

THE ROOTS OF POLITICAL INSTABILITY IN AFGHANISTAN AND THE IMPLICATIONS OF (MIS)GOVERNANCE

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Introduction

In the recent history of Afghanistan, two major phases of governance can be distinguished: the mainstream governance in the elected domain and the non-mainstream governance by the Taliban. Both modalities of governance have emanated as a means of crisis intervention, following a time of political instability and institutional inefficiency in the late twentieth century and the early twenty-first century. The roots of political instability are grounded in a mosaic of internal factors, which date back to Afghanistan's early history and have time and again been exploited by both, outside and inside actors, for their respective interests. The present state of political and institutional affairs in Afghanistan is thus the concomitant outcome of those historical continuations, however, with certain transfigurations and power-centric inversions. The following analysis looks at both forms of governance in terms of their contribution to the current and continued misgovernance of the country.

Means of analysis

The concept of 'mis-governance' used here is based on the Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI)¹ developed by Daniel Kaufmann and Aart Kraay, which measures 'good' governance using the following factors: "voice and accountability², absence of violence, government effectiveness, regulatory quality, rule of law, control of corruption". A state can be considered as a model of 'good governance' once it embodies the aforementioned traits, otherwise it is what Kaufmann calls as a 'misgoverned' or 'failing' state.

Additionally, the non-mainstream mode of governance corresponding to the Taliban will be analysed in terms of their compliance to the principles of Islamic governance (Khilafat), as defined by four of the most influential post-

modernist Islamic thinkers; juxtaposing the Taliban's implementation of Islam with these principles.

Central to the analysis of Afghanistan's elected domain of representation or mainstream governance is the Bonn Agreement³ passed on 5 December 2001, which was the primary instrument and foundation for the political and institutional restructuring of Afghanistan after the Taliban rule, as envisioned by the intervening powers. It is argued that while this foreign intervention has contributed significantly to the establishment of electoral and democratic facilities during the post-war reconstruction period, it also came at the price of, advertently or inadvertently, drawing various fault-lines across different operational domains of the country. Hence, the effects of these developmental measures are also critically examined in the light of the serious social, economic and political disorder that the country continues to suffer from till today.

Early Afghan history

Afghanistan has had a peculiar history. It has more often seen dents and disturbances than peace, progress and development. First and foremost, the country has been attacked and invaded on countless occasions by foreign forces, primarily due to its strategically important geographic position. During its ancient and post-classical history, it has been part of the most important trade routes and transits, most notably the famous Silk Route and for a long period of time, the country was under foreign rule of the Greeks, Bactrians, Turks, Persians, Kushanas, Mongols, Chinese, and Khwarzmis, to name a few. The dilute retention of peoples from different civilizations and nationalities is one of the main reasons why Afghanistan has presently such a diverse ethnic and heterogeneous make-up.

1 „Worldwide Governance Indicators“, Worldbank, accessed 21 October, 2019, <https://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/#home>.

2 „Voice and accountability captures perceptions of the extent to which a country's citizens are able to participate in selecting their government, as well as freedom of expression, freedom of association, and a free media.“, Worldbank, accessed 21 October, 2019 <https://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/pdf/va.pdf>.

3 The Bonn agreement is officially called the „Agreement on Provisional Arrangements in Afghanistan Pending the Re-Establishment of Permanent Government Institutions“, International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) accessed 21 October, 2019, [https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/ihl-nat/a24d1cf3344e99934125673e00508142/4ef7a08878a00fe5c12571140032e471/\\$FILE/BONN%20AGREEMENT.pdf](https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/ihl-nat/a24d1cf3344e99934125673e00508142/4ef7a08878a00fe5c12571140032e471/$FILE/BONN%20AGREEMENT.pdf).

However, instead of cultivating 'unity in diversity', the country has seen a history of ethnic polarization and contestation that has also kept it volatile and prone to outside invasions. At the same time, indigenous Afghans have proven to be very resilient to any foreign hegemonic rule. Whenever the collective national identity of Afghanistan was challenged or under threat from a foreign force, the diverse and otherwise polarized ethnic groups of the country have always united in order to resist the invasion at all costs. Hence, nationalism is one of the major factors uniting the different peoples of the country. But as soon as the foreign invaders are driven out, ethnic tensions tend to again destabilize the country, weakening a greater nationalistic sentiment and instead strengthening the sub-nationalistic domain.

Throughout their history, Afghan people have always placed a lot of importance on preserving their ethnic, tribal, religious and cultural identities⁴. Yet, the Islamisation of Afghanistan was not a development that occurred from within the country, but was a spill-over from the neighbouring Sassanid Empire, and was initially met with a lot of resistance by the Afghans. Despite this, Islam eventually became a unifying factor in a country divided by ideologies and ethnicities.

Taliban emergence and its mode of government from 1996-2001

The emergence of the Taliban was a response to the long series of unprecedented disorder in Afghanistan. The Taliban's emergence came at a time when all other initiatives, both indigenous and foreign, failed to stabilize the country. Neither the Islamabad Declaration, nor the Nangarhar Peace Committee, nor the measures from the UN and the Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC) could ensure peace and stability in Afghanistan. It was at that point in time that Taliban founder Mullah Umar rose to fill the gap.⁵

The Taliban assumed power and shaped the government after having fought against the Soviet occupation in the country and in the sequential Afghan Civil War, in which various Afghan factions fought for power as well as ethno-ideological and sectarian domination. The Civil War exposed the country to chaos, violence and destruction. In the end, the Taliban emerged as the dominant force, having used coercive and persuasive measures. Under Mullah Umar they set up a theocratic Islamic state for five years (1996-2001). During their reign, the Taliban adopted and implemented different measures, which evoked both appreciation and criticism amongst several scholars and Islamic thinkers, such as banning girls from receiving school education.

When the Taliban resumed power soon after the Civil War, they did not want to take risks regarding women's safety and chastity, which are central aspects of the 'orthodox' Islamic society, which they wanted to set up in Afghanistan. The ban came at a time when women had become quite unsafe and the tribal factions sexually molested the women and girls of the rival tribe for amusement, retaliation, and most strategically to "send a message". Thus, the Taliban's ban on women's education was arguably a temporary and conditional one until the country was stable again⁶. A second reason for this measure was their concern of the potential spreading of Western thought and culture, from which they wanted to keep Afghan women away. Their education was supposed to follow the ethical-moral code contained in the educational content of the Islamic traditional institutions, the Maktabs and Madrassas.

The Taliban's ban on girl's school education, their modes of punishment, and their call of Jih'ad, rendered them infamous in the academic and political spheres. The demolition of Bamiyan Buddhist statues was criticized by a majority of the Islamic scholars, branding the act as "un-Islamic". Traditionally, Islam in

4 Neamotullah Nojumi, "Historical Background," *The Rise of the Taliban in Afghanistan: Mass mobilization, civil war, and the future of the region*, Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2009, pp.2-3.

5 Kamal Matinuddin, "Background," in *The Taliban phenomenon: Afghanistan 1994-1997: with an afterword covering major events since 1997*, Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1999, p.8.

6 Nancy Hatch Dupree, "Afghan Women under the Taliban," in *Afghanistan and the Taliban: The rebirth of fundamentalism?* ed. William Maley, New Delhi: Penguin Books, 2001, p.146.

Afghanistan has been very tolerant towards other Muslim sects, other religions and modern life-styles. Muslim ideals entail religious tolerance, respect and recognition of the religious faiths and institutions of others and, unlike the Taliban, Afghan Mullahs were never known to force Islam onto people and until recently sectarianism was not a political issue.

One of the biggest points of critique is the Taliban's non-recognition of the relevance of democracy in their mode of governance. For example, Maududi⁷ greatly emphasizes the importance of the concept of "theo-democracy" in establishing an Islamic system. According to Ghamidi⁸, the Taliban did not seek the collective consultation or *nazm-e-ljtimayi* when announcing Jih'ad against the US and its allies. No doubt the Taliban did have an established Shura or Council of Elders; however the decision was made only by very few people. According to Ghamidi, taking such a huge step without collective consultation contradicted the principles of hikmah and Muntaq (wisdom and rationale), especially since it would affect millions of Afghan people who had already seen a lot of devastation and pillage.

Over-reliance on practices like absolute religious transcendentalism – a psychological state where the subjects abandon the worldly affairs and seek only the hereafter – as a means to motivate and perform acts like suicide bombing or using the idea of the 72 hours as a temptation to motivate such acts, has also been criticized by Abdullah Yusuf Ali. According to Ali⁹, Islam relies on maintaining a balance between the worldly affairs and the belief in the hereafter, as expressed in the Trinitarian concept of Tawassum, Tafakkur and Tadabbur. For example, Tawassum is "the ability to understand the signs of nature. That is, to observe the phenomena of the

universe in order to draw lessons from them and receive spiritual nourishment from the physical events".¹⁰ From an ontological perspective, Islam endorses the philosophical discernment of existentialism and its promulgation of Free Will. It therefore transcends the limitations laid down by the philosophy of essentialism followed by the Taliban.

Additionally, the pre-conditions for waging Jih'ad were not met by the Taliban. As Ghamidi¹¹ points out, Jih'ad-e-Fisabeelillah is the sole prerogative of a prophet only and with the demise of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), who is remembered as the last prophet, the concept of such Jih'ad is obsolete and stays null and void. Israr Ahmad¹², otherwise a staunch Taliban supporter, calls their efforts of establishing a Khilafat by using the Islamic code of punishment, "un-Islamic" and devoid of philosophical as well as pragmatic concerns. Instead, the Taliban's mode of operation was coercive, dictatorial and resorted to extreme punishment.

Most importantly, Jih'ad-e-Akbar (Jih'ad with the nafs or self) is the prime concern of every Muslim. Once a Muslim frees his own self from all evils, only then is the person justified to wage Jih'ad-e-Asghar (Jih'ad against oppression and injustice). However, Muslims resorting to any form of Jih'ad directly wage Jih'ad-e-Asghar with no or very little cognizance of Jih'ad-e-Akbar, therefore lacking its spiritual foundation.

However, it can be argued that the Taliban's call of Jih'ad was within the Islamic format, since Islam permits use of force in defence. They employed it as an effective mechanism to fight the English, Soviets and the US forces from time to time. It was, therefore, a special strategic religious tool for uniting the multi-ethnic and multi-tribal Afghan society against the invaders.

7 Abu al-A'la al-Mawdudi, "Political Theory of Islam," in *Islam: Its Meaning and Message*, ed. Khurshid Ahmad, London: Islamic Council of Europe, 1976, pp. 159–161.

8 "Islam, Jihad and Taliban: Saleem Saifi and Javed Ahmed Ghamidi", You Tube Video, 00:35:57, 13 Feb, 2017. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xt3Y0LysrrQ>, accessed, 4 March, 2018.

9 Abdullah Yusuf Ali, "Introduction", in *The Quran*, Noida, India: Goodword Books, 2016, p.xi.

10 "Tawassum, Tafakkur and Tadabbur in Islam," CPS International: Centre for Peace and Spirituality, accessed, 11 September, 2018, <http://www.cpsglobal.org/content/tawassum-tafakkur-and-tadabbur-islam>.

11 "Islam, Jihad and Taliban: Saleem Saifi and Javed Ahmed Ghamidi", You Tube Video, 00:35:57, 13 Feb, 2017, accessed, 4 March, 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xt3Y0LysrrQ>.

12 "Dr. Javid Iqbal and Taliban- Dr. Israr Ahmad", You Tube video, 00:05:52, 28 Dec, 2009, accessed, 2 September, 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NdFBpF6LzfU>.

The Jih'ad spirit enabled them to resist the various colonizing powers and to preserve their innate social, cultural, tribal and religious ethos.¹³ Those who followed their call of Jih'ad, often termed as the Jih'ad-e-Asghar by Islamic scholars, did so by choice rather than due to force or compulsion. Despite this, some scholars do condemn the Taliban for daring to challenge the US, which is a military super power after all, as it led to the country's massive devastation.¹⁴

Contrary to most opinions, I argue that the Taliban's rule hasn't merely been an epitome of political misappropriation and misgovernance. The Taliban government combined some aspects of 'good-governance' with 'bad-governance'. Their emergence was preceded by civil war, which was characterised by a gross display of absolute factionalism, to the extent that some experts were worried about the disintegration of the country. Strategically speaking, the Taliban in a way simplified the equation when it comes to fighting anti-state elements. During the Civil War, there were too many actors impeding or endangering the statehood of the country. However, with the emergence of Taliban after having eliminated all other warlords and the varied factions competing for power, there was only one anti-state element left, the Taliban itself. From the perspective of retaining or consolidating the statehood, it might be seen as less difficult to fight one anti-state element than many.

Moreover, despite the major short-comings of their rule, the Taliban adopted several measures to restore peace and order in the country. They sought to end factionalism and guarantee a system they perceived as just, transparent and egalitarian. For example, their efforts of eradicating corruption as a major obstacle to the institutional functioning can be named here. Basic human and fundamental rights were respected and the men, women and children were secured. The cities, towns

and the countryside became stable after a long spell of chaos, disorder and displacement, plundering, killing and kidnapping following the Civil War. Roads and highways were rendered safe for trade, traffic and commerce. Justice was expedited and delivered without any bribe. Girls were allowed schooling at Maktab and boys both at the Maktab and Madrassa levels in Afghanistan. Ethical and moral values were placed at the centre of the Islamic society.¹⁵

The Taliban absolutely despised the values of modernity, democracy and secularism because they saw them as the ideological enemies of an ethical and moral-based Islamic society in Afghanistan. However, some of their decisions, such as banning sports and music cannot be explained by Islamic principles. The tradition and culture of both Islam and Afghanistan demand physically and mentally fit people, and sports are the best means to attain this.¹⁶ Music is also not un-Islamic, considering its precedence on duff. In summary, it can be said that the Taliban continuously failed to comply with the basics of Islam, yet they managed to somewhat stabilize the country in the aftermath of the Civil War.¹⁷

The Bonn Agreement and post-war reconstruction

The Bonn Agreement from 2001 was a political initiative aiming at a multi-dimensional approach towards the modernization and institutionalization in Afghanistan. Institutionalization technically meant the emanation, persuasion and consolidation of institutions that govern the country across the political, economic and social realms.

13 Neomatullah Nojumi, "Islam", in *The rise of the Taliban in Afghanistan: Mass mobilization, civil war, and the future of the region*, New York: Palgrave, 2009, p.3.

14 Tim Bird & Alex Marshall, "The Great Enigma," in *Afghanistan: How the West Lost Its Way*, New Haven Connecticut: Yale University Press, 2011, p.11.

15 Mushtaq A Kaw, "A failed US Peace Building Project in Afghanistan: Exploring Cause-Effect Relationship," *Strategic Analysis*, 40(4), 2016: 271-290. DOI: 10.1080/09700161.2016.1184788.

16 Neomatullah Nojumi, 2009, pp.3-4.

17 Abu Bakr al-Jassas al-Razi, "Dar Al-Fikr Al-Beirutiyya", in *Ahkam al-Quran*, Vol.1, Lahore, 1989, P 100, accessed, 11 January, 2018, <http://kitabosunnat.com>.

The agreement established a roadmap based on a gradual and evolutionary implementation of different domains of good governance. The agreement was forged by Afghan and international delegates during a conference from 27 November to 5 December 2001 in Bonn, Germany. Certain interim structures, per se, the traditional Loya Jirga (Grand Council), were created under it to form and frame an interim government and national constitution, leading ultimately to the establishment of a democratic and formal Afghan government. The entire process was suggested to be accomplished within 2 years and the step-by-step schedule gave room for any ethnic representation that felt to have been neglected, to address their representative grievances, till the interim government would be dissolved for major elections.

However, it can be argued that the Bonn Agreement was problematic in many ways. Apart from the fault lines that it cut across the very fundamental subtleties and idiosyncrasies specific to the country, it also gave too much primacy to state building and trivialized nation building. Given the country's complex intricacies like its ethnic divisions and even more so the longstanding sub-ethnic polarization mentioned earlier, which were already threatening nationalistic sentiments, nation building too needed a formidable impetus. Yet instead, the agreement fuelled the sub-nationalistic sentiments even more.

The biggest drawback of the Bonn Agreement pointed out by many was the non-inclusion of the Taliban. Perhaps, the delegates erroneously assumed that the Taliban were no longer relevant after their dismemberment from power in 2001 by the US military forces, and that most of the Talibs were either dead or marginalized beyond any scope of regrouping/resurgence. Instead, the Taliban's exclusion came at a time when over 90% of the country had still been ruled by the Taliban only days ago. Even more poignantly: At the time when the conference was taking place in Bonn, Germany, the de facto capital of the country, Kandahar, was still under the control of the Taliban. Consequently, Lakhidar

Brahimi, former UN Special Envoy on Afghanistan and one of the main observers and participants in the Bonn Agreement conference, called the non-inclusion of the Taliban "the Original Sin".¹⁸

Besides this, the agreement was characterised by extreme ethnic misappropriation and sub-ethnic misrepresentation. The agreement addressed four major representations: the "Northern alliance" (non-Pashtuns), the "Rome group" (followers of King Zahir Shah, representative of Pashtuns), the "Peshawar group" (led by Pir Sayed Ahmad Gailani, leader of Mahz-i-Milli Islmai'ye Afghanistan) and the so-called "Cyprus group" (led by Huamyoun Jareer, son in law of Gulbuddin Hekmatayr). However, Afghanistan comprises of almost 20 ethnicities¹⁹, but not even the eight major ethnic representations were present at the conference. On top of that, the Rome group represented only the elitist Durrani sub-ethnic Pashtuns while the less privileged Ghilzai sub-ethnic Pashtun group was ignored, mainly due to the fact that the Taliban are predominantly of Ghilzai ethnicity, including Mullah Umar.

Out of the twenty-nine ministries established in the interim government, sixteen portfolios including that of defence, home and foreign affairs were allowed to be held by the Northern Alliance, predominantly the Tajiks. In a way, the Tajiks were allowed to dominate the political spectrum of Afghanistan. Tajiks represent merely 27 % of the total population while Pashtuns represent around 40%. It would therefore have been fair if the Pashtuns got more portfolios than the Tajiks, yet this was not the case. Therefore, the modality of the Bonn Agreement and its institutional implementation led to an asymmetric distribution of power and allowed for one ethnic group, the Tajiks, to dominate the political system.

18 Ahmed Rashid, *Descent into Chaos: The United States and the Failure of Nation Building in Pakistan, Afghanistan and central Asia*, 2008, cited in Scott Seward Smith, "The Bonn Agreement," *Afghanistan's troubled Transition: Politics, peace Keeping and the 2004 Presidential Elections*, Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2011, p. 20.

19 "Afghanistan: Ethnic Diversity and Dissidence," *National Foreign Assessment Center*, May 1, 1979, accessed, 3 February, 2018, https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/DOC_0000515454.pdf.

Furthermore, the Bonn Agreement did not entail any safety measures to prevent the return of warlords and criminal networks to power across the political spectrum of Afghanistan. Warlords and drug cartels were two of the major obstacles to peace and security in Afghanistan. Yet, the Bonn Agreement did nothing to eliminate these criminal cartels and punish their leaders. Instead it allowed for them to re-enter the domain of mainstream politics. Since, such warlords and criminal cartels had gone into hiding under the Taliban's five-year regime (1996-2001), the delegates had no balanced vision of the real situation. They limited themselves to the creation of a representative government and ignored the problems of the suffering population containing of displaced refugees, unemployed people, widows and half-widows²⁰. They also failed to address the question of a sustainable development of the country, which are central aspects of 'good' governance.

The interim government of President Hamid Karzai as a follow-up to the Bonn Agreement was a disappointment in terms of governance. He subjected everything to security and failed to address important issues such as the rule of law, maintaining order, ensuring justice, safeguarding human rights, and working towards the homogenization and centralization of power in sociological, historical and political terms. The Bonn Agreement was thus rather 'a means than an end' of the Afghan conflict.

The 'misgoverned' Afghan state post-2001

The conditions that are present in Afghanistan today resonate with what Kaufmann and Kraay call a 'misgoverned' state, due to its virtually defunct administrative, legislative and executive institutions; despite the many billions of US dollars spent for their restoration. The

20 Half Widow is a constructed term which means a married woman who has no whereabouts about her husband and who is not sure whether her husband is dead or alive.

foreign intervention no doubt restored the defunct institutions to some extent and made available a lot of developmental aid; however, it lacked coordination and was primarily centred around security—with lesser impetus on the Afghan governance. Ironically, most of the decisions about the fate and providence of the country were taken outside the country with little or no cognizance of the indigenous traditional and cultural intricacies. The lack of understanding on part of the foreign intervention forces either directly led to political and institutional mal-functioning of various sorts, or indirectly incriminated or aggravated the existing governmental inefficiency. The coalition partners, the local ruling elite, insurgents and warlords, as well as tribal chiefs, the drug mafia, and other vested interests have further undermined Afghan governance across different domains.

Sarah Chayes has highlighted the miscalculation by the Western democracy promoters at two major fronts: First, their lack of experience with and expertise of the complex local dynamics. Second, their choice of Afghan partners with whom they sought cooperation, and who were often perceived by other Afghan groups as either self-promoting political activists or as those who would speak with a "Western mouth."²¹ Kaw's critique of the modus operandi of the West regarding democracy promotion follows a similar vein. Kaw²² argues that democracy was superimposed on Afghanistan from above without being tested first in a phase of relative peace and political stability, but suprisingly it was implemented during the times of insecurity and political abnormality. This argument has been supported by

21 Sarah Chayes, "Hearing the people's Complaints: Kandahar to Kabul; 2001-2009," in *Thieves of State: Why Corruption threatens Global Security*, New York: W.W. Norton & Company: 2016, Chap.3, accessed, 12 June, 2018, https://books.google.co.in/books?id=dIMCBAAAQBAJ&pg=PT3&source=gbs_selected_pages&cad=2#v=onepage&q&f=false.

22 Mushtaq A Kaw, "A failed US Peace Building Project in Afghanistan: Exploring Cause-Effect Relationship," *Strategic Analysis*, 40(4), 2016: 271-290. DOI: 10.1080/09700161.2016.1184788.

Helen Clark²³ and Michael Doyle²⁴ who have both been quite critical of imposed democracy and who have endorsed a promotion of democracy through the will of the people and by establishing platforms based on all-inclusive persuasion.

The current situation in Afghanistan

To date, democratic institutions exist only for the name sake. A real democracy is hard to develop in the country, due to the manifold vested interests and the disinclination of the Taliban and the warlords towards it. The Taliban consider democracy as 'un-Islamic' and the warlords see it as a strategy to dispossess them of their hereditary rights on taxes from land, trade and transit. Democracy is believed to be an unnatural idea for a society dominated by warlords and tribal heads. Despite the different efforts towards 'Sovietization', 'Modernization' and 'Democratization' that have been made by different players in the recent history of the country, Afghan people remain attached to the Loya Jirga and the traditional institutions of religion, law, justice and education. Islam is still a driving force to guide the family norms and convert the multi-ethnic population of Afghanistan into one religious whole.

Albeit Afghanistan ratified the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) in 2008 bribery, embezzlement and misappropriation of funds, abuse of power, and nepotism continue to thrive in the country and amongst government officials. Corruption stalls the government since government jobs are mutually shared by Ghani and Abdullah on the basis of party affiliations or bribes and tips.²⁵ Justice is delayed as the judges, lawyers, court officials and police also fall within the

corruption nexus. The Taliban tenure saw a radical decline in corruption and bribery, which was actually one of the positives of the contradictory regime. However, during the tenure of the mainstream government dominated by Hamid Karzai, corruption has skyrocketed. According to Transparency International, Afghanistan ranked on place 172 among the 7 most corrupt countries on the Global Corruption list for the year 2018, and corruption is now considered by the majority of the people to be the most impeding factor in the way of development and security.

The State is in place but it remains invisible for the delivery of public services and for enforcing the rule of law. Centralized state control is visible in Kabul and in other major cities. But the Taliban continue to rule the areas under their control, which is now more than 50% of Afghan territory. Thus, the country's security is fragile and the state is powerless. The Afghan security forces are failing to defeat the insurgents despite the US backing. The Taliban have reoccupied more than half of the territory they had lost in 2001, allegedly with covert Russian, Iranian and Pakistani support. The "ISIS Khurasan" has become a new powerful faction challenging the Afghan security forces who fail to put a stop to their violence. To date there are gruesome killings of officials, security personnel and Shiites on sectarian grounds. Additionally, the Taliban and IS now also clash for regional leadership. The state is failing to defeat either of the two and the security situation in the country is worsening every day.

Economic development is one of the major determinants of 'good governance'. Today, the Afghan economy is shattered and the country does not have any sustainable sources of income and continues to look to the international community for aid and assistance. The thriving narcotics-culture has triggered a parallel economy. The associated mafia is unbridled. All sections of the society, including politicians, insurgents, the police, farmers and many more are involved in its production, processing and trade from within and outside of Afghanistan. Insurgents thrive on the taxes levied on its production and trade. On the other hand, trade, tourism and business are at a standstill. Money circulation has reduced after the most of the US

23 Helen Clark, "Democracy cannot be Exported or Imported," Huffington Post, 15 November, 2011, accessed 10 May, 2018, https://www.huffingtonpost.com/helen-clark/democracy-cannot-be-expor_b_963445.html.

24 Michael W Doyle, "Promoting Democracy is not imposing Democracy," Huffington Post, 22 February, 2011, accessed, 11 May, 2018, https://www.huffingtonpost.com/michael-doyle/promoting-democracy-is-no_b_826574.html.

25 Simon Chesterman, Michael Ignatieff, Ramesh Thakur, "Introduction", In Making states work: State failure and the crisis of governance, (eds.) Simon Chesterman, Michael Ignatieff and Ramesh Thakur, New York: United Nations University Press, 2005, p.3.

troops' withdrew in late 2014. All the mining projects worth \$trillions are in limbo due to the insecure situation. Thus, prospects of the country's vertical and horizontal economic growth are bleak.

Looking at the situation it seems that the state system is in a way endangered by its own agents and organs. The general public has lost faith in the state due to its failure to ensure peace, security and development and continues to suffer from the on-going violence and lack of health care and other public service provisions. What can be done to improve this dire situation?

Recommendations

- The acknowledgment of the precedence of the rich traditional legacy of the tribal system of governance is a must for every political undertaking. The tribal system of the country and more specifically the rural domain is deeply seated in the consultation of the elders, religious leadership, and works through the yardstick of consensus among the members of the assembly, a typical symbolism of "Pashtunwali code of conduct". It therefore needs to be the basis of governance.
 - Islam has shaped the social and political structure of the country, and remains its unifying force. "Islamic preachers" should clearly disseminate the correct teachings of Islam and end the prevailing ignorance of its true message, which has pushed the country into an unending spiral of violence.
 - Social institutions should work to actively mitigate the ethnic tensions. Inter-ethnic marriage could well be one of the stimulations to bring the divided ethnicities together.
- Recognition of the Taliban as a main party to the conflict should take place; any sort of dialogue, or other measures of negotiation need to include them. A precondition of this, however, is refraining from terrorist attacks.
 - Of late, ISIS Khurasan has emerged as a common threat to both the Afghan government and the Taliban; it thus provides a good opportunity for outside intervening bodies to bring both the Afghan government as well as the Taliban to the same negotiating table, which could act as an ice-breaker for further progressive and unified measures.