

The US Military Drawdown from Afghanistan and the Role of Regional Dynamics in the Peace Process

Dr. Muhammad Tariq^a, Dr. Aziz Ur Rahman^b, Imtiaz Ahmad^c, Dr. Muhammad Kashif^d, Dr. Muhammad Ayaz^e, ^aLecturer Department of Political Science, Hazara University Mansehra, ^bAssistant Professor Department of IR & Political Science, Qurtaba University Peshawar, ^cAssistant Professor, Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, University of Malakand, Chakdara, Lower Dir., Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, ^dSuperintendent, D.R. (E), University of Karachi, ^eChairman Department of Political Science, Hazara University Mansehra, Email: ^amuhammadtariq@hu.edu.pk, ^bdr.azizku@gmail.com, ^cdostisw@hotmail.com, ^ddrkashif@uok.edu.pk

This paper focusses on the military drawdown of the US forces from Afghanistan and role of regional dynamics in the peace process. The main focus rests on three research objectives encompassing the drawdown of the US forces from Afghanistan, output of the US-Taliban talks followed by the resultant intra-Afghan talks, and the role played by the regional dynamics in the peace process in Afghanistan. The US forces are about to leave Afghanistan in the wake of February 29, 2020 US-Taliban talks whereby efforts are underway for the restoration of normalcy in the country to the pre-9/11 scenario. The regional powers are playing their due role in withdrawal of the foreign troops since each of them have their vested interest in Afghanistan. Theoretical framework for the study is provided by the Game Theory which sets the foundation of the study. The basic component of this theory is the Assurance Game which emphasises that actors can achieve successful results only if they can cooperate and coordinate with one another. An important aspect of this theory is the cooperative and non-cooperative dimensions which lay the foundation of this framework. The cooperative dimension rests upon the phenomena when the coalition partners or groups work in coordination to the effect when the resultant outcomes are known. It also provides a game between the coalition partners and not between the individuals. The outcome of the US and coalition partners were achieved, hence they decided to enter into negotiations with the Taliban and Afghan government and withdraw their forces from Afghanistan.

Keywords: *US, Drawdown, Afghanistan, Regional, and Peace Process*



Introduction

Game Theory is a theoretical framework for conceiving social situations among competing players. It signifies a science of strategy or the optimum decision-making process of independent and competing actors in a strategic setting (HAYES, 2020). The pioneers of this theory are John von Neumann and economist Oskar Morgenstern, who were mathematicians by profession and introduced this theory during the 1940s. Fundamental to this theory is an interactive situation among the rational players. The key to this theory is that one player's payoff is contingent upon the strategy implemented by the other player. This theory has a variety of applications, including Psychology, Biology, War, Politics, Economics, and Business.

This is one of the most important theories concerning various fields with a wide range of applicability. This theory has various forms such as the symmetric, asymmetric, simultaneous, and sequential etc. Of all the types of the game theories, the most common ones are cooperative and non-cooperative game theories. The former deals with the way coalition groups or cooperative groups work when only the outcomes are known. It provides a game between the coalition of players rather than between individuals. The US and the coalition partners have achieved their objectives in Afghanistan by dethroning the government of Taliban and placing a democratic government in the country by maintaining law and order in the country. The US also helped in strengthening the Afghan National Army for coping with any untoward situation jeopardising the key installation of the country.

The 9/11 episode is an important event in the history of the world whereby a non-state actor attacked the twin cities of the Pentagon resulting in huge casualties to the United States of America. From that day onwards an unending war started between the state actors and non-state actors. The hegemony of the former was dashed to the ground by the latter. The responsibility for these attacks was shouldered by the Al-Qaeda network led by Saudi-based Osama Bin Laden who was claimed to have taken refuge in Afghanistan. A competing race started between the state actors and non-state actors, the US, Al-Qaeda, the Taliban and other terrorist groups. The US termed it a war against terrorism and was assisted by many allied forces from different parts of the world. Since that day, both the US and Afghanistan have suffered irreparable losses in terms of human casualties (Tariq, 2018). Pakistan is also the country that has suffered the most after Afghanistan with huge losses to the people and economy of the country.

Problem Statement

The US has spent almost 19 years in Afghanistan in order to fight terrorism and insurgency by stationing NATO forces in collaboration with the 'allied powers' but she has now decided to withdraw from Afghanistan as per the terms and conditions of the US-Taliban Agreement of February 2020. What is going to be the future of Afghanistan in the post-withdrawal scenario?

Would peace and stability last in Afghanistan? Do the regional dynamics have any role to play in the peace process or not? This article aims at investigating the withdrawal of the US forces from Afghanistan and focusses on the post-drawdown scenario of Afghanistan. This article also aims at exploring the various dimensions of the regional actors in the peace process.

Objectives

To investigate the drawdown of the US forces from Afghanistan and highlight the role of the regional dynamics in bringing peace and stability to Afghanistan.

Research Questions

- i) Why does the US embark upon the strategy of Drawdown of the US forces from Afghanistan?
- ii) Have the US-Taliban talks and intra-Afghan talks been successful in the withdrawal of the US forces from Afghanistan?
- iii) What role do regional dynamics play in the drawdown scenario?

Significance

This study is very significant on account of its focus on the most important issue that has caught the attention of the entire world since the 9/11 era. The world witnessed an abrupt change by concentrating on the security strategy since the 9/11 syndrome brought the success of the non-state actors in preference to state actors. The US withdrawal from Afghanistan is very significant since this would provide the people of Afghanistan with means to establish a government of their own choice with the increased role of the stakeholders. The regional powers would also have to play a prominent role in the peace process in Afghanistan that will have a direct impact on regional and global politics.

Methodology

This paper utilises a qualitative approach through the theoretical framework of ‘Game Theory’ which focusses on social situations among the competing powers. This has been represented through the struggle of state actors and non-state actors, the former refers to the elected representatives and agents of the state while the latter refers to the non-elected representatives who try to establish their own writ through their self-styled form of government and enacted laws. This competing environment also finds its expression among the various members of the same political party as was witnessed during the Trump administration when even men of his own political party had to go against the decision of the US President regarding the early withdrawal of the US forces and between the two administrations of Donald Trump and Joe Biden.



The long-standing war in Afghanistan initiated in 2001 is coming to an end as a result of the US-Taliban Talks held in Doha (Qatar) on February 29, 2020 (Tariq, 2020). The timeframe for the withdrawal of the US forces has been determined as April 2021 whereby all the foreign troops from Afghanistan will leave the country and government of Afghanistan will be totally free in her decision-making power. The US President Donald Trump is going to wind up the mission of counter-terrorism strategy in Afghanistan before that time, though he has been criticised by most of the senior officials of his own party. Even some of the coalition partners are not happy over this hasty decision of the American President for not taking them into confidence.

The drawdown of the NATO forces from Afghanistan is very significant in the current scenario as efforts have been in progress since December 2014 for the reduction of the foreign troops. It was decided that the foreign troops would work there under the nomenclature of the Resolute Support Mission (RSM). During the US-Taliban Agreement it was agreed upon by both Afghanistan and the United States that US has agreed to reduce the troops from the current 13,000 to 8,600 within 135 days, with proportionate decrease in the foreign troops and then to withdraw all its forces till April 2021 covering a time frame of 14 months (Clayton, 2020). The US has already spent \$141 billion for the purpose of security and reconstruction in Afghanistan, which is tantamount to the highest amount the US has ever spent in any country for security and reconstruction.

Despite agreement and efforts regarding the drawdown of the foreign troops from Afghanistan, doubts still persist whether the US would completely withdraw their forces from Afghanistan or not within the stipulated time frame (Clayton, 2020). Doubts and suspicions have been expressed by various scholars, statesmen and particularly the senior administrative officers. For example, on October 7, 2020, Robert O' Bren, Advisor on National Security of the US, expressed his concern by stating that the US troops would reach 2,500 by early next year (Cooper & Schmitt, 2020). On the same date, President Donald Trump expressed the same view by tweeting that "we should have the small remaining number of our BRAVE Men and Women serving in Afghanistan home by Christmas" (Trump, 2020). It is still ambiguous what he meant by tweeting regarding the reduction of the US forces from Afghanistan whether he wanted to convey the message of reduction in the number of foreign troops or he wanted to convey the message of official change in the U.S. policy towards Afghanistan. The Taliban expressed their jubilation and welcomed the statement as "a big blow" that dulled the national mood (Constable & Hassan, 2020).

The early withdrawal of the US forces from Afghanistan is a positive sign for the Taliban and ISIS but it may not be a positive sign for the Afghan government as the Afghan Security Forces still lack the coherence and strength to safeguard the country both internally and externally (Williams, 2020). Neither should it be regarded as the victory of the US government since the members of the Donald Trump party look at it as a defeat for their allies and friends who had fought with them against terrorists and insurgents in the war on terror. This was supported by



the November 17, 2020 call of the Trump emphasising the reduction of the US forces to 4,500, another blow to most of the US parliamentarian and members of the President's own party criticising him of pleasing the Taliban and annoying his partners and allied forces.

This measure by the American president prognosticates a sign of pleasure and victory for the Taliban, who are a fanatic minority and have been in search of replacing the naïve democratic set up of Afghanistan with their harsh and self-styled Islamic law (Williams, 2020). They also have close ties and alliance with the al-Qaeda by offering shelter to the other terrorist groups and providing help in supporting the terrorist campaigns against the neighbouring countries such as Pakistan and Uzbekistan (Williams, 2020). This move of the US government has been welcomed by the Taliban and local people of Afghanistan since they will be at liberty after a period of about 19 years to have their own government without the involvement of foreign forces. It is also worth mentioning that the Taliban may raise their heads in the country and form government with or without the support of other local groups.

It is an admitted fact that the long-suffering people of the country are going to be affected by the US withdrawal from Afghanistan since they rely on the US troops for their safety and security. The Taliban have a stronghold in the south-eastern parts of Afghanistan where they seek to get control of the capitals and the rest of the country. The US political experts have also shown their concern the withdrawal of the US forces would result in weakening the security forces of Afghanistan because they rely on them for the security of their key sectors. The number of security forces that have been killed in the country from 2015 to 2019 stands at 4,500, which is a clear vindication of their inability in maintaining security of the country.

The withdrawal of the US forces as a consequence of the US-Taliban Talks is a great step towards the decreased role in the affairs of Afghanistan. It is a real victory for the Taliban who have been striving since 2001 when they were dethroned from the power by the US and allied forces. This would allow the Taliban and other non-state actors to reassert their authority after the US has withdrawn from Afghanistan. The withdrawal of the US from Afghanistan, on one hand, shows the weakness of the US forces to get a stronghold in the war-stricken country of Afghanistan after fighting for about 19 years against the Al-Qaeda, the Taliban and other insurgent groups. But on the other hand, shows the strategic wisdom of the US as the war has already caused them \$141 billion in maintaining security and for reconstruction purposes. The US should also realise that the world cannot be conquered by force and even the allied forces would not be able to subdue the non-state actors by the sheer use of coercion. The US has lost 2,300 security personnel since 2001 in Afghanistan while more than 20,000 security personnel have been wounded. Their withdrawal from Afghanistan has been described as their failure (Malkasian, 2020).

The weaknesses of the security forces of Afghanistan still leaves a question mark on their competency and potentiality of combating the terrorists and still face challenges in holding the territory and defending the people (Tracker, 2020). The Taliban still continue to capture

districts by carrying out suicide attacks in the key cities. According to an estimate of 2019, the Afghan government is in control of 53.8% of the Afghan districts while 33.9% are contested and the remaining 12.3% are under the influential sphere or control of Taliban (Tracker, 2020). The estimates of 2018 present quite a bleak picture by seeing the record high number of civilian casualties standing at 10,993 including 3,804 deaths and 7,189 injuries as per reports of the United Nations documentation. During 2019, there was a slight decrease in the number of casualties where the number of civilian deaths stood at 3,403 and injured stood at 6,898. According to a report of the US, civilian casualties outdid 10,000 each year since 2010 and now the total figure stands at 100,000 (Tracker, 2020).

Keeping in view the current situation in Afghanistan, Acting US Defense Secretary Christopher Miller visited Afghanistan on December 22, 2020 to discuss security issues and US drawdown from Afghanistan with president Ashraf Ghani (Acting US Defence Secretary visits Afghanistan, meets with Ghani, 2020). They also discussed the US drawdown to stand at 2,500 by January 15, 2021 as a result of President Donald Trump's tweet that came in November this year. It is important to mention that the US have agreed to the withdrawal of the US forces subject to certain conditionality including the reduction in violence, ceasefire and peace talks with the Afghan government.

As far as the gravity of the security situation is concerned, during the presence of Christopher Miller in Afghanistan, an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) bomb attached to a vehicle blasted in Kabul resulting in the killing of five people, including four doctors. This is testimony to the fact that there has not been reduction in violence and the capital city of Kabul remains at the highest ebb. Just during the current month of December, the deputy governor of Kabul, two journalists and many civilians have lost their lives. US General Mark Miley, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff met with the Taliban in Qatar and Ashraf Ghani in Kabul remarking that, *"The most important part of the discussions that I had with both the Taliban and the government of Afghanistan was the need for an immediate reduction in violence," Miley said. "Everything else hinges on that"* (Acting US Defence Secretary visits Afghanistan, meets with Ghani, 2020).

The US has a strategic interest in many countries of the world. It has been fighting the war in Afghanistan for the last 19 years and another major war in Iraq for the last 17 years (Cordesman, 2018). It has also been very active in Somalia for a longer time, and has been dealing with the terrorist or extremist threats in a wide range of conflicts in north and Sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, and South East Asia (Cordesman, 2018). But it is also an admitted fact that the US has moved from the policy of counterterrorism to the policy of counterinsurgency, and hence from the interest of temporary military deployment to the interest of permanent military presence. Due to the US involvement in the counterterrorism and counterinsurgency strategies, the line between the strategies has become so blurred that it is difficult to differentiate one from the other.

But there is still ambiguity whether the United States intends to end its strategy in Afghanistan and other countries of the world. If at any rate, it intends to end its military operations in various parts of the world, does it have the potential to leave a peaceful and stable government behind after it leaves the country (Cordesman, 2018). The same may be the case in Afghanistan after the drawdown is yet to be completed and there are still doubts about the future outcomes of the US withdrawal. The most common perception is that if the US leaves Afghanistan, there are chances of the security situation worsening in the country, which is very clear from the fact that the country has witnessed approximately 1,00,000 civilian casualties during the years from 2010 to 2020, with each year witnessing more than 10,000 civilian casualties during the internecine period.

The Role of Regional Dynamics in the Peace Process in Afghanistan

Regional dynamics are very important to the peace settlement in Afghanistan. Regional dynamics have a very key role to play in the war-stricken country on account of its strategic position and presence of the non-state actors at a larger scale. The most significant key actor among them is Pakistan that has played a very significant role for a long time in the internal affairs of the country of Afghanistan. It was instrumental during the Russian intervention in Afghanistan in 1979, during the post Russian withdrawal scenario, during the Taliban Regime that lasted from 1996 to 2001, and then particularly has suffered a lot due to its involvement in the war against terrorism. Despite the fact that Pakistan has always been very friendly towards its neighbouring countries in general and Afghanistan in particular, it has always been criticised of interfering in the internal affairs of Afghanistan.

Pakistan has always played a constructive role in Afghanistan which nobody can deny. The US government under President Donald Trump has always sought help and assistance from Pakistan for the successful conduct of US-Taliban talks. US special Envoy for Afghanistan thanked Pakistan for releasing *Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar* from custody in October 2018 and the assistance provided by Pakistan in the facilitation of Taliban figures to Doha for talks (Hindu, 2019). On the release of Baradar, he said, “*The release of Mullah Baradar, which was my request....they (Pakistan) accommodated that, Mullah Baradar has reputation of being more open, more pro-peace,*” said the top American envoy. Khalilzad has expressed the view that Pakistan is very important to the peace process in Afghanistan but historically has not played a positive role. He further adds that there has been a positive change in the attitude of Pakistan towards Afghanistan. As Pakistan favours the intra-Afghan talks, between the Taliban and the Afghan government, the release of Baradar would further facilitate the talks and can play a vital role in the Afghan peace process.

US Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo also shares the same positive view about Afghanistan by saying that they expect Pakistan to do more but still appreciate what they have done (Hindu, 2019). He also said that he (Mike) and the US President Donald Trump want to keep good relations with Pakistan rather better relations with Pakistan. According to him, what Pakistan



can do in Afghanistan is to facilitate the process of peace and reconciliation, which is a burden on their relationship. The role played by Pakistan with regard to its relationship with the Taliban and the Haqqani Network is a burden on their relationship. A biannual report by the Department of Defence on Afghanistan released in July 2020 asserts that Pakistan has been instrumental in demonstrating strong support to facilitate the peace process in Afghanistan (Defence, 2020).

A common perception has developed among some countries about the controversial role played by Pakistan in the internal affairs of Afghanistan which has led to the destabilisation of the country (Clayton, 2020). According to them, Pakistan views a weak and destabilised Afghanistan as preferable in comparison to a strong and unified Afghan government. Pakistan's choice in Afghanistan may be the government led by the Pashtun-ethnic community since Pakistan has itself a large and restive Pashtun Community (Tariq, *The Pashtun Tribal System and Issues of Security*, 2018). It is also a fact that keeping in view the Indian threat, Pakistan wants to establish a government in Afghanistan that may favour Pakistan and for that purpose the Taliban may best serve the interest of Pakistan (Clayton, 2020). But it is also a fact that relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan are further complicated by the presence of more than one million Afghan refugees present in Pakistan and the long running windy and treacherous border known as the Durand Line.

On the other hand, India is also more tilted towards Afghanistan in order to contain Pakistan on both its eastern and western sides (Tariq, 2015). India, being the arch-rival of Pakistan, has been there in Afghanistan for strategic purposes. Most of the energies of India are based upon broader diplomatic engagement (Chaudhuri & Shende, 2020). Afghan security forces have been provided with military training and logistic support for curbing the insurgency and militancy. India is also going to provide more military training to Afghan security forces and invest in longer-term capacity-building programs. It has also been struggling in supporting and investing in the National Directorate of Security in terms of providing training and sharing intelligence (Chaudhuri & Shende, 2020). Keeping in view the continued ratio of violence in the war-stricken country of Afghanistan and the impact of COVID-19 on the economy of Afghanistan, India should also provide more development and assistance. Moreover, India is also trying to broaden its engagements with Iran and Russia, by exploring opportunities for establishing cooperation with China, the United States and Afghanistan.

Afghanistan tries to maintain cordial relations with the neighbouring countries particularly the post-Soviet states of Central Asia whose role in Afghanistan has been very limited but could increase their role (Hamidzada & Ponzio, 2019). During the past two years, most of the US military commanders have warned of an increased ratio of support for the Taliban from both Russia and Iran and both of them have expressed their concern of the presence of an Islamic State affiliate in Afghanistan for the sake of justification of their activities. The US has also shown concern that these states have been involved during the period of 2020 to support the attacks of Taliban against the US forces (Hamidzada & Ponzio, 2019). It is an important fact



that earlier these states were opposed to the enthronement of the Taliban in power in the late 1990s but now they have got sympathies with the Taliban for their vested interests.

Both Russia and Iran have been criticised of coordinating with the Taliban and other non-state actors in Afghanistan which creates problems for the United States and the government of Afghanistan but the US and Afghan government should jointly strive to make them cooperate with them rather than support the Taliban. Their cooperation would be of great help to both the US and the Afghan government since they are neighbouring countries of Afghanistan and can play the most significant role in the peace process of Afghanistan. Their mediating role can resolve the major issues in Afghanistan and bring the discordant elements to terms and truce. But their support for Taliban would harm the whole peace process in Afghanistan and the gap between the government of Afghanistan, the Taliban and other non-state actors would increase, which may widen the gap between them.

But the United States is also of the view that China, Russia and Iran are very important for the maintenance of peace and security and they can play their due role in the peace settlement of Afghanistan (Iqbal, 2021). Keeping in view the internal security of Afghanistan, China's military, economic and political engagements are driven by domestic security concerns that terrorism will spread across the Afghan border into China. This will compel China to enhance their security and protect its regional economic investments (Iqbal, 2021).

As far as Iran is concerned, it is interested in seeking a stable government in Afghanistan that is more responsive to Iran for the eradication of the elements of ISIS-K, the withdrawal of the foreign troops from Afghanistan and providing safeguard to the concerns of the Iranians, such as water rights and border security (Iqbal, 2021). Russia's engagement in Afghanistan concentrates upon a wide range of actors including the Taliban, for securing its interests in the Central Asian States and for expanding its influence in the region. The Pentagon does recognise the influence of Iran in Afghanistan, stressing that Tehran pursues "multi-track strategy" of engagement in Afghanistan with the aim of growing ties with the Afghan government. This also aims at expanding trade and economic investments, and provides standardised support to the Taliban while trying not to alienate Kabul. The involvement of Iran is very explicit in some of the key areas of Afghanistan particularly the western, central and the northern areas where they share common history, culture, religion, and language with Iran. The US is of the view that Russia is interested in renewing arms sales, maintenance, and training to Kabul, which would be helpful in providing influence with the Afghan government.

Relations between China and Afghanistan have also very complex due to the Chinese involvement in the assistance of Taliban when Beijing first came into contact with the insurgent group of Afghanistan for protecting their vested interests (Kaura, 2020). It was during the 1990s when China was worried about the linkages of the Taliban with the anti-Chinese terrorist group, better known as the East Turkmenistan Islamic Movement (ETIM) that had been instrumental in operating militant groups in Afghanistan (Kaura, 2020). But despite that,



Beijing had to improve its relations with the when it came to power for strategic purposes. A drastic change occurred in their relations in the post 9/11 scenario where China has been busy to hedge its bets by maintaining formal ties with the government of Afghanistan while also establishing informal ties with the Taliban.

Since China has not been a party to the Afghan conflict, that is why it has adopted a flexible attitude towards Afghanistan in its policies. But it is also significant to note that China has been involved in several multilateral initiatives for seeking a political settlement and making reconciliation between the Taliban and the Afghan government. China's involvement in the peace process of Afghanistan is also emaciated by the US- China hegemonic designs for power in the region. For example, when the Trump administration cancelled talks with the Taliban in September 2019, the Chinese tried to avail the opportunity by injecting itself into the group by inviting the group to Beijing for a two-day intra-Afghan conference in October 2019 (Kaura, 2020). The conference in China could not be materialised and had to be postponed for some strategic purposes.

The tilt towards Afghanistan by both the United States and China has led to the creation of tension in the region that has put the security of Pakistan at stake (Kaura, 2020). With the rise in tension, Pakistan is facing difficulties in making choices between the USA and China. In such a situation, Pakistan wants to remain neutral while keeping in view the geostrategic significance of China which can help her in cases of dire need. Pakistan is of the view that China's enthusiastic support is very necessary for her (Pakistan) in terms of providing protection so as to avoid being named or shamed as a terrorist for sponsoring terrorism in the international forums, and particularly the United Nations. This inclination towards the war-stricken country of Afghanistan by both the United States and China has faced Pakistan with many challenges.

Pakistan has projects with China such as the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) which has been very beneficial for the economic and political prosperity of Pakistan. This would enhance the market mechanism and economy of Pakistan by having access to the huge economic market of China. Moreover, this would also help in making Pakistan much stronger nation in the region in terms of economy. On the other hand, in order for Pakistan to keep good relations with the United States of America as it was the American consideration that Pakistan should stand by her rather than join the opposite block of her enemies. Pakistan, being the neighbouring country of Afghanistan had to join hands with the US to avoid any untoward situation arising out of not standing by the US and allied partners.

Discussion and Conclusions

It is significant to note that US withdrawal from Afghanistan is a very burdensome task to which most of the US administrative officials refer to as a mega event in the history of the United States. Even the tweet of the US President Donald Trump is looked at with suspicion

by various circles as a change in the US policy towards Afghanistan since he showed his intention of reducing the US army to 2,500 by early 2021, although the time frame is the April 2021. Other officials of the US have also shown the same concern regarding the early withdrawal while on the other hand, the Taliban has welcomed cordially this move of the US President. These mixed feelings are going to make Afghanistan a stable democratic and prosperous country since the decision of the US government to leave the country may be a good sign for the Taliban and the local people. On the other hand, it also carries a positive omen for the US as she has already spent \$141 billion on the reconstruction and security parameters of the country. This decision shows the wisdom of the Trump administration that has spent a huge amount of their budget on Afghanistan which they can better spend in their own country.

The Taliban are a strong and coherent force and have been trying to get control over the country by first capturing the capitals and then extending their influence to the rest of the country. The US withdrawal from Afghanistan would further weaken the law enforcement agencies of Afghanistan as they look at the US forces for the security of their installations and key points. The incompetency of the Afghan security forces can be gauged from the fact that they lost 4,500 security personnel during 2015-2019. As per the security situation in Afghanistan, the Afghan government is in control of 53.8%, the remaining 33.9% are being contested while the remaining 12.3% are under the control of Taliban. Latest security developments testify the fact that insecurity still persists in the country as the previous decade witnessed approximately 10,000 casualties during the period between 2010 and 2020.

Pakistan has been a key actor to peace and security in Afghanistan. Its role has been very positive in the process of peace and security which as a fact has been admitted by the US Special Envoy on Afghanistan, Zalmay Khalilzad, who has appreciated the role played by Pakistan in the resolution of conflict and steps taken by Pakistan for the restoration of democratic set up in Afghanistan. US President, Donald Trump has also applauded the role played by Pakistan in bringing the US and Taliban closer to the table talks and resultantly facilitating the Taliban talks with the government of Afghanistan by releasing Mullah Baradar from prison at the request of US Special Envoy, Zalmay Khalilzad.

Besides Pakistan, other key actors that can play their role in the peace process of Afghanistan are India, Iran, China and Russia. India has been playing her role by providing logistic support to Afghanistan in terms of providing training and assistance to the Afghan security forces. While Russia, India and China have also been castigated for supporting the Taliban in Afghanistan, they should better utilise their energies for supporting the Afghan government as well as the Taliban by bridging the gap between the Afghan government and Taliban in order to maintain lasting peace and security in the war-stricken country. All the regional powers should focus on the peace and security measures of Afghanistan since their true cooperation will make it a peace loving and stable country in the world so that the cooperative parameter



of the Game Theory based on the cooperative paradigm should work to bring the countries closer to one another for the lasting peace and prosperity in the world.



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