

2 Chapter 2 – Contextualization of Afghan Politics

2.1 Background

I have divided chapter two into four main sections. I shall start by exploring the historical emergence of Afghanistan as a nation state and the importance of its strategic location in geopolitics. Once the historical facts of its geopolitical implications are established, I shall examine Afghanistan's relationship with its neighbors and global players during the Cold War, the Afghan civil war and the War on Terror. The observations from the above study shall guide me to analyze the linkages between local, regional and global players in the Afghan conflict and how have these players have changed within the pyramid of peace actors.

The geographic centrality of Afghanistan has made it a strategic location in geopolitics. For centuries Afghanistan has been at the cross road between the East and the West bringing trade, religion and various empires to the region. Although it became a nation in the 18th century, it got sucked into the regional political rivalries beginning in the 19th Century¹⁰⁷ and since then, it has been at war with its neighbors or the 'superpowers'.¹⁰⁸ Being an ardent student of Afghan history, the pattern that comes to light repeatedly is the direct or indirect interferences of foreigners in the internal political dynamics of the country. A good example of this can be found in the book called the *Great Game*,¹⁰⁹ which illustrates the rivalries between Czarist Russia and the British Empire vis-à-vis Afghanistan.

2.1.1 Terminology

I would like to explain that while writing this book, I am faced with the dilemma whether or not to use the widely applied terminologies in regard to the Afghan reconciliation and conflict in the past three decades.

As mentioned in chapter one, most of the literature I am referring to throughout my text is based on the school of realism and realpolitik. Although, I am making use of the widely applied terminologies such as the 'superpowers',

¹⁰⁷ Peter Hopkirk, *The Great Game: On the Secret Service in High Asia* (UK: Oxford University Press, 2001).

¹⁰⁸ The usage of terminology is further explored under the terminology section in chapter 2. Please see as to why I have chosen to use the term superpower in my thesis.

¹⁰⁹ Hopkirk, *The Great Game*.

‘Cold War’, ‘international community’ or ‘War on Terror’ to refer to the literature I have quoted, I am aware that such categorization and labeling of actors in conflict transformation could be even more problematic. Through labeling, a conflict is framed and thus frozen, hindering the options for creative exploration to bring about social healing and reconciliation. Furthermore, at times this labeling also generalizes the context of conflict in a way that otherwise would remain very dynamic and robust.

Being aware of this dilemma, I have consciously chosen to apply the widely used term ‘superpowers’ to keep consistent with the references I have made, but my understanding of the superpowers is not on the basis of realpolitik. Instead, I see them as the main actors in the Afghan reconciliation processes, which I am analyzing.

In the upcoming chapters, I shall refer to the continuing conflict in Afghanistan from the Cold War era to the War on Terror by not framing or giving it a name. Having worked with the Afghan youth in social projects of healing, I realized that the labeling of the conflict was an extremely sensitive matter, as it exposed the background of the person and thus their affiliation with certain political factions, regional powers and so forth.

For example, if a member of the youth group I worked with called the Afghan conflict the years of Jihad, it implied that he or his family supported the Jihad. His affiliation with a certain political group and regional country depended on what ethnicity, which part of the country he belonged to and where he had taken refuge.

I remember an incident with one of the youth participants who was supposed to attend a roundtable discussion I had organized on peacebuilding. He called me the previous night to confirm that he was no more participating in the discussion because by associating himself with me, he will be labeled ‘pro-communist’ and this could cause his family or him trouble when he returns back to Afghanistan from India.

I have made a conscious effort not to label the Afghan conflict for two reasons:

- i. Afghans have different interpretations of the Afghan conflict, some call it Jihad, some state terrorism or resistance against the

government, others ethnic conflict and to be able to include everyone in the discussion of reconciliation, it is important to keep the door open for all to participate from their view point and perspective;

- ii. In order to explore creative options for reconciliation and social healing, it is important not to frame or label the conflict otherwise, I shall introduce my own dimension of conflict just like many other authors, who have done in the case of Afghanistan.

In the following chapters, I will further clarify the usage of certain concepts or terminologies to be clear as to why I have chosen their application.

2.2 Afghanistan: A Global Strategic Importance in Geopolitics

“It is not Afghanistan’s history or culture that is its impediment but rather its geography!”¹¹⁰ – Najibullah, Ex-President of Afghanistan, spring 1990.

Map 2.1: Afghanistan geopolitical map¹¹¹



¹¹⁰ Najibullah (President of Afghanistan 1987-1992), in personal discussion with the author in regard to the National reconciliation and the peace process in Afghanistan, Spring, 1990.

¹¹¹ AP Graphics, “A map of Afghanistan and the surrounding countries and the Persian Gulf,” *Boston.com*:
http://www.boston.com/news/packages/underattack/news/afghanistan_map_popup.htm
(accessed May 2nd, 2015).

In order to grasp the obstacles at hand in making the Afghan reconciliation sustainable, it is important to understand the geopolitics of Afghanistan in the context of its history. In the upcoming sections of chapter 2, I shall emphasize the historical evolution of my country and its global geopolitical importance in the region due to its location and relationships with its neighbors and global players.

2.2.1 The Epistemology of Afghan History

The modern day Afghan state was established in 1747, however, empires crossed the geographic region of what has become known today as Afghanistan even prior to Alexander the Great. For example, central Afghanistan was flourishing with the Zohrashtrian religion from 11th- 7th B.C.¹¹², Buddhism between 3rd B.C. to 5th A.D.;¹¹³ in years 545 -539 B.C.¹¹⁴ Achemenians ruled the region followed by Parthians, Sassanians and Hephthalites up to 650 A.D.¹¹⁵ The Arab conquest that brought the religion of Islam with it started from 650 A.D.¹¹⁶ onwards. Even though the religion of Islam dawned in Khurasan during the Umayyad, there existed corners of Afghanistan that practiced Zohrashtrian religion till the 19th Century, when Amir Abdur Rahman Khan, the King of Afghanistan, converted his subjects in the region of *Kafiristan* (land of infidels) to *Nuristan* (land of light) into the religion of Islam. In his memoir King Abdur Rahman Khan interestingly elucidates the prevention of Tsarist Russia to overtake the Afghan region of *Kafiristan* as one of the main reasons of his pacification.¹¹⁷

Amongst the Empires to cross the region of Afghanistan are the Greeks, when Alexander the Great set course towards India through the Middle East in 332-331 B.C.¹¹⁸ The other renowned empire that crossed Afghanistan from the east was Chenghiz Khan from Mongolia. Najibullah Torwayana, a historian and diplomat, noted the arrival of the Mongol army in Balkh in 1220 in his book, the

¹¹² Najib Ullah Torwayana, *A Short History of Afghanistan* (Bloomington, IN.: 1stBooks, 2002), 74

¹¹³ Ibid., 158

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 87

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 160-162

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 173

¹¹⁷ Mir Munshi Sultan Mahomed Khan, *The Life of Abdur Rahman: Amir of Afghanistan*. Vol.2 (London: Elibron Classics, 2005), 290

¹¹⁸ Torwayana, 95

Short History of Afghanistan.¹¹⁹ In the 15th century, one of the founders of the Moghul dynasty, Zahir-ud-din Muhammad Babur made his way to the Indian Sub-continent from Central Asia through Kabul, Afghanistan's current capital. His remains lay in the Babur Gardens of Kabul even today.

It was under the rule of the Abdali tribe (which later came to be known as Durrani) that Afghanistan emerged as a nation in 1747: "From 1747 to 1750, he (Ahmad Shah Abdali) united the country from Indus to the western borders of Herat and from the Oxus to the Arabian Sea."¹²⁰

Ahmad Shah Abdali was an army officer at the court of the Persian King Nader Shah Afshar and managed to use his military prowess as well as political understanding of the Persian and Moghul Empires to build Afghanistan as a nation state. The so-called Afghan empire lasted until 1818¹²¹ from when it is vital to note that even as a young nation, the historical significance of how global politics influence Afghan internal politics. Najib Ullah Torwayana explains how the world affairs in 1800, when France and England were once again at war, impacted the internal politics in Afghanistan. He emphasizes how Bonaparte's consulate and victories in Europe were a threat to the supremacy of the British Empire, especially when the Tsar of Russia, Paul I, withdrew from the British coalition against France in 1800¹²².

French and Russian strategists prepared an over optimistic plan for an attack on India by land. That plan consisted of assigning 35000 French Soldiers and 25000 regular Russian troops as well as 10000 Russian Cossacks to an expedition towards India. It was envisaged that these troops joining in Astrakhan would drive to Astrabad in Persia, and then to Heart, Farrah, Kandahar and the Indus Valley in Afghanistan. The Russian military experts thought that five months would be enough time for such an expedition. They were sure that the anti-British feelings of the Near Eastern rulers and people, and those of the Indians would remove the possibility of

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 297

¹²⁰ Ibid., 414

¹²¹ Ibid., 439

¹²² Ibid., 440

any serious British resistance to the invading Franco-Russian army in India¹²³.

The interesting conclusion one can draw from the above passage is the geopolitical importance of Afghanistan, which has drawn empires to cross and reach either India or the caucuses. The geographic gravity of Afghanistan was again tested in the 19th century under the reign of Amir Abdur Rahman Khan, one of the descendants of the Abdali, who became the King in the 1880s.

The country's geopolitical strategic importance was much researched and written about by both the British and Russian envoys, scholars and agents, whereby the two powers competed for supremacy in Central Asia and doubted each other's intentions. This rivalry in the 19th century was called the Great Game and in the 1970s, Peter Hopirk, a journalist by profession, published a well-researched book by the same name¹²⁴.

In understanding today's Afghan conflict and its complex relationships with its neighbors, I made an effort to understand the historical events that led to the proxy wars during the Cold War and the War on Terror. Peter Hopkirk's *The Great Game*¹²⁵, Amir Abdur Rahman Khan's memoirs¹²⁶ and Najibullah Torwayana's *A Short History of Afghanistan*¹²⁷ have demonstrated how the rivalries between Tsarist Russia and the British Empire, which had its seat in Kolkata then, divided the Afghan territories and negotiated its current borders so it can serve as a buffer state between the two.

How can a small Power like Afghanistan, which is like a goat between these lions (Britain and Tsarist Russia), or a grain of wheat between two strong millstones of grinding mill, stand in the midway of the stones without being ground to dust?¹²⁸ – Abdur Rahman Khan, Amir of Afghanistan.

¹²³ Ibid., 440-441

¹²⁴ Hopkirk, *The Great Game*.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Khan. *The Life of Abdur Rahman*

¹²⁷ Torwayana. *The Short History of Afghanistan*.

¹²⁸ Khan. *The Life of Abdur Rahman*, 150 and 166.

In the last chapters of his book, Amir advises his successors on how to deal with Afghanistan's neighbors and expresses regret that the country does not have access to the oceans, which means dependency in terms of trade, commerce and military routes on its neighbors¹²⁹.

In conclusion, successors of Abdur Rahman Khan reigned in the country till 1929, when the country once again fell prey to British and Russian rivalries. During the Second World War, Afghanistan managed to keep its neutrality but once India declared independence in 1947, Afghanistan started to face challenges with its nascent emerging neighbor Pakistan with regard to its borders.

The current Pakistan and Afghan relations took root at the reign of Amir Abdur Rahman Khan, when the Indian Sub-Continent was still ruled by the British Empire and the Afghan territories were divided on the basis of Russian and British Empire rivalries. In 1949 the Afghan council announced that they did not recognize the passage of the Durand Treaty, which was signed with the British Empire under the reign of Amir Abdur Rahman Khan to the newly born Pakistan.

Immediately after the end of the World War II and the Independence of India and Pakistan, once again it is the Cold War Rivalries that take shape in Afghanistan and the region. Adding to the challenges of Afghanistan and Pakistan relations, the politics of the Cold War further impacted the region, especially the two country's relations as the USSR supported the Afghan government, while the US backed Pakistan's policies in support of the Mujahideen.

2.3 Cold War Rivalries: 1950s-1992

The Cold War rivalries between the USSR and the US could be observed through the inflow of aid in Afghanistan and the developmental or social projects each of the countries were supporting between 1950s-1970s¹³⁰. However, it was not until the 1980s that Afghanistan became the epicenter of the Cold War¹³¹. The engagement of the superpowers and their regional allies in the Afghan conflict meant an escalation of fighting, increased financial investment in providing ammunitions, weapons and war propaganda.

In order to discuss the international political dynamics that linked the

¹²⁹ Ibid., 211

¹³⁰ Louis Dupree, *Afghanistan* (Pakistan: Oxford University Press, 2007), 507

¹³¹ Carew, 13.

superpowers and their ideological war to Afghanistan, I would like to briefly describe the historical chain of events that led to the Soviet invasion in 1970s.

One of the main events in Afghan history during the decade of 1970s was the change from Monarchy to the Afghan Republic, whereby King Zaher Shah's cousin Mohammad Daoud Khan, who had served as his Prime Minister from 1953 to 1963, took power in July 1973 through a white coup and became the first President of Afghanistan¹³².

The era of 1960 is known as the years of Afghan neutrality, whereby the representatives of the people in the parliament demand for a constitutional monarchy and establishment of a multi-party system in Afghanistan was fiercely debated. The aid rivalry between the US and the USSR brought more financial assistance and provided more opportunities for the Afghan youth to get educated and create an intellectual middle-class that desired social and economic reforms¹³³.

In a personal chat with the deceased Vice-President of Afghanistan and Head of the National Reconciliation Committee, Abdul Rahim Hatif¹³⁴, who was the member of House of Representatives from Kandahar in 1965, he underlined that the factors that led to the polarization of Afghan politics between the left and the Islamist groups was mainly the result of a lack of a multi-party system in Afghanistan.

In the 1970s, as Afghanistan became a Republic, Mohammed Daoud Khan, the President, took a strong stand against the radical Islamic groups within the country, which caused their exile to Pakistan¹³⁵.

Meanwhile, the leftist groups and some university students in Afghanistan formed the People Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) that constituted two factions: Parcham and Khalq. The Parcham faction was viewed to be elite coming from the cities while the Khalq faction were mostly made up of

¹³² Olivier Roy, *Islam and Resistance in Afghanistan* (UK: Cambridge, 1986), 74

¹³³ Torwayana, 26

¹³⁴ Abdul Rahim Hatif (Vice President of Afghanistan 1989-1992), in personal discussion with the author in regard to the National reconciliation and the peace process in Afghanistan, July, 2012.

¹³⁵ Olivier Roy, *Islam and Resistance in Afghanistan*, 75

masses from the Afghan provinces¹³⁶.

It is on April 27th, 1978 that the Khalq faction of PDPA rose to power through another coup¹³⁷. Since the focus of this chapter is on the Cold War rivalries, I shall not discuss further the reasons behind this coup in the 1970s. However, it is important to ask whether the Soviets were behind the Khalqi coup? Rodric Braithwaite in his book *Afgansty*¹³⁸ says:

... Several accounts maintain that the PDPA leaders were closely linked to the Soviet KGB from the start and that the most of them were directly under Soviet control. But reliable evidence that the Russians were behind the coup is lacking¹³⁹... though the Soviets have been accused of standing behind the coup, it is not clear how much if anything they knew about it. Despite their worries about Daoud's flirtations with the West, the Soviets' policy of friendship with the Afghan government currently in power had paid off in the past, and there was no particular reason to assume that it could not be satisfactorily managed in the future¹⁴⁰.

Afghanistan encountered another bloody coup that eventually led to the Soviet invasion from April 1978 to December 1979. Enough books have been written by Western, Soviet and Afghan experts on exploring the reasons and the way these decisions were made for the invasion of Afghanistan. Although there are different points of view in explaining the grounds for the Soviet actions, in the sub-section below on the US and USSR relations, I will briefly mention some of the justifications for the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

After the Soviet invasion, a new government was established, this time with the Parcham wing of the PDPA. It is at this juncture that polarization of the political system comes to fruition and the notion of *Jihad* against the 'Godless Communists or infidels' takes shape within the Cold War context.

¹³⁶ Thomas Ruttig, 'Islamists, Leftists and a Void in the Center: Afghanistan's Political Parties and where they come from (1902-2006),' Konrad Adenaur Stiftung: Afghanistan Office, 6 and 7, http://www.kas.de/wf/doc/kas_9674-544-2-30.pdf (accessed March 31st, 2015).

¹³⁷ Rodric Braithwaite, *Afgantsy*, chap.2, para. 2, Kindle edition.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., chap.2, para. 16, Kindle edition.

2.3.1 Cold War in the 1980s Afghanistan

The government in power, which was called the ‘Communist’ government, was supported by the USSR, while the opposition forces that had taken shelter in Pakistan and Iran were called the holy warriors of Islam. The holy warriors of Islam were self-proclaimed *Mujahedeen*¹⁴¹, supported by regional countries such as Iran, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and the Western Countries that were ideologically anti-Communist, mainly the US.

I was very happy to read the following statement in *Building Peace*¹⁴² by Lederach because it affirms that most of the wars during the Cold War period were proxy wars and the same held true for Afghanistan:

During much of the Cold War the superpowers were never directly engaged in armed conflict in their own territories. Instead, most wars (well over one hundred in the last fifteen years of the Cold War) were fought through, in, or over client states aligned with the superpowers¹⁴³.

Once *Jihad*¹⁴⁴ was declared, the Afghan government became embroiled in a conflict that has manifested itself as a part of the Global War on Terror and the socio-political and economic challenges that the current Afghan government is facing even today. Presidents Jimmy Carter and Ronald Regan established their doctrines after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in such a way that the US would financially and militarily support the local opposition to the governments that were

¹⁴¹ Plural for Mujahid, a person that takes the cause of Jihad. In the case of Afghanistan, they are Afghan political groups based out of Iran and Pakistan who fought the government and the Soviet troops to liberate the country from the Soviet occupation in the 1980s; President Regan also called them holy warriors.

¹⁴² Lederach, *Building Peace*.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 5

¹⁴⁴ Jihad is translated from Arabic to English as struggle. It has a spiritual and physical dimension, whereby a believer by practicing Jihad gets closer to Allah (God). However, in the context of Afghanistan it relates to the uprising of those Afghan groups, who wanted to overthrow the Soviet supported government, their supporters and defeat the Soviet Army. Their struggle and uprising was called Jihad, which in effect united Afghans who were Muslims against the Afghans who were supported by the Soviets as infidels (non-believers) making their cause just according to Sharia.

backed by the USSR¹⁴⁵. The aid provided by the US to the Mujahideen before 1984 was around 50 million dollars annually while in 1984 the aid increased to 122 million US dollars¹⁴⁶. Olivier Roy writes the following:

The Carter administration at first committed itself only to defensive action to protect the Gulf and strengthen Pakistan. The Regan administration, on the other hand, adopted the roll-back policy; the theory was that new communist regimes in Third World countries could be toppled if local insurgents, of 'freedom fighters' were supported. The decision to apply this policy to Afghanistan was made only in 1984, under Congressional pressure. For both presidents, the principle concern was the East-West dimension; little attention was given to local or regional issues¹⁴⁷.

Of course there are Afghans who would object to the above statement and believe that the Afghan *Jihad* was a result of the Soviet invasion and that therefore their Jihad was the prime reason for the Soviet collapse.¹⁴⁸ While the US continued its support covertly and overtly to the Mujahideen, the USSR was economically and militarily supporting the Afghan government.

The involvement of the superpowers, as well as their regional allies, can also be seen during the rigorous negotiations under the UN umbrella between the USSR and the US and its allies to withdraw its forces from Afghanistan. The change in leadership in the USSR that saw Mikhail Gorbachev became the Premier in 1985 also resulted in changes in USSR policies¹⁴⁹.

The Afghan postulate proved to be unsustainable. Although the actual costs of Soviet involvement did not change in 1985, they were less bearable under the new Soviet policy. The ceiling of intervention chosen by Brezhnev, although rather low, was too high for Gorbachev. Soviet public opinion became more vocal; ... the war appeared increasingly

¹⁴⁵ Olivier Roy, 'The Lessons of the Soviet/Afghan War', Adelphi Papers 259 (Summer 1991): 34

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 35

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 34

¹⁴⁸ Jonathan Steel, *Ghosts of Afghanistan: The Haunted Battleground* (Berkeley: Counterpoint, 2011), chap.3, para. 35, Kindle edition.

¹⁴⁹ Najibullah, *Afghan Attempts at Peace and Reconciliation*, 8

objectionable.¹⁵⁰

In trying to find a 'peaceful solution',¹⁵¹ both the USSR and the US tried to find agreements for the Afghan situation and allowed the UN to engage with the Afghan government to resolve the conflict.¹⁵²

At the peak of the Cold War, the Afghan government coined the term *Ashti or Musaleh-e-Mili* i.e. National reconciliation¹⁵³ for the first time. A policy by the same name was introduced to bring about reforms to end the on-going conflict between the so-called 'Mujahedeen' and the 'Communist' government. Reaffirming the global dimensions of the conflict due to the Cold War, the reconciliation process constituted many phases.

At the global level, the United Nations got engaged to mediate between the superpowers and their regional allies, including the Afghan government, when the UN General Assembly voted in favor of the Soviet withdrawal in January 1980. In 1981, the UN was given the official mandate to negotiate the withdrawal of the Soviet troops. Diego Cordovez, the then UN Deputy Secretary General for Special Political Affairs, was the chief negotiator in facilitating the process between all stakeholders (i.e. the US, the USSR, Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and the Mujahideen factions) from 1982 to 1988. He also played a crucial role in concluding the signing of the Geneva Accords in April 1988¹⁵⁴ between the governments of Afghanistan and Pakistan with international observers being the USSR and the US. The last Soviet troops withdrew from Afghanistan in February 1989 as a direct result of the Geneva Accords.¹⁵⁵

Although the Geneva Accords ensured the withdrawal of the Soviet troops, it still allowed for the superpowers to continue supplying arms and ammunitions to their beneficiaries and therefore enabled the fighting to escalate in Afghanistan¹⁵⁶. Barnett R. Rubin, who is a professor of Political Science and

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 33

¹⁵¹ In regard to the peaceful solution, it is to be questioned as to who for did the superpowers want the peaceful solution i.e. the Afghans or themselves based on their self-interest?

¹⁵² Rubin, 111

¹⁵³ Najibullah, *Afghan Attempts at Peace and Reconciliation*, 3

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ Please refer to Annex 1 to read the text of the Geneva Accords of 1988

¹⁵⁶ Rubin, *The Search for Peace in Afghanistan*, 85

author of several books on Afghanistan, called the continuation of aid in Afghanistan after the Geneva Accords 'positive symmetry'.¹⁵⁷

Positive symmetry was the agreement between the USSR and the US to continue supplying the Afghan government and the Mujahedeen respectively with financial support, even after the Geneva Accords were signed. According to Rubin¹⁵⁸, the Soviets did not want to end positive symmetry unless the US ensured that regional countries, such as Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, were also included in the equation. However, in 1990, both the powers agreed to stop funding their beneficiaries in Afghanistan, knowing that regional stakeholders were taking the US's position in continuing to fund the Mujahedeen. In other words, negative symmetry came into effect without taking all stakeholders into consideration to find a solution to the Afghan conflict, whereby the Afghan government was isolated and had no means of support to defend itself while regional actors continued to financially fund and supply weapons to the Mujahedeen in violation of the Geneva Accords.

Even though the Geneva Accords fulfilled the objectives for a Soviet withdrawal as the international instruments agreed on by the superpowers, it failed to provide a political solution for Afghanistan, let alone pave the way for reconciliation. As mentioned earlier 'positive symmetry' continued at one front and on the other efforts were made by the Soviets and the US to reach an agreement in resolving the conflict in Afghanistan. Despite the Geneva Accords, fighting continued and the Mujahedeen intensified their attacks on different provinces of Afghanistan, believing the demise of the regime was inevitable once the Soviet troops pulled out¹⁵⁹.

From 1988 to 1991, The USSR and the US engaged in discussions to finally reach an agreement on negative symmetry i.e. both sides would stop the supply of arms and allow the UN to proceed with finding a political solution amongst different stakeholders in Afghanistan through a negotiated process.

Since the US also wanted a regime change, they insisted on changing the leadership, which meant Najibullah's departure from power. In 1990 both the US

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 84

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 108

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 103-104.

and the USSR agreed that a coalition government was to be formed and that free and fair election should take place under the auspice of a neutral body of Afghans. The intricacies of the mechanisms were left for the UN to negotiate with the Afghan government and other parties involved in the conflict. It is at this juncture when the UN initiated discussions with the Afghan parties towards a transition that finally led to the UN 5 point-peace-plan (5PPP), aiming to attain a durable political solution in Afghanistan involving regional stakeholders¹⁶⁰.

Throughout the years of my father's Presidency (1987 – 1992), I was exposed to the discussions that paved the way for the National Reconciliation Policy, the Geneva Accords, the withdrawal of the Soviet troops and the role of the UN in implementing its 5PPP. I grew up with UN diplomats who would visit for official dinners and I would watch my father talk to the journalists on his views for peace in his country. The future of my family, my people and myself was linked to all that was taking place on the world's stage.

In 1990, the UN passed resolution 45/12 highlighting the need for a political settlement in Afghanistan by establishing 'democratic procedures acceptable to the Afghan people, including a free and fair election, of a broad-based government.'¹⁶¹

In May 1991, the UN Secretary General delivered a statement to the General Assembly proposing his 5PPP¹⁶² for resolving the political situation in Afghanistan¹⁶³.

The Najibullah government, despite all his efforts and cooperation with the UN to ensure the implementation of the UN 5PPP, fell in April 1992 and the UN 5PPP did not materialize. I shall explore all the three elements of the reconciliation

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 109-111.

¹⁶¹ The UN General Assembly Resolution 45/12. 1990. 'The situation in Afghanistan and its implication for International Peace and Security', 19

¹⁶² The UN General Assembly. A/46/577 or S/23146. 1991. 'Report of the Secretary General', 14

¹⁶³ The main objectives of the UN 5 PPP focused on the need for a transition period. The emphasis was made on intra-Afghan dialogue that could eventually lead to a broad-based government by holding a free and fair election. The cessation of hostilities and the UN or other IOs role as monitors for free and fair elections were also included in the UN 5 PPP. In addition, the UN 5 PPP encouraged negative symmetry to end the supply of arms to the Afghan beneficiaries. You can review the actual text of the UN 5PPP in Annex 2 at the end of the thesis. I shall also discuss the mechanisms and political intricacies of the UN 5 PPP in chapter 3.

process from 1986-1992 in-depth in chapter 3. Meanwhile, I will focus on the regional power alliances and their relationships vis-à-vis Afghanistan during the Cold War.

2.3.2 Global and regional Relations during the Cold War

2.3.2.1 US and USSR Relations:

2.3.2.2 When the Soviet troops invaded Afghanistan in December 1979, the Khalq faction of the PDPA¹⁶⁴ was already ruling the country. The reasons for the invasion vary depending on who one is talking to or reading. For example, it is assumed that the Soviets decided to intervene in Afghanistan in order to prevent the fall of a socialist government that was one of their allies. While the US claims that it supported the Mujahideen as a result of the invasion. There is evidence today that the then US National Security Advisor had convinced Jimmy Carter, the US President, to covertly aid the Afghan Islamic groups in Pakistan in order to avenge the Vietnam War by embroiling the USSR in Afghanistan¹⁶⁵. In an interview, Brzezinski says the following:

... According to the official version of history, CIA aid to the Mujahideen began during 1980s, that is to say, after the Soviet army invaded Afghanistan, 24 Dec 1979. But the reality, secretly guarded until now, is completely otherwise: Indeed, it was July 3, 1979 that President Carter signed the first directive for secret aid to the opponents of the Pro-Soviet regime in Kabul. And that very day, I wrote a note to the president in which I explained to him that in my opinion this aid was going to induce a Soviet military intervention¹⁶⁶.

So, how did the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan impact the global policies during the Cold War between the US and the USSR and hence their allies? One of the

¹⁶⁴ Rodric Braithwaite, *Afgantsy*, chap.2, para. 4, Kindle edition.

¹⁶⁵ Alexander Cockburn And Jeffrey St. Clair, 'How Jimmy Carter and I Started the Mujahideen,' Counter Punch, January 15th, 1998, <http://www.counterpunch.org/1998/01/15/how-jimmy-carter-and-i-started-the-mujahideen/> (accessed March 30th, 2015).

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

main impacts was on the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALTII)¹⁶⁷Treaty that never got ratified after the Soviet troops invaded Afghanistan, despite of the treaty being agreed upon between Jimmy Carter and Leonid Brezhnev, the Secretary General of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Soviet Union¹⁶⁸.

The soviet invasion of Afghanistan also led to the Carter Doctrine, which highlighted the potential threat to dominate the strategic Persian Gulf and affect the flow of Middle East oil¹⁶⁹.

...Carter also asked congress to support increased defense spending and registration for the draft, pushed for the creation of Rapid Deployment Force that could intervene in the Persian Gulf or other areas threatened by Soviet expansionism, offered increased military aid to Pakistan, moved to enhance ties with the People's Republic of China (PRC), approved covert CIA assistance to the mujahideen, and signed a presidential directive on July 25, 1980, providing for increased targeting of Soviet nuclear forces¹⁷⁰.

What is even more interesting for me is that in the 1980s, under President Ronald Reagan, the US took more of an offensive realist approach by funding a military build up that developed the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI)¹⁷¹, or better known as 'Star Wars'¹⁷² against the USSR¹⁷³. The reason I chose to refer to Star Wars is because of a letter my father wrote to us i.e. his family and a friend when he had taken protection in the UN compound in 1994. He explained the main reasons as to why the Soviets wanted their troops out of Afghanistan and the expectation they had from the Afghan leaders to cooperate with them. The letter was published in 2011 in Dari¹⁷⁴, which I shall translate here in order to demonstrate the global

¹⁶⁷ James R. Arnold and Roberta Wiener, *Cold War: The Essential Reference Guide*, (Santa Barbara, California: ABC-CLIO, LLC, 2012), 205.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 4

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 5

¹⁷¹ SDI was a missile defense system dependent on satellites to destroy enemy missiles with laser before armed warheads separated and hit their target.

¹⁷² Arnold and Wiener, 209.

¹⁷³ Ibid., 5

¹⁷⁴ Najibullah to his family and friend, Kabul, 9April 1994, *Dr. Najibullah's personal letter to his family and friend*, (Payamewatan, September 26, 2011): 3
http://www.payamewatan.com/15th_Aniversary/nama-e_ShaheedDr.Najibullah260911.pdf, (accessed March 30th, 2015)

dimensions that impacted the Afghan politics and the Afghan National reconciliation policy:

... You know better that the Cold War started from the end of the heated Second World War in Berlin, but, its peak, the height of its burning flames ended in Afghanistan. The rivalry in the war became so fierce that Regan, the then President of the US, announced the development of his Star Wars project. The shattered economy of the Soviets made it financially difficult for them to compete in the Star Wars project and seriously was interested in pursuing the SALT II agreement. The US was well aware of this weakness of the USSR and had put the conditions that for signing of the SALT II, the Soviet troops had to withdraw from Afghanistan. In addition, their yearly budget of ten million dollars for their troops was economically unsustainable¹⁷⁵.

The question here arises is whether the Geneva Accords was signed in order to obtain Afghan reconciliation or to ensure that the superpowers could find a suitable agreement for their global policies, including the withdrawal of the Soviet troops? The answer to the above question is complex but the above excerpts demonstrate how Afghanistan was once again the grain of wheat stuck between two strong millstones, in the words of Amir that I quoted before.

In addition, it is important to highlight that the US and the USSR's political relationship in negotiating global policies were based on realpolitik and a balance of power; and the question here would be how can global players preach reconciliation and peacebuilding at local level – in this case Afghanistan - when their own global policies are based on suspicion, fear, containment and competition? What is needed for reconciliation is building relationships, which depends on trust, congruence and transparency. Hence the political approach of the superpowers was in complete contradiction to the process of reconciliation that they had proposed to the Afghan government.

One can see why the internal Afghan politics for centuries have been dominated by foreign elements and international politics. One of the reasons as to

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., translated from Dari to English by the Author.

why Afghanistan ends up in this situation is because of its geopolitics and another reason is because it is financially not self-reliant.

I have briefly mentioned above the roles, which the US and the USSR governments played in Afghan National reconciliation, however in the upcoming sections, I shall explain the role played by regional actors and how their relationships with the US and the USSR influenced the Afghan reconciliation process.

2.3.2.3 India

During the Cold War years, India belonged to the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM)¹⁷⁶. However, its foreign policy in regard to Afghanistan was consistent with the Soviet Union from 1980 – 1988; in other words, New Delhi supported the Afghan government¹⁷⁷.

The Indo-Afghan relation since India's independence must be viewed in relation to Pakistan. Although Pakistan and India were one nation, after their independence they have fought 4 wars and they have a major dispute regarding the territory of Kashmir. In addition, Abdul-Ghaffar Khan, who was a Pashtun and worked closely with Gandhi for India's liberation from the British Empire, had hoped to join the Indian Subcontinent¹⁷⁸. Once Pakistan became a nation, the Pashtuns were forced to become a part of Pakistan because of their religion. Since Afghanistan had already not recognized the Durand Treaty in 1949, Pakistan was extremely suspicious of Indo-Afghan relations especially having lost East Bengal as part of their country with the support of India.

For India, there was no such thing as a Soviet threat in South Asia, but only the threat of internationalization of regional conflicts through American involvement, either directly (as with the presence of an American aircraft

¹⁷⁶ Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) was founded in Belgrade in 1961 and represents groups of states that did not ally or were against any blocs, in the Cold War it meant members of NAM did not take positions against East or West i.e. the USSR or US respectively.

¹⁷⁷ Olivier Roy, 'The Lessons of the Soviet/Afghan War', 38

¹⁷⁸ Selig S. Harrison, 'Pakistan the State of the Union', *Centre For International Policy* (April 2009): 56, http://www.ciponline.org/images/uploads/publications/pakistan_the_state_of_the_union.pdf (accessed April 2nd, 2015)

carrier in the Bay of Bengal during the 1971 war), or indirectly through a Pakistani military build-up¹⁷⁹.

When the USSR decided to withdraw from Afghanistan, India continued its support to the Najibullah government and his policies of National Reconciliation but also contacted the Mujahideen groups and others who were less dependent on Pakistan. Even today it is pivotal for India that the Afghan government is free of the Pakistani establishment's influence¹⁸⁰.

2.3.2.4 China

As mentioned above, the US tried to improve its relationship with China after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. In the 1970s, when the political groups were taking shape in Kabul, there were also Maoist groups that were being established in Afghanistan and were believed to have support from China. Hundreds of people who were suspected to have been Maoist were prosecuted and eventually forced to depart the country¹⁸¹.

In the Cold War, China supported the Mujahideen indirectly by supplying small arms through Pakistan¹⁸² but it remained an outsider to the political discourse of reconciliation.

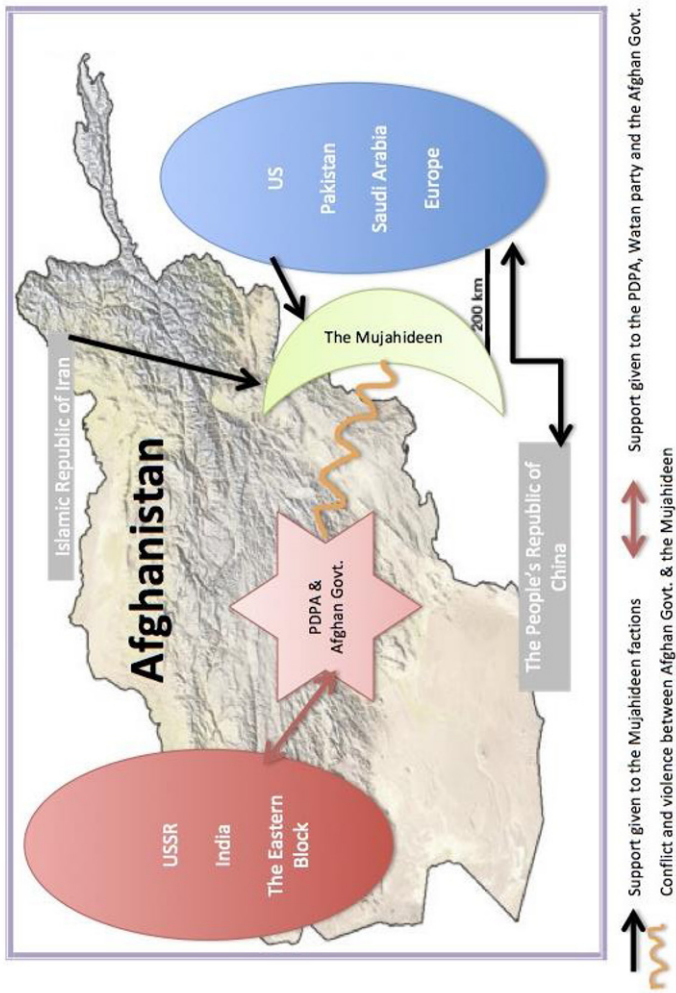
¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 39

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

¹⁸¹ Melody Ermachild Chavis, *Meena, Heroine of Afghanistan* (New York: Library of Congress in Publication Data, 2003), chapt.5 para. 50, Kindle edition.

¹⁸² Jatin Kumar Mohanty, *Terrorism and Militancy in Central Asia* (India: Kalpaz Publications, 2006), 79.

Map 2.2 Illustration of regional countries and their alliances in the Cold War vis-à-vis Afghanistan¹⁸³



¹⁸³

Tom Patterson, *Aiding Afghanistan*, 2006, Natural Earth image, U.S. National Park Service:

<http://earthobservatory.nasa.gov/Features/Afghanistan/> (accessed May 2nd, 2015). The additional drawings are my own creation to illustrate the conflict in Afghanistan during the Cold War.

Table.2.3: The list of local Afghan actors with the name of their parties and their regional and global allies during the Cold War¹⁸⁴

Cold War (1980-1992)	
Regional & Global Actors	Local Afghan Actors
Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, US	Mujahideen: 7 faction based out of Peshawar – <i>Hizbe Islami</i> (Led by Gulbuddin Hekmatyar) – Radical Sunni from Pashtun ethnic background
Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, US	Mujahideen: 7 faction based out of Peshawar – <i>Hizbe Islami Khalis</i> (led by Mawlawi Khalis) – Radical Sunni from Pashtun ethnic background
Pakistan, Iran, Saudi Arabia, US	Mujahideen: 7 faction based out of Peshawar – <i>Jamiyate Islami</i> (Led by Burhanuddin Rabbani) – Moderate Sunni from Tajik ethnic background
Pakistan, Iran, US	Mujahideen: 7 faction based out of Peshawar – Shura-e Nizar (led by Ahmad Shah Massoud) – Moderate Sunni from Tajik ethnic background, his party was of shoot of <i>Jamiyate Islami</i>
Pakistan, US	Mujahideen: 7 faction based out of Peshawar - <i>Harakate Inqilabe Islami</i> (led by Muhammad Nabi Muhammadi) – Moderate Sunni from Pashtun ethnic background
Saudi Arabia	Mujahideen: 7 faction based out of Peshawar - <i>Ittehad-e Islami bara-ye Azadi-ye Afghanistan</i> (led by Abdul Rasul Sayyaf) – extremist Sunni from Pashtun background
Pakistan, US, Europe	Mujahideen: 7 faction based out of Peshawar – <i>Jabhay Nijate Milli</i> (led by Sebghatullah Mojadeddi) – Moderate Secular Sunni from a Sufi sect called the Naqshbandi

¹⁸⁴

In order to compile the data in the above table, I have referred to the following resources: Ruttig, 'Islamists, Leftists and a Void in the Center. Afghanistan's Political Parties and where they come from (1902-2006)' ;Kenneth Katzman, 'Afghanistan: Post-Taliban Governance, Security, and U.S. Policy,' Congressional Research Service: 3-5, September 19, 2013. "Background Paper, Afghanistan: Political Parties and Insurgent Groups 1978-2001", *Migration Review Tribunal or Refugee Review Tribunal* (Australian Government), March 2013-2014, http://www.ecoi.net/file_upload/1226_1369733568_ppigl.pdf (accessed May 7, 2015). Olivier Roy, *Islam and Resistance in Afghanistan*, 228-236. Andre Brigot and Olivier Roy, *The War in Afghanistan* (Hertfordshire: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1988), Olivier Roy, 'The Lessons of the Soviet/ Afghan War', Adelphi Papers 259 (Summer 1991).

Pakistan, US, Europe	Mujahideen: 7 faction based out of Peshawar – <i>Mahaze Islami</i> (led by Pir Sayed Ahmad Gailani) – Pro-Royalist from Pashtun ethnic background and Sufi school of thought
Soviet Union & the East Block	PDPA: consisted of 2 faction – Khalq
Soviet Union, India, & the Eastern Block	PDPA: consisted of 2 faction – Parcham
Soviet Union, India, & the Eastern Block	Watan Party: consisted of PDPA member of Khalq, Parcham and non-Communists
Iran	Mujahideen: 8 factions based out of Iran – <i>Shuraye Ittifaghe Islami</i> (led by Sayyad Beheshti) – traditionalist Shiite from the Hazara ethnic background
Iran	Mujahideen: 8 factions based out of Iran – <i>Nasr</i> – radical Shiite led by a council
Iran	Mujahideen: 8 factions based out of Iran – <i>Harakate Islami</i> (led by Shaykh Asaf Muhseini) – moderate Shiite from Tajik ethnic background
Iran	Mujahideen: 8 factions based out of Iran – <i>Shura-ye I'tilaf-e Islami-ye Afghanistan</i> – encouraged by Iran for the eight Shiite faction to unite under the council out of which <i>Hizbe-Wahdate Islami</i> was born in 1989 (led by Abdulali Mazari)

2.3.2.5 Iran

The role of Iran in Afghanistan during the Cold War must be viewed within the context of the Gulf War and Shia-Sunni rivalries between Iran and Saudi Arabia. Iran's support to the Mujahideen in supplying small arms was mainly based on the Soviet's support to Iraq in the Gulf War¹⁸⁵. "Khomeini is opposed to the Soviet presence in Afghanistan, as he has declared officially, and every time he participates in a national festival he solemnly repeats this declaration."¹⁸⁶

In the Cold War era Iran hosted millions of Afghan refugees, however unlike in Pakistan, there were no resistance-training camps. Up until 1986, Iran supported the eight Shiite party alliance of Mujahideen but changed its policy by also inviting non-Shiite political parties: "The Ministry of Foreign Affairs tried to approach the Sunnis (Rabbani was invited twice to Iran, in January 1987 and March 1988, while leaders of small Sunni splinter groups from Peshawar...) were directly supported by Iran."¹⁸⁷

The withdrawal of Soviet troops shifted Iran's policy towards Afghanistan, mainly because Iran viewed Sunni fundamentalism and Saudi Arabia's influence in the region as a larger threat than the USSR. This is why Iran decided to cooperate with the USSR when Gorbachev and Rafsanjani met in June 1989, in Moscow¹⁸⁸. Olivier Roy suggests the possibility that both Moscow and Tehran agreed to have a coalition government in Kabul, including the PDPA and the Mujahideen at this meeting¹⁸⁹, which means Iran had agreed to support the UN 5PPP and reconciliation, even though it continued supporting its Shiite Mujahideen clients.

2.3.2.6 Pakistan

Pakistan's foreign policy towards Afghanistan in the Cold War stems from the hostile relationship towards India, the question of Pashtuns and the Durand Line

¹⁸⁵ Brigot and Roy, 145

¹⁸⁶ Ibid, 146

¹⁸⁷ Olivier Roy, 'The Lessons of the Soviet/Afghan War', 42

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., 43

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

that Afghanistan and Pakistan share and, last but not least, the Pan-Islamic vision in South Asia that Pakistan was seeking with the Arab countries support¹⁹⁰.

When General Zia-ul-Haq¹⁹¹ carried out the military coup in 1977, the US stopped its military aid to the administration of Pakistan. However, after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, Zia's military government was funded by the US. With this aid, Pakistan purchased weapons to use against India, supported the Mujahideen groups by establishing training camps within the Pakistan borders, i.e. in the North West Frontier Province (NWFP), where it also developed its nuclear arsenal¹⁹².

As a result of the ongoing conflict in Afghanistan, Due to the porous borders shared by Afghanistan and Pakistan, circa 3 million refugees¹⁹³ took shelter in NWFP. The refugee camps notoriously served as recruiting ground for the Mujahideen in order to fight the Afghan government.

Irrespective of what government was in control in Pakistan (military or civilian), their foreign policy towards Afghanistan has been entirely in the hands of the Pakistani Inter-Service-Intelligence (ISI).

General Zia's death in August 1988 and the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) victory in the elections of November 1988 did not change Pakistani foreign policy. Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto could not defy conservative Muslim circles in Pakistan and Saudi Arabia or her patron, the US. A condition of her coming to power was to allow the army – and notably the ISI – to sustain its policies¹⁹⁴.

During the Cold War, Pakistan established good relations with China and received ammunition for the Afghan Jihad. It also built close alliances with the Sunni Arab countries, such as the Saudi Arabia, to get financial, ammunition and personnel support for the Jihad. One of its main objectives to have close relationship with the

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., 39

¹⁹¹ Muhammad Ziaul-Haq was the 6th President of Pakistan who came to power through a military coup. He declared Martial law in 1977 by introducing extreme religious measures to be practiced in Pakistan as a Muslim nation. He was a military man and was in charge of the Afghan policy during the Cold War.

¹⁹² Olivier Roy, 'The Lessons of the Soviet/Afghan War', 39

¹⁹³ Ibid.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., 40

Arab countries was to build a Sunni-Muslim belt against the USSR. This is why Pakistan was always keen to promote its Afghan clients to take control of power in Kabul¹⁹⁵.

In order to ensure its Afghan clients were in power, Pakistan pursued the Soviet withdrawal by signing the Geneva Accords. This created an Afghan Interim Government (AIG) in Peshawar but in order to get it recognized internationally, the AIG had to operate within Afghan borders. Therefore, once the Geneva Accords were signed, the Mujahideen- with the support of ISI- attacked the town of Jalalabad, a violent conflict that lasted for three months but the Mujahideen neither were able to capture Jalalabad nor establish their Interim Government within Afghanistan¹⁹⁶.

This setback further divided the Mujahideen factions located in Pakistani territory and allowed Pakistan to promote its extremist Sunni clients through the UN negotiations to reach power in Kabul. Pakistan viewed the Najibullah government close to India and pro-USSR and made sure to propagate a regime change through global mechanisms, i.e. the UN with the support of the US¹⁹⁷.

The ousting of Mrs. Bhutto on 6 Aug 1990 put Hekmatyar's staunchest Pakistani supporters back into power. In spring 1990, at the peak of the Kashmir crisis, there were reports of Kashmiri insurgents being trained by the ISI in Afghan Mujahideen camps. The taking of Khost by the Mujahideen in March 1991 showed that Pakistan was sticking to its offensive pro-Pashtun and pro-Hekmatyar policy. The operation was carried out under direct Pakistani supervision, most of the weapons were provided by Pakistan and the bulk of the booty went to Hekmatyar's party¹⁹⁸.

In March 1990, after the withdrawal of the Soviet troops Shah Nawaz Tanai, who was the Defense Minister in my father's government, attempted a coup. Upon the failure of the coup, he went to Pakistan and started working closely with his

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁹⁶ Barnett R. Rubin, *The Search For Peace in Afghanistan*, 104

¹⁹⁷ Cordovez and Harrison, 328

¹⁹⁸ Olivier Roy, 'The Lessons of the Soviet/Afghan War', 41

associate Hekmatyar. Hence Pakistan once again was accused of promoting disunity and chaos within the Afghan government¹⁹⁹. In addition, Pakistan's approach to ensure that its clients take power in Kabul created further division amongst the Mujahideen when the UN 5 PPP was being implemented. Its objective was not really the reconciliation process but control over Kabul. Pakistan's foreign policy in the Cold War towards Afghanistan proved to be a destructive one for the years to come.

2.3.2.7 Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia got involved in supporting the Mujahideen groups in Pakistan by provision of funds and ammunitions since 1979 with the objective of opposing the Soviet Union²⁰⁰.

American aid started at about 30 million dollars in 1980, already more than the average of 20 million dollars per year during the previous twenty-five years. Saudi Arabia and other Arab sources at least matched American aid... The American budget for aid to the Mujahideen, reportedly still matched by Saudi contributions, climbed to 470 million dollars in 1986 and 630 million dollars in 1987²⁰¹.

However, it is believed that the Wahhabi²⁰² school of thought heavily influenced the Afghan religious clergy since 1950s in Pakistan²⁰³. Since the Afghans follow the Hanifi²⁰⁴ Islamic School of thought, this extremist interpretation of Saudi Arabia was seen external to the Afghan culture especially since it supported alliances inside Afghanistan that were against *Sufism*²⁰⁵.

¹⁹⁹ Barnett R. Rubin, *The Search For Peace in Afghanistan*, 114

²⁰⁰ Olivier Roy, 'The Lessons of the Soviet/Afghan War', 43

²⁰¹ Barnett R. Rubin, *The Search For Peace in Afghanistan*, 30

²⁰² Wahhbi school of thought is a branch of Sunni Islam founded by an orthodox preacher by the same name in 1700. Wahhabism is known for its fundamentalist interpretation of Islam and it is believed that some of the current extremist Islamic movements such as Al-Qaida, ISIS, Taliban refer to Wahhabi branch of Islam.

²⁰³ Olivier Roy, 'The Lessons of the Soviet/Afghan War', 43

²⁰⁴ Hanfi school of thought is one of the four Sunni Islamic Jurisprudence (*Fiqh*) that is named after a scholar called Abu-Hanif, it was founded circa 767 A.D. Majority of Sunni Muslims around the world belong to the Hanifi school of thought.

²⁰⁵ Olivier Roy, 'The Lessons of the Soviet/Afghan War', 44

Members of the Muslim brotherhood, such as Abdullah Azam²⁰⁶, were hosted in Peshawar, Pakistan, with the Saudi funding coming from the Saudi Royal family and Wahhabi clergy. The Saudis also funded the Sunni extremist factions of the Mujahideen, such as Hekmatyar, Sayyaf, Khales and Rabbani, who was relatively moderate²⁰⁷. It is in the Cold War that the Arab militias got involved in fighting for the cause of Jihad against the USSR in Afghanistan with the presence of individuals such as Bin Laden and Zawahiri²⁰⁸.

After the Geneva Accords and withdrawal of the Soviet troops, Saudi Arabia continued to fund the Sunni based factions of the Mujahideen in order to contain Iran and the expansion of Shiites²⁰⁹. Despite Iran being included as a stakeholder in the 5 PPP, it really did not demonstrate a serious desire to endorse reconciliation.

2.4 The Civil War and the Taliban years 1992-2001

The proposed UN 5 PPP did not achieve its objectives and the bloody civil war in Afghanistan that lasted more than four years leaving millions of Afghans once again displaced, injured and killed, began in 1992. The question as to why my father's government failed in the implementation of its National reconciliation policy makes a great research topic because it highlights the intricacies of the relationships between the Afghan government, its neighboring countries and the superpowers. However, the fall of the Kabul regime in 1992 is not the focus of my book so I shall mainly focus on how the emerging events impacted the reconciliation process in Afghanistan.

Indeed, the sabotage of the UN 5 PPP was the work of some members of the Afghan government and the Mujahideen groups that started the vicious cycle

²⁰⁶ Abdullah Azam was a Palestinian Islamic scholar who preached during the Cold War to Afghan and Arab Mujahideen to fight against the Soviet invasion and the Afghan government. He was based out of Peshawar while recruiting foot soldiers for Jihad and preached defensive and offensive Jihad. He is also known as the father of global Jihad.

²⁰⁷ Ibid.

²⁰⁸ Ayman al-Zawahiri was the second in command in Al-Qaeda when he was in Afghanistan during the Taliban years; he also was an active member of Muslim Brotherhood who was imprisoned after the Egyptian President Sadat's murder. Currently, he is assumed to be the leader of Al-Qaeda.

²⁰⁹ Barnett R. Rubin, *The Search For Peace in Afghanistan*, 113

of violence amongst the Mujahedeen factions in order to secure power. The question remains if the struggle to reach power was influenced by the global and the regional actors? If so, then why?

Although the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan was a manifestation of the confrontation between East and West, it must be stressed that local powers made use of their alignments to achieve specific regional aims, rather than to become surrogates of the superpowers²¹⁰.

²¹⁰ Olivier Roy, 'The Lessons of the Soviet/Afghan War', 32

Table. 2.4: The list of local Afghan actors, their political parties and their regional allies during the civil war²¹¹

Civil War (1992-2001)	
Regional & Global Actors	Local Afghan Actors
Pakistan	Mujahideen: <i>Hizbe Islami</i> (Led by Gulbuddin Hekmatyar) – Radical Sunni from Pashtun ethnic background
Pakistan, Saudi Arabia	Mujahideen: <i>Hizbe Islami Khalis</i> (led by Mawlawi Khalis) – Radical Sunni from Pashtun ethnic background
Pakistan, Iran, Saudi Arabia	Mujahideen: <i>Jamiyate Islami</i> (Led by Burhanuddin Rabbani) – Moderate Sunni from Tajik ethnic background
Iran, Russia, India	Mujahideen: 7 faction based out of Peshawar – Shura-e Nizar (led by Ahmad Shah Massoud) – Moderate Sunni from Tajik ethnic background, his party was of shoot of <i>Jamiyate Islami</i>
Pakistan	The Taliban
Saudi Arabia	Mujahideen: <i>Ittehad-e Islami bara-ye Azadi-ye Afghanistan</i> (led by Abdul Rasul Sayyaf) – extremist Sunni from Pashtun background
Pakistan, Europe because of its affiliation with the King in Rome	Mujahideen: <i>Jabhay Nijate Milli</i> (led by Sebghatullah Mojadeddi) – Moderate Secular Sunni from a Sufi sect called the <i>Naqshbandi</i>
Pakistan, Europe because of its	Mujahideen: <i>Mahaze Islami</i> (led by Pir Sayed Ahmad Gailani) – Pro-Royalist from Pashtun ethnic

²¹¹

Thomas Ruttig, 'Islamists, Leftists and a Void in the Center: Afghanistan's Political Parties and where they come from (1902-2006),' Konrad Adenaur Stiftung: Afghanistan Office, 6 and 7, http://www.kas.de/wf/doc/kas_9674-544-2-30.pdf (accessed March 31st, 2015).
 "Background Paper, Afghanistan: Political Parties and Insurgent Groups 1978-2001", *Migration Review Tribunal or Refugee Review Tribunal* (Australian Government), March 2013-2014, http://www.ecoi.net/file_upload/1226_1369733568_ppigl.pdf (accessed May 7, 2015). Kenneth Katzman, 'Afghanistan: Post-Taliban Governance, Security, and U.S. Policy,' Congressional Research Service: 3-5, September 19, 2013.Olivier Roy, 'The Lessons of the Soviet/ Afghan War', Adelphi Papers 259 (Summer 1991). Andre Brigot and Olivier Roy, *The War in Afghanistan* (Hertfordshire: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1988). Olivier Roy, Islam and Resistance in Afghanistan, 228-236

affiliation with the King in Rome	background and Sufi school of thought
Turkey, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Iran	<i>Jombesh</i> (led by Dostum) who had worked with PDPA and Watan Party. He is mostly viewed as a Militia who worked for the Najibullah government and then turned against him. He is from Uzbek ethnic background.
India, Iran, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan	Mujahideen: <i>Jabha-ye Muttahed-e Islami bara-ye Nejat-e Afghanistan</i> or otherwise known as Northern-Alliance (NA) established in 1997 to fight against the Taliban movement.
Iran	Mujahideen: <i>Harakate Islami</i> (led by Shaykh Asaf Muhseni) – moderate Shiite from Tajik ethnic background
Iran	Mujahideen: <i>Shura-ye Irtilaf-e Islami-ye Afghanistan</i> – encouraged by Iran for the eight Shiite factions to unite under the council out of which <i>Hizbe-Wahdate Islami</i> was born in 1989 (led by Abdulali Mazari). In 1995, Mazari was killed and Karim Khalili took over the leadership of the party.

For the successful implementation of the 5 PPP, the AIG and Mujahideen factions had put the condition that Najibullah had to resign from his post and leave the country. Their conditions very much resonated with the Pakistani leadership. By mid 1990, the rift between the different Mujahideen factions representing the AIG had increased whereby they were divided on the basis of ethnicity, linguistic and tribal affiliations more than ideological differences.

While the UN tried to work with my father in order to fulfill the objectives of the 5 PPP (will be explored fully in chapter 3), regional countries such as Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Iran, India and Russia tried to either find new alliances amongst the Mujahideen factions or push their clients to take power in Kabul. At the global level, the regional countries worked with the UN to implement the 5 PPP while simultaneously each actor tried to redefine new relationships with the stakeholders in Afghanistan to meet their own national objectives.

In the midst of such a chaotic and uncertain situation, the UN wanted to make sure that my father resigned from his post for the UN 5 PPP to move forward. In March 1992, my father offered his resignation as a part of the reconciliation process in order for the UN 5 PPP to achieve its goal. However, by April 1992 there were some members of his government, such as his Chief of Army, Defense Minister and a faction of his party, that supported the preceded President and had allied with the Mujahideen factions that were alienated from AIG and were not close to the Pakistani government. The question thus arises as to whose clients were the Mujahideen factions that took the power in 1992 and did not allow the UN 5 PPP to come to fruition?

Even before the establishment of an interim government by a shaky coalition of mujahideen... an iconic post-Cold War scene began to play itself out on the streets of the Afghan capital. As had already happened in Mogadishu and was soon to happen in Sarajevo, ethnic and factional battles killed thousands, devastated the city, blocked food and medical supplies, and increasingly threatened to split the country²¹².

²¹² Barnett. R. Rubin, *The Fragmentation of Afghanistan: State Formation and Collapse in the International System* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2003), 1

Although scholars such as Rubin have indicated the Afghan civil war to be rooted in ethnic and tribal rivalries, I do not believe that the conflicts or civil wars around the world are ethnic or tribal based. Most of the conflict and violence after the end of the Cold War in Afghanistan stemmed from personal desires to gain power and pursued objectives of the regional powers that were backing individual factions or groups. The reason I state the above argument is based on my analysis of the Afghan socio-political and socio-emotional context, which I have tried to understand in reference to elicitive conflict mapping²¹³ (ECM), especially if one is to explore the different layers.

The ECM is a tool that can be applied by defining the conflict in focus and accordingly allows the conflict worker to assess the needs or positions of the involved stakeholders, actors or groups. The mapping of conflict is done through different layers, levels considering Principles and themes of the conflict.

One way to gain a deeper understanding of conflict is by examining different levels of the conflict that are guided through the different themes of the episode²¹⁴. There are four main themes i.e. truth, justice, harmony and security, each of these themes are dissected further to layers that can give the conflict worker an insight to the unmet needs of individuals that eventually make them take the positions they do and become part of the conflict. One of such layers is the socio-emotional communal²¹⁵ that belongs to the theme of security in this particular context. This layer addresses the need for social belonging and recognition, which is a natural intrapersonal dimension and when denied, the individual can be wounded. "... a person were deprived of social interaction,

²¹³ Josefina Echavarría Álvarez, 'Elicitive Conflict Mapping: A Practical Tool for Peacework' *Journal of Conflictology* Vol.5 Issue 2 (2014), <http://journal-of-conflictology.uoc.edu/index.php/journal-of-conflictology/article/view/vol5iss2-echavarria/vol5iss2-echavarria-en> (accessed April 5th, 2015)

²¹⁴ Innsbruck University, 'Individual Orientation Guide', <http://www.uibk.ac.at/peacestudies/ecm/ecm-as-elicitive-working-method/individualorientation.html> (accessed October 10th, 2015)

²¹⁵ Innsbruck University, 'Socio-emotional Communal Layer' <http://www.uibk.ac.at/peacestudies/ecm/layers/socioemotional-communal-layers.html> (accessed October 10th, 2015)

cooperation and recognition, this would lead to emotional harm, wounds and sickness of the *persona* in her ego-aspects.”²¹⁶

Rubin explains the chain of events in the months of April to October 1992 that led to the four years of civil war. Hekmatyar started fighting against the Northern factions of the Mujahideen, the non-Pashtuns Parchamis were assisted by the Iranian Embassy who also armed the Shiites in Kabul while the fighting between Iran backed Shia and Arab backed Salafi (Wahhabi) Sunni groups killed innocent lives²¹⁷.

Despite of the intensified conflict, attempts were made by regional countries such as Pakistan and Saudi Arabia to negotiate between warring Mujahedeen factions in order to stop the bloodshed²¹⁸.

Such failed attempts at peace making can be studied by examining the various accords and their objectives. Michael Semple in his book *Reconciliation in Afghanistan* says the following:

The Series of accords that failed to end the conflict included the Peshawar Accord of April 1992, which was an agreement on the first Mujahedeen government to be led first by Sebghatullah Mojadedi and then by Burahanuddin Rabani; the Islamabad Accords of March 1993, which was an agreement on the terms of power sharing between Rabbani and Gulbudin Hekmatyar; and the Mahiper Accord of March 1995, which was an agreement on bringing Hekmatyar back into Rabbani’s government. Each of these accords also included a political agreement on distribution of power in the central government as the centerpiece of what was supposed to be comprehensive end to the fighting²¹⁹.

The accords mentioned above are mostly viewed as attempts to bring peace in Afghanistan during the civil war but none had a lasting impact. One can argue that the accords were not initiatives towards reconciliation because when one studies the objectives of the accords, it can be concluded that they were mostly political

²¹⁶ Ibid.

²¹⁷ Barnett R. Rubin, *The Search For Peace in Afghanistan*, 133

²¹⁸ Semple, 21

²¹⁹ Ibid., 21-22

negotiations for power sharing between the Mujahedeen factions rather than a strategic attempt at healing the wounds of the past.

Instead of bringing about reconciliation, different alliances kept emerging and the continued fighting in 1994 gave birth to the Taliban movement that eventually took power in September 1996. How the movement gained strength and flourished is a point of contention, however, with the help of countries such as Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and the US, the Taliban emerged as a political force²²⁰. In 2012 Hillary Clinton, in her capacity as the Secretary of State, admitted to funding the Mujahedeen and the Taliban²²¹.

With the Taliban takeover in 1996, the fighting continued between the Taliban and the previous Mujahedeen groups who ruled the country during the civil war years. The country had two administrative bodies: one led by the Taliban and the other by the Northern-Alliance²²² that had based itself in the North of the country. Internationally, the Northern-Alliance represented the Afghan embassies in Tehran, Delhi and Moscow, while the Taliban attended the UN and Red Cross functions. Since the Pakistan government supported the Taliban, India, Russia and Iran supported the Northern-Alliance both financially and with ammunitions to fight the Taliban.

Although it was widely reported that banditry and local harassments had ceased in the Taliban governed areas, the conflict between the Taliban and the Northern-Alliance militia continued. The UN officials had reported more than fifteen massacres from 1996 to 2001 by the Taliban²²³. Despite this, there were occasions that the Taliban negotiated ceasefires and an end to the fighting in

²²⁰ Peter Marsden, *The Taliban: War, Religion and the New Order in Afghanistan* (New York: Zed Books Ltd., 1998), 43

²²¹ "Sleeping With the Devil: How U.S. and Saudi Backing of Al Qaeda Led to 9/11". September 5, 2012. *Washington Blog*; <http://www.washingtonsblog.com/2012/09/sleeping-with-the-devil-how-u-s-and-saudi-backing-of-al-qaeda-led-to-911.html>, (accessed January 28, 2015)

²²² Northern Alliance was originally called the United Islamic Front for the Salvation of Afghanistan. It was a military front that was formed against the Taliban and had based itself in the Northern Provinces of Afghanistan. After September 11, 2001, it was the Northern Alliance that fought against the Taliban with the support of the CIA and led the fall of their regime.

²²³ Edward A. Gargan. "Taliban Massacres outlined for UN," *Chicago Tribune*, October 12, 2001: http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2001-10-12/news/0110120312_1_taliban-fighters-massacres-in-recent-years-mullah-mohammed-omar (accessed January 28, 2015).

Hazarajat or other provinces using Afghan and Islamic traditional structures of settlement and deal making to gain allegiances²²⁴.

Despite wide global outrage on abuse of women rights, destruction of cultural monuments, Shia massacres of Hazaras and continued fighting in different parts of Afghanistan²²⁵, the Taliban days started to be numbered when the twin towers in September 11, 2001 came down. The US and its allies once again decided to fund and support the Northern-Alliance²²⁶ in defeating the Taliban forces and establishing a new administration, which started taking shape at the Bonn Conference in 2001.

2.5 The Global War on Terror, post 2001

The fall of the twin towers in September 2001 marked the point of departure for reshaping the current Afghan political scenario. The US and its allies decided to bomb the Taliban regime in Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and replace it with the new government that took shape in December 2001, at the International Conference on Afghanistan held in Bonn, known widely as the Bonn Conference.

Some of the scholars refer to the Bonn Conference as the initial steps for peacebuilding in Afghanistan. This is mainly because the Conference, with the exception of the Taliban and the left parties in Afghanistan, brought together leaders to establish the Afghan Interim Authority, which was constituted mostly of Royalist and the Mujahideen groups. The method in which the Bonn Conference was conducted can further explain the ongoing insurgency and conflict with the Taliban, which eventually led to the start of the Afghan Peace and Reintegration Programme.

Other mechanisms that the Afghan government pursued on reconciliation include the Independent National Commission for Peace headed by Sebghatullah Mojadedi²²⁷. A Regional Peace *Jirga*²²⁸ was hosted in 2007 to improve the Afghan-

²²⁴ Semple, 23

²²⁵ Edward A. Gargan, "Taliban Massacres outlined for UN," *Chicago Tribune*.

²²⁶ Lucy M. Edwards, *The Afghan Solution: The Inside Story of Abdul Haq, the CIA and How Western Hubris Lost Afghanistan* (London: Bactria Press, 2011), chap. Introduction, para 16, Kindle Edition.

²²⁷ Semple, 54

Pakistan relations and work towards reconciliation of those stakeholders who were impacted or engaged in the conflict²²⁹. Finally, the Afghan government- with the assistance of the UN- established a set of reconciliation principles that the Afghan government and the international community would seek guidance in implementing the principles.

In the concluding chapter, I will explore some of the gaps in the reconciliation initiatives from 2001-2014 and underline where the reconciliation process stands in Afghanistan today. In this section of my book, I shall focus on highlighting the regional and global actors and their relations to Afghanistan's current political situation.

2.5.1 Global and Regional Relations in the Global War on Terror

2.5.1.1 China

After the Taliban era, China joined forces with the international community to economically assist and rebuild Afghan institutions. However, China's engagement in Afghanistan has been very cautious. It has mainly focused in building economic and trade ties instead of getting militarily involved in combating the War on Terror. In 2007, Chinese state-owned mining giant China Metallurgical Group Corporation (MCC) had won the bid for one of the biggest Copper mines in Afghanistan.

When analyzing China's role in Afghanistan, it is important to note that it is done within the regional framework of Central and South Asia. China has a close relationship with Pakistan and even though there are neighborly relations between India and China; the two countries have territory disputes and fought a war in 1962. The recent growth of Islamic extremist groups within China has increasingly brought China to the attention of Afghanistan and Pakistan militants.

This may now be changing, in part due to their fear of relapse of Afghanistan into the hands of Islamic extremist groups that will encourage *“growth of (Uighur) Muslim extremism on Chinese territory, supported from across the border with Pakistan”*, using Afghanistan for their training

²²⁸ A traditional assembly where different community representatives come together to discuss matters of importance and reach consensus.

²²⁹ Semple, 60

and other support activities. This perception may well have been strengthened by the latest incident in Xinjiang region where 21 people died in clashes, including 15 police officers²³⁰.

It is also important to view China's role in Afghanistan vis-à-vis US foreign policy, i.e. the presence of NATO and US bases close to the Chinese borders. Since the start of the Peace and Reintegration Program in 2010, China has supported the Afghan government to lead its own peace process²³¹. However, after the 2014 Afghan Presidential elections, China has taken a very active role in mediating between the Taliban and the Afghan government with the support of Pakistan and the blessing of the US²³².

2.5.1.2 India

From its inception, India has had friendly and cordial relations with Afghanistan. The only time that India played a proxy role was in the Afghan civil war, especially, when the Taliban took power in Kabul, India's support to the Northern Alliance²³³ was reinforced. This action of India must be viewed in the context of India - Pakistan relations.

Since the fall of the Taliban, India has supported the Afghan government and allied itself with the international community through economic development and institutional rebuilding, such as building the Afghan Parliament and the roads for transportation. India also supported Afghanistan by providing scholarships for education of the youth and training of bureaucrats, military and police officers. It entered a number of diplomatic and economic arrangements with Afghanistan to forward its interests in the region²³⁴.

In terms of supporting its overall policy towards Afghanistan, India supported President Karzai's Peace and Reintegration Program despite being

²³⁰ Malaiz Daud, "Afghanistan & the Regional Powers: An Overview of 2013", 7-8

²³¹ Ibid.

²³² Edward Wong, 'Q. and A.: Barnett Rubin on China's Role in Afghanistan' *The New York Times*, February 20th, 2015, http://sinosphere.blogs.nytimes.com/2015/02/20/q-and-a-barnett-rubin-on-chinas-role-in-afghanistan/?_r=0 (accessed April 6th, 2015).

²³³ Murshed, 248.

²³⁴ Malaiz Daud, "Afghanistan & the Regional Powers: An Overview of 2013", 8.

suspicious of the Taliban based on their past deeds, especially when they hosted the Air-India hijacked plane in 1999 in Kandahar to allow Pakistan to negotiate the release of members of a terrorist group called Harkat-ul-Mujahideen in Pakistan²³⁵.

The growing Indo-US relations, especially when the two countries signed the nuclear civil agreement in 2005, made Pakistan highly suspicious of India's intentions in Afghanistan and it did its best to alienate India from the regional peace process with regards to the talks with the Taliban.

2.5.1.3 Iran

Although Iran has had a difficult position globally due to its foreign policy, it cooperated with the international community and the US on the Bonn Conference bringing on board the Mujahideen leaders, who were their allies. Iran's foreign policy under the leadership of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad became even more hostile towards the US, Israel and the West. Since Iran shared borders with Afghanistan and Iraq, the US invasions of both the countries was of concern to the Iranian government. Therefore, in 2007 Iran was accused of supporting the Taliban with ammunitions. Although ideologically, Iran never supported the Taliban because of their extreme Sunni and Wahabbi indoctrination, it was surprising to read the news articles from 2007-2012 that Iran was supporting the Taliban.

Iran also continues to oppose the presence of Western military bases in Afghanistan, engages in talks with Taliban, invites them for conferences in Iran and even, allegedly, supplies arms to them. At the same time, it provides Afghanistan with technical and financial support. Iran and Afghanistan are set to sign a strategic agreement, the draft of which was prepared this year. Issues around the reported maltreatment of Afghan refugees were taken up several times in the Afghan parliament this year²³⁶.

²³⁵ Maya Sharma, 'The hijacking of Indian Airlines flight IC-814' *NDTV*, August 30th, 2009, <http://www.ndtv.com/india-news/the-hijacking-of-indian-airlines-flight-ic-814-400555> (accessed April 6th, 2015)

²³⁶ Malaiz Daud, "Afghanistan & the Regional Powers: An Overview of 2013", 9.

Iran still hosts many Afghan refugees, however they are mostly not treated according to the international norms of the Geneva Convention. In addition, Iran has signed agreements with India and Afghanistan in 2014 to become the main transportation routes to and from Afghanistan instead of Pakistan, which served as the main trade route to different cities of Afghanistan²³⁷.

2.5.1.4 Pakistan

It is a well known fact that Pakistan supported the Taliban government until OEF and when the War on Terror was declared, Pakistan assumed a double game whereby at the global level, it declared its alliance in the War on Terror but at the same time harbored Taliban and Al-Qaida members within its territory²³⁸. Pakistan had believed that eventually ISAF and the US troops would withdraw, like the Soviets, so in the meanwhile they can protect their clients so that at a later stage they can be re-launched in Afghanistan as a political force.

At the moment it is believed that the Taliban leadership that make up the Quetta Shura, which is based out of the city of Quetta in Pakistan, are protected by the Pakistani administration²³⁹. The Taliban operate freely within Pakistan and have been promoting an insurgency in Afghanistan since they left power in Kabul.

The Taliban came back and their insurgency gained momentum from 2005 onwards. This was one of the main reasons why the Afghan government, with the support of the Obama administration in 2009, started its Peace and Reintegration Program. While Peace and Reintegration Program is highly managed by the Afghan leadership and government, the Pakistan government has the leverage over the peace process and the peace talks with the Taliban because it hosts the Taliban within its territory.

The Afghan recent Presidential elections in 2014 and the change of leadership after the Peshawar attacks have brought the Pakistan and Afghan governments closer in finding a platform for talks, while China has played an

²³⁷ Ibid.

²³⁸ Bob Woodward, *Obama's Wars* (NY: Simon & Schuster, 2010), 3.

²³⁹ "Background Paper, Afghanistan: Political Parties and Insurgent Groups 2001-2013", *Migration Review Tribunal or Refugee Review Tribunal* (Australian Government), September 2013, https://www.ecoi.net/file_upload/1226_1369733768_ppig2.pdf (accessed April 6, 2015).

important role in facilitating this process. Since Afghanistan has not enjoyed good relations with Pakistan since its inception, the Afghans do not trust the current progress on the reconciliation and peace talks and are suspicious of Pakistan's intentions²⁴⁰.

2.5.1.5 Russia

Russia's stand in Afghanistan has been very careful due to its recent history of the Cold War, however it supported the idea of a stable Afghanistan in order to avoid another Islamic militancy in Central Asia and Chechnya that spread like wild fire after the civil war in Afghanistan broke out. Although Russia has been weary of the US military presence in the region, in the case of Afghanistan in the post-Taliban era, it has stated the fact that Russia's interest and the US intersect in Afghanistan.

Russia has recognized the Taliban as a political force but they are not in favor of the presence of radical Islamic groups taking over Afghanistan because Russia is apprehensive that this would motivate the extremist Islamic groups in Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Chechnya as well. All of this stated Russia has not officially rejected the Afghan Peace and Reintegration Programme.

At the same time though, Russian authorities – President Vladimir Putin in particular – continued criticism of the American policy globally but also in relation to Afghanistan. However, they emphasized the fact that in Afghanistan their interests converged with those of the US and its allies... Despite Russia-West's relations being at the lowest level, Russia's government, President Putin in particular, is keen for the West to stay engaged in Afghanistan. President Hamid Karzai's reported insistence on the importance of the involvement of Russia and Iran in breaking the electoral impasse is interpreted by Afghan observers as Russia and Iran's actively supporting – even funding – different political groups in the country, with a view of using these groups against the Taliban and the international Islamist syndicates in the event of the fragmentation of the Afghan

²⁴⁰ Ahmed Rashid, 'Viewpoint: Ashraf Ghani needs Pakistan help with Taliban talks', BBC News, January 13th, 2015, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-30785086> (accessed May 6th, 2015).

state²⁴¹.

2.5.1.6 Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia's relations in the context of Afghanistan started during the Cold War, when it was supporting the Mujahideen groups and aiding Pakistan. Since the fall of the Taliban, Saudi Arabia fully supported the US's position in Afghanistan and the Global War on Terror.

Due to its strong alliance with Pakistan, the government of Afghanistan has tried since 2010 to involve the Saudi Royal family and the government in bringing the Taliban to the negotiation table²⁴².

Whilst some credit may go to the Afghan President for repeatedly reaching out to the Saudi Royal Family for facilitating peace talks with the Taliban, with an underlying strategy to circumvent Pakistan in relations with the Saudis, it is more likely that Saudi motivation for direct engagement is in response to the abundant Iranian investment in Afghanistan²⁴³.

Saudi Arabia, in support to the Afghan government, has initiated joint projects in various sectors such as trade and commerce, youth, culture and sports. Despite all the new developments in the Saudi Arabia and Afghan relations, it is crucial to underline that Saudi Arabia and the Arab countries, such as Qatar, are taking keen interest in the Afghan reconciliation process with the Taliban because of its regional competition with Iran within the context of Sunni and Shiite sectarianism²⁴⁴.

2.5.1.7 Turkey

In the aftermath of the Taliban, Turkey has played an active role in Afghanistan. First of all, Turkey sent its troops as part of International Security Assistance

²⁴¹ Malaiz Daoud, "Afghanistan: Overview of Sources of Tension with Regional Implications 2014", *CIDOB: Barcelona Centre for International Affairs* (December 2014): 9, http://www.cidob.org/en/publications/stap_rp/policy_research_papers/afghanistan_overview_of_sources_of_tension_with_regional_implications_2014 (accessed April 6th, 2015).

²⁴² Ibid., 10-11

²⁴³ Ibid.

²⁴⁴ Haroun Mir, 'Afghanistan stuck between Iran and Saudi Arabia', *Aljazeera*, April 6th, 2015, <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2015/04/afghanistan-yemen-iran-saudi-conflict-150406082938492.html> (accessed April 6th, 2015).

Force (ISAF)²⁴⁵ to Afghanistan and engaged in economic development projects. In 2011, Turkey organized a trilateral talk between the Afghan, Pakistan and the Turkish governments to facilitate the reconciliation process and the talks between the Afghan and the Taliban representatives.

Turkey also initiated the İstanbul Process on Regional Security and Cooperation for A Secure and Stable Afghanistan in 2011²⁴⁶, inviting regional stakeholders from Central and South Asia.

2.5.1.8 Qatar

The role of Qatar in the Afghan Peace and Reintegration Programme came to light when Qatar offered to arrange talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban. In addition, Qatar offered to host Taliban representatives and their office in Doha²⁴⁷. However, at the official opening of the Taliban office, the Taliban representatives raised their own government's flag of Afghan Emirates, which made the Afghan government suspicious of Qatar's involvement in the reconciliation process.

In addition, Qatar is viewed to be closely allied with Saudi Arabia and to support the Sunni radical *Wahhabi* school of thought in the region, which makes the Afghan government doubt their intentions. In 2014, the US released Taliban detainees from Guantanamo and sent them to Qatar²⁴⁸, further signaling a close alliance between Qatar and the Taliban. What the interest is of the Qatari government in hosting the top leadership of the Taliban remains a question.

²⁴⁵ The International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) was established in 2001 by the UN Resolution 1386 passed in the Security Council. Its main objectives were to assist Afghanistan to rebuild institutions and its army. It is important to mention that ISAF was a NATO led force.

²⁴⁶ Republic of Turkey, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 'İstanbul Process on Regional Security and Cooperation for A Secure and Stable Afghanistan, 2 November 2011', <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/istanbul-process-on-regional-security-and-cooperation-for-a-secure-and-stable-afghanistan.en.mfa> (accessed April 6th, 2015).

²⁴⁷ Mustafa Sarwar and Sahar Liwal, 'Peace Talks With Afghan Taliban Expected to Resume', *Gandhara RFE/RL*, December 18th, 2014, <http://gandhara.rferl.org/content/afghanistan-peace-talks/26750609.html> (accessed April 6th, 2015).

²⁴⁸ 'Taliban five arrive in Qatar after swap deal', *Aljazeera*, June 1st, 2014, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2014/06/taliban-five-arrive-qatar-after-swap-deal-20146113536748321.html> (accessed April 6th, 2015).

2.5.1.9 United States

The US role in the fall of the Taliban after September 11, 2001, in shaping a new government in Afghanistan and combating the Taliban insurgency up until now has been significant. The US government declared the War on Terror when the Twin Towers fell in New York and then pursued OEF to replace the Taliban with a new administration. Prior to the Bonn Conference in December 2001, the US government funded the Northern-Alliance so they could defeat the Taliban.

Then, the US-led coalition provided financial and military support to the Taliban's traditional foe, the predominantly Tajik Northern Alliance which-since the killing by Al-Qaeda on 9 September 2001 of Commander Massoud – has been led by Mohammad Fahim²⁴⁹.

When the OEF was declared to have succeeded, many leaders of the Taliban and Al-Qaeda made their way to Pakistan. In 2005, as the Taliban insurgency took momentum, the US recognized that they could not prevail in Afghanistan unless they solve the problem of sanctuaries in Pakistan²⁵⁰.

However, with the new US administration taking charge in 2008, President Obama in his speech on 19 March 2009 encouraged the Afghan nation to focus on reconciliation in order to end the conflict²⁵¹. The US policy towards Afghanistan was changing, it was no more about combatting the Taliban insurgency but reconciling with them. It is at this juncture that in 2010, Afghan President Karzai announced his Peace and Reintegration Program.

It is important to highlight that since 2010, most of the reconciliation processes with the Taliban have been a political process at the leadership level engaging regional countries through diplomatic means to bring the Taliban to the negotiating table. One of the main Taliban conditions for negotiating was the withdrawal of US troops, which started in 2014. However, after the National Unity Government (NUG)²⁵² signed the agreement to work together under the leadership

²⁴⁹ Lucy M. Edwards, chap. Introduction, para 16, Kindle Edition.

²⁵⁰ Woodward, 43.

²⁵¹ Najibullah, Afghan Attempts at Peace and Reconciliation, 28.

²⁵² 'Afghan presidential contenders sign unity deal', *BBC*, September 21st, 2014, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-29299088> (accessed April 6th, 2015).

of two people, i.e. Ashraf Ghani, the President and Abdullah Abdullah, the Chief Executive Officer in September 2014, the US-Afghan Security and Defense Cooperation Agreement²⁵³ was concluded. The agreement has allowed the US to have nine military bases in Afghanistan, thus keeping maintaining a US presence in Afghanistan rather than withdrawing as planned and promised.

Since the new Afghan administration has taken office, the notion of reconciliation with the Taliban has been facilitated more by China than the US. Perhaps this is due to the tension and mistrust that President Karzai had with the US administration over the peace negotiation with the Taliban. President Karzai, since the launch of the Peace and Reintegration Program, accused the US of being biased towards Pakistan and not aiding the Afghan government to find a sustainable solution to peace.

It is important to note that the US still has its military and its advisors based in Afghanistan and funds the Afghan National Army (ANA), as well as most of the government institutions so that Afghanistan can remain 'stable'.

²⁵³ Just Security, 'Security And Defense Cooperation Agreement Between the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the United States of America, 30th September 2014', <http://justsecurity.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/BSA-ENGLISH-AFG.pdf> (accessed April 6th, 2015).

Table. 2.5: The list of local Afghan actors, their political parties and their regional allies during the War on Terror²⁵⁴

Global War on Terror (2001-2014)	
Regional & Global Actors	Local Afghan Actors
Pakistan	Mujahideen: <i>Hizbe Islami</i> (Led by Gulbuddin Hekmatyar) – Radical Sunni from Pashtun ethnic background
EU, Iran, US, NATO, India	Mujahideen: <i>Jamiyate Islami</i> (Led by Burhanuddin Rabbani) – Moderate Sunni from Tajik ethnic background
Saudi Arabia, US, NATO, UAE	Mujahideen: <i>Ittehad-e Islami bara-ye Azadi-ye Afghanistan</i> (led by Abdul Rasul Sayyaf) – extremist Sunni from Pashtun background. Currently, his party is known as <i>Tanzim-e Dahwat-e Islami-ye Afghanistan</i>
US, EU, NATO	Mujahideen: <i>Jabhay Nijate Milli</i> (led by Sebgatullah Mojadeddi) – Moderate Secular Sunni from a Sufi sect called the <i>Naqshbandi</i>
US, EU, NATO, Pakistan	Mujahideen: <i>Mahaze Islami</i> (led by Pir Sayed Ahmad Gailani) – Pro-Royalist from Pushtun ethnic background and Sufi school of thought
Turkey, US, NATO	<i>Jombesh</i> (led by Dostum) who had worked with PDPA and Watan Party. He is mostly viewed as a Militia who worked for the Najibullah government and then turned against him. He is from Uzbek ethnic background.
Iran, India, Russia	Mujahideen: <i>Hizb-i-Afghanistan-i-Navin</i> (led by Qannuni) who was a part of <i>Jamiyate Islami</i> and

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Thomas Ruttig, 'Islamists, Leftists and a Void in the Center. Afghanistan's Political Parties and where they come from (1902-2006),' Konrad Adenaur Stiftung: Afghanistan Office, 6 and 7, http://www.kas.de/wf/doc/kas_9674-544-2-30.pdf (accessed March 31st, 2015). "Background Paper, Afghanistan: Political Parties and Insurgent Groups 2001-2013", *Migration Review Tribunal or Refugee Review Tribunal* (Australian Government), September 2013, https://www.ecoi.net/file_upload/1226_1369733768_ppig2.pdf (accessed April 6, 2015).

	Northern-Alliance
Iran	Mujahideen: <i>Harakate Islami</i> (led by Shaykh Asaf Muhsemi) – moderate Shiite from Tajik ethnic background
Iran, India, Russia	<i>Hezb-e Muttahed-e Milli Afghanistan</i> (led by Ulomi) – Moderate Pashtun who was a member of PDPA. He is close to the Northern-Alliance
US, NATO, EU, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia ²⁵⁵	Mujahideen: <i>Nahzat-i Hambastagi-i Milli Afghanistan</i> (led by Ishaq Gailani) – Son of Pir Gailani
India, Iran, Russia	Mujahideen: <i>Rawand-e Sabz-e Afghanistan</i> (led by Amrullah Saleh) – worked closely with the Northern-Alliance
	<i>Hezb-e Kongra-i Milli-i Afghanistan</i> (led by Pedram) – independent
	<i>Hezb-e Jamhori Afghanistan</i> (Barahawi) – Pro-Karzai party, newly established.
Iran	Mujahideen: <i>Nahzat-e Melli Afghanistan</i> (led by Ahmad Wali Massoud), former Jamiyat member
Pakistan, US, EU	Mujahideen: <i>Afghan Millat</i> (led by Anwar al-Haq Ahadi) – royalist, son-in-law of Pir Gailani
	Mujahideen: <i>Hezb-e Islami-ye Motahed</i> (Wahidullah Sabawun) – Former Northern-Alliance Finance Minister

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Thomas Ruttig, 'On Your Marks! Alliances and actors before the 2014 presidential election,' Afghanistan Analysts Network, September 2013, <https://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/on-your-marks-alliances-and-actors-before-the-2014-presidential-election/> (accessed May 7, 2015) Mara Tchalakov, 'The Northern Alliance Prepares for Afghan Elections in 2014,' Institute for the Study of War, August 2013, <http://www.understandingwar.org/report/northern-alliance-prepares-afghan-elections-2014> (accessed May 7, 2015) Kenneth Katzman, 'Afghanistan: Post-Taliban Governance, Security, and U.S. Policy,' Congressional Research Service: 3-5, September 19, 2013.

Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Qatar	Taliban: <i>The Quetta Shura</i>
Iran	Mujahideen: <i>Hezb-e Wahdat-e Islami</i> (led by Khalili) – Shiite from Hazara ethnic background
Iran	Mujahideen: <i>Hezb-e Wahdat-e Islami-ye Mardom</i> (led by Mohaqeq) – primarily Shiite from Hazara ethnic background
Iran	Mujahideen: <i>Harakat-i Islami-i Afghanistan</i> (led by Mohseni) – Shiite from Tajik background
	<i>Harakat-i Islami-i Mardom</i> (led by Anwari) – Shiite but not necessarily from Hazara ethnic background
Iran	Mujahideen: <i>Hezb-e Wahdat Milli Islami</i> (led by Akbari) – Shiite from the Hazara ethnic background who also negotiated to surrender to the Taliban and was with <i>Wahdate Mili</i>
Iran	Mujahideen: <i>Hezb-e Wahdat-e Islami-ye Millat</i> (led by Erfani) – Shiite from Hazara ethnic background
	<i>Hezb-e Eqtedar-e Mellit</i> (led by Kazemi) who was a part of <i>Hezb-e Wahdat Milli Islami</i> . The party was formed in 2006.

2.6 Linkages between local, regional and global players in the Afghan conflict

2.6.1 Afghan Reconciliation: Social or Political?

In my attempt to explore various reconciliation processes in Afghanistan during the Cold War era and the War on Terror, this book highlights how such initiatives so far have been political rather than social.

In order to better analyze and comprehend the gaps in the Afghan reconciliation processes, I call a top-down approach initiated by the Afghan governments as political reconciliation. In addition, a political reconciliation for me is also when the government's focus is on reaching agreements or political solutions with the opposition. My definition of social reconciliation also embraces the middle-out²⁵⁶ approach, whereby Afghans from different walks of life i.e. including middle range and grassroots, are all apart of the reconciliation process.

In the above sections I have demonstrated how the idea of Afghan reconciliation was a device of global politics and different regional and global actors. Both the National reconciliation policy and the Peace and Reintegration Program have been political initiatives by the Afghan government leadership and the processes have focused on finding a political solution with the opposition groups. It must be noted that in the case of Afghanistan, the opposition, be it in the Cold War or now, are propped up by regional or global powers for their national or global political interests.

If we were to reflect on Lederach's Pyramid of Peace Actors, introduced in chapter one, it is important to assess whether both the Afghan reconciliation processes have found their way in the middle range and the grass-root levels of Afghan society or not. This is important as the Afghan government is too entangled in a balancing act between self-survival and meeting the divergent interests of its regional and global interlocutors.

²⁵⁶ John Paul Lederach, *The Moral Imagination*, chap.8, para. 16, Kindle edition.

2.6.2 Afghan Social Structure

Looking at Lederach's pyramid of peace actors and the concept of middle-out, I would like to analyze whether the reconciliation processes in Afghanistan have had a similar approach.

When one studies the social structures of Afghan society, one can observe that the leadership has its followers on the basis of tribal, ethnicity, *qawm* or religious affiliation. What the PDPA tried to do was to break away from these traditional social structures by re-organizing the party's organizational structure, whereas the Mujahideen party system tried to function on the basis of the traditional social structures.

The Najibullah government recognized that for its policy of national reconciliation to achieve its objectives, they had to work with traditional social system already in place. This is why the National Reconciliation Commission was working with elders and leaders of the tribes and villages to negotiate nonaggression deals. In other words, the Commission did succeed to work with the middle range. However, most of the negotiations were to pacify the local commanders and have them guard their territories against the opposition instead of introducing projects for social healing²⁵⁷.

I have tried to analyze why this was the case and the only answers I can come up with are i) the Afghan government was faced with a conflict in which it had to survive so its approach had to be militarily strategic, in other words, reconciliations had to go hand in hand with military action; ii) The Afghan government did not have enough resources to invest in this process because most of the time it was trying to find a sustainable solution to the conflict at the international level; and iii) Reconciliation was a new concept that was introduced and the Afghan government's ways of working were innovative within the Afghan political and social context at the time, but there was not much experience or guidance from the UN, rather positive symmetry for the conflict to brew.

Today, yet again, the Afghan Peace and Reintegration Programme is mostly stuck at the top leadership level, whereby the government is mostly engaged with global and regional players through diplomatic channels to bring the Taliban on board for peace talks and find a solution to end the conflict. Those in power have

²⁵⁷ Semple, 19

fiercely rejected the notion of reconciliation in terms of conducting a truth and justice commission because the majority of them were responsible for the civil war atrocities and bloodshed. It must be noted that when the policy of national reconciliation was introduced, Afghanistan had gone through a decade of war that was fought mostly on ideological basis, but now the conflict in Afghanistan has lasted for more than three decades and since the end of the Cold War it has transformed to an ethnic, tribal and religious sectarian conflict.

The deeper-rooted social divide amongst the Afghans can also be viewed as an opportunity to introduce social healing and therefore put mechanisms in place for constructive social change.

Recognizing that the traumas of violence and conflict run deeper than the Cold War era, I think social healing is even more important today. Therefore, it is critical that the Afghan Peace Council and the Peace and Reintegration Programme do not only remain a political initiative but integrate the social aspects of healing, so that national truth commissions and restorative justice can be embraced to nationally heal the wounds of the past and unite the country.

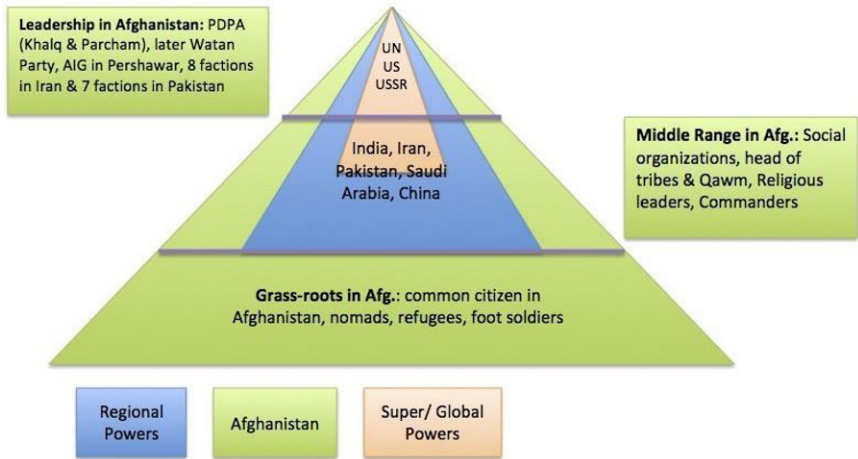
2.6.3 Analysis of Reconciliation through the Pyramid of Peace Actors

I would like to analyze the Afghan reconciliation processes and the actors vis-à-vis John Paul Lederach's pyramid of peace in different eras and recognize how the policies of regional or global actors have touched the Afghan social structure.

Considering the Afghan social framework, the diagram below portrays the influence global and regional powers had on Afghan politics and the national reconciliation policy during the Cold War.

In the Cold War the global powers, such as the USSR, the US and the UN, mostly engaged with the top leadership of the main political parties, i.e. those of the Mujahideen as well as the government in Afghanistan. The political parties would, through their political structure, work with the middle range figures that supported them, such as the elders of the village, tribe or *qawm*.

Figure 2.6: Cold War list of Actors according to the Pyramid of Peace Actors

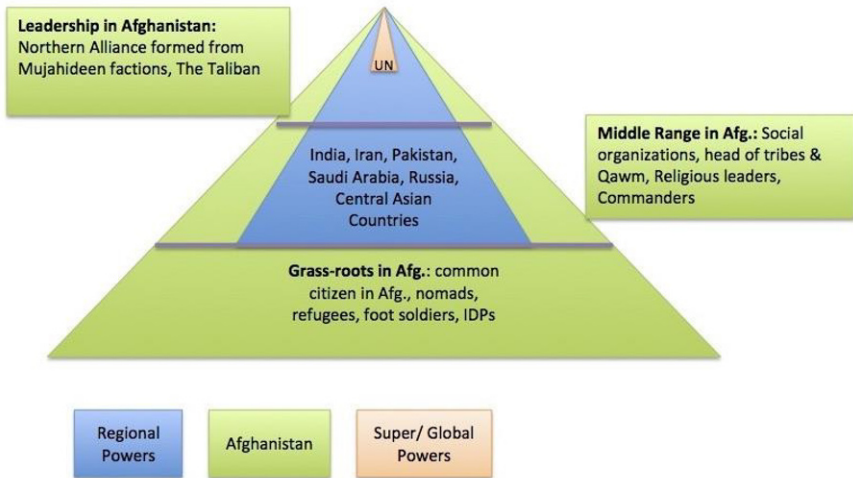


It remains unclear how the Afghan political parties engaged with the grass-root levels or, for that matter, with the village and tribal leaders. Whether the village and tribal leaders played a middle-out approach in making the deals with the local commanders has to be studied as an individual case. The regional actors, due to their geographic vicinity as well as their linguistic proximities, were able to influence the middle range; this is specially the case amongst the Mujahideen political parties.

In conclusion, Lederach's middle-out approach was not fully apart of the national reconciliation policy of 1986 because the tribal, *qawm* and village leaders' role in involving the grass-root and leadership in the reconciliation process was not fully explored.

In the Afghan civil war from 1992-2001, the role of global actors -with the exception of the UN - became extremely limited. However, the regional countries were supporting their individual clients and fighting their proxy wars in the streets of Kabul.

Figure 2.7: Civil War list of Actors according to the Pyramid of Peace Actors

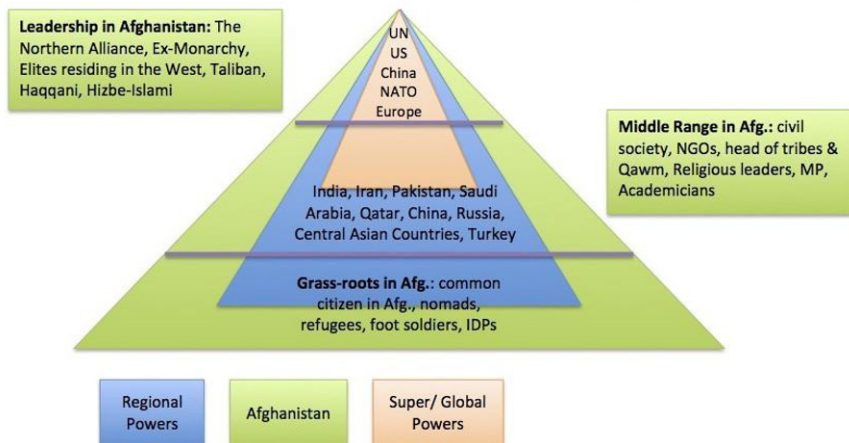


Although the United Nations persisted with mediation tracks through the mujahideen and Taliban periods (1992-2001), and the secretary general appointed a succession of envoys (Mahmoud Mistiri, Norbert Hall, Lakhdar Brahimi and Francesc Vendrell), it had no major role in the accords that were signed. The international role in the failed rapprochement consisted of Pakistan hosting the accords, Saudi Arabia blessing them, and the United Nations watching them fall apart.²⁵⁸

Since most of the warring factions in the civil war were either the mujahideen or the Taliban, they fought on the basis of ethnicity, religious sectarianism, tribal or *Qawm*, supported by their regional allies. As a result of this, one can say that the role of regional players impacted the Afghan society all the way to the middle range, while the UN's role was not even influential at the leadership level.

²⁵⁸ Semple, 22

Figure 2.8: The War on Terror list of Actors according to the Pyramid of Peace Actors



In the post Taliban era, Afghanistan saw a different kind of engagement on behalf of the global and regional players. The presence of ISAF and NATO brought 49 nationalities from around the world to Afghanistan to aid in institutional rebuilding. In addition, the international community decided to introduce the concept of Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) that took diplomats, military officers and intelligence all the way to the district levels for rebuilding projects.

Regional as well as global players under NATO and its allies in the War on Terror were not only influencing the political and economic decision-making at the top leadership, but were also present all the way to the district levels (but with not much acceptance by the local village or tribal leaders). Furthermore, the lack of coordination amongst the international community allowed the already existing divides in the Afghan society to gain momentum. The presence of foreign troops and PRTs were viewed as a bounty for the rival tribes or *qawms* on the ground.

Although the international presence set the grounds for the mushrooming of civil society groups as a result of an abundance of funding, the opportunities to involve the grass-root level in reconciliation or peace-building in Afghanistan was explored in a limited manner. Meanwhile at the leadership level, the regional and

global players maintained their former relationships with individual Mujahideen or Taliban factions whilst also supporting the Afghan government.

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