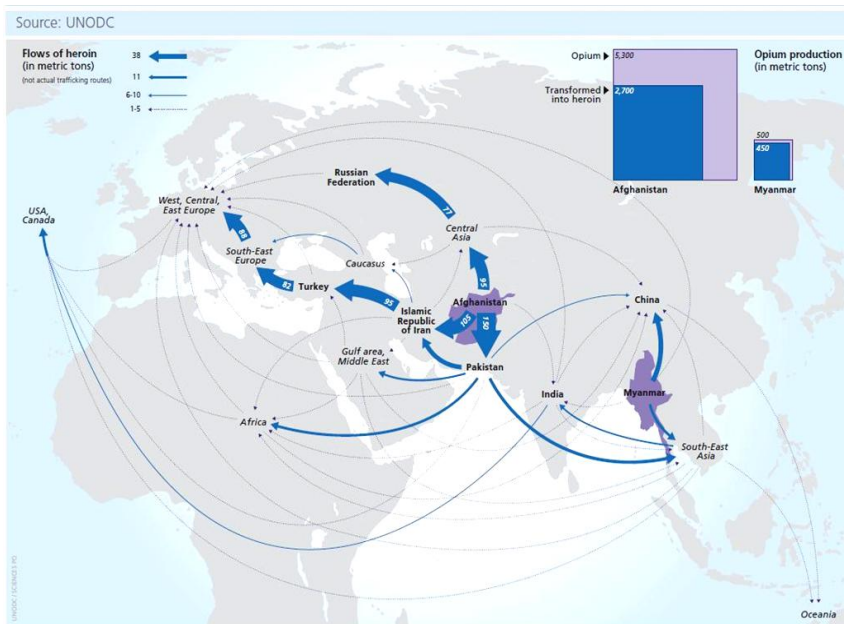
The Afghan drug is transported mainly from three supply routes to reach the regional and global markets. First route originate from Pakistan. Most of the Afghan opium pass through Pakistani route. According to the UNODC, 43% of the Afghan opium is trafficked through Pakistan.³² The Drug traffickers utilize the porous border between both states and transport Afghan opium to Pakistan from where it is transported via sea to the Middle Eastern and European markets. Second route for the Afghan opium is from Iran, another country that share border with Afghanistan. The last route is from Central Asian Republics.³³

The Afghan drug trade is one the major issue between Central Asian states and Afghanistan. The Central Asian route is one of the major transit for Afghan opium, this is one of the major concern for these states. Because insurgency in Afghanistan has fueled drug trafficking, especially Tajikistan from CAS would face the brunt. Currently large scale opium is smuggled through Tajikistan border, which pose serious threats to the peace and stability of this country.³⁴ Drug trafficking would help smugglers, criminal elements and insurgents which is going to create serious security challenges for Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran and Central Asian states. Other than drug addiction the ratio of crime and lethal infectious disease likes HIV/AIDS would also increase in these countries. It is necessary that regional actors must fight this menace collectively and save this region from possible spillover of drug trafficking from Afghanistan.

³² Hasan Mansoor, "Afghan drugs go to rest of world via Pakistan: UN report" *Dawn*, Islamabad, 24 August 2016. <http://bit.ly/2swkjZm>.

³³ "The Global Afghan Opium Trade: A Threat Assessment, 2011" *UNODC*, July 2011. <http://bit.ly/2sw3VrG>, 17.

³⁴ Oktay F. Tanrisever, (Ed), *Afghanistan and Central Asia: NATO's Role in Regional Security Since 9/11* (Washington DC: IOS Press, 2013), 39.



There is lot of money involved in this business, which attracts many state and non-state actors. Many terrorist groups' benefits from Afghan opium trafficking, according to one such estimate, the Afghan Taliban alone generate about \$300 to \$500 million in drug sales.³⁵ The Afghan drug trade is one of the issue which needs an urgent attention. The opium trade in Afghanistan directly and indirectly funds the insurgency and seriously endanger the peace and stability of Afghanistan and hamper the efforts for regional connectivity.

India-Pakistan Discord: Proxy War

India and Pakistan are engaged in a proxy war in Afghanistan, which has created serious rift between these states. India is there in Afghanistan for two reasons, first is economic and second is strategic. India is a \$ 2.8 trillion economy³⁶ with a population of about 1.31 billion.³⁷ To sustain its economic growth and to manage the requirements of its growing population, India would require resources from other states. Afghanistan is rich in natural resources. According to some estimates, Afghanistan possess more than \$3

³⁵ Jim Michaels, "Airstrikes cripple Taliban drug labs, costing group \$42 million" *USA Today*, April 13, 2018. (<https://bit.ly/2Ao1m00>, accessed on December 30, 2018).

³⁶ "World Economic Outlook Database- 2018" *International Monetary Fund*, December 2018. (<https://bit.ly/2RgURXd>, accessed on December 30, 2018).

³⁷ "Population of India- 2018" *Live Population*, December 30, 2018. (<https://bit.ly/2xfkNV5>, accessed on December 30, 2018).

trillion of natural resources.³⁸ Which makes it lucrative market for the Indian policy makers. Due to instability and turmoil in Afghanistan, these resources are still untapped.

In 2011, India got a contract to extract Iron reserves from Hagigak.³⁹ The worth of Iron deposits in Hagigak is more than \$420 billion.⁴⁰ This is the reason that India has funded many projects in Afghanistan to earn a soft image in this country and achieve foothold to extract huge wealth of Afghanistan. Other than economic reasons, India is there in Afghanistan for strategic reasons. Indian thinkers believe that after the withdrawal of the US, Afghan Taliban may come in power again and provide a base for the Kashmir based fighters, which may create problems for India not only in held Kashmir but also at home.

To achieve this goal India wants a favorable government in place to prevent Taliban from coming in power and help India in countering Kashmir based insurgents.⁴¹ Secondly, India wants to use Afghan soil to create problems for Pakistan in Baluchistan and FATA, to internally engage Pakistan in terrorism and insurgencies so it may not take up Kashmir issue at any forum regionally or globally. In 2013, former US secretary of defense Chuck Hagel said in a statement that India is financing problems for Pakistan from the Afghan soil.⁴² The confession of TTP financier Latif Mehsud⁴³ and former spokesman Ehsan Ullah Ehsan- (Liaquat Ali) unveiled the Indian involvement in Pakistan.⁴⁴

The confession of Indian spy Kulbushan Yadav further consolidated Pakistan's position about the subversive activities of India inside Pakistan. Such policies are dangerous for regional peace and stability. Pakistan officially agitated the Indian government's involvement in terrorist activities in tribal areas and Baluchistan. It has also requested the Afghan government

³⁸ Suleman Yousaf, "Afghanistan's Mineral Resource Potential: A Boon or Bane?" *Journal of Current Affairs*, Vol. 1, Nos.1&2: Islamabad: IPRI, 2016, 88.

³⁹ Erica Downs, "China buys into Afghanistan" *SAIS Review*, Vol. XXXII no. 2, Washington DC: John Hopkins University Press, 2012), 76. <http://brook.gs/2rt1Q1g>. Accessed on August 27, 2018

⁴⁰ Cindy A. Hurst and Robert Mathers, "Strategic Implications of the Afghan Mother Lode and China's Emerging Role", *Joint Force Quarterly* 72, 01 January 2014. <http://bit.ly/2s9H9sn>, 78.

⁴¹ Larry Hanauer and Peter Chalk, *India's and Pakistan's Strategies in Afghanistan: Implications for the United States and the Region*. (Santa Monica: Rand Corporation, 2012), 11-12.

⁴² "India finances trouble in Pakistan: Hagel" *Dawn*, Islamabad, February 27, 2013. <http://bit.ly/2qQmMMY>. Accessed on June 24, 2018

⁴³ "India is behind terrorism in Pakistan: TTP Commander Latif Ullah Mehsud Speaks out". 29 January 2016. YouTube video, <http://bit.ly/2rLmri3>. December 31, 2018.

⁴⁴ "Former TTP, JuA spox claims terrorist organizations being 'used' by India, Afghanistan" *Dawn*: Islamabad, April 27, 2017. <http://bit.ly/2rtdU2L>. Accessed on May 24, 2018.

to take action against such elements. But instead of solid action, the Afghan intelligence agencies in collaboration with Research and Analysis Wing- (R&AW) of India carried out nefarious activities in Baluchistan and tribal areas. Which compelled Pakistan to support the Afghan Taliban to counter the Indian influence in Afghanistan. Former Army Chief and President of Pakistan Parvez Musharraf acknowledged that Pakistan considered Afghan Taliban as allies because other factions in Afghanistan got the backing of Iran, India and Russia.⁴⁵

In order to maintain strategic influence in Afghanistan, Pakistan rely on Afghan Taliban because they are powerful dominant group and a crucial player in the future political settlement of Afghanistan. This is the reason that many important countries including the US, Russia and China are directly negotiating with them.⁴⁶ The discord among Pakistan, India and Afghanistan must be resolved with meaningful negotiations. Pakistan and India must realize this fact that they cannot live without each other, instability in Afghanistan would hurt the interests of both parties.

Pakistan and India may not get access to Central Asia for their energy needs if Afghanistan is unstable. Afghanistan must also realize that the only viable route to connect with the rest of the region and to the outer world is through Pakistan. It must shun the aggressive policies influenced by India and seek help from Pakistan to overcome its problems in Afghanistan. The best way to resolve Afghan impasse is reconciliation and dialogue. It must be supported by Pakistan and India, only then stability in Afghanistan is possible.

Fragile Afghan Security Forces

The Afghan security forces are newly established force by the US, they are weak, lack motivation and adequate resources to fight highly organized, well trained Taliban guerrillas. Due to these reasons they are unable to protect Afghanistan and facing huge losses. The United States has spent around \$68 billion on ANSFs since 2001 but it could not bring a drastic change in the operational capacity of the ANSFs.⁴⁷ The US has planned a force of about 352,000 but so far it could not meet the target.⁴⁸ Currently the strength of Afghan National Army is close to 183,000 men and police has

⁴⁵ Jon Boone, "Musharraf: Pakistan and India's backing for 'proxies' in Afghanistan must stop" *The Guardian*, February 13, 2015. <http://bit.ly/2svW5yB>. Accessed on August 11, 2018.

⁴⁶ Dawood Azami, "Afghanistan war: Taliban attend landmark peace talks in Russia" *BBC*, November 09 2018. (<https://bbc.in/2zLoq8x>, accessed on December 30, 2018).

⁴⁷ John F. Sopko, "Assessing the Capabilities and Effectiveness of the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces". *SIGAR*, 12 February 2016. <http://bit.ly/20Q11Pq>, 9.

⁴⁸ *Ibid*, 6.

about 151,000 personnel.⁴⁹ Whereas, Afghanistan is a huge country of about 652,864 sq. km⁵⁰ and the enemy is much stronger than ever before.

It is difficult for the ANSFs to cover whole Afghanistan with such a meagre force and it is beyond their capacity to eliminate Afghan Taliban, their safe heavens, training centers, command and control network from Afghanistan. Weak Afghan security forces are major challenge for the peace and stability of Afghanistan. It is necessary for the US to deploy more advisors and trainers to improve the quality of the ANSFs especially the local police and Special Forces. In addition, Pakistan can also help Afghanistan in this regard. Pakistan's army is a professional and highly trained force, it can help Afghan troops in counter insurgency and also equip them with light weapon and equipment. To achieve this goal there must be trust, faith and cordial relationship between both states.

Way Forward for Lasting Peace in Afghanistan

Afghanistan needs a holistic solution which is acceptable to all warring parties and stake holders. The following recommendations would bring long term peace and stability to war torn country which is prerequisite for the inter-regional connectivity and development of Afghanistan.

Collective Efforts at Regional and Global Level: Meaningful Reconciliation Process

Instability and turmoil in Afghanistan has seriously threatened the global peace and security. If Afghanistan is left on its own, then there would be a bloody civil war which may seriously hamper peace and stability of Afghanistan. All sorts of militant groups would take refuge and establish their training grounds, IED factories, network, command and control centers in Afghanistan. It is necessary that regional countries including Pakistan, Iran, Central Asian Republics, Russia, China and India must take concrete steps and help Afghanistan to come out of this quagmire of terrorism and extremism.

There is a dire need of meaningful dialogue process between Afghan Taliban and government to end this bloody insurgency and bring long lasting peace. In the same pattern, the major powers must also help Afghanistan to overcome operational deficiencies in its overall military capabilities. More funds, advisors and troops are needed to train ANSFs and carry out counter terrorism operations against Islamic state, Al-Qaeda and other irreconcilable militant groups in Afghanistan. Because if there is no peace in Afghanistan,

⁴⁹ "Afghan National Security Forces-(ANSF)" *North Atlantic Treaty Organization*, June 2013. <http://bit.ly/18JhdGQ>. Accessed on May 12, 2018.

⁵⁰ Karen Jacobs Sparks (Ed)., *Britannica Book of the Year 2012*. (London: Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc, 2012), 361.

we cannot expect peace at regional or global level. The IS, Al-Qaeda, IMU, ETIM and other militant groups would find shelter in unstable Afghanistan. It would again become a hotbed and a safe haven for all sorts of militant groups. However, it is necessary that NATO and regional countries of Afghanistan must work together and bring eternal peace to Afghanistan.

Pak-Afghan Border Management

The Pak-Afghan border management is one the issue that hampered the relationship between both states. Afghanistan is a land locked country, and Pakistan provides Afghan goods the shortest route to the world. Apart from legal trade between both states, smuggling also takes place between both countries, because of the poor border management. Different militant groups, criminal elements, drug mafia and smugglers use this porous border to carry out their nefarious activities.

It is imperative that Pakistan and Afghanistan must work closely and devise a mechanism to properly manage this border to disrupt movement of the militants, drug trade and other criminal activities. Both countries must increase the number of check posts along the Pak-Afghan border to keep constant check on the movement of the people. In addition, both states must make it compulsory for their citizens to carry valid identification documents, visa and passport etc.

It is quite difficult to keep vigilance over 2,400km Pak-Afghan border.⁵¹ This is the reason that Pakistan has started fencing on the Afghan border to effectively curb the movement of smugglers and militants. Pakistan has planned to fence almost 2,611 km border with Afghanistan by December 2019. So far it has built 233 forts out of 843 and also completed the fencing of 802km out of 1,200 km priority one areas close to the border with Afghanistan to curb movement of the militants.⁵² Pakistan can utilize its UAVs to monitor unchecked areas to disrupt any illegal movement of terrorists or smugglers. Pakistan and Afghanistan must take concrete steps towards the management of this mountainous and rugged border to dissuade any terrorist activity in this area.

Curb Terrorist Financing

Afghanistan has become the hub of narcotics trade and chief supplier of the world's opium. Drug trade is deep rooted in Afghan society, even many members of the Afghan parliament had been part of this trade.⁵³ The drug trafficking takes place from Pakistan, Iran and Central Asia. Through these

⁵¹ Joseph J. Collins, *Understanding the War in Afghanistan: A Guide to the Land, the People, and the Conflict*. (New York: Skyhorse Publishing Inc., 2013), 7.

⁵² "Pak-Afghan border fencing to complete by Dec 2019: DG ISPR", *The Dawn*, December 31, 2018.

⁵³ Christopher M. Blanchard, "Afghanistan: Narcotics and U. S. Policy". *Congressional Research Service*, 12 August 2009. <http://bit.ly/2sehRtJ>, 8.

supply routes the Afghan opium reaches the global markets where it becomes highly profitable for the drug cartels. According to UNODC the estimated total value of Afghan drugs in the international market is in billions. Apart from this, the Afghan drug trade also work as a fuel for insurgency and terrorism in Afghanistan. Different terrorist groups generate millions of dollars from opium trade in Afghanistan.

Especially the Afghan Taliban generate in millions as protection money from drug mafia and farmers. This source of funding for militant groups would plunge the region into further mayhem and turmoil. It is necessary that Pakistan, Iran and Central Asian Republics must improve their vigilance at borders and disrupt any move to smuggle opium from Afghanistan to rest of the regions. In addition, the US may also carry out aerial spray to destroy opium crops and provide alternative livelihood to the Afghan farmers.

Counter Narrative- Role of the Ullemas

Most of the extremist organizations in Afghanistan and Pakistan use religion Islam to recruit people and carry out terrorist activities. Here, the role of Ullemas or religious scholars becomes essential. The religious elite in both states must denounce all forms of terrorism and counter the narrative of militants with the help of Quran and Sunnah. Islam is the religion of peace and harmony. The Ullemas must represent the true picture of Islam to the masses and also interpret injunctions of Jihad in Quran and Sunnah with its true meaning, sense and context. The militants use their own interpretations to recruit and execute their terrorist activities. There is a need of counter narrative which must be humane and reflection of Quran and Sunnah. The madrassas in both states also needs an overhaul, transformation and proper monitoring. Most of the militants captured or killed had Madrassa education, which means there are loopholes in the education and management of Madrassas in both states. There is an urgency to revamp Madrassa education in both states. It must be at par with modern education system, a graduate of Madrassa must be fit in the society instead end up a radical or an extremist. With these steps we can counter the propaganda of the militants who use religion Islam for their own notorious political aims and objectives.

Massive Reconstruction and Development in Af-Pak Region

Afghanistan and Tribal Areas of Pakistan have suffered a lot in last few decades. Both areas were denied of education, socio economic and human resource development. Which made it easy for the terrorist organizations to manipulate and brainwash locals. People without education, employment and regular source of income were lured to join terrorist activities. This is the time that economically stable countries including China, Japan, Canada, Russia, Europe and America must come forward and help Afghanistan and Tribal areas of Pakistan in reconstruction and development process.

Regional states like Pakistan, Iran and India must also shun their proxy war and help Afghanistan to improve its economy, human resource, health care, infrastructure and education sectors. More schools, colleges and universities are needed to bring these societies at par with other developed areas or urban centers. In addition, there is a need to improve the human resource development in these areas. Pakistan and Afghanistan with the help of developed countries must establish small scale industries and technical schools in these war ravaged areas where people can learn different skills, earn diplomas and professional certificates to find a respectable livelihood.

Counter Terror Training of the Local Forces

The local forces in any country are first line of defense against any mala fide elements. The ANSF and local forces like FC, Khassadars and levies deployed in FATA needs serious help. The US along with its allies have raised a reasonable force against Taliban and other terrorist outfits in Afghanistan. But more efforts are required. Pakistan can play an important role in this regard. Pakistan's armed forces are well trained, war hardened and better equipped. In last 17 years they have learnt a lot from their counter terror/insurgency campaigns and their success rate in the war against terror has been monumental.

They can extend help to Afghanistan in this regard. The ANSF personnel could get training and material support from Pakistan provided they establish good brotherly relationship, eschew blame game and carry out a strategic partnership. The main issue right now is the mistrust and suspicion between both states. Pakistan believes that Afghanistan is trying to destabilize Pakistan in collaboration with India, whereas Afghanistan believes that Pakistan supports the Afghan Taliban and Haqqani network for greater political role in Afghanistan. Such mistrust and blame game is causing huge losses to both states. They need to work together and improve the capacity of local forces along with their regular army to overcome security challenges.

Conclusion

Afghanistan is facing numerous challenges and it requires holistic approach to stabilize this war ravaged country. The withdrawal of the US forces plunged this country into unending war against terrorism and extremism. The failure of the US led alliance proven to be disastrous for Afghanistan. The Afghan Taliban along with other terrorist groups emerged as an undeniable force and now they control many parts of Afghanistan, established their training and recruiting centers. This is the reason that Afghan Taliban are carrying out terrorist activities against Afghan government, ANSFs and resolute mission forces with greater impunity and

ferociousness. It is beyond the capacity of ANSFs to defeat the Afghan Taliban and their affiliates.

The limitations in ANSFs related to men, material and morale are irrepressible. The only option left with Afghan government is to seek dialogue and reconciliation with the Afghan Taliban and other reconcilable groups. The dialogue process must be led by the Afghan government and supported by other regional and global actors. The reconciliation and dialogue process between Afghan government and Taliban must be universal and all ethnic groups/stake holders must be part of it. In addition, the peace process must be followed by massive socio-economic development and reconstruction programs.

Major Powers, including China, America, Russia, EU, Canada and Japan must whole-heartedly support economic revitalization of Afghanistan. The regional actors, including Pakistan, India and Iran must also stop their nefarious activities against each other because proxy wars will not help any party. Pakistan and Afghanistan cannot live without each other. Afghanistan needs Pakistan to connect its economy, people and goods through sea ports whereas Pakistan needs Afghanistan to connect itself with energy rich Central Asian States to overcome its energy woes. Without stability in Afghanistan it would be difficult for Pakistan to benefit from resource rich Central Asian states to improve its economy and overcome serious energy shortfall. Both states are necessity of each other, however it is advisable that both states must improve their bilateral ties and enhance their economic partnership for stable and prosperous future.

Bibliography

- “Afghan National Security Forces-(ANSF)” *North Atlantic Treaty Organization*, June 2013. <http://bit.ly/18JhdGQ>. Accessed on May 12, 2018.
- “Afghanistan’s Booming Poppy Harvest Feared to Boost Taliban Militancy” 17 May 2017. *Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project-OCCRP*, <http://bit.ly/2qYm8wg>. Accessed on August 26, 2018
- “Former TTP, JuA spokesperson claims terrorist organizations being 'used' by India, Afghanistan” *Dawn: Islamabad*, April 27, 2017. <http://bit.ly/2rtdU2L>. Accessed on May 24, 2018.
- “India finances trouble in Pakistan: Hagel” *Dawn, Islamabad*, February 27, 2013. <http://bit.ly/2qQmMMY>. Accessed on June 24, 2018
- “India is behind terrorism in Pakistan: TTP Commander Latif Ullah Mehsud Speaks out”. 29 January 2016. YouTube video, <http://bit.ly/2rLmri3>. December 31, 2018.
- “Kashmir diplomacy: “LoC tension can impact Pak anti-terror efforts” *The Express Tribune*, 09 October 2016, <http://bit.ly/2rtd5qo>.

- “Mid- Year update on the protection of civilians in armed conflict:1 January to 30 June 2018” *UNAMA*, July 15, 2018. <https://bit.ly/2LEyKo3> (access on December 30, 2018).
- “Pak-Afghan border fencing to complete by Dec 2019: DG ISPR”, *The Dawn*, December 31, 2018.
- “Population of India- 2018” *Live Population*, December 30, 2018. <https://bit.ly/2xfkNV5>, accessed on December 30, 2018.
- “Resolute Support Mission (RSM): Key Facts and Figures” *North Atlantic Treaty Organisation*, July 18, 2018. <https://bit.ly/2GhE6H5>, accessed on December 30, 2018.
- “The Global Afghan Opium Trade: A Threat Assessment, 2011” *UNODC*, July 2011. <http://bit.ly/2sw3VrG>.
- “U.S. General to Congress: War in Afghanistan is at stalemate and local troop deaths unsustainable” *Japan Times*, December 05, 2018. <https://bit.ly/2CFawr7>, accessed on December 30, 2018.
- “US drops largest non-nuclear bomb in Afghanistan” *CNN*, 14 April 2017. <http://cnn.it/2obPUfw>. Accessed on April 24, 2018
- “World Economic Outlook Database- 2018” *International Monetary Fund*, December 2018. (<https://bit.ly/2RgURXd>, accessed on December 30, 2018).
- Azami, Dawood, “Afghanistan war: Taliban attend landmark peace talks in Russia” *BBC*, November 09 2018. (<https://bbc.in/2zLoq8x>, accessed on December 30, 2018).
- Azimi, Prof. Salamat et al, “Afghanistan Opium Survey 2018: Cultivation and Production” *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime*, November 2018. <https://bit.ly/2OPNH73>, accessed on December 30, 2018), 5.
- Blanchard, Christopher M., “Afghanistan: Narcotics and U. S. Policy”. *Congressional Research Service*, 12 August 2009. <http://bit.ly/2sehRtJ>.
- Boone, Jon, “Musharraf: Pakistan and India's backing for 'proxies' in Afghanistan must stop” *The Guardian*, February 13, 2015. <http://bit.ly/2svW5yB>. Accessed on August 11, 2018.
- Brown, Vanda Felbab, “Afghanistan’s opium production is through the roof—why Washington shouldn’t overreact” *Brookings Institution*, November 21, 2017, (<https://brook.gs/2jLlKkm>, December 30, 2018).
- Bugeja, Matthew, *Al-Qaeda in Afghanistan: Nation-building and Combating Al-Qaeda’s Ideology*. Hamburg: Anchor Academic Publishing, 2014.
- Butt, Usama and N. Elahi, (Ed)., *Pakistan's Quagmire: Security, Strategy, and the Future of the Islamic Nuclear Nation*. New York: The Continuum International Publishing Group, 2010.
- Collins, Joseph J., *Understanding the War in Afghanistan: A Guide to the Land, the People, and the Conflict*. New York: Skyhorse Publishing Inc., 2013.

- Downs, Erica, "China buys into Afghanistan" *SAIS Review*, Vol. XXXII no. 2, Washington DC: John Hopkins University Press, 2012), 76. <http://brook.gs/2rt1Q1g>. Accessed on August 27, 2018
- Eichstaedt, Peter, *Above the Din of War: Afghans Speak about Their Lives, Their Country, and their future, and why America should listen*. Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books, 2013.
- Gstalter, Morgan "Trump hasn't ordered Pentagon to withdraw troops from Afghanistan" *The Hill*, December 29, 2018. <https://bit.ly/2s11QYs>, accessed on December 30, 2018.
- Hanauer, Larry and Peter Chalk, *India's and Pakistan's Strategies in Afghanistan: Implications for the United States and the Region*. (Santa Monica: Rand Corporation, 2012).
- Harding, Luke, "Taliban forcing thousands into army" *The Guardian*, 04 October 2001. <http://bit.ly/2rLwsLU>. Accessed on November 12, 2017.
- Hurst, Cindy A. and Robert Mathers, "Strategic Implications of the Afghan Mother Lode and China's Emerging Role", *Joint Force Quarterly* 72, 01 January 2014. <http://bit.ly/2s9H9sn>.
- Jaffrelot, Christophe (Ed.), *Pakistan at the Crossroads: Domestic Dynamics and External Pressures*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2016.
- Jones, Seth G. et al, *Rolling Back the Islamic State*. Santa Monica California: Rand, 2017.
- Katzman, Kenneth and Clayton Thomas "Afghanistan: Post-Taliban Governance, Security, and U.S. Policy" *Congressional Research Service*, 19 May 19, 2017. <http://bit.ly/2kK7mcV>.
- Khan, Ismail "Military operation in Khyber ends successfully" *The Dawn*, Islamabad, 03 July, 2015, <http://bit.ly/2qQmGFi>.
- Linschoten, Alex Strick van and Felix Kuehn, *An Enemy We Created: The Myth of the Taliban-Al Qaeda Merger in Afghanistan*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2012.
- Mansoor, Hasan, "Afghan drugs go to rest of world via Pakistan: UN report" *Dawn*, Islamabad, 24 August 2016. <http://bit.ly/2swkjZm>.
- Mattox, Gale and Stephen M. Grenier, (Ed.), *Coalition Challenges in Afghanistan: The Politics of Alliance*. California: Stanford University Press, 2015.
- McKay, Hollie, "ISIS threat in Afghanistan shows no end in sight" *Fox News*, 31 May, 2017. <http://fxn.ws/2rknsvm>. Accessed on March 11, 2018.
- Micallef, Joseph V. "How the Taliban Gets Its Cash" *Huffington Post*, <http://bit.ly/1X03MUO>. accessed on March 24, 2017.
- Michaels, Jim "Airstrikes cripple Taliban drug labs, costing group \$42 million" *USA Today*, April 13, 2018. (<https://bit.ly/2Ao1mO0>, accessed on December 30, 2018).

- Munoz, Carlo, "Head of Islamic State in Afghanistan killed in U.S. drone strike" *The Washington Times*, 12 August 2016. <http://bit.ly/2boMN3k>. Accessed on August 24, 2018
- Murphy, Eamon, *The Making of Terrorism in Pakistan: Historical and Social Roots of Extremism*. New York: Routledge, 2013.
- Neff, Thomas Gibbons and Mujib Mashal, "U.S. to Withdraw About 7,000 Troops from Afghanistan, Officials Say" *New York Times*, December 20, 2018. <https://nyti.ms/2EHhgGX>, accessed on December 30, 2018.
- Njoku, Mary Gloria C, Christian C. Anieke, *Stories of Peace Volume II: Creating and Sustaining Peace through Social Responsibility and Education, Volume 2*. UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2016.
- Rasheed, Dr. Adil, *ISIS: Race to Armageddon*. New Delhi: Vij Books India, 2015.
- Sharifi, Shoaib and Louise Adamou, "Taliban threaten 70% of Afghanistan, BBC finds" *BBC*, January 31st 2018. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-42863116>, accessed on December 30, 2018.
- Sopko, John F., "Assessing the Capabilities and Effectiveness of the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces". *SIGAR*, 12 February 2016. <http://bit.ly/20Q11Pq>, 9.
- Sparks, Karen Jacobs (Ed)., *Britannica Book of the Year 2012*. London: Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc, 2012.
- Tanrisever, Oktay F., (Ed), *Afghanistan and Central Asia: NATO's Role in Regional Security Since 9/11*. Washington DC: IOS Press, 2013.
- Tellis, Ashley J., Jeff Eggers, "U.S. Policy in Afghanistan: Changing Strategies, Preserving Gains", *Carnegie Endowment*, July 22, 2017. <https://bit.ly/2SnqL1u>, (December 30, 2018).
- Tetty, Justice et al, "World Drug Report 2011" *UNODC*, (<https://bit.ly/1kPK7bH>, accessed on December 30, 2018).
- Williams, Brian Glyn, *Counter Jihad: America's Military Experience in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2016.
- Yousaf, Suleman "Afghanistan's Mineral Resource Potential: A Boon or Bane?" *Journal of Current Affairs*, Vol. 1, Nos.1&2: Islamabad: *IPRI*, 2016.