

ROLE OF UNITED NATIONS IN NATION BUILDING IN AFGHANISTAN: 2001-2021

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the data presented in this Dissertation report entitled, Role of United Nations in Nation Building in Afghanistan, 2001-2021. is based on the results of investigations carried out by me in the International studies at the School Of International and Area Studies, Goa University under the Supervision of Dr. Mukund Vishwanath Narvenkar and the same has not been submitted elsewhere for the award of a degree or diploma by me. Further, I understand that Goa University or its authorities will be not be responsible for the correctness of observations / experimental or other findings given the dissertation.

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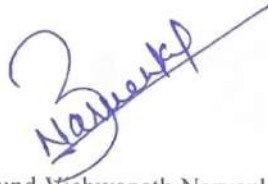
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This is to certify that the dissertation report Role of United Nations in Nation Building in Afghanistan, 2001-2021, is a Bonafide work carried out by Mr, Mohammad Hosain Turrkistani Middle Name, Last Name under my supervision in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Masters Of Arts in the Discipline International Studies at the School Of International and Area Studies Goa University.



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Date: 25th April 2024

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Glossary

AIAF.	Afghan Interim Authority Fund
ANBP.	Afghanistan New Beginnings Programme
DDR.	Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration
D-SRSG.	Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General
ISAF.	International Security Assistance Force
LOFTA.	Law and Order Trust for Afghanistan
MRRD .	Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development
NABDP.	National Area-Based Development Programme
NGO.	Non-governmental organization
NSP.	National Solidarity Programme
SRSG.	Special Representative of the Secretary-General

UNAMA. United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan

UNDP. United Nations Development Assistance Programme

UNGA. UN General Assembly

Chapter I

Research Proposal

Rationale of the Study

Following the fall of the Taliban regime, Afghanistan finds itself at a crucial point in its history, characterized by both opportunities and obstacles in nation-building. Over the past two decades, from 2001 to 2021, the United Nations has significantly contributed to Afghanistan's nation-building efforts. Initially, it supported the Afghan government in crafting the Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS), emphasizing the importance of Afghan participation in addressing development priorities. The UN facilitated the transition to Afghan-led reconstruction and aid coordination, promoting capacity building and fostering a shift in mentality within the country. Additionally, it assisted in documenting historical human rights abuses, engaging with the Afghan population on matters of accountability, and supporting peace-building initiatives. Moreover, the UN focused on providing humanitarian aid, addressing economic challenges, and preventing a severe economic downturn that could worsen widespread poverty. Efforts were also made to ensure the uninterrupted presence of UNAMA in Afghanistan, allowing for unhindered activities and engagement with relevant stakeholders to promote peace and stability. Overall, the United Nations played a crucial role in strengthening Afghanistan's development, governance, and stability during this period. This research proposal seeks to evaluate the UN's effectiveness in tackling these challenges and advancing nation-building goals in Afghanistan over the past two decades.

Research Objective

1. Investigating the historical context of nation-building endeavors in Afghanistan.
2. Examining the involvement of the United Nations in bolstering nation-building initiatives in Afghanistan.
3. Identifying the principal challenges and barriers encountered by the UN in its nation-building pursuits in Afghanistan.
4. Analyzing the nation-building objectives set by the Afghan government and the United Nations.

Research Question

1. What particular functions and actions has the United Nations carried out to aid nation-building endeavors in Afghanistan between 2001 and 2021?
2. What are the primary difficulties and hurdles faced by the United Nations in its mission of nation-building in Afghanistan after 2001?
3. To what extent have UN interventions succeeded in promoting governance, security, and socio-economic progress in Afghanistan?

Research Method

The methodology employed relies on qualitative research, utilizing both historical and descriptive approaches to comprehend the United Nations' role in nation-building in Afghanistan spanning from 2000 to 2021.

Hypothesis

1. The United Nations encounters notable obstacles in its nation-building endeavors in post-Taliban Afghanistan, such as political instability, security risks, and insufficient local capacity, potentially hindering its ability to foster lasting development and stability.
2. The United Nations' attempts at nation-building in Afghanistan are hindered by the absence of a cohesive global approach, leading to disjointed tactics and varying results.

Theoretical approach

For this research proposal constructivism framework will help to examine the role of the UN in nation-building in Afghanistan post-Taliban 2001.

Constructivism emphasizes the role of ideas, norms, and identities in shaping international relations. In the context of Afghanistan, Constructivism can help analyze how the UN, as an international organization, constructs and disseminates norms related to governance, security, and development. It also considers how these norms influence

state behavior and shape the dynamics of international cooperation and conflict resolution.

Chapterization

CHAPTER 1: Introduction

This introductory chapter lays the groundwork for the subsequent sections of the document by presenting an overview of the topic of nation-building in Afghanistan. It encompasses background information, the rationale for the study, research objectives, research questions, hypotheses, theoretical approaches, limitations of the study, and a literature review.

CHAPTER 2: History of Afghanistan's Nation-Building

This chapter delves into the historical backdrop of Afghanistan's endeavors in nation-building, tracing its trajectory from 2001 to the present. It covers significant events, leadership transitions, and societal transformations that have influenced the nation-building process.

CHAPTER 3: United Nations Involvement in Afghanistan Post-2001

This segment examines the United Nations' role in Afghanistan subsequent to the collapse of the Taliban regime. It explores UN initiatives across various domains including governance, security, humanitarian assistance, and reconstruction efforts.

CHAPTER 4: UN and Extended Partners

This chapter delineates the precise objectives or aspirations established by Afghanistan and its global allies for the nation-building endeavor. These encompass aims pertaining to political stability, economic advancement, social integration, and security.

CHAPTER 5: India's Role in Afghan Nation Building

India's role in Afghan nation-building spans various sectors such as Humanitarian Assistance. Infrastructure development.

CHAPTER 6: Challenges to Nation-Building in Afghanistan And Conclusion

This chapter scrutinizes the hurdles and challenges encountered during the nation-building endeavors in Afghanistan. It encompasses topics such as political volatility, corruption, ethnic divisions, insurgency, poverty, and external intervention.

Literature Review

Eslami, R., & Forozesh, E. (2020). Systematic Analysis of State-Nation Building and Political Development in Afghanistan:

This article talks about how The Soviet Union's withdrawal from Afghanistan in the 1990s led to its collapse, marking the end of the Cold War era. During that decade, western governments largely overlooked the plight of the Afghan people. However, the 1998 attack on US interests in Africa and the subsequent September 11, 2001, al-Qaeda attacks reignited foreign intervention by Western governments, leading to a coalition effort against Afghanistan. In late 2001, NATO countries, led by the United States, ousted the Taliban regime. Concurrently, the UN convened a conference in Bonn, Germany, where political and paramilitary factions agreed to establish an inclusive government excluding the Taliban. The principles outlined in the Bonn Agreement

largely align with the tenets of Liberal Democracy. Consequently, liberal democratic ideals are evident in many aspects of Afghanistan's eighth constitution, with the expectation that they would positively impact a nation that had experienced various political systems. However, challenges arose, and the nation-building process encountered shortcomings. This paper employs a systemic analysis of the liberal nation-state, examining system input, policy design, implementation, evaluation, and outcomes, to address the research question: How has the nation-state building process and political development in Afghanistan been influenced by the Bonn Agreement and the doctrine of liberal democracy, resulting in deficiencies in nation-state building and political development? Hypothetically, the process faced deficiencies due to factors such as overlooking Afghanistan's historical and traditional contexts, the limited presence of liberal democrats in positions of power, neglect of the diverse demands of the fragmented society, the perpetuation of nationalist policies, and the flawed public-private divide within the liberal democratic structure.

Rhoda Margesson Congressional Research Service,

This article talks about Since 1988, the United Nations (UN) has maintained an active presence in Afghanistan, earning significant esteem among Afghans for its mediation role in ending the Soviet occupation. Following the Bonn Agreement in December 2001, the coordination of international aid efforts was assigned to the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). However, there are other coordinating bodies linked to the Afghan government, and UNAMA has encountered challenges in fulfilling its complete mandate. The international endeavor for recovery and reconstruction in Afghanistan is vast and intricate, involving UN agencies, bilateral donors, international organizations, and both local and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs), in collaboration with the Afghan government. The coordinated

aid programs of the United States and its European allies encompass a broad spectrum of initiatives, ranging from bolstering Afghanistan's central and local governance structures and security forces to facilitating civilian reconstruction, combating corruption, and providing support for electoral processes.

Yuka Hasegawa. Journal of Intervention and State building

Amidst the intricate contemporary landscape of global interventions, UN peacekeeping endeavors have evolved into broader peace operations. The emergence of concepts like human security and the responsibility to protect has heightened expectations regarding the role of UN peace operations, urging them to address both overarching and localized insecurity in conflict and post-conflict scenarios, particularly in instances of state failure or collapse. Consequently, there has been ongoing discourse regarding the appropriate framework for conceptualizing peace operations. This article examines a conflict resolution perspective on the conceptualization of UN peace operations and scrutinizes the case of the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) through the lens of conflict transformation. It contends that the notion of UN operations' impartiality has been reconceptualised in alignment with the principles of 'human security' and the 'responsibility to protect', underscoring the importance of explicitly defining and understanding the implications of 'value-based' impartiality.

Leake, E.. States, nations, and self-determination: Afghanistan and decolonization at the United Nations

This article talks about how Afghanistan's status as a 'decolonized' state is unconventional, given its historical absence from formal empire affiliations. Nonetheless, Afghan state leaders strategically employed anti-colonial rhetoric and self-determination discourse to assert influence internationally, particularly within the UN

framework. This study delves into the dynamics between Afghan elites and the UN, focusing on Afghanistan's resistance to the prevailing global consensus that self-determination, during the decolonization era, necessitated the establishment of a territorial state-centric international system. Instead, Afghan elites advocated for self-determination for peoples, rather than states. This Afghan perspective on self-determination, diverging from the norm of territorial state centrism, offers insights into the nuanced aspects of decolonization's universal principles and specificities, and how it complicated Afghanistan's international standing. The article examines Afghanistan's engagement with the UN General Assembly and its subcommittees from 1946 to the Soviet withdrawal in 1989, illustrating how decolonization emerged as a multifaceted and contested global phenomenon, accommodating diverse practices and competing visions of political autonomy and rights. International forums like the UN served as crucial platforms where postcolonial statehood norms were established yet simultaneously challenged. Afghanistan's deviation from the UN's emphasis on territorial statehood underscores the ongoing fluidity and intricacy of decolonization's implications and the enduring influence of nation-states on the global stage.

Suhrke, A., Harpviken, K. B., Knudsen, A., Ofstad, A., & Strand, A.
Peacebuilding: Lessons for Afghanistan.

This report examines insights gleaned from past peacebuilding endeavors in Afghanistan, as well as experiences from other nations, to underscore key issues pertinent to the current phase of peacebuilding and economic recovery. It comprises two papers commissioned by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The report advocates for prioritizing the strengthening of national institutions as the most viable strategy. Simultaneously, it cautions against a hasty injection of funds for reconstruction, suggesting instead a cautious approach with a focus on long-term

sustainability. Presenting a substantial aid package at this juncture risks inciting competition for resources and reinforcing the influence of warlords. While there's no one-size-fits-all model for peacebuilding based on experiences elsewhere, valuable lessons can still be drawn. Innovation, willingness to take risks, and adaptability are crucial in crafting effective strategies. In Afghanistan, the establishment of institutions that can mitigate future conflicts among competing factions is paramount. Generating employment and providing external financial support to essential state functions are imperative, although reforming the security sector will be arduous and necessitate a sustained effort. Despite the UN's modest footprint, other actors seem to offset this positive aspect.

Chapter-II

The Turbulent History of Afghanistan

From the aftermath of World War II until nearly the onset of the communist uprising in 1978, Afghanistan was governed by Mohammad Zahir Shah. He focused on advancing the nation while consolidating power within the central government. This era saw initiatives for modernization, social and economic reforms, and infrastructure expansion (Adam,2012). Zahir Shah aimed to modernize governance and promote national independence and progress, investing in schools, hospitals, roads, and other infrastructure projects. However, these efforts encountered internal resistance and regional challenges, ultimately leading to unrest and the communist revolution 1978.

The communist uprising in Afghanistan began in early 1978 and culminated in the ousting of the monarchy by September 1978 (Musawi, 2009). Initially instigated by a group of communist officers led by Nuoor Muhammad Taraki, the revolution established a new communist government. Taraki and the Communist Party of Afghanistan (the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan) orchestrated a military coup against the monarchy.

After the monarchy's fall, Noor Muhammad Taraki led the new communist government, implementing reforms in social, economic, and political realms, including changes in laws pertaining to women's rights and land ownership (Adamec,2012). However, these measures faced significant opposition from religious and ethnic factions.

The communist government's actions triggered a civil war between government forces and opposition groups, including the Muslim Mujahideen and the National Liberation

Front of Afghanistan (Islamic Community), backed by foreign support, notably from Pakistan.

With escalating conflict and mounting pressures, the communist regime collapsed under internal and external strains in 1992. This marked the end of communist rule in Afghanistan and the onset of a tumultuous period characterized by factional strife and power struggles.

The period from 1992 to 2001 witnessed a series of conflicts and political shifts, profoundly impacting Afghanistan and the broader region. Various factions, including the Taliban, Mujahideen, and rival governments, vied for control, leading to intermittent battles and instability.

This tumultuous era culminated in the rise of the Taliban, who swiftly seized power in the mid-1990s, establishing an Islamic government under Mullah Omar's leadership. However, resistance against the Taliban intensified, leading to their eventual downfall in 2001 following the United States-led invasion in response to the September 11 attacks.

The subsequent years saw a series of political, security, and economic changes, including the establishment of a democratically elected government led by Hamid Karzai in 2004 and the assumption of power by Ashraf Ghani in 2014. However, challenges such as corruption, insecurity, and Taliban resurgence persisted, culminating in the Taliban's rapid takeover of Afghanistan in 2021 following the withdrawal of NATO forces.

This tumultuous 20-year period underscores the ongoing struggle to establish stability and development in Afghanistan amidst shifting political landscapes and persistent challenges. The Afghanistan War, an international conflict initiated in 2001 following

the September 11 attacks, unfolded in three distinct phases. The first phase, which involved ousting the Taliban regime that harbored al-Qaeda, was brief, spanning just two months. The subsequent phase, from 2002 to 2008, focused on the U.S. objective of defeating the Taliban militarily and reconstructing key Afghan institutions. The third phase, characterized by a shift to traditional counterinsurgency tactics, commenced in 2008 and intensified with President Barack Obama's decision in 2009 to temporarily augment U.S. troop levels (Witt,2024). This larger force aimed to safeguard civilians from Taliban assaults and aid in the reintegration of insurgents into Afghan society, alongside a timetable for foreign troop withdrawal starting in 2011. However, this strategy largely fell short of its objectives, as insurgent attacks and civilian casualties persisted, while many Afghan military and police units tasked with security proved inadequately trained to fend off the Taliban. By the formal conclusion of the U.S. and NATO combat mission in December 2014, the 13-year Afghanistan War had become the longest conflict in U.S. history, resulting in approximately 2,400 American service members killed and 20,700 wounded (Bateman,2022).

Before the joint U.S. and British invasion of Afghanistan in late 2001, the region had been embroiled in more than twenty years of conflict. On December 24, 1979, Soviet tanks crossed the Amu Darya River into Afghanistan, purportedly to restore stability following a coup by Marxist-Leninist political factions—the People's (Khalq) Party and the Banner (Parcham) Part (Witt,2024). However, their presence sparked a nationwide rebellion by mujahideen fighters, who rallied around Islam as a unifying force. These fighters received significant covert support from Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and the United States, while foreign volunteers, including those who later formed al-Qaeda, joined their cause. The guerrilla warfare against Soviet forces led to their withdrawal in 1989,

allowing the mujahideen to oust the Soviet-backed government and establish a transitional regime.

Despite their victory, the mujahideen remained politically divided, leading to escalated armed conflict in 1994. The emergence of the Taliban in 1996 resulted in the seizure of Kabul and the imposition of strict Islamic law, which included bans on female education and harsh punishments for minor offenses (Subramanian,2022).

That same year, Osama bin Laden, leader of al-Qaeda, sought refuge in Afghanistan after being expelled from Sudan, establishing the organization's headquarters there. With al-Qaeda's support, the Taliban gained control of the majority of Afghan territory by 2001. On September 9 of that year, al-Qaeda operatives assassinated Ahmad Shah Masoud, a prominent mujahideen leader leading the Northern Alliance, which was fighting against the Taliban and seeking increased U.S. support (Maizland,2023).

The events of September 11, 2001, when four U.S. jetliners were hijacked and crashed, immediately shifted the focus to Afghanistan. The plan was orchestrated by al-Qaeda, with some of the 19 hijackers receiving training in Afghanistan (FBI,2001). In response to the attacks, the administration of President George W. Bush rallied around a strategy aimed at removing the Taliban from power in Afghanistan and dismantling al-Qaeda. Bush primarily called for Taliban leader Mullah Mohammed Omar to hand over all al-Qaeda leaders hiding in Afghanistan. When Omar refused, U.S. officials initiated plans for military intervention.

The Afghanistan campaign commenced covertly on September 26, with the arrival of a Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) team named Jawbreaker in the country. Collaborating with anti-Taliban allies, they devised a strategy to overthrow the regime. U.S. officials aimed to avoid deploying a large military force to Afghanistan by

partnering with Afghan factions (Wit,2024). Pentagon officials were particularly concerned about avoiding a prolonged occupation similar to the Soviet experience. The United States primarily relied on the Northern Alliance, despite the recent loss of Massoud, who had been replaced by other leaders such as Mohammed Fahim and Abdul Rashid Dostum. Additionally, they collaborated with anti-Taliban Pashtuns in southern Afghanistan, including Hamid Karzai, a lesser-known tribal leader at the time (Wikimedia foundation,2024).

The CIA team was quickly joined by U.S. and British Special Forces units, who collaborated in providing arms, equipment, and guidance to the Afghan allies. They also assisted in coordinating targets for the air campaign, which commenced on October 7, 2001, with U.S. and British aircraft striking Taliban positions, officially launching Operation Enduring Freedom. By late October, Northern Alliance forces began capturing towns previously under Taliban control, with support from the United States. However, they acted against U.S. preferences on November 13, when they entered Kabul as the Taliban withdrew without resistance (Ignatius,2021).

On December 6, Kandahar, the largest city in southern Afghanistan and the spiritual center of the Taliban, was captured, signaling the collapse of Taliban rule. Forces led by Karzai from the north and those commanded by Gul Agha Sherzai from the south, both heavily supported by the United States, besieged the city(witt,2012). As the Taliban leadership retreated to rural areas within Afghanistan and across the border into Pakistan, key anti-Taliban figures convened at a United Nations (UN)-sponsored conference in Bonn, Germany. With diplomatic backing from the United States, Karzai was chosen to lead the country on an interim basis.

An extensive manhunt for Omar, bin Laden, and al-Qaeda's deputy chief, Ayman al-Zawahiri, was launched. Until bin Laden's death at the hands of U.S. forces in 2011, the closest encounter with him was believed to have occurred during the December 2001 battle of Tora Bora, his mountain stronghold. However, bin Laden reportedly evaded capture with the assistance of Afghan and Pakistani forces who were purportedly aiding U.S. efforts (Witt,2012).

Criticism later arose regarding why the U.S. military allowed Afghan forces to lead the assault on the cave complex at Tora Bora instead of conducting it themselves. Al-Qaeda subsequently reestablished its operations in Pakistan's tribal areas along the northwest border with Afghanistan. Omar and his senior Taliban commanders took refuge in and around the Pakistani city of Quetta, situated in the remote southwestern province of Baluchistan. One of the concluding major engagements of the initial phase of the conflict occurred in March 2002 with Operation Anaconda in Paktia province in the east. This operation involved U.S. and Afghan forces battling around 800 al-Qaeda and Taliban militants and saw the participation of special operations units from Australia, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, and Norway (Witt,2012).

Following the removal of the Taliban and al-Qaeda, the global attention turned towards reconstructing and rebuilding Afghanistan. In April 2002, President Bush unveiled a reconstruction plan dubbed a "Marshall Plan" for Afghanistan during a speech at the Virginia Military Institute, pledging significant financial aid (Donova,2008). However, development efforts in Afghanistan were underfunded from the outset, as U.S. officials shifted their focus to the impending conflict in Iraq. Between 2001 and 2009, Congress appropriated just over \$38 billion for humanitarian and reconstruction aid to Afghanistan (61st quarterly report to the United States Congress, October 2023). The majority of the funds were allocated to training and arming Afghan security forces,

leaving only a fraction of what experts deemed necessary to uplift a country that consistently ranked low on global human development indices. Additionally, the aid program was plagued by inefficiencies and confusion regarding whether civilian or military authorities were responsible for leading various development projects in education, health, agriculture, and other sectors.

The United States maintained the largest foreign presence in Afghanistan and suffered the highest casualties. By spring 2010, over 1,000 U.S. troops had been killed, with Britain and Canada also experiencing significant losses, particularly in the south where the fighting was most intense. While over 20 other countries contributed troops, some nations like Germany and Italy concentrated their forces in the north and west, where insurgency activity was less severe (Gibbons-neff, Cooper, Schmitt, 2021). As the conflict prolonged and casualties mounted, public support for the war dwindled in many Western nations, leading to political pressure to minimize troop exposure to danger or withdraw altogether.

Initially, the war seemed to have been concluded relatively smoothly. On May 1, 2003, U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld declared the end of "major combat" in Afghanistan. Similarly, on the same day, President Bush made a similar announcement aboard the USS Abraham Lincoln, stating that "major combat operations in Iraq have ended." At that time, the number of U.S. troops in Afghanistan stood at 8,000 (Council on Foreign Relations, n.d).

The first democratic elections in Afghanistan since the Taliban's downfall took place on October 9, 2004, with an impressive turnout of approximately 80 percent of registered voters, resulting in Karzai's election to a full five-year term as president (OSCE, n.d). Subsequently, parliamentary elections were held a year later, with many

women securing seats reserved for them to ensure gender representation. However, the structure outlined in the 2004 constitution, which granted Afghanistan a robust central government at the expense of weaker regional and local authorities, contradicted the country's longstanding traditions (United Nations, n.d). Despite holding extensive authority according to the constitution, Karzai was widely perceived as a feeble leader who became more secluded as the conflict unfolded. He narrowly escaped multiple assassination attempts, including a rocket attack in September 2004 that nearly hit a helicopter he was traveling in, forcing him to remain mostly confined to the presidential palace in Kabul due to security concerns. Corruption plagued Karzai's administration, and attempts to establish a national army and police force faced challenges from the outset due to insufficient international assistance and ethnic divisions among Afghans (United Nations, n.d).

Taliban resurgence

From 2005 onward, violence surged as the Taliban made a comeback, adopting new tactics inspired by insurgents in Iraq. Initially, the Taliban had engaged in direct combat with U.S. and NATO forces, which yielded little success. However, their shift towards employing suicide bombings and improvised explosive devices caused significant casualties. Between January 2005 and August 2006, Afghanistan experienced 64 suicide attacks, a tactic previously unheard of in the country's history (Security Council Report, n.d). While these attacks initially caused few casualties, the death toll rose as training and access to high-powered explosives increased. In a particularly brutal attack in November 2007, over 70 people, including many children, were killed during a visit by a parliamentary delegation to Baghlan in the north. Less than a year later, a bombing

at the Indian embassy in Kabul claimed more than 50 lives, leading the Afghan government to accuse elements of Pakistan's intelligence service of involvement, an accusation Pakistan denied (Willkey, 2014).

The resurgence of the Taliban coincided with a rise in anti-American and anti-Western sentiment among Afghans. These sentiments were fueled by the slow pace of reconstruction, allegations of prisoner abuse at U.S. detention facilities, widespread corruption in the Afghan government, and civilian casualties resulting from U.S. and NATO bombings (Council on Foreign Relations, n.d). In May 2006, a U.S. military vehicle accident led to the deaths of several Afghans, triggering violent anti-American riots in Kabul—the most severe since the war's onset. Later that year, NATO assumed command of the war across Afghanistan, signaling a reduced U.S. role and an increasingly international effort (Guardian News and Media, 2007).

However, field commanders in Afghanistan observed a clear intention by the Taliban to escalate their operations, conducting more frequent attacks and intensifying fundraising efforts from wealthy individuals and groups in the Persian Gulf. The resurgence of Afghanistan's opium industry provided another significant source of funding for the Taliban. While international pressure had forced the Taliban to reduce poppy cultivation during their final year in power, the industry rebounded after their removal in 2001, with revenues benefiting the insurgency in some regions. Despite Western-backed initiatives to eradicate poppy cultivation or encourage farmers to switch to other crops, Afghanistan soon became the primary global supplier of opium, accounting for over 90 percent of production.

On the other hand, the United States had limited success in neutralizing Taliban commanders. In early 2007, Mullah Obaidullah Akhund, the Taliban's third-ranking

leader, was captured in Pakistan, and later that year, Mullah Dadullah, the top military commander, was killed in clashes with U.S. forces (Council on Foreign Relations, n.d). However, such instances were rare, as many high-ranking insurgent leaders remained at large, often hiding in the tribal regions of Pakistan adjacent to Afghanistan. Consequently, the United States began targeting insurgent leaders residing in Pakistan with missile strikes conducted by remotely piloted drones. Although U.S. officials publicly denied the existence of the CIA's targeted killing program, it was widely acknowledged in private. Pakistani authorities publicly criticized the strikes but privately consented to them as long as civilian casualties remained minimal. In response to Pakistan's perceived lack of cooperation in combating the Taliban, the United States repeatedly threatened to expand drone strikes beyond the tribal areas into regions like Balochistan, a warning rooted in Pakistan's historical support for the Taliban.

Upon assuming office, U.S. President Barack Obama pledged to direct attention and resources toward addressing the struggling war effort in Afghanistan. On February 17, 2009, he authorized the deployment of an additional 17,000 U.S. troops, supplementing the existing 36,000 U.S. troops and 32,000 NATO service members already stationed there (Kirkpatrick, N. Whitlock, C. and Vitkovskaya, 2021). Just three months later, Obama took the unusual step of relieving a commanding general from his position in the theater of war, replacing Gen. David McKiernan with Gen. Stanley McChrystal. While McKiernan was adjusting the U.S. strategy in Afghanistan, Obama and other senior officials determined that a more significant shift was necessary. McChrystal was appointed to implement a new strategy modeled after the successful surge strategy employed in Iraq (Witt, 2012). This approach emphasized the protection of the civilian population from insurgents rather than simply targeting a large number of militants.

Additionally, it aimed to encourage enemy fighters to defect and ultimately facilitate reconciliation between the Karzai government and Taliban leaders.

Shortly after assuming command, McChrystal determined that he lacked sufficient troops to implement the new strategy. In September 2009, he outlined his concerns in a confidential report, which later became public after being leaked to the press. McChrystal warned that without a significant troop surge, the war would likely be lost within a year. Following an extensive review of Afghan policy—marking the second review by the Obama administration in less than a year—the president delivered a speech at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point on December 1, announcing a significant escalation in the war effort. This included the deployment of an additional 30,000 troops to Afghanistan by the summer of 2010.

The implementation of the new strategy resulted in a rise in U.S. combat fatalities, with U.S. deaths during the first three months of 2010 approximately twice as high as they had been during the same period in 2009 (Kirkpatrick, N. Whitlock, C. and Vitkovskaya, 2021).

The surge in U.S. forces was accompanied by a notable increase in U.S. drone strikes in Pakistan, one of which targeted and killed Pakistani Taliban leader Baitullah Mehsud. However, the CIA suffered a setback in late December 2009 when an al-Qaeda double agent detonated a suicide bomb at Bagram air base in the eastern province of Khost, resulting in the deaths of seven agency personnel (Al Jazeera, 2013).

In early 2010, the surge commenced with an offensive against the insurgent-held town of Marja in Helmand province's southern region. U.S. Marines achieved a swift victory, while McChrystal planned a more ambitious operation in Kandahar. President Obama made his inaugural visit to Afghanistan on March 28, delivering a stern message to

Karzai, urging him to address corruption within his government. Despite winning a new five-year term in an August 2009 election marred by widespread fraud allegations, Karzai pledged to combat corruption in his administration in his inaugural speech. However, there were few immediate indications of progress on this front.

Meanwhile, Karzai expressed a desire to reconcile with the Taliban, repeatedly extending invitations for talks to Mullah Omar, who steadfastly refused. Under pressure from the United States, Karzai criticized international interference in Afghan affairs in April 2010 and even threatened to align with the Taliban. Concerned by these remarks, the White House warned of potentially canceling Karzai's scheduled meeting with Obama in Washington, D.C. Nevertheless, the meeting proceeded as planned, with both leaders outwardly attempting to mend their relationship.

Pakistan offered to facilitate peace talks between Afghan factions, yet its true stance toward the Taliban remained a contentious issue. In February 2010, Pakistani security forces apprehended Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, the Afghan Taliban's second-in-command. Many U.S. officials interpreted this move as a sign of Pakistan's willingness to collaborate with the U.S. and Afghan governments to curb the Taliban's influence. However, others, including Kai Eide, the former top UN official in Kabul, believed that Baradar had advocated for Taliban reconciliation and that his arrest aimed to derail efforts for a political resolution to the conflict rather than a military one. In June 2010, the military leadership in Afghanistan saw a sudden shift when President Obama replaced Gen. Stanley McChrystal with Gen. David Petraeus. This decision came after McChrystal and some of his aides made derogatory comments to a Rolling Stone magazine reporter about Obama, Vice President Joe Biden, National Security Advisor James L. Jones, and special representative to Afghanistan Richard Holbrooke. These remarks highlighted underlying tensions between U.S. military commanders in

Afghanistan and certain members of the Obama administration's civilian leadership. Obama justified the change by stating, "I welcome debate among my team, but I won't tolerate division." Despite the change in leadership, Obama affirmed that the U.S. strategy in Afghanistan would remain unchanged. Petraeus, renowned as the principal architect of counterinsurgency doctrine in the U.S. military, was expected to continue McChrystal's focus on safeguarding the Afghan population from insurgents, bolstering Afghan government institutions, and minimizing civilian casualties.

In 2011, significant developments regarding the primary objectives of the war—capturing key al-Qaeda figures and addressing the Taliban—came to the forefront. Nearly a decade after eluding capture at Tora Bora, bin Laden was killed by U.S. forces on May 2, 2011, following intelligence locating him in a secure compound in Abbottabad, Pakistan. The operation, conducted by a small team arriving by helicopter, resulted in a firefight in which bin Laden was killed. The following month, U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates confirmed the initiation of reconciliation talks with the Taliban, though he emphasized the preliminary nature of these negotiations. On June 22, President Obama announced an accelerated withdrawal timetable for U.S. forces from Afghanistan, citing successes in disrupting al-Qaeda and eliminating many of its leaders. The plan involved reducing the number of U.S. troops by up to 30,000 within a year, with a complete withdrawal of combat forces by the end of 2014. In response, French President Nicolas Sarkozy announced France's intention to commence withdrawal of its 4,000 soldiers from Afghanistan. However, efforts to end the conflict suffered a blow in September when Burhanuddin Rabbani, a former Afghan president involved in reconciliation talks, was assassinated by a suicide bomber (Council on Foreign Relations, n.d).

Early 2012 saw a series of incidents straining U.S.-Afghan relations and sparking public outrage. In mid-January, a video depicting U.S. Marines urinating on deceased Afghans circulated, prompting apologies from U.S. officials. Subsequently, reports of Quran desecration at a military base led to riots and protests among Afghans. Then, on March 11, a U.S. soldier allegedly attacked homes near Panjwai, killing 17 Afghans, mostly women and children (Council on Foreign Relations, n.d).

This event incited widespread demonstrations and condemnation from President Karzai. Shortly afterward, the Taliban suspended talks with the United States and the Afghan government.

Throughout 2012, NATO's efforts to train and equip Afghan security forces were hindered by a rise in insider attacks, where Afghan personnel turned against NATO soldiers. These incidents prompted enhanced screening measures and suspension of training for certain units.

These agreements set the stage for a broader economic and security cooperation framework between the United States and Afghanistan post-NATO combat troop withdrawal in 2014.

2014, Ashraf Ghani assumed the presidency and promptly endorsed the Bilateral Security Agreement. While the U.S. and NATO formally concluded their combat mission in Afghanistan on December 28, 2014, a scaled-down force of around 13,000 troops remained to assist and train Afghan forces until a gradual drawdown began in 2020 (Donovan, 2002). The subsequent withdrawal of U.S. troops, initiated in 2020 and continuing into 2021, aimed to complete the U.S. military presence in Afghanistan. However, the Taliban's resurgence during the withdrawal process left the nation facing challenges akin to those encountered when U.S. forces first entered the country two

decades earlier and finally The military offensive launched by Taliban insurgents in Afghanistan during 2021 resulted in the overthrow of the Kabul-based Islamic government. This offensive commenced on May 1, 2021, coinciding with the withdrawal of US troops and other international allies. Swiftly, the Taliban gained control over numerous provinces and major cities, ultimately seizing Kabul on August 15, 2021, leading to the collapse of the Afghan government. This offensive sparked widespread domestic and international concerns regarding human rights and security. Despite some resistance efforts, the Taliban's rapid and unexpected advancement marked a significant power shift in Afghanistan.

Chapter-III

United Nations' involvement in Afghanistan post-2001

Since the downfall of the Taliban regime in 2001, the United Nations (UN) has been actively involved in Afghanistan, focusing on governance, security, humanitarian aid, and reconstruction efforts. Despite significant challenges such as prolonged warfare, internal conflicts, international neglect, and severe drought, the UN has played a crucial role in coordinating international aid, with donors committing \$4.5 billion for rebuilding the nation. The UN Assistance Mission for Afghanistan (UNAMA) was established in 2002 to oversee all UN relief and reconstruction activities, alongside the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). However, despite these efforts, Afghanistan has struggled with governance issues, widespread influence of warlords, and reliance on opium cultivation. The resurgence of the Taliban since 2007 (Bosi, 2003) has raised doubts about the effectiveness of interventions and garnered concerns about public support in contributing countries. The UN's involvement extends to various areas such as election support, promoting governance and the rule of law, police force training, and engagement with Taliban leaders. Yet, the Taliban's strict restrictions on women's rights, including limited access to education and employment, have drawn widespread criticism and hampered the country's economic development. The UN envoy to Afghanistan has expressed scepticism about recognizing the Taliban government as long as these restrictions persist. However in this section we will be exploring U.N. Involvement in Afghanistan in the areas such as . Governance. Security. Humanitarian Aid. And reconstruction of Afghanistan post 2001.

Governance

Political Transition: shortly after the US and its allies ousted the Taliban in late 2001, representatives from various Afghan factions convened in Bonn, Germany under the guidance of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan to shape the nation's future. Despite strenuous negotiations involving Afghan military leaders, representatives of different ethnic groups, expatriate Afghans, and the exiled monarch, the Bonn Agreement was eventually signed on December 5, 2001, under significant pressure from external powers. (Afghanistan Bonn agreement,n.d).

Participants at the Bonn conference, some of whom had been adversaries for decades, achieved remarkable progress by agreeing on an interim power-sharing arrangement, drafting a new constitution, and scheduling elections for 2004. The Bonn Agreement outlined a structured roadmap and timeline for establishing peace and security, reconstructing the nation, reinstating key institutions, and safeguarding human rights.

Although the Bonn Agreement fell short of being a comprehensive peace accord and lacked crucial provisions such as formal commitments from Afghanistan's neighbors to respect the nation's neutrality and cease support for various military factions, many Afghans viewed it as the best opportunity for peace, security, and human rights in Afghanistan. The agreement offered hope to a population long oppressed and offered the promise of political and economic support from major global powers. However, this hope was tempered by the immense challenges ahead. Afghanistan's civil society had been decimated, with essential institutions like parliament, courts, civil service, education, and health systems virtually nonexistent. Under Taliban rule, the majority of the population, particularly women, were deprived of education and employment rights.

The country was riddled with landmines, and its infrastructure had been ravaged by warfare and neglect.

The Bonn Agreement, or any other agreement, was incapable of providing immediate solutions to these profound issues. Reconstruction efforts would require years, as well as the nurturing of a new political culture that prioritized civilian authority, national interests, and peaceful conflict resolution. Despite the formal signing of the Bonn Agreement, Afghanistan remained a nation where violence and force were often used to settle disputes and assert power.

Despite the anticipated challenges, there remained significant potential for progress, even if only in incremental steps. However, deliberate choices by key actors, notably Afghan military leaders and the United States, have caused the processes initiated by the Bonn Agreement to falter in critical areas such as human rights, public security, the rule of law, and economic reconstruction.

Elections: The smooth execution of the presidential election on October 9th marked a significant milestone in Afghanistan's journey toward building democratic structures. Despite facing significant logistical hurdles, efforts were made to ensure that both voters and candidates could participate in an electoral process that largely adhered to many important international benchmarks for democratic elections. Despite security challenges, polling day stood out for its peaceful environment and remarkable voter turnout, offering voters a diverse range of candidates and genuine political options. The 2004 Afghan presidential election was a pivotal moment in Afghanistan's move towards democracy, with Hamid Karzai securing victory with 55.4% of the ballots. The United Nations played a vital role by providing impartial support and overseeing voter registration (Barrick, 2006) underscoring the significance of security and voter

engagement. Despite imperfections, the election represented a significant step forward for Afghanistan's democratic aspirations, with the U.N facilitating voting in Pakistan and Iran to ensure safety and substantial participation, reflecting international commitment to Afghanistan's democratic advancement. Despite allegations of fraud, the election proceeded, demonstrating the Afghan populace's steadfast commitment to democracy.

Institution Building: The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has played a key role in institution-building efforts in Afghanistan, collaborating closely with the Afghan government and international bodies such as the World Bank. Initially focused on providing services, the UNDP's strategy has shifted towards strengthening formal state institutions, including the executive, judiciary, and legislature. However, this transition has also led to a weakening of civil society, which is essential for a democratic society.

The UN's involvement in Afghanistan has been marked by a cooperative approach, emphasizing Afghan ownership of the reconstruction process. International intervention, including the presence of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and the establishment of political institutions through the Bonn process, has aimed to enhance human security.

Security

Peacekeeping: The United Nations' peacekeeping efforts in Afghanistan after 2001, conducted through the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), have concentrated on aiding Afghans in establishing the groundwork for lasting peace and progress. Established in March 2002, UNAMA's main goal is to facilitate a comprehensive and inclusive Afghan-led political process to achieve sustainable peace.

In recent years, the UN's engagements in Afghanistan have revolved around advancing peace and development, specifically by assisting Afghans in constructing a sustainable future. UNAMA's mandate has been renewed multiple times, most recently until March 17, 2024, with a focus on promoting good governance, capacity building, and the rule of law to bolster governmental institutions in Afghanistan. The UN Security Council has expressed concern over the Taliban's lack of progress in meeting expectations, highlighting the crucial need for the full and meaningful participation of women and the protection of human rights, especially for women, children, minorities, and vulnerable individuals.

Aside from UNAMA, the UN has undertaken various initiatives in Afghanistan, including supplying essential medicines and medical supplies for drug treatment centers in partnership with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). The UN also issued its largest aid appeal for a single country, requesting \$4.6 billion in 2023 to provide assistance in Afghanistan, where it estimates two-thirds of the population depend on aid for survival.

the UN's peacekeeping mission in Afghanistan post-2001 has aimed at fostering peace, stability, and development in the nation, with a specific focus on bolstering governmental institutions, promoting good governance, and safeguarding human rights.

Counterterrorism: before the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, the United Nations (UN) had a limited role in counter-terrorism efforts. Despite numerous attempts, the General Assembly had struggled to negotiate conventions to outlaw terrorism, although it had successfully negotiated 12 international conventions targeting various terrorism-related activities. While the Security Council responded to several terrorist incidents since its establishment, its permanent members did not consider

terrorism a threat to international peace and security. This view was shared by a majority of UN members, who believed that terrorism was best addressed at the national level. Consequently, many states did not ratify the General Assembly's conventions on terrorism, resulting in the UN's pre-9/11 role in counter-terrorism being informal and mainly focused on encouraging member states to combat terrorism voluntarily (Messner, and Yardan, 2010).

However, the 9/11 attacks dramatically changed the UN's role in counter-terrorism. Utilizing its quasi-legislative authority, the Security Council passed Resolutions 1368 and 1373, which laid the foundation for the current global counter-terrorism framework. Resolution 1368 affirmed states' right to self-defense against terrorist groups or their state sponsors when under attack or threat. Resolution 1373 mandated all states to criminalize terrorism, ratify the 12 international conventions mentioned earlier, and align their laws with international standards. Essentially, the Security Council mandated states to enhance their domestic counter-terrorism capabilities to impede terrorist groups' global operations (Messner, and Yardan, 2010). Moreover, the Security Council argued that aligning states' legal frameworks with international norms would facilitate interstate cooperation in counter-terrorism efforts.

The third pillar of the global counter-terrorism framework includes the Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC) and the Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate (CTED), both established following the adoption of Resolution 1373. These entities, functioning as subsidiary bodies of the Security Council, are tasked with coordinating and assisting efforts in counter-terrorism. Therefore, the Security Council plays a pivotal role in shaping and implementing global counter-terrorism measures.

Humanitarian Aid

Emergency Assistance in 2001, the UN's involvement in Afghanistan through UNSMA and UNOCHA was marked by a struggle between political and humanitarian priorities. While the UN aimed for peace and imposed sanctions on the Taliban, its humanitarian agencies and associated NGOs continued their mission to aid the Afghan population within their respective mandates. Different UN entities pursued distinct objectives: the Security Council and UNSMA criticized Taliban policies, while UNOCHA, UNHCR, and UNDP sought ways to provide assistance despite obstacle.

The United Nations (UN) plays a critical role in delivering emergency aid in Afghanistan, especially following the Taliban's takeover in 2021. The situation in Afghanistan is marked by a rapid economic downturn, heightened risks of hunger and malnutrition, inflation, increased poverty rates, a severe strain on the national healthcare system, and significant limitations on the participation of women and girls in public life. The UN has outlined three main priorities to tackle the crisis: maintaining essential services, fostering economic opportunities and resilient livelihoods, and promoting inclusion, gender equality, human rights, and the rule of law. Since August 2021, the UN has utilized international donor funds to procure, transport, and allocate at least \$2.9 billion to Afghanistan, with the United States being the largest contributor. Notably, the UN is the sole entity involved in purchasing and transporting cash for humanitarian aid in Afghanistan. Additionally, the European Union collaborates with the NGO 'People in Need' to provide support to the most vulnerable families through cash assistance, rehabilitation of water sources, hygiene and nutrition sessions, and other initiatives.

United Nations emergency aid in Afghanistan focuses on helping with the critical situation in the country, including economic decline, food insecurity, malnutrition risks, inflation, poverty, healthcare strain, and gender inequality.

The UN has three main priorities to tackle the crisis: ensuring essential services like healthcare, education, and clean water continue; supporting economic opportunities and resilient livelihoods; and promoting inclusion, gender equality, human rights, and the rule of law. Since August 2021, the UN has raised over \$2.9 billion in international donations for Afghanistan, with the United States being the largest donor. The UN handles purchasing, transporting, and distributing cash for aid in Afghanistan, showcasing its crucial role in providing essential assistance in the country. Collaboration with NGOs like 'People in Need' shows joint efforts to help vulnerable families by offering cash aid, improving water sources, providing hygiene and nutrition sessions, and other necessary support services. , the UN's emergency aid in Afghanistan deals with various humanitarian needs and priorities to reduce suffering and promote stability and resilience in the country.

Refugee Support: It has been over forty years since the first Afghan refugees left their country, creating one of the largest and longest displacement crises in recent history. Today, Iran and Pakistan host the majority of Afghan refugees, providing access to health and education services for over 2 million registered Afghan refugees. In 2021, an estimated 1.6 million Afghans have arrived in neighbouring countries despite strict border controls, using unofficial crossing points.

The international community has been involved in the refugee response for many years, working on finding solutions for Afghan refugees through initiatives like the Global Compact on Refugees in 2018. In 2012, Afghanistan, Iran, and Pakistan, with support

from UNHCR, developed the Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees to Support Voluntary Repatriation, Sustainable Reintegration and Assistance to Host Countries (SSAR). This strategy has brought together government agencies, humanitarian organizations, UN agencies, and NGOs to work towards solutions for Afghan refugees.

The SSAR strategy recognizes that refugee protection and solutions are a shared responsibility of the international community, requiring a commitment to address the root causes of displacement and share responsibility with host countries. A Support Platform for the SSAR strategy was established in 2019 to strengthen global efforts towards finding solutions for Afghan refugees based on the principles of solidarity and responsibility-sharing outlined in the Global Compact on Refugees.

Afghanistan, Iran, and Pakistan are leading the new SSAR Support Platform, with UNHCR serving as the secretariat. This platform allows the three countries and the international community to collaborate on solutions for Afghan refugees. The SSAR Core Group, comprised of various States, financial institutions, the European Union, and UNDP, is also contributing to this effort. Initially chaired by the European Union from 2021-2023, the Core Group is working to support Afghan refugees.

Since its inception in 2019, the Support Platform has seen significant changes in the region that impact solutions. Afghanistan is currently facing a severe humanitarian crisis, with various factors such as bans on Afghan women working in humanitarian response and climate change exacerbating the situation. Over 3.4 million people remain displaced in Afghanistan due to recent conflicts, putting a strain on the resilience of the Afghan people, especially internally displaced individuals.

The United Nations and non-governmental organizations have launched plans for 2023 to provide humanitarian aid to 23.7 million people in Afghanistan and support 7.9

million displaced Afghans and local communities in neighboring countries. The needs have increased since 2022.

To address the humanitarian needs in Afghanistan, a plan has been put forth that requires \$4 billion. This funding will cover emergency needs, including protection for the most vulnerable and life-saving assistance in shelter, food security, and healthcare. The United Nations offers extensive support to refugees in Afghanistan to help meet the needs of displaced individuals and families. Here is an overview of the UN's efforts to support refugees in the country:

1. **Protecting and Helping Refugees:** The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) ensures that refugees, asylum-seekers, internally displaced persons (IDPs), and returnees in Afghanistan receive protection and assistance. This includes providing legal help, shelter, healthcare, education, and support for earning a livelihood.
2. **Registering and Documenting Refugees:** UNHCR helps refugees and asylum-seekers in Afghanistan register and obtain necessary documents to ensure they are recognized legally and can access essential services.
3. **Managing Refugee Camps:** UNHCR, in collaboration with government authorities and humanitarian partners, manages refugee camps and settlements to offer safe and dignified living conditions for displaced populations.
4. **Helping with Repatriation and Reintegration:** UNHCR supports the voluntary return of Afghan refugees from neighbouring countries, providing aid to help them reintegrate into communities and access basic services.
5. **Protecting Vulnerable Groups:** The UN focuses on protecting vulnerable groups such as women, children, elderly individuals, persons with disabilities, and minority

populations by addressing their specific needs and ensuring they have access to essential services and support.

6. Engaging with Communities and Building Capacity: UNHCR works with local communities to promote understanding and support for refugees and IDPs, while also helping government institutions and civil society organizations respond effectively to the needs of displaced populations.

7. Advocating for Refugee Rights: The UN advocates for the rights and well-being of refugees and IDPs in Afghanistan by collaborating with government authorities, international partners, and civil society to develop and implement policies that uphold international refugee law and standards.

the United Nations' support for refugees in Afghanistan focuses on ensuring the protection, assistance, and dignity of displaced populations, as well as promoting long-term solutions and sustainable integration within the country or facilitating voluntary repatriation when circumstances allow.

Reconstruction

The program has changed to match the economic, political, and security conditions and the views of the international community at the United Nations. From when the Mujahideen captured Kabul until the Taliban fell, the UNDP office worked from Islamabad for safety. After the Loya Jirga meeting and the new government forming in early 2004, the office in Kabul was fully operational again.

When the Taliban was in power, because of their treatment of women and the world's refusal to accept their government, UNDP mostly focused on community development

and rebuilding projects. Local NGOs and groups were key partners in running UNDP projects for social development and rebuilding local infrastructure. UNDP and other UN agencies worked directly with communities to decide on what needed to be done. In many cases, local shuras managed small projects like fixing roads, canals, water systems, and bridges.

With the UNDP office based in Islamabad, they worked a lot with Pakistan-based NGOs. Even though UNDP doesn't work with these groups anymore and many staff have left, the office still has people who were there during the PEACE program.

After the US-led war and the Taliban's fall in 2002, UNDP changed its program to focus on providing urgent services and filling important needs. This shift was necessary to follow UNDP's goals and help in the emergency situation.

In this regard, it is evident that UNDP has primarily focused on seeking funds in areas that fall under its responsibility. However, the haste to gather resources has sometimes come at the expense of developing national capacity and ensuring sustainability.

During the years 2002-2004, UNDP played a key role in managing a fund for civil service and police salaries, assisting the UN Department of Political Affairs in organizing a Loya Jirga, and mediating agreements between local and national leaders involved in the conflict to help achieve peace. It seemed that UNDP's approach during this time was more about meeting the demands of the international community and the interim Afghan authorities rather than systematically analyzing the conflict and developing.

The UNDP country office started moving from Islamabad to Kabul in November/December 2001. The process was slow because access to 'security slots' for international staff was limited and the SRSB wanted to keep a 'light footprint'. While

other agencies were able to move a large number of staff using humanitarian and relief assistance as a reason, UNDP had restrictions on the number of people it could mobilize as development was seen as a lower priority in a phased approach. The Secretary-General appointed the Administrator of UNDP to lead the early recovery effort in Afghanistan as Chairman of the United Nations Development Group. Later, the UNDP Resident Coordinator became the Deputy SRSG for Humanitarian Coordination and Development Cooperation.

It also played a role in overseeing the Afghan Reconstruction Trust Fund, which was set up in May 2002. The Trust Fund replaced the AIAF and served as a unified financing tool for the Afghan budget. It made managing funds for the Afghanistan Transitional Administration simpler by coordinating financial aid to help the government address significant funding gaps for civil servant salaries. Additionally, the Afghan Reconstruction Trust Fund supported key reconstruction projects and was a funding source aimed at encouraging skilled Afghans to return and contribute to rebuilding their nation. The Asian Development Bank, Islamic Development Bank, UNDP, and the World Bank work together to manage the Fund, with the World Bank acting as the Fund's Administrator.

Donors contributed US \$73.4 million to the Afghan Interim Authority Fund (AIAF) for re-establishing the civil service. This money was used for various purposes like recruiting new employees, paying salaries, winterizing government buildings, providing office equipment and vehicles, and covering other necessary expenses (Faubert, C. Kaldor, M. Niazi, S. Pillay, R., 2006). Despite not having a financial system in place or accurate data on the number of civil servants, a new payroll system was set up at the Ministry of Finance just a month after the Bonn Agreement was signed. Between January and July 2002, salaries were restored for all 32 provinces in

Afghanistan, and control systems for salary payments were implemented at the Ministry of Finance. Finance staff were trained, including in information technology skills, and emergency repairs were done in 30 ministerial offices of the Afghan Interim Authority. The AIAF also supported the commissions established under the Bonn Agreement, such as the Emergency Loya Jirga that approved the Transitional Administration under President Hamid Karzai.

Since 2001, the UN has been involved in Afghanistan in various ways to help the country move towards peace, stability, and development. However, there are still challenges because of conflict, political instability, and socio-economic weaknesses. This means that continued international support and cooperation are needed.

Chapter-IV

United Nations and Extended Partners (EU, U.S)

Introduction

After the Taliban regime fell in Afghanistan in 2001, the US spent much money and sacrificed many lives in the country as part of its efforts in the "War on Terror" and to help with rebuilding and establishing institutions there. The US mainly focused on getting rid of Al-Qaeda and overthrowing the Taliban but also aimed to create a working government. However, mistakes made by US leaders along the way hurt the US-led coalition's goals. Even after almost twenty years in Afghanistan, the US did not fully achieve what it set out to do.

In response to the September 11, 2001 attacks, the US started its military operation in Afghanistan on October 7, 2001, known as "Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF)". This became the longest war in US history. According to former President George W. Bush (Bush, 2001), the fight against terrorism began with Al-Qaeda but would continue until all global terrorist groups were defeated. OEF was meant to stop Afghanistan from being a base for terrorists.

By late 2003, the Bush administration focused more on bringing democracy to Afghanistan and developing a broader strategy called the 'Freedom Agenda' (FA). This was part of a larger plan to promote democracy in the region.

Years later, in August 2017, President Donald Trump announced the US strategy for South Asia and Afghanistan, saying that America would support the Afghan

government as long as progress was made. Despite different plans by various US administrations over the years, Afghanistan remains a work in progress for US foreign policy (Trump, 2017).

This argument examines why the US was unsuccessful in building a stable government in Afghanistan. Even though the US invested many resources in rebuilding the country's institutions and infrastructure, mistakes made by US leaders ended up undermining their mission in Afghanistan. Despite the US's military and diplomatic efforts in Afghanistan for almost twenty years, the goals set were not fully achieved. The paper uncovers several reasons that stopped the US from reaching its goals. By looking at previous studies, the paper has examined the weaknesses in US policy in Afghanistan through three main areas of nation-building.

US-led state-building in Afghanistan

The US has taken the lead in creating new governments in different parts of the world for over a hundred years, starting in Cuba in 1898 and continuing in places like Afghanistan and Iraq. The US began working on building up Afghanistan in 2001, but this is still an ongoing project. Initially, the main goal of these efforts was mostly strategic, with the US wanting to protect its own security and economic interests rather than focusing on democracy (Amin and Graz, 2006). It was only later that the US started to push for democratic rule in the countries it was helping to rebuild, partly because of its own political beliefs and the need for support from its people.

One of the key parts of US state-building efforts is sending many troops to the area in question. Another important aspect is using American military and civilian personnel

to help run the government in the rebuilt country. Afghanistan serves as an example of how the US has tackled state-building.

After the 9/11 attacks, the US went into Afghanistan to fight against terrorism rather than to help the Afghan people. The main goals were to defeat Al-Qaeda and remove the Taliban from power, as they had been supporting terrorists. The focus shifted from humanitarian concerns to what would happen after the intervention (Hehir, 2007). This led to a shift towards state-building instead of just helping in emergencies. The US's actions in Afghanistan were mostly driven by the need to deal with the immediate threats posed by terrorist groups. State-building in Afghanistan faced challenges from the start to the mistakes made by the US in terms of security, peace, democracy, and economic development.

Security and peace

Building a stable and peaceful state in Afghanistan is crucial for development and security. It is important to have a comprehensive strategy that considers state-building, the economy, society, the environment, and peace equally. Focusing too much on one aspect can lead to more problems in the present and the future.

During the G8 conference in Geneva 2002, a Security Sector Reform plan was established for Afghanistan. This plan included five pillars, each major donor country leading and supporting one. The US was responsible for building the Afghan National Army, Germany for reconstructing the police force, Italy for the judiciary, Japan for disarming and reintegrating former fighters, and the UK for counter-narcotics. However, no system was in place to coordinate the efforts of these lead nations. (Hodes and Sedra, 2007).

In Afghanistan, having a strong security presence is important, but there were not enough troops on the ground with a clear mission. This allowed various groups like warlords, drug smugglers, and militants to regain power. The focus was on winning the war on terror instead of supporting state-building efforts.

Understanding the enemy and oneself is crucial in warfare. In Afghanistan, the US failed to follow these principles effectively, leading to challenges in achieving their goals. Additionally, there is a lack of a cohesive strategy among international players involved in state-building in Afghanistan.

The approaches of different countries, such as the US and Europe, towards state-building in Afghanistan vary greatly. The US focuses on military requirements and neoliberal economic principles, while Europe, particularly Germany, relies heavily on non-governmental organizations. This lack of coordination and conflicting strategies hinder the progress of state-building efforts in Afghanistan. The international community aims to help the central government become stronger so that it can have control over the use of force across the country and fulfill its duties. However, the government's power is quite restricted by the warlords, who are ironically supported by the US.

U.S support to warlords

The US gave a lot of money and weapons to the former mujahideen who became warlords after 9/11 to fight against the Taliban and Al-Qaeda in Afghanistan. This support continued even after the Taliban fell and al-Qaeda was dismantled in the country. With the help of the US, these warlords, who had been defeated or kicked out

by the Taliban, regained power and began to intimidate people and corrupt the newly established state institutions.

The group of Afghan commanders who opposed the Taliban was called the Northern Alliance (NA) because of where they operated in the north of the country. General Tommy Franks, who was the Commander-in-Chief of the United States Central Command (CENTCOM) at the time, mentioned in his book, *American Soldier*, that the NA commanders were very willing to work with the Americans. He said, “Our plan relied on teaming up these strong, motivated opposition fighters with the Coalition’s powerful air support. But for this to happen, we needed Special Forces teams—Operational Detachments Alpha (ODA)—to work with each of the local Northern Alliance commanders”(Franks, 2004).

After the death of the most powerful NA commander, Ahmad Shah Massoud, on 9 September 2001, the leadership of the group was passed on to four tough commanders who were suspicious of each other. Muhammad Fahim Khan and Bismillah Khan Mohammadi led the eastern Tajiks, Ismail Khan led the western Tajiks mainly in Herat, Abdul Rashid Dostum led the Uzbek militia, and Karim Khalili and Mohammad Mohaqiq led the Hazara group. Together, they had about 20,000 fighters (Bolger, 2014).

On 27 September 2001, Gary, a CIA officer, led a team of ten paramilitary officers into Afghanistan with \$3 million in cash to give to anti-Taliban commanders. He offered them money in exchange for information on enemy positions, intelligence on their communication, weapons, and structure to assist the US Special Forces. The official name for the US government's Global War on Terrorism in Afghanistan, Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), began on 7 October 2001 and was mostly finished by 7

December 2001. The CIA spent \$70 million to gain the support of the NA commanders and tribal elders to achieve the Agency's goals. (Council on Foreign Relations, n.d).

The coalition armed and funded Afghan commanders to capture and hold territory once the Taliban and al-Qaeda fled the US air offensive. Some of these commanders misused the money and weapons they received by getting involved in drug production and taking over land, causing fear among Afghans (Rubin 2013: 229).

Warlordism presented a significant challenge in post-Taliban Afghanistan. Zalmay Khalilzad, the former US envoy and ambassador to Afghanistan from 2001 to 2005, mentioned in his book *The Envoy: From Kabul to the White House, My Journey Through a Turbulent World* that President Karzai expressed deep concern about the threat of warlordism. Karzai feared that if people became tired of insecurity or oppression from their local leaders, they might turn to the Taliban or others who promised justice and peace. The issue was that the United States was working with these warlords who had played a crucial role in fighting against the Taliban and al-Qaeda and were still needed to combat the insurgents (Khalilzad 2016: 136–137).

In Spring 2002, Pacha Khan Zadran, a tribal elder and warlord in Afghanistan's eastern Paktia province, threatened President Karzai with civil war if he was not recognized as the provincial governor by the central government. Despite Karzai's rejection of his demand and issuing an ultimatum to Zadran on 30 April to surrender, the US Department of Defense did not seem willing to assist Karzai against a local warlord. The US Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld sent a memo to President Bush stating that if Karzai could not handle local forces without American military support, he would not survive politically. Rumsfeld believed that Karzai needed to govern in a similar manner to Mayor Richard J. Daley of Chicago in the 1960s, using tactics like

maneuvering, guile, money, patronage, and services to maintain authority over the city's diverse and powerful leaders and prevent rebellion. (Rumsfeld, 2002).

US officials were determined to back warlord authority, despite the opposition from the Afghan political leadership and the general public, which ultimately led to a disastrous outcome in Afghanistan. Karzai felt offended by Rumsfeld's statement, believing that the secretary of defense was out of touch with reality. As the war continued, the Bush administration faced two policy choices. By the summer of 2002, it became clear that the warlords were gaining power while the Karzai government lacked the necessary resources to compete. The US strategy was to make Karzai ineffective in the capital, relying on the warlords to maintain peace in rural areas and the US Special Operation Forces (SOF) to target al Qaeda. This approach focused on military aspects and overlooked nation-building, institution-building, and infrastructure development, essentially maintaining the status quo from the Taliban era with a change in government (Rashid, 2008).

This situation encouraged the Taliban to regroup and launch an insurgency against the Afghan government and its international allies. In March 2002, frustrated aid officials at the American embassy disclosed that the CIA's large budget was being used to pay off warlords and their militias, carry out quick development projects, locate al Qaeda leaders, and conduct covert operations against extremists. By early summer 2002, the CIA was funding 45,000 Afghan mercenaries (Rashid, 2008). The United Nations Special Representative for Afghanistan, Lakhdar Brahimi (2001–2004), pushed for international troops to patrol Kabul and other major cities instead of relying on militia groups. In contrast, Rumsfeld and General Franks preferred to continue collaborating with local warlords. (Dobbins, 2008).

Ai Eide, who was the UN's Special Representative to Afghanistan and head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) from 2008 to 2010, stated that President Hamid Karzai had limited power and financial resources. The US, Karzai's strong ally, made it clear that they would not get involved, so Karzai had to be cautious in his actions. Karzai himself acknowledged this, saying that the West was not going to help Afghanistan get rid of warlordism. Instead, some warlords were allowed to keep their militias, get rich, and scare Afghan villagers. This was Karzai's first disappointment with the West after the Taliban fell (Eide, 2014).

As foreign aid started pouring into Afghanistan, warlords, and corrupt local leaders were quick to take advantage and enrich themselves. Karzai mentioned that they even formed contracting companies and received lucrative foreign contracts. US officials and generals treated these warlords like "heads of state," which only boosted their egos. In September 2002, top US officials like the US Treasury Secretary and the commander of US-led Coalition forces met with these warlords. Looking back, the new US ambassador, Robert Finn, questioned if the US could have handled things differently. He believed they should have distanced themselves from the warlords sooner and supported the government more openly. Finn stopped visiting some warlords, but others, like Rumsfeld, continued to meet with them (Rashid, 2008).

Reconstruction and economic development

The World Bank says that from 1978 to November 2001, Afghanistan lost \$240 billion due to damaged infrastructure and missed opportunities. (Ghani and Lockhart, 2008). After the Bonn Agreement, a donors' conference occurred in Tokyo in January 2002. Out of \$5 billion raised, the US pledged only \$290 million for one year, leading other

countries to offer less aid. This meant that when divided among over 25 million Afghans, the amount was not as substantial as it seemed. In comparison, Bosnians received 16 times more aid than Afghans in their first year of reconstruction, while Kosovars received eight times more (Dobbins, 2008). Between FYs 2003 and 2004, US Congress spending on Afghan assistance increased from \$740 million to \$1.9 billion, with a large portion being a supplemental appropriation. As donors from the Tokyo conference did not fully fulfill their pledges, a second conference was held in Berlin in March-April 2004. Here, \$8.2 billion in bilateral aid was committed for the years 2004-2006, with \$4.5 billion promised upfront in 2004. The US pledged \$2.9 billion in non-military assistance for the whole period (Weinbaum, 2005).

The White House's Office of Management and Budget (OMB) leadership was responsible for not providing enough economic assistance to Afghanistan in 2002 and 2003. Instead of giving the necessary aid to Afghan farmers and completing critical roads, OMB was focused on negotiating with the State. If OMB had given Afghanistan the same amount of money spent on Iraq in just one week - \$3 billion - it could have helped the country develop alternatives to poppy production and promote economic growth. This lack of support from OMB hindered Afghanistan's progress and made it harder to prevent a Taliban resurgence (Zakheim, 2011).

The US draft budget for 2006 only allocated \$37 million for road programs (Neumann, 2009) which limited President Karzai's ability to provide services to the Afghan people. The international community's minimal engagement in building Afghan institutions further weakened the government's power. The Afghan government's 'Donor Financial Review' in 2009 revealed that most of the assistance provided to Afghanistan bypassed the Afghan authorities. Out of the \$62 billion pledged by the international community between 2001 and 2009, only \$8.7 billion was directly delivered through the Afghan

government's treasury. However, the government had little control over how this money was allocated and spent, with only \$770 million being fully at their discretion (Donor Financial Review, 2009).

Lack of communication and coordination between US authorities and Afghans hindered the state-building project in Afghanistan. In 2002, World Bank and UN officials advised against investing in higher education and recommended minimal investment in secondary and vocational education. They believed that focusing on primary education aligned with the millennium development goals, while higher education and vocational training were considered a luxury. However, the absence of trained professionals like doctors, teachers, engineers, and managers raised doubts about Afghanistan's ability to recover. Five years later, the country's operational budget was overwhelmed by the cost of technical assistance due to the government's "poor capacity."

Furthermore, the promise to build hundreds of schools in Afghanistan resulted in USAID requesting other actors to halt their programs. Despite the commitment to construct eleven hundred schools within two years, only eight school buildings were completed, six of which have already collapsed. The consequences of this failure go beyond financial losses and extend to the erosion of trust and hope among Afghan citizens. Interviews conducted in 2007 revealed a feeling of betrayal towards the international community due to perceived waste, inefficiency, and corruption.

Author Jack Fairweather highlights the lack of communication among organizations involved in the reconstruction of Afghanistan, using the example of the Kajaki hydroelectric dam repair project in Helmand province. In 2003, the US ambassador allocated \$20 million for a study on the necessary repairs, estimated to cost \$125 million. However, Afghanistan's finance minister, Ashraf Ghani, had already conducted

a study revealing that the repairs would only cost \$500,000, unbeknownst to the Americans (Fairweather, 2014).

The US and UN have spent hundreds of millions of dollars during presidential and parliamentary elections since 2004. If the process had been electronic or biometric, it could have saved money and prevented election fraud. Thousands of people admitted to voting multiple times in the 2004 presidential elections. The same happened during the 2005 parliamentary elections, costing about \$400 million. An electronic system could have been implemented for \$140 million and made \$80 million by issuing passports, licenses, and identity cards in the first year. A partial biometric process was used in the 2018 parliamentary elections and the 2019 presidential elections, but it had some issues (Ghani and Lockhart, 2008).

The "aid system" faces challenges with transparency and accountability and struggles to offer effective advice to national governments. The US reconstruction policy lacked coordination and relied heavily on NGOs for aid distribution. Resources that should be used for long-term projects are instead used for short-term NGO projects. Important national projects like road-building, healthcare, and education are typically the responsibility of the government. If NGOs continue focusing on small local projects, the country's infrastructure will remain weak.

During an international donor conference in Paris in 2008, the US refused to commit to providing information on the activities of Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) to the Afghan government. President Karzai found this unacceptable and emphasized the need for transparency. PRTs were small civilian-military units aimed at helping local governments function better and provide essential services. Afghanistan had 26 PRTs in total.

President Karzai frequently urged allied governments to stop using private security companies and PRTs as they were hindering the central government's authority in the country. During the 2011 Munich Security Conference, Karzai stated that the Afghan government did not want any competing parallel structures that confused people about who was in charge. He emphasized the need for these parallel structures to end as the Afghan government took on more responsibility.

The Afghan government's 'Donor Financial Review' in 2009 found that only 15 out of 34 donor countries provided complete data of their assistance, with the US being among those that provided incomplete data. Many donors, including the US, spent a large portion of their funds on international salaries, luxury cars, and chartered airplanes. Consultants in the Afghan Ministry of Finance were reported to receive high salaries, with one consultant claiming to receive \$22,000 monthly (DONOR Financial Review, 2009).

The influx of billions of dollars into Afghanistan to build a new state and fight a counterinsurgency war led to rampant corruption and a waste of aid money. Former Afghan President Hamid Karzai blamed the US for fostering a culture of corruption in Afghanistan by spending large amounts of money without accountability over the past two decades. Karzai responded to findings of US administrations misleading the public about the war in Afghanistan, stating that the US encouraged corruption in the country.

From FY 2002-2019, around \$132.6 billion was allocated for reconstruction and related activities in Afghanistan. The nine largest U.S. funds received over 86.1% (almost \$114.17 billion) of this total amount. More than 92.9% (almost \$106.11 billion) has been used, and nearly 89.2% (almost \$101.80 billion) has been spent. Approximately \$5.80 billion of the allocated funds will not be used as it has expired. As of September

30, 2019, the total appropriations for reconstruction and related activities in Afghanistan were approximately \$132.55 billion (SIGAR, 2019). These funds are divided into four main categories: security, governance and development, humanitarian, and oversight and operations. Around \$8.94 billion of the funds are allocated for counternarcotic initiatives that intersect with security (\$4.57 billion) and governance and development (\$4.37 billion) categories (SIGAR, 2019). According to the Department of Defence's latest report on the "Cost of War" dated June 30, 2019, cumulative obligations for Afghanistan, including war-fighting, had reached \$764.5 billion (SIGAR, 2019). The cost of Afghanistan reconstruction accounted for 16% of this total amount. It appears that a significant portion of the funds did not result in lasting and sustainable benefits due to mismanagement, lack of coordination, unnecessary projects, and prioritizing military aspects over development. Four main reasons why state-building efforts fail include insufficient resources, donor policies not adapting to local conditions, flawed state-building models, and conflicting interests of key domestic actors. In the case of Afghanistan, the United States made all of these mistakes.

In 2001, the US and its coalition partners in Afghanistan did not focus on building the state. However, their main goal should have been to create security and promote peace in the country as a result of their "War on Terror". They went to Afghanistan to break down Al-Qaeda and remove the Taliban regime in order to protect their own countries. When the US eventually started working on building the state in Afghanistan, they didn't have much success. The US state-building effort ended up giving power to various warlords by giving them money and helping them get important military and political roles. This not only affected security and peace but also led to chaos and violations of rights. If the US had strengthened the Afghan central government and helped it enforce the rule of law, the state-building project would have been much more

successful. It would have had a positive impact not only on security, but also on good governance, democracy, and economic growth.

EU engagement in Afghanistan - An overview

While the EU has not been involved in the military side of rebuilding after the conflict in Afghanistan, it has played a crucial role in politics and the economy. The EU has provided financial support and has had a political impact through the appointment of an EU Special Representative (EUSR), Francesca Vendrell, since 2002. EUSR Vendrell leads a small team of political advisers and acts as the face and voice of the EU in Afghanistan. Their goal is to uphold the EU-Afghanistan Joint Declaration, promote positive contributions from regional actors, and support the work of the UN and the Secretary-General/High Representative Javier Solana in the region (Council of EU, 2006). The EU is the second largest donor to Afghanistan, initially providing 4.93 million Euros from the Rapid Reaction Mechanism (RRM) after the Bonn Agreement in 2001. From 2002-2006, the EU contributed 3.7 billion Euros in aid to Afghanistan. The EU is working on various projects with member states, such as the road project between Kabul, Jalalabad, and Torkham with Sweden, electricity rehabilitation in Kabul with Germany, and co-financing Civil Military Cooperation (CIMIC) operations with Finland and Sweden. Additionally, over 10 million Euros have been allocated to the Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs). However, the EU has expressed concerns about the challenges faced in Afghanistan, including security issues and the rise in opium poppy production, which have led to the suspension of projects in high-risk areas. Individual EU member states have also taken on specific roles in Afghanistan. The UK leads the counter-narcotic programme, focusing on border and police training and

supporting sustainable, alternative livelihoods. France coordinates international efforts to establish the Afghan Parliament, working closely with the UNDP and European partners, while Italy leads in the justice sector (EUPOL, 2007).

EUPOL Afghanistan: building in nation-building efforts and missed opportunities

EUPOL Afghanistan started in Kabul on June 17, 2007, as part of the EU's efforts to help rebuild the country. A strong police force is crucial for addressing Afghanistan's challenges due to the weak law enforcement and justice systems. The mission is building on existing police reform projects in the country, such as the German Police Project Office (GPPO). EUPOL Afghanistan will have around 160 experts in police, law enforcement, and justice working at different levels across Afghanistan. The goal is to support the development of sustainable civilian policing in line with international standards. This mission faces challenges due to the history of reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan and the current political situation. It is important for all actors involved to work together effectively to make a positive impact (EU Factsheet, 2007).

However, terms like "coherence" and "added value" are causing some concerns, as it is uncertain if they can be achieved for two main reasons. Firstly, the focus on military reform over police reform has been criticized as a missed opportunity by international actors, including the United States. Secondly, the various actors involved in police reform have been following different strategies and goals. For example, Germany's reform strategy started in Kabul and then expanded to other areas. By mid-October 2004, 2,624 individuals had been trained at the Kabul Police Academy, including 1,831

non-commissioned officers and 752 border police. On the other hand, the US concentrated on training police recruits, with 27,200 individuals receiving basic training through US-supported Programs (Council of the EU, 2007).

The US has also made significant financial commitments to police reform, surpassing the EU in spending. These differing approaches suggest a lack of coordination, which is a concern at this critical time. The challenges in Afghanistan, such as security issues, governance problems, corruption, drug trafficking, and economic struggles, are all interconnected and pose a threat to establishing the rule of law and building institutions. President Karzai has not been able to gain credibility among the population and relies heavily on international support. While progress has been made in creating government institutions, they are not fully functional. With 93% of the budget coming from external sources, Afghanistan risks becoming permanently dependent on foreign aid. Given these challenges, it is important to consider what can realistically be achieved by the EU's mission in Afghanistan within the three-year timeframe. The current mission faces several significant challenges.

The European Union and the transatlantic context of state – building in Afghanistan (2001-2021)

The 9/11 attacks are still considered the deadliest terrorist act in the world. Nearly 3,000 people died directly, and an additional 5,000 survivors and responders later died due to exposure at Ground Zero. The World Trade Center Health Program continues to provide care for 120,000 survivors and responders dealing with ongoing issues from the attacks. The attacks occurred shortly after the European Commission warned of the dangers coming from Afghanistan, including terrorism and religious conflicts. Despite this

warning, the Commission did not propose a specific response, stating that more reflection was needed on the challenges in the region. During the 1990s, al-Qaeda, led by Osama bin Laden, was forming in Afghanistan with the support of the Taliban. The Bush administration responded by declaring a 'war on terror' and engaging with Afghanistan through security measures. These decisions had a significant impact on US policy and the international system. The long-term consequences of these decisions are still unfolding today (Hassan, 2023).

The European Union's post-2001 aid to Afghanistan

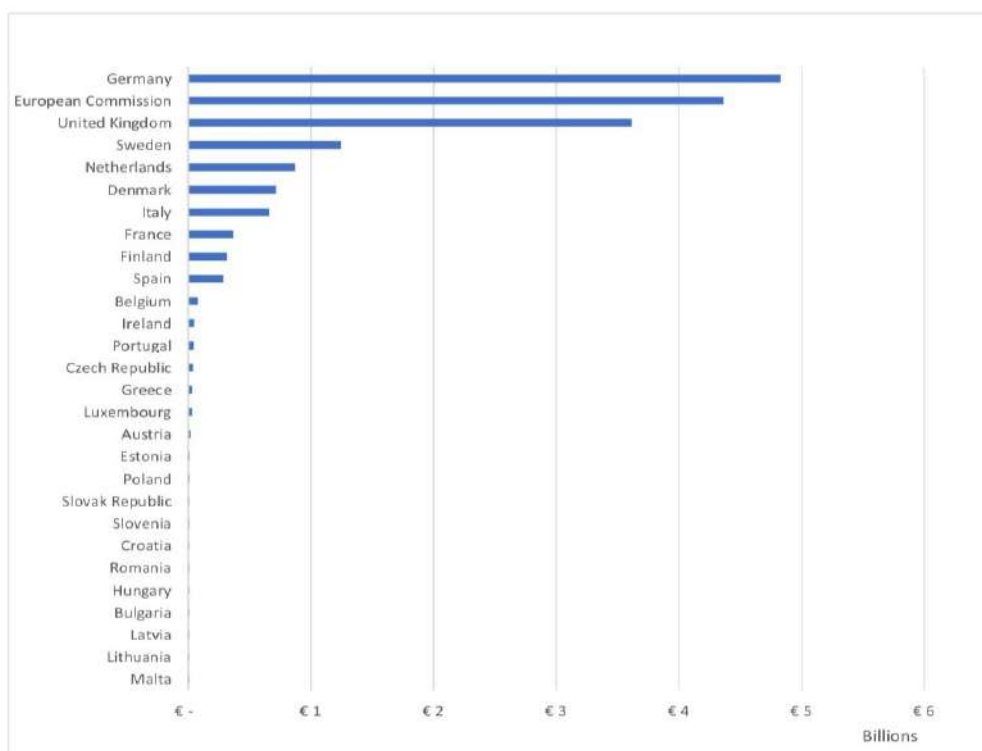
The European Union and its Member States are among the largest international aid donors globally, providing around EUR 50 billion annually to help with global development and reduce poverty. The EU aims to increase its contribution by dedicating at least 0.7% of its gross national income to annual development aid. This aid is divided into development cooperation and humanitarian assistance. Development cooperation focuses on long-term economic growth and poverty reduction, often given directly to governments with cooperation and monitoring. Humanitarian aid is for immediate crises, providing basic needs to civilians in conflicts or disasters without involving governments or armed groups. Afghanistan is a significant recipient of EU aid, receiving around EUR 26 billion from the EU and Member States between 2002-2020, compared to the USA's EUR 32 billion. In 2020, the EU pledged an additional EUR 1.2 billion in aid from 2021-2025, but development cooperation has halted since the Taliban's takeover in September 2021.

The EU has focused more on humanitarian aid and meeting basic needs by increasing its allocated funds to EUR 200 million for 2021, which is three times more than before, along with contributions from EU Member States.

Since August 2021, the EU aid explorer has not given detailed information about projects in Afghanistan for safety reasons. Similarly, this study has hidden specific details of aid recipients that were gathered. However, the EU Aid Explorer provided recipient data from 2007 to 2022, which is used here for the detailed and agreed-on data provided. From 2007 to 2022, Afghanistan received EUR 17.6 billion in disbursements from the EU and Member States.

This EUR 17.6 billion in disbursements can be categorized into 161 sectors, with the largest areas of spending being 'Public sector policy and administrative management' (EUR 1.9 billion), 'Material relief assistance and services' (EUR 1.29 billion), 'Civilian peace-building, conflict prevention and (Hassan,2023) resolution' (EUR 1.17 billion), 'Security system management and reform' (EUR 1.17 billion), and 'Legal and judicial development' (EUR 1.3 billion) These sectors are the only categories for each. Surpassing the EUR 1 billion mark, the total amount reached EUR 6.66 billion, accounting for 38% of all aid given by the EU and Member States from 2007 to 2022 (Hassan, 2023).

Total disbursements of official assistance to Afghanistan between 2007 to 2022



Source: EU Aid Explorer, 'Recipients' website, n.d

Chapter V

The impact of Indian policies on the process of state-building in Afghanistan

The land and people of Afghanistan have had a close relationship with the people of the Indian subcontinent since the past. Afghanistan has been one of the gateways to the Indian subcontinent, which, throughout history, accepted invaders and immigrants into the Indian subcontinent and created a long-standing interaction and connection between the people of this region. The withdrawal of the Soviet Union from Afghanistan started a new era in India-Afghanistan relations. Considering its interests, the government of India considered Najibullah's government in Kabul suitable. However, due to the collapse of the Soviet Union and some other factors, this government could not last for more than four years. Moreover, it was overthrown by the Mujahideen; with the inability of the Mujahideen government in Afghanistan and its instability, the ground was created for the Taliban to come to power in Afghanistan. Here, it is necessary to examine India's role in the process of Afghanistan's state-building.

India's role in the state-building process of Afghanistan

During the Taliban era

With the fall of the Najibullah government in April 1992, the Mujahideen government, although the Indian government was not very satisfied with the establishment of a government with an Islamic orientation, supported the government of Burhanuddin Rabbani. However, this government was composed of It was from different groups with

different tendencies; it could only last for a while, and with the emergence of many differences between jihadi groups, severe conflicts arose between them. These differences became so high that they caused instability in Afghanistan. For example, in the launch of rockets and various shellings by the Hekmatyar group, the city of Kabul suffered severe injuries. In the same way, there was a difference between other groups in the division of power, which hindered the formation and survival of a national unity government. Following these developments, the Taliban group, which initially controlled parts of southern Afghanistan, gradually expanded the territory under its control and finally took power in Afghanistan with the conquest of Kabul. The Taliban government came to power as a result of direct support. Pakistan was the United States and Saudi Arabia. Pakistan and Saudi Arabia immediately recognized this government. This culminated in long-term policies established by Pakistan and Saudi Arabia and American financial aid. Pakistan, under the government of Zia-ul-Haq, which was chosen as a distribution and aid channel since the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan in 1979, played an active role in organizing the coordination and training of the Afghan Mujahideen against the Soviet Union.

During the Cold War between the Soviet Union and the United States, these activities had a large volume and dimensions. With the support of the West and some Arab and Muslim countries, this country organized and gave ideological training in religious schools, the number of which suddenly increased tremendously. It was found and provided. With the establishment of the Mujahideen government in Kabul and the presence of elements in this government that did not have cordial relations with Pakistan, this country decided to put the Taliban group in power, a group that consisted of Pashto fanatics who had studied in Deobandi religious schools. The purpose of Pakistan was to install a puppet government that would never raise its territorial

problems with Pakistan and would not pose a threat to this country. At the same time, it would have a strategic depth about its rival, Pakistan, and India. The Taliban's rise to power in Afghanistan with the very effective help of Pakistan's intelligence agency ISA had adverse security implications for India.

After a short period, the Indian embassy in Kabul was closed, and political relations with the Taliban government were severed. Because the government of India did not recognize the Taliban group as the official government of Afghanistan, in addition, it considered the spread of the Taliban's ideology as a threat to its security. Since 1987, this state has been facing unrest and dissatisfaction among its Muslim population, and this spread of unrest in the areas adjacent to and connected to the Indian soil could provide the basis for its spread to the Indian soil. On the other hand, in the political circles, Pakistan, considering the competition and hostility they had with India, was watching such a situation in order to have a limited war with their rival and keep the Kashmir issue alive, so they were not reluctant to. Dissatisfied Kashmiri elements in the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir encouraged rebellion and jihad against the Indian government. The most important groups that are involved in terrorist activities in the Kashmir Valley of India are Hizb Mujahideen, Harkat Ansar or Jamaat Ansar, Jaish Muhammad, Khaddam Islam, Lashkar. Tayyaba (Da'awt al-Arshad), Hizbul Mujahideen, Movement of the Mujahideen, Commander of the Islamic Front of Jammu and Kashmir, Al-Badr, Jamaat Mujahideen and Daughters of the Nation, according to the Indian authorities, except for the Hizbul Mujahideen, the majority of whose members are Kashmiri, the rest of the organizations mentioned are mostly Pakistani. Their activities are prohibited under the laws to prevent terrorism of India approved in 2000 (Annual Report, 2003-04, based on the evaluations and reports of the Indian government in the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir between 1990 and 2004). 35,000

people have been victims of terrorist operations, which statistic includes civilians, military personnel and terrorists themselves. In addition to the above hijacking of the Indian flight IC 814 in December 1999, which was taken to Kandahar, and in return for the release of passengers belonging to terrorist groups imprisoned in India, the attack on the state assembly of Jammu and Kashmir in October 2001 and the Indian parliament on December 13, 2001, was another case of terrorist operations in which the Indian government implicated extremist Muslim groups inspired by the Taliban and Pakistan's intelligence agencies in this matter. escalated and led to the limited Kargil war in May 1999, which brought the two nuclear powers to the brink of a full-scale and devastating war(Constantino,2022). Therefore, due to the demographic structure of the Kashmir region, which has a large Muslim population, and the fact that India has a total Muslim minority of 140 million people, the spread of ethnic, religious, and sectarian unrest in India can have severe consequences for the security of that country and shake the political-social foundation of the people of India, who have ethnic and religious diversity and make Indian politicians face severe ethnic and religious riots. Instability and security threats in the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir have imposed a high cost on the Indian government so the Indian government has to use thousands of army personnel to maintain the security of the borders and prevent the infiltration of cross-border terrorists, whom Pakistan calls freedom fighters. deploy border police and paramilitary forces in that state.

In addition, the infiltration of these elements into other Indian states that share a border with Pakistan is another issue that the Indian government is facing. The transformation of Afghanistan during the Taliban period into a center for the gathering of extremist Islamic groups has been a threat to the security and stability of the region, which the Indian government considers vital for its security. Extremism and terrorist activities in

South and Southeast Asia, the Middle East, and Europe have been a potential threat to India's security. According to Indian sources, the Taliban group has been under the direct influence of Pakistan. It puts Pakistan in a superior position against India, and this issue has been to the detriment of India. The above issue has not only worried India but has also worried other countries in the region, such as Iran, Russia, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan, Because some of these countries are facing the challenge of radical Islamic groups in their land. As a result, there was a consensus among them in opposition to the Taliban group. In Afghanistan, Iran considers the rise of the Taliban as a conspiracy by the United States of America to discredit true Islam and suppress the Shiite minority in Afghanistan. Afghanistan knew that it was during this period that Iranian diplomats were killed by Taliban forces in Mazar-e-Sharif, and severe tension arose in Iran-Afghanistan relations. In addition to security threats, the large-scale cultivation of poppy in Afghanistan and the export of drugs and arms smuggling to neighboring countries became a great source of insecurity for all neighboring countries. The drug trade, which had generated significant income for the warlords and the Taliban group, continued more intensively, and Afghanistan's neighboring countries in Central Asia, Iran, Pakistan, and India were used as a transit route for drugs to Europe and America. According to Indian officials, Pakistani officials earned between 90 and 136 million dollars annually from opium cultivation, which they spent mainly on proxy war with India in Jammu and Kashmir.

India's role in Afghanistan's state-building process in the Post-Taliban era

The five-year rule of the Taliban in Afghanistan brought many difficulties for the Indian government. The unprecedented spread of cross-border terrorist influence and instability in the Kashmir valley and the Indian mainland created a challenge for the Indian government. The attack on the business towers in New York was a significant event in international relations that finally made the United States aware of the great danger that the Taliban government and the extremist groups gathered around it had created. The Taliban government's disregard for the rules and regulations Internationally, their petrified reading of Islam, the apparent violation of human rights, and the widespread violation of the rights of women, children, and religious minorities activated human rights groups and civil activists in America, and they increased their pressure on the Clinton administration. On the other hand, the CIA's secret reports about the security risks of the gathering of terrorist groups gave the necessary warnings to the American government. Finally, after The events of September 11 and the role of al-Qaeda and their presence in Afghanistan, the US government decided to attack Afghanistan and overthrow the Taliban government. The mentioned developments were a turning point in the region that led to the overthrow of the Taliban and the establishment of the interim government of Karzai and his election as the official president of Afghanistan. This event put the Indian government in a unique position, and the government decided to make the most of the opportunity and establish close relations with the new Afghan government. The new Afghan leaders had close relations with India in the past. Hamid Karzai had completed his education at Himachal Pradesh University, Shimla. Other people who had strong influence in Kabul were General

Dostum and Abdullah Abdullah from the Northern Front, who had close relations with India since the Taliban regime.

On the other hand, with America's tendency towards India, which considers this country as its strategic partner in global issues, in the new international relations, India is America's ally in the war against terrorism, which has been announced as an essential and central policy after the September 11 incident.. This provides a favorable ground for establishing political, economic, and cultural relations between India and Afghanistan, Especially since America prefers Afghanistan to have less connection with Iran, Afghanistan's neighboring country. On the other hand, Karzai and Ghani also want to strengthen their position in the political scene and gain the support of India. After the overthrow of the Taliban government in Afghanistan, India reopened its diplomatic headquarters on November 21, 2001. It upgraded it to the level of an embassy on December 22 of the same year. After some time, Indian consulates were reopened in Jalalabad, Herat, Kandahar, and Mazar-e-Sharif. India participated in the Bonn talks held under the auspices of the United Nations. These talks led to the Bonn agreement. In India, Fahim participated in meetings in New York, Washington, Islamabad, and Brussels (Annual Report, 2001) and Tokyo for reconstruction and assistance to Afghanistan. Three months immediately after the establishment of the interim government, mutual visits of Indian and Afghan officials to each other's countries began. In this regard, Karzai Dostum, the then interior minister, Foreign Minister Abdullah Abdullah, and Defense Minister Mohammad Qasim visited India after the formation of the interim government (Shah, 2002). In the December 13, 2001, meeting between Abdullah Abdullah and Indian Prime Minister Vajpayee, various topics were discussed, including changing the dry religious structure left over from the Taliban era. From November 2001 to April 2007, he made five trips to India, which showed the

special relationship between New Delhi and Kabul. With Afghanistan's membership in SAARC, India wants to have a more active role for both countries in regional policies; two countries in this union can have common positions on many regional and international issues. One of the critical areas of cooperation is the fight against the spread of drugs and terrorism, which is very important for both countries. Also, the Indian government, in line with the reconstruction of Afghanistan in 2003 and 2004, as follows has done to Afghanistan.

1. Allocation of 70 million dollars for the construction of the Zaranj-Dalaram road, one of the critical transportation roads of Afghanistan, which connects this country to Iran
2. Three Airbus airplanes were donated to Ariana Afghan Airlines, training Afghan personnel and providing support and maintenance to these airplanes.
3. Donation of 274 buses to the public transport service,
4. 101 practical motor vehicles for carrying garbage, water sprinklers, and bulldozers for Kabul Municipality and 300 vehicles for the Afghan National Army,
5. Reconstruction of Indira Gandhi Hospital and Habibie School, which has a capacity of 13,000 students; training of technicians, diplomats, teachers, bankers, computer experts, and other Afghan specialist forces.
6. Construction of a 5,000-ton cold storage facility in Kandahar; Delivery of protein-enriched biscuits to feed Afghan children. Under this program, one million Afghan children received 100 grams of enriched biscuits daily.
7. Funding for the construction of the Afghan Legislative Assembly.
8. Continue the construction of the 218 km long Zaranj Delaram road. Since India does not have transit access to Afghanistan through Pakistan, it wants to access Afghanistan through Iran and the road mentioned above.

9. Reconstruction and completion of Salma Dam and its electricity generation project in Herat Province.
10. Provision of 69 tons of medicine and medical equipment for Kabul and Mazar-e-Sharif, Shaberghan, Herat and Kandahar.
11. Providing medical equipment and modernizing the Children's Health Center of Indira Gandhi Hospital.
12. Establishing an advanced printing house bui, leading radio and television stations, and completing some existing stations.
13. Provision of indelible composite ink for marking and conducting elections.
14. Dispatch of five senior banking experts to rebuild the structure of the National Bank of Afghanistan. (MEA, n.d).

In 2005 and 2006, the relations and interactions between India and Afghanistan expanded. In February 2005, Karzai visited India, and Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh visited Kabul in August. During Karzai's visit to India, eight cabinet ministers accompanied him, and two memorandums of understanding regarding civil aircraft and mass communication devices.

The information was signed from the Annual Reports 2005-2006;- Among the essential actions taken by the Indian government in 2005, the continuation of the previous construction works and some other works can be mentioned as follows:

- 1 Construction and implementation of transmission towers Power from Khumri Bridge to Kabul and enabling the transfer of power from Uzbekistan to Kabul.
2. Granting scholarships to 500 Afghan students for long-term courses in India and 500 scholarships for short-term courses and creating capacity for 250 others.
3. Providing 1,000 sewing machines for women's organizations in Afghan villages.

4. Creating facilities and completing ten radio and television stations.

5 Revival and reconstruction of communication networks in 11 provinces.

6. The construction of the new parliament of Afghanistan, which has a budget of 67 million dollars, is supposed to be completed in 2010 (MEA, n.d).

Due to the significant presence of India in all fields of reconstruction and construction in Afghanistan, this country also has broad political and economic goals in mind. As one of the emerging economic powers, India needs consumer markets, and naturally, Afghanistan can be a good market for Indian goods. Another issue in India-Afghanistan relations is India's access to energy resources in Central Asia. India needs much energy to develop its economy and industry. This country is serious about the natural gas pipeline with Iran and Pakistan despite negotiations. However, India wants to have more diverse resources, and it is possible to access these energy resources through Afghanistan, which can benefit both Afghanistan and India. Another issue is curbing extremist currents. Establishing stability and peace in Afghanistan can prevent the spread of extremist forces in Afghanistan and neighboring regions. This will lay the groundwork for preventing extremist movements in Indian Kashmir. In this regard, the Indian government shares interests with Iran because such movements threaten India's security and Iran; India has invested heavily in the transit route of Chabahar port to Zabol Zaranj and Delaram. In this way, India wants to remove the obstacles that Pakistan has created in sending Indian goods to Afghanistan and beyond. However, the developments in Afghanistan have created concerns for the Indian government.

The killing of an employee of a road construction project at the hands of extremist forces linked to the Taliban has increased India's problems. Before this person Was killed the kidnappers warned that all Indians working in Afghanistan should leave Afghanistan

within 24 hours. In addition, due to the establishment of pro-Taliban groups in Pakistan's Border Province and Balochistan and the spread of terrorist activities to Afghanistan and the evidence that indicates the assistance of some Pakistani elements to the Taliban group, and many concerns have arisen among Indian officials. Some experts have raised that the Indian government should not tie all its chances in Afghanistan with Hamid Karzai's government. Finally, it can be concluded that the fall of the Taliban government has been a very positive development for the interests of India. This government's fall is one factor that would cause instability in its security zone, and the Indian government has decided to make the most of the opportunity and establish deep and comprehensive relations by involving Afghanistan in economic, political, commercial, and technical cooperation. Alliance and cooperation with countries that have a shared vision of Afghanistan will prevent the growth of extremist forces that are detrimental to that country in Afghanistan. However, the Indian government has less leverage due to not having a common border with Afghanistan. The growth and renewal of the Taliban group and the inability of the central government and NATO to establish order and security in Afghanistan have raised many concerns among Indian officials. Undoubtedly, establishing stability and security will positively affect India, and this country will be able to achieve its political and economic goals in vast Central Asia. Access to new and diverse energy sources, oil and gas, and transit routes to reach Central Asia is one of the critical goals of the Indian region. In the current situation, India wants to have good relations with Afghanistan for the following reasons: Considering its traditional rivalry with Pakistan, India is worried about Pakistan's influence in Afghanistan and is trying to prevent this influence as much as possible. India has traditionally had friendly relations with Afghanistan and is seeking to expand these relations. India attaches great importance to providing security and establishing

stability in Afghanistan. Considering its competition with China in Asia, India is worried about China's penetration into Afghanistan through Pakistan.

India is compassionate about the rapprochement of the relationship between Iran and Pakistan. At the same time, the relations between India and Iran have traditionally been excellent, and India has signed contracts worth billions of dollars with Iran according to its needs in the field of energy.

Nevertheless, India is one of the countries that has taken the side of America in the nuclear conflict between Iran and America. India is very sensitive to Pakistan's policies. On the one hand, India has recently cooperated with China in various fields to weaken the cooperation between China and Pakistan. On the other hand, Iran is traditionally friendly with India, so its support does not become Pakistan's monopoly. Apart from this, even though India is traditionally a close ally of Russia and has many agreements and contracts with that country, this is to weaken Pakistan's military cooperation. Moreover, America has signed a strategic cooperation agreement with Russia.

Overall, we see India and Afghanistan share a robust bond rooted in historical, cultural, and diplomatic connections. India's engagement with Afghanistan is shaped by its historical ties, solidarity with the populace, and adherence to pertinent UN resolutions. Despite the departure of some Afghan diplomats from India, diplomatic operations persist, underscoring India's dedication to Afghanistan. India has declined recognition of the Taliban regime and advocates for an inclusive government in Kabul, opposing the use of Afghan territory for terrorist activities. Extensive humanitarian assistance, including wheat, medical supplies, and aid for earthquake relief, has been provided by India to Afghanistan. The two nations have a Strategic Partnership Agreement centered on infrastructure, education, investment, and peace initiatives. India's developmental

aid to Afghanistan, nearly \$2 billion, underscores its commitment to Afghan stability and prosperity. Reciprocal high-level visits exhibit sustained political engagement and collaboration across diverse domains, reflecting a profound and multifaceted relationship (MEA, n.d).

Chapter-VI

The Nation Building Challenges in Afghanistan

Afghanistan is a diverse country that struggles with differences in culture, society, and politics. This diversity has led to various groups forming and the Afghan society breaking apart over time. Because of its mix of tribes and people, building a unified nation in Afghanistan has faced many difficulties. The country's strategic location has also played a part in creating challenges. Throughout history, The Soviet Union turned these competitions into violent conflicts, adding to the obstacles in nation-building.

The process of building a nation in Afghanistan has been disrupted by factors like geography, politics, and economics. These challenges have created divisions based on ethnicity, religion, and language in the country. Nation-building is crucial for unity and shared progress, especially in countries like Afghanistan, which are plagued by internal conflicts and external interference. In this article, we explore the impact of these challenges on nation-building in Afghanistan. Through a descriptive analytical approach using various sources, we delve into the hurdles faced in creating a cohesive nation in the country.

Nation-building has a lengthy history dating back several hundred years, with significant growth occurring after World War II. In the post-Cold War era, a new form of state-led nation-building has emerged, influenced by experiences in the Balkans, Iraq, and Afghanistan during the 1990s. Foreign agents are involved in leading nation-building efforts in other countries, drawing from post-World War II examples in Germany and Japan (Aminian and Ghahrodi, 2011).

Culturally diverse nations, particularly those with linguistic, ethnic, and religious variations, require a social and political foundation based on social justice, political, and economic development to facilitate successful nation-building. This ensures that all societal identities are recognized and respected (Mashreghi, 2018).

Political and social scientists emphasize the importance of nation-building for overall stability and development across various aspects of society. National crises are seen as significant challenges to a society's security, stability, development, and progress (Rahimi, 2016).

Afghanistan stands out as a country with a wide range of ethnic groups and nationalities coexisting, including numerous ethnic minorities alongside major groups (Sajjadi, 2016). The lack of a unifying solution has hindered successful nation-building in the country amidst ethnic diversity and heterogeneity. Despite many years since gaining independence, a common national identity that satisfies all groups has yet to be established (ibid, n.d).

The diverse social fabric of Afghanistan, with its various ethnic groups and values, presents challenges for nation-building. Ethnic diversity continues to pose obstacles to the nation-building process, a key political issue in Afghan society. Throughout Afghanistan's history, rulers have often used ethnicity to assert dominance over other groups, presenting a barrier to achieving a unified national identity.

The challenges of Afghanistan's natural geography and its crucial role in the nation-building process.

The land, consisting of both land and water, is governed by the nation-state and is essential for the concept of a nation-state to have meaning. Geography is a key element in politics, with land being a significant aspect of the state-nation phenomenon. Afghanistan's geographical indicators have a direct impact on its social structure and political activities.

Afghanistan's unique geographical features, such as being landlocked and bordering insecure tribal areas of Pakistan in the south, pose challenges for the country. In the north, the lack of government oversight due to inadequate infrastructure in partnership with Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan creates further obstacles. These geographical characteristics both benefit and hinder Afghanistan. While the country avoids territorial disputes that could threaten its nation-state status, the limitations of being landlocked create obstacles for development and nation-building efforts. The confinement to land has a significant impact on Afghanistan's ability to address these challenges.

Special Geographical Position of Afghanistan

Afghanistan sits in the heart of Central Asia like a closed fist, acting as a meeting point between India, Central Asia, China, and West Asia. Throughout history, it faced invasions from all directions due to its strategic location. The mountains in Afghanistan play a crucial role in its geography, adding to its significance. The unique geographical position of Afghanistan has hindered the formation of a strong nation-state. The

country's location as a buffer between colonial powers like Tsarist Russia, British colonialism, and the United States has influenced its development. Internally, the mountainous terrain and scattered population make nation-building a challenging task in Afghanistan.

Traditional Tribal Culture and Structure

Traditional tribal culture and structure in Afghanistan are unique due to the diverse ethnic groups and tribes living there. The nation-building process has faced challenges in creating a common national identity that all groups can accept. The traditional tribal system, still prevalent among the Pashtuns of Ilati, includes institutions like the Khan (tribal leader), Malek (chief), Jirga (decision-making assembly), and Loya Jirga (representatives making major decisions). These customs are supported by religious, economic, and elder-based institutions. The ethnic construction in Afghanistan has led to identity differences and conflicts, impacting trust, communication, and self-restraint. The combination of tribal mentality and Islamic fundamentalism has created a political culture with challenges like ethnocentrism and violence, hindering the country's political development.

Ethnic divide in Afghanistan

The ethnic divide in Afghanistan is a major issue that stems from different ethnic groups vying for power. When they are unable to secure a place in the political system, they resort to violence. The level of ethnic solidarity in Afghan society is higher than social solidarity in more advanced societies, leading to a division of social work based on ethnicity. Currently, there are two main groups in Afghanistan: the Northern Alliance

consisting of Tajik, Hazara, and Uzbek ethnic groups, and the second group mainly comprising Pashtuns. Balancing the Pashtun and non-Pashtun groups, navigating intra-Pashtun ethnic divisions, and addressing the overall ethnic characteristics of Afghan society are key challenges for the nation-building state in the country.

The ethnic divide in Afghanistan has always played a significant role in its political landscape due to the social structure's ethnic and tribal nature. While at times it may not have a serious impact, non-ruling ethnic groups often view the ruling ethnic group and central government with suspicion. These divisions can escalate into ethnic conflicts and bloody tribal disputes when activated by family power struggles. In Afghanistan, while ethnic identity is clear, political identity is yet to be established. The tribes remain organized based on race, hindering the nation-building process and resulting in tribal and ethnic cultures prevailing. Without a significant initiative towards unity, the country risks further division and violence.

The historical focus on Pashtun people and the Pashto language as the core of the "Afghan nation" has not led to progress but rather fueled violence and division. If left unchecked, the country may fracture into multiple parts. It is crucial to address the ethnic divide and strive towards a united Afghanistan to prevent such a collapse.

The nation-building project in Afghanistan focused on the Pashtun ethnic group has not been successful. A new approach to nation-building and state-building in the country needs to be considered. Over a century ago, Afghan governments, including the Karzai government, missed opportunities to unite tribes and ethnicities and promote Pashtun culture throughout the country. Instead of investing in these efforts, resources should have been used to promote national unity

The Weakness of Central Government

The central government in Afghanistan has always been weak throughout history. It lacks experience in governing and is financially struggling. Its authority is limited to the capital and a few major cities. The government's weakness lies in its inability to control the resistant ethnic and tribal social structure in the country. This has led to the failure of nation-state building and created instability. Afghanistan has faced constant crisis since the Durrani dynasty, as efforts to establish a strong government have been unsuccessful due to strong ethnic and tribal divisions. The government is fragmented, with power dispersed among various sources, making it difficult to concentrate power in the capital. Despite international efforts to strengthen the central government, the deep-rooted ethnic nature of Afghan society continues to pose a challenge. Paying attention to building a strong and modern democratic government with a system of separation of powers has given hope for the country to move towards empowerment and independent action. Efforts to strengthen national unity and the nation-building process have been discussed internationally, especially by countries like the United States. However, building a government and establishing authority in Afghanistan has faced many challenges due to cultural traits and inadequate infrastructure (Badakhshani, 2014).

Throughout history, Afghanistan has had various regimes with different ideologies, but the country has mostly been governed by a weak central government. Leaders in Afghanistan have struggled to assert financial and administrative control, resulting in over 80% of the population residing in rural areas. The government faces a significant budget deficit and lacks authority over large parts of the country, leaving power in the hands of local rulers (Heidari and Rahnavard, 2011). Despite efforts to establish a

central government in Kabul, it is still considered weak. This weakness has hindered the nation-building process in Afghanistan over the years.

International interference

Interference has greatly impacted Afghanistan's nation-building process, creating numerous challenges that have slowed down the country's progress towards stability, security, and development. Since the Soviet invasion in 1979, outside forces have influenced Afghanistan's political, social, and economic landscape, making existing tensions worse and making it difficult to create a united and prosperous nation.

A major issue caused by international interference is the weakening of Afghan sovereignty and ability to make decisions for themselves. Throughout history, Afghanistan has been influenced by foreign powers with their own interests in the region. The Soviet invasion in 1979, which aimed to support a communist government, was the start of outside.

Moreover, foreign involvement has played a role in harming the environment and depleting resources in Afghanistan. Companies and warlords from other countries have been extracting natural resources like timber, minerals, and water without regulation, which has led to the loss of valuable resources and damage to ecosystems. This has made poverty and food insecurity worse, especially in rural areas that rely on agriculture and natural resources for their livelihoods.

Additionally, interference from outside forces has continued to cause violence and instability in Afghanistan. External actors have often pursued their own interests, disregarding the well-being of Afghan people. The presence of foreign military and the

use of drone strikes have created anger and opposition among the Afghan population, making the country more unstable and complicating efforts to achieve peace.

To sum up, foreign interference has brought about many obstacles in Afghanistan's efforts to build a strong nation. It has undermined the country's independence, deepened divisions, increased violence and instability, and made it harder to achieve economic progress and democracy. It is crucial for Afghan leaders and the international community to prioritize Afghan involvement in nation-building, address the root causes of conflict and instability, and promote fair governance, sustainable development, and human rights. By working together in a genuine partnership, Afghanistan can overcome the challenges caused by foreign interference and create a brighter future for all its citizen

Economic challenges

One of the key challenges faced by Afghanistan is its status as an underdeveloped country on the global stage. With a per capita income of only 98%, (Badakhshani, 2014).) it is considered one of the poorest countries in the world. Despite the importance of establishing an industrial and commercial economy for democracy, Afghan society continues to rely heavily on traditional economic practices such as agriculture and animal husbandry, with some regions even being involved in the illicit opium trade. This reliance on traditional and corrupt economies shapes the culture of the country. It is crucial to prioritize economic development over political efforts, as the lack of interaction among people in traditional and agricultural economies can lead to internalization and alienation, preventing citizens from forming a sense of unity and community.

The significant economic challenges faced by Afghanistan, including poverty and structural weaknesses, pose serious obstacles to the nation-building process. The government's reliance on foreign aid due to economic poverty leaves it vulnerable to collapse if this aid is interrupted. Economic poverty not only affects the government but also has a detrimental impact on society as a whole. The lack of financial resources hinders public participation in national and social issues, essential for nation-building. Poverty creates a barrier to people's engagement in political and social activities, essential for building a cohesive nation-state. Instead of fostering unity and participation, poverty in Afghanistan leads to disunity and isolation, hindering the country's progress towards becoming a unified and prosperous nation.

Political structure

Afghanistan's political structure has faced significant flaws in state building and government building throughout modern history. The lack of a universal desire to establish a state has led to a focus on nation-building in plural societies. Nation-building and state-building are closely related concepts in Afghanistan and other heterogeneous societies. The formation of a modern government in Afghanistan required centralizing power, leading to dissatisfaction among various ethnic groups. This problematic nation-building process has caused ethnic alignment and continued even after the Taliban period.

Modern Afghanistan faces a paradox with its centralized government in a country that needs a decentralized system to serve its diverse population effectively. This centralized government has left many basic needs of Afghan citizens unmet and made the country vulnerable to foreign conflicts. Changing to an authoritarian democracy and concentrating power in one person's hands seems more likely than establishing a

democratic system. The rush to draft and approve a constitution post-war has led to a system that favors one ethnic group over others, ultimately failing to address the demands of all ethnic groups in Afghanistan.

The centralized presidential system in Afghanistan poses a challenge to national unity and nation-building due to the country's ethnic diversity. Changing to a decentralized system could potentially address these challenges and promote solidarity in the nation-building process.

Political challenges

In political challenges, that ethnic wars are not caused by the existence of ethnic lines in a country, but rather by the elites who manipulate these divisions. The responsibility for these conflicts lies with the leaders who exploit these conditions to gain power over ethnic groups. These leaders have the ability to control the level of violence, but do not contribute to the creation of ethnic identities (Naimi, 2017).

In Afghanistan's recent history, governments have lacked long-term governance experience and often failed due to their inability to connect with society. The root of this crisis, which has eroded the legitimacy and authority of Afghan governments, can be found within the government itself. The elites and political leaders in power have been unable to present a unified vision, leading to ongoing civil strife. Looking back at the 20th century, this pattern of internal conflict has been a recurring theme in Afghan politics.

In Afghanistan, the elites have a history of engaging in political competitions, resulting in the deaths of nine out of thirteen political leaders in this century, with five others fleeing the country (Farzanehpour and Zahi, 2017). The behaviour of these elites is

influenced by emotions, kinship, tribes, ethnicity, directions, and values, as well as religion, beliefs, and ideology. This has led to divisions among Afghans into different ethnic groups, sometimes causing them to face off against each other. While it is believed in Afghanistan that ethnic leaders and factions are primarily responsible for fuelling ethnic wars and inciting conflict among ethnic groups, it is important to note that attributing all problems related to ethnicity to the competition among ethnic elites is misleading. The reality is that without a conducive environment, ethnic-oriented elites cannot effectively collaborate.

The Existence of Ethnic Political Culture

The political beliefs and attitudes of the people in a society are expressed through political culture. In studies on political and economic underdevelopment in less developed societies, political culture is often used as a factor. Sidney Verba defines political culture as a set of values, beliefs, and symbols that influence political actions. In Afghanistan, political culture reflects the perspectives and attitudes of both the people and the elite towards politics and political authority. These views are shaped by beliefs and traditions and impact how individuals behave politically, including their acceptance or rejection of governments. Balkhi's research in 2015 delves into Afghanistan's political culture to understand how Afghans have viewed the political system, rulers, and their relationships with the general populace throughout history.

Ethnic inclinations and a sense of duty and responsibility towards fellow members of a specific ethnic group play a significant role in Afghanistan's political culture. People often establish and solidify their social and political status through their ethnic identity, using it as a foundation for political, social, economic, and cultural support. According to Richard Tupper, the term "tribe" is widely used among Afghans to encompass all

social group relations and conflicts (Badakhshani, 2014). While ethnic ties are crucial, ideological allegiances take precedence in critical moments, as noted by Papoli Yazdi in 1993. A notable characteristic of Afghanistan's ethnic and political groups has been their use of force and violence to secure political power over the past few decades

Conclusion

Afghanistan before 2021 faced a lack of national solidarity due to various factors imposed on the people over time. The crisis of solidarity and national identity in the country stems from a lack of acceptance and mutual respect among Afghan rulers. Instead of prioritizing unity among all ethnic groups, leaders have focused on their own families and communities, leading to disunity and hindering the nation-building process.

Looking back at the history of nation-building in Afghanistan, it is evident that rulers have not taken significant steps to unite the nation. Rather than focusing on building a strong nation, leaders have promoted ethnic nationalism, causing division and hindering progress. Various challenges such as natural geography, human geography, political issues, and economic challenges have further complicated the nation-building process.

While other societies have overcome challenges through the efforts of nationalist forces and people-oriented governments, Afghanistan has failed to address these issues. In fact, leaders have exacerbated problems by fueling ethnic, linguistic, and religious differences. Efforts to build a unified nation in Afghanistan have been one-sided, based on ethnic, linguistic, and religious ideologies, leading to numerous obstacles and hindering progress.

What To Do?

To solve the complex issues in Afghanistan, we need a comprehensive approach that deals with political, security, socioeconomic, and governance problems. Here are some suggestions:

1. Strengthen government institutions and promote inclusive governance by fighting corruption, being transparent, and holding officials accountable. International help with building capacity and institutions can be useful.
2. Improve security by addressing the root causes of conflict, investing in professional security forces, combating extremism, and encouraging reconciliation between different groups.
3. Focus on education, healthcare, and infrastructure to raise living standards and create job opportunities. Supporting private sector growth can reduce poverty and decrease reliance on illegal activities.
4. Protect human rights, especially for women and minority groups, by providing access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities for everyone.
5. Work with neighbouring countries and regional partners to promote stability and economic growth in Afghanistan. Cooperation can boost trade, improve security, and tackle issues like terrorism and drug trafficking.
6. Continue receiving support from international organizations like the United Nations and regional groups. Aid and diplomacy are crucial for progress and overcoming challenges.
7. Involve local communities in decision-making and development projects to build trust and enhance the effectiveness of interventions.

8. Understand that solving Afghanistan's problems will take time and patience. Progress might be slow, and setbacks can happen, but persistent efforts can lead to positive change in the long run.

By following these suggestions and encouraging cooperation among all involved, Afghanistan can move closer to a stable, prosperous, and inclusive future.

Final Research Analysis

The Research paper is focused on addressing specific questions that were posed at the start. I am grateful for the support and resources that have enabled me to provide the required answers. The responses to the questions are as follow

1.What particular functions and actions has the United Nations carried out to aid nation-building endeavours in Afghanistan between 2001 and 2021?

As mentioned chapter III Since the downfall of the Taliban regime in 2001, the United Nations (UN) has been actively involved in Afghanistan, focusing on governance, security, humanitarian aid, and reconstruction efforts. For example. From 2001 to 2021, the United Nations (UN) played a crucial role in helping Afghanistan with nation-building efforts. After the US-led invasion in 2001, the UN Security Council allowed the deployment of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) under Chapter VII of the UN Charter. The ISAF's main task was to keep Afghanistan secure, with the UK leading the first six months and 18 other countries sending their forces and resources.

In 2002, the UN set up the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) to aid in the country's reconstruction and growth. The UN also helped with

the Bonn Agreement, which resulted in Hamid Karzai being appointed as the leader of an interim government and the establishment of an international peacekeeping force.

The US military started Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) in 2002, working together with UN agencies and non-governmental organizations on redevelopment projects. Some of these PRTs were later managed by NATO member and partner countries.

NATO took over the leadership of ISAF in 2003, broadening its presence to the north and west, and continued to lead the mission until withdrawing troops in 2021. Throughout this time, NATO backed the Afghan government's efforts to enhance security, governance, and economic growth.

In 2021, NATO began Operation Allied Solace to aid in resettling NATO-affiliated Afghans and their families, showing the alliance's ongoing dedication to supporting Afghanistan's stability and security.

2.What are the primary difficulties and hurdles faced by the United Nations in its mission of nation-building in Afghanistan after 2001?

After 2001, the United Nations (UN) faced many challenges in Afghanistan during its nation-building mission. For example continuous foreign interference that worsened the conflict by supplying arms to warring factions. Both the Taliban and the Northern Alliance wanted to gain an advantage over their enemies instead of working towards a peaceful resolution.

Ensuring the safety of UN staff was a major concern, shown by the attack on the UN compound in Herat in 2010. Coordinating humanitarian aid, managing donors, and promoting inclusive governance, human rights, and regional cooperation were crucial but complicated tasks.

As mentioned in chapter six there are challenges where UN faced during it is nation building in Afghanistan. Here are few of them

1. Security Challenges: Violence and insurgency made it hard for UN workers to help people and do projects because their safety was at risk.
2. Political Instability Afghanistan's government was weak and corrupt, which made it tough to make good institutions and have fair leadership.
3. Complex Tribal Dynamics: Different groups in Afghanistan didn't get along, which made it hard to bring everyone together and make peace.
4. Corruption and Governance Issues: Many people in power were dishonest, which made it tough to build trust and make sure things were done right.
5. Limited Infrastructure Bad roads and not enough services made it hard to give help and make the country better, especially in rural areas.
6. Economic Challenges: Afghanistan's economy depended too much on farming and was easily hurt by problems, which made it hard to make jobs and fight poverty.
7. Regional Interference: Other countries nearby got involved in Afghanistan's problems, which made it harder to bring peace and make things better.

3. To what extent have UN interventions succeeded in promoting governance, security, and socioeconomic progress in Afghanistan?

The UN's interventions in Afghanistan from 2001 to 2021 have had mixed success in promoting governance, security, and socioeconomic progress. As mentioned in chapter III United Nations has played very important Role In promoting governance Shortly after the US and its allies removed the Taliban in late 2001, representatives from different Afghan groups gathered in Bonn, Germany to plan the nation's future. With

the help of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan, Afghan military leaders, ethnic group representatives, expatriate Afghans, and the exiled monarch worked hard to negotiate. Finally, on December 5, 2001, the Bonn Agreement was signed under pressure from outside forces.

At the Bonn conference, participants who had been enemies for years made impressive progress. They agreed on a temporary power-sharing plan, created a new constitution, and set up elections for 2004. The Bonn Agreement laid out a clear plan and schedule for achieving peace, rebuilding the country, restoring important institutions, and protecting human rights.

In the security area also, UN contributed in recent years, the UN's engagements in Afghanistan have revolved around advancing peace and development, specifically by assisting Afghans in constructing a sustainable future. UNAMA's mandate has been renewed multiple times.

Hypothesis

The hypothesis proved that the United Nations is facing challenges in rebuilding Afghanistan after the Taliban, which could impact its ability to support long-term development and peace.

Afghanistan has experienced political turmoil with conflicts and power struggles among different groups. This instability can hinder the UN's work to set up stable governance and institutions.

Ongoing security threats like insurgency and terrorism are major obstacles to the UN's efforts in Afghanistan. Unsafe conditions make it hard to carry out development projects and offer necessary services to the people. Afghanistan lacks the needed institutions and

skilled workers for effective nation-building. Establishing stable governance and administrative systems requires capable local partners, which may be scarce after conflicts. With various international players each having their own goals and methods, coordinating actions becomes difficult and may lead to duplicated efforts. Inconsistent collaboration among stakeholders could weaken nation-building projects.

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