

CHALLENGES IN AFGHANISTAN

THE POST BONN ERA

Afghanistan is once again at the crossroads. Foreign occupation troops are scheduled to leave by the end of this year without settling many of the issues that cloud the future of the deeply divided and fragile country. Corruption is rife and the Taliban are still a force to be reckoned with, the production of opium is the largest sum of income for most farmers, while industry is almost nonexistent. Nonetheless, progress has been achieved in many areas despite the turmoil of the past decade. If neighbouring countries cooperate and help Afghanistan rebuild and restore domestic peace, it might reach stability and prosperity, although the Taliban will have to be included in any nationwide settlement.

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INTRODUCTION

The United Nations Security Council *Resolution 2069* dated 9 October 2012 underlined the significance of the *Lisbon Agreement* signed in 2010 between Afghanistan and the countries contributing to the International Security Assistance Force for the transference of countrywide full security responsibility to the Government of Afghanistan by the end of 2014 (online at <http://www.un.org>). The resolution also stressed the need for the continuation of aid and support by international donors for enhancing the capabilities of

Afghan national security forces, both the army and the police (*ibid*). Despite their gradual withdrawal, which began in early 2011, American led North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) troops still numbered 58,129 as of 15 January 2014 (“Troop Numbers and Contributions”, online at <http://www.isaf.nato.int>). Although American President Barack Obama announced a complete withdrawal of troops from combat operations by the end of 2014, a small number will stay behind to advise and train Afghan security forces. As Obama stated:

“Beyond 2014, America’s commitment to a unified and sovereign Afghanistan will endure, but the nature of our commitment will change. We are negotiating an agreement with the Afghan government that focuses on two missions— training and equipping Afghan forces, so that the country does not again slip into chaos and counterterrorism efforts that allow us to pursue the remnants of *al-Qaeda* and their affiliates” (Michael R Gordon and Mark Landler, “Decision on Afghan Troop Levels Calculates Political and Military Interests”, *The New York Times*, 12 February 2013, online at <http://www.nytimes.com>).

While the number of troops to be left behind and their composition is unclear, the significant question lingering in the minds of the international community is, what next in Afghanistan? There are apprehensions that once the troops fully depart, the country could slip into turmoil leading to the outbreak of another of civil war. Some predictions state that violence and turbulence could cause secessionism leading to a fragmentation of the country. This paper analyses the situation in Afghanistan post-2001 and recommends measures to sustain the success achieved in the post *Bonn Agreement* era.

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Officially known as the *Agreement on Provisional Arrangements in Afghanistan Pending the Reestablishment of Permanent Governing Institutions*, the *Bonn Agreement* was the initial attempt to recreate the state in Afghanistan. It stipulated the formation of an interim authority and the convening of an emergency *loya jirga* (grand council) within six months for deciding on the establishment of a transitional authority. A constitutional *loya jirga* was then to be convened within 18 months to frame the Constitution of Afghanistan (online at <http://www.un.org>). However, the *Bonn Agreement* achieved only little headway and Afghanistan continues to be inflicted by many evils.

Corruption

According to the 2012 *Corruption Perception Index* of Transparency International, Afghanistan ranked 174 out of 176 countries (“Corruption in Afghanistan”, online at <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki> and “How they Robbed Kabul Bank”, online at <http://www.uspolicyinabigworld.com>). Even Afghan President Hamid Karzai had admitted:

“There is corruption in the whole system, whether it is the ministries, the NGOs, the donors’ implementation of projects, in all spheres of the Afghan recovery” (Karzai: Corruption in the Whole System”, *Fortune: CNN Money*, online at <http://money.cnn.com>).

The major corruption scandal that rocked Afghanistan was the 2010–13 Kabul Bank financial scandal involving Mahmood Karzai (the president’s brother) and others close to the president. These people were accused of spending a billion US dollars of the bank’s for their own personal lavish lifestyles and for lending money under the table to family and friends. As of October 2012, the government had recovered only \$180 million of the \$980 million in fraudulent loans (*ibid*). The scandal heavily dented the president’s image and broke the trust of the Afghan people looking to rebuild their country.

Most citizens consider the Afghan national army and police as sources of fear rather than security, while corruption and incompetence also plague these services. Low-level corruption is rampant throughout the country and authorities even have to bribe each other to get any administrative work done. To mute opposition against corrupt officials, Karzai had transferred but not punished the guilty, generating much ill will against his government. According to the *Congressional Research Service Report 2013*, the processing of official documents (driver’s license, passport, etc) routinely requires bribes in exchange for action. Other examples of corrupt activities include Afghan security officials selling American or internationally provided vehicles as well as fuel and equipment to supplement salaries. In other cases, local police or border officials siphon-off customs revenues or demand extra payment to guard the equipment of foreign militaries. Some security commanders place “ghost employees” on official payrolls and pocket their salaries. Corruption is fed in part by the low salaries of government workers—about \$200 per month, as compared to the \$6,500 per month received by foreign contractors (Kenneth Katzman, “Afghanistan: Politics,

Elections and Government Performance” Congressional Research Service, 2013, online at <http://www.fas.org>).

Patrimonialism

If the 1990s were free of cronyism in the form of dynastic politics, Karzai brought back the culture of “all in the family”. He supported his allies and relatives with government jobs, money and aid, filling their coffers and they in turn unabashedly built and flaunted large houses amidst the dire economic and social conditions of society. Thomas Barfield (*The War for Afghanistan: A Very Brief History – From Afghanistan: A Cultural and Political History*, (Princeton Shorts) Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012, p29) accused the president of not being interested in institutional building but rather of focussing on tapping the country’s resources for his personal wellbeing. Despite the large sums invested by the international community in “institution building”, Karzai’s model of government remained patrimonial and administration and assets became an extension of the

ruler. In such a system, personal relationships determined everything, from who amassed personal wealth to who was thrown in jail. Karzai did not use state assets to centralise power as much as to create a patronage network of personal clients bound to him (Barfield, *ibid*). In response to the accusation of promoting patrons, the president had stated:

“You have to carry the past in a way that will not hurt what you are building for the future ... have a reasonable sense of inclusivity in order to protect the progress you want to achieve tomorrow ... and we have done it” (Katzman, *ibid*).

Karzai may have “done” something for building the future but his policy of cronyism undid the hopes and aspirations of millions of Afghans who had pinned their trust on him for establishing a democratic system of governance.

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The Taliban's Resurgence: Mission Unaccomplished

Low violence and a huge voter turnout of 70 per cent (*ibid*) marked the first direct elections to the office of the president in 2005 and it was termed as “mission accomplished”. While the occupation of Afghanistan did send the *Taliban* back to the mountains, this factor added to the complacency of foreign troops. They did not concentrate on eliminating the *Taliban*. As Barfield (*ibid*) mockingly commented:

“It was as if a patient stopped taking an antibiotic when the immediate symptoms had ended, disregarding his physician’s warning that a full course was required to eliminate the infection”.

What could have been achieved in 2004 became difficult to eliminate in 2009. Buoyed up by the success of the first presidential elections, Washington reduced the budgeted aid request by 38 per cent (from \$4.3 billion in fiscal 2005 to \$3.1 billion in fiscal 2006). In 2005, it also announced that it would reduce troops by 3000 in the coming year, although these would be replaced by NATO forces (“Afghan Election Workers Begin Vote Count”, online at, <http://www.cbsnews.com>). The Americans also committed the mistake of not bringing to book Pakistan for aiding the *Taliban*. As a result, the *Taliban's* capacity soon increased. Afghanistan marred by a lack of basic minimum necessities (housing, proper food, safe drinking water, sanitation, security, transportation, etc) turned once again to the *Taliban*. The latter also changed their ideology and themselves from orthodox, conservative imposers of the *Sharia* (Islamic Law) to nationalists with the aim of freeing their country from Western infidels. In this, they received great support from southern Afghanistan, which remained mostly untouched by developmental efforts, allowing the *Taliban* to spread their tentacles in this part of the country.

Security also soon started deteriorating, especially in the regions bordering Pakistan where suicide bombers appeared for the first time (Barfield, *ibid*). Furthermore, on 29 May 2006, a riot erupted due to a fatal traffic accident involving American troops and locals in Kabul. Although the riot was brought under control, it showed the unpopularity of Karzai’s regime and the distrust of the foreign occupiers. Later that summer, British and Canadian troops deployed in Helmand and Kandahar bore an unexpectedly fierce attack by the *Taliban*. Although the foreign troops were victorious, the *Taliban* could not be eliminated. Trouble also surfaced in eastern Afghanistan, which experienced crossborder

attacks from Pakistan's autonomous tribal territories where *al-Qaeda* and *Taliban* forces had again become dominant (*ibid*). Violence increased manifold—in 2005–06, suicide bombings increased by more than 400 per cent (from 27 to 139), the use of improvised explosive devices more than doubled (from 783 to 1,677) and armed attacks nearly tripled (from 1,558 to 4,542) (*ibid*). Non-Pashtuns however did not join the war of the *Taliban* against the Western infidels.

Opium Production

Outside Kabul and in rural areas the Karzai regime had little authority, few basic conditions reached the local populace, foreign assistance was insufficient and agriculture remained in poor shape. The only option left to earn an adequate living was by growing opium and since this was supported by the *Taliban*, many Afghans became sympathetic towards their objectives. According to the *World Drug Report 2013* (online at <http://www.unodc.org>), Afghanistan ranked as the leading producer and cultivator of opium globally (74 per cent of all global illicit opium production in 2012) (Seth G Jones, “The Rise of Afghanistan’s Insurgency: State Failure and *Jihad*”, *International Security*, vol32, no4, 2008, pp7–40). Poppy cultivation increased nationwide by 18 per cent between 2011 and 2012 and Helmand province became the biggest opium-producing region, despite an aggressive campaign to eradicate the crop and promote alternative jobs. The

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opium trade provided \$155 million in tax to the *Taliban* in the areas under their control. A farmer makes up to \$120 per hectare of wheat but in a good year can make up to \$10,000 per hectare of raw opium (Alissa J Rubin, “Opium Cultivation Rose this Year in Afghanistan: United Nations Survey Shows”, *The New York Times*, 20 November 2012, online at *ibid*). The drug trade continues to flourish with the complicity of security officers, the *Taliban* and warlords. In addition, the number of drug addicts in the region has increased and the

menace of HIV/AIDS has spread. The international community must address and curb this burgeoning problem. Eradication measures taken to eliminate poppy cultivation however led to the killing of 102 Afghan civilians, police officers and soldiers by farmers and the *Taliban* and the injuring of another 127 people (*ibid*). In an interview, while Karzai admitted to the growing production of poppy, he also emphasised that its cultivation constituted 30 per cent of the economy and to eradicate it, holistic measures needed to be taken to improve the socioeconomic conditions of the Afghans, rather than just telling them not to do it. As Karzai stated:

“We have very good agriculture, but you can’t tell me, ‘grow pomegranates, grow grapes, grow cucumbers or watermelons, but I’m not going to buy them from you’. If the international community wants to help us get rid of narcotics, they must help us all around by buying our products” (*ibid*).

Dependence on Foreign Assistance

Given the drawdown of American troops in 2014 and donor fatigue shared by many countries, Afghanistan’s dependence on foreign assistance has become a major issue. Although Karzai had frequently asked Washington to withdraw troops—to earn reward from his political allies and not project himself as a Western puppet—he knew that his police force was ill equipped to deal with civilian problems or contain the rising insurgency in the region. Throughout history, revenue has been a problem. Afghanistan has always been dependent on foreign aid to fuel its administration and economy. Nadir Shah, Zahir Shah and Daoud Khan to name a few rulers had all looked to the West and neighbouring countries for funds. It was through funding that the Soviets had increased their influence prior to their invasion. Afghan rulers have continuously failed in pursuing a fiscal policy to strengthen the financial base and have therefore remained dependent on others for their survival, allowing donor states to run Afghanistan.

To rebuild the country, investments in agriculture, infrastructure and troop build-up are imperative. Although many countries poured in finances, funds largely ended up as phantom aid. The total international aid pledged from 2002 to 2013 was \$62 billion, while the international aid spent from 2002 to 2009 was a mere 43 per cent (\$26.7 billion). The United States of America (US) pledged \$38 billion from 2002 to 2013 but disbursed only \$10.9 billion in aid

(online at <http://money.cnn.com>). Decreasing aid levels together with ineffective means for implementing aid assistance have exacerbated the economic situation. Foreign donors are in charge of delivering services, which keeps locals away from employment and so the aid meant for the Afghans is channelled back to donor countries in the form of salaries of foreign workers. The Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief estimated that of the \$15 billion in reconstruction assistance given to Afghanistan 2001–08, “a staggering 40 per cent returned to donor countries in corporate profits and consultant salaries” (“Afghanistan 2011: Major Resource Flows”, online at <http://www.globalhumanitarianassistance.org>). In addition, corruption undoubtedly remains a significant factor for the pocketing of left over aid.

Economic and Social Conditions

Insufficient actual foreign aid has affected social and economic developmental efforts. Food and nutrition, infrastructure, hospitals, police services, roads, schools, etc continue to remain in pitiable states. The business community faces serious problems of a lack of electricity, high levels of corruption, insufficient access to capital and land, inadequate legal redressal mechanisms, poorly trained forces and taxes. Although the visibility of women has comparatively increased in parliament and the work force, the majority continue to live a life of fear and hopelessness. Since 2007, about 145 schools have closed in Kandahar and southern Afghanistan affecting more than 70,000 students, both girls and boys. Nationally, the *Taliban* have threatened and torched schools, leaving 200,000 children out of schools (“Aid Effectiveness”, online at <http://www.oxfam.org>). The developmental gap between rural and urban areas has increased. In Kabul, modern buildings have come up along with private television channels,

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shopping malls and Chinese/Italian/Thai restaurants. Many young urban Afghans have embraced international fashions and music and movies from Asia and Europe. Outside Kabul in the rural areas however, basic facilities are still not available and 36 million people continue to live below the poverty line (Nasreen Ghufuran, "Afghanistan in 2006: The Complications of Post Conflict Transition" *Asian Survey*, vol47, no1, January–February 2007, pp87–98, online at <http://www.jstor.org>). Social Security is still a distant dream for many.

A LOST DECADE FOR AFGHANISTAN?

Although Afghanistan has experienced 13 years of war and foreign occupation, it would be incorrect to call it a lost decade in which no improvements were made. The country has been slowly making a comeback—all that is needed is some support along the way ("Economic and Social Rights Situation", online at <http://www.aihrc.org>). Given below are certain significant improvements that have been made in the past decade although much more still needs to be achieved.

Security: The Afghan national forces have seen a marked improvement in their position. Security forces including the army and police force stand at around 300,000, up from just a few thousand in 2001 (Taymor Shah Kamrany, "Afghanistan 2002–12: A Decade of Progress and Hope", Middle East Institute, 14 August 2012, online at <http://www.mei.edu>). These forces are now professionally educated and trained and many are sent abroad to Europe, India, Turkey, the United Arab Emirate (UAE) and the US, for further training. Women have also been included at all levels and are training other women.

Education: In 2002, 800,000 students were enrolled in primary schools, while today there are 8.2 million students of whom 40 per cent are girls. Higher education at the international level has also emerged (*ibid*).

Infrastructure Build-up: International aid has financed the rebuilding of the collapsed infrastructure. Bridges, highways, irrigation systems and roads have been constructed. The Central Bank has been established and a new afghan

currency allows international and domestic banks to function. According to World Bank estimates, the Afghan gross domestic product grew from under \$2.5 billion in 2001 to over \$17 billion in 2011 (*ibid*).

Media and Communication: Completely banned by the *Taliban*, media and communication services today include six mobile phone carriers, 75 television channels, over 175 radio stations and hundreds of print publications (*ibid*). On a visit in 2011, *The Guardian* reporter Nushin Arbabzadah (“There is Progress in Afghanistan, Even if the Afghans won’t Admit it”, *The Guardian*, 6 August 2011, online at <http://www.theguardian.com>) highlighted significant changes that had unknowingly crept into the lifestyle of the Afghans.

“The use of mobile phones has become common and some own two or even three. This is in contrast to the 1980s where few owned landlines and mobile phones were non-existent”.

On the drive from Kabul to Panjshir, Arbabzadah wrote:

“The shops and stalls were bursting with goods, from foodstuffs to drinks to mobile top-up cards to soaps, shampoo bottles and DVDs”.

Arbabzadah also spent long hours in traffic and had difficulty finding parking space due to the large numbers of cars on the roads. She found resurfaced roads and highways, refurbished schools and new health clinics. According to Arbabzadah returned refugees had reopened businesses, joined nongovernmental organisations (NGOs) as translators or had started working as guards in international offices. Such a picture of Afghanistan gives a ray of hope for the country and the international community.

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE POST NATO WITHDRAWAL

The statement below of the former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Mike Mullen, reflects the complacent and obstinate policy adopted by the US in Afghanistan.

‘In Afghanistan, we do what we can. In Iraq we do what we must’ (“Washington News”, 11 December 2007 online at <http://usatoday30.usatoday.com>).

This was not mere rhetoric. By the end of 2009, the US had spent only 28.8 per cent of the total aid pledged (“Afghanistan 2011: Major Resource Flows”, *ibid*). The half-heartedness is evident in the poor social statistics. The main

problems are institutional and political fragility (Nabi Misdaq, *Afghanistan: Political Frailty and External Interference*, Abingdon: Routledge, 2006), foreign interference that violates the sovereignty and integrity of the country (*ibid*), aid and assistance deficit for implementing modernisation programmes and the geostrategic position that makes Afghanistan a “land of routes” and vulnerable to invasion and foreign meddling. With just a few months to go before NATO troops withdraw, urgent measures need to be taken for the consolidation of Afghanistan and to prevent it from slipping into oblivion.

The Political Solution

According to Amin Saikal (“The only Real Solution for Afghanistan is a Political One”, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 19 October 2010, online at <http://www.smh.com.au>), the only real solution to the problems of Afghanistan is a political one. Whether it was the *Geneva Accord* or the *Bonn Agreement*, the affected parties or losers in the war were not included and the real issues sidelined. Now with the exit of US troops, the question is what should be done next to hold the country together in terms of economy, polity and security. Although criticism has mounted over the issue of negotiating with the *Taliban*, this may be a pragmatic solution. The US may have divided the *Taliban* into moderates and extremists, but has achieved little else. Washington may be spent economically, militarily and politically but the violence in Afghanistan remains unabated and the proposal to negotiate with the *Taliban* seems to be the only option. The exclusion of the opposing party in 2001 was a mistake that the US committed at a great cost. Moreover after toppling the Islamic regime, the US confined its military to urban areas and did not work its way up to eliminating the *Taliban*. Since resources are now exhausted, the only option is to open public talks with the *Taliban*, who are waiting for the foreigners to leave before executing their own plan of action. Political talks need to be held with not only the *Taliban* but all other parties as well representing the interests of all sections—the media (though at a nascent stage, it is steadily strengthening its roots), civil society (though not pervasive, it could take up relevant issues and seems to be working towards this end) and the youth (who constitute a significant portion of the population).

Most Afghans would not like to see a reversal of the progress made post

2001 and many realise the country cannot remain isolated from globalisation for long. The *Taliban's* hardcore repressive policies are unlikely to be accepted by the Afghans today. The *Taliban* too have evolved in terms of their ideology. In 1991, their aim was to remove a godless, communist, puppet regime of the Soviet Union and they succeeded after prolonged fighting. Most had been educated in Pakistani *madrassas*, as their own country did not have a pervasive education system and so imposed what they learned and believed in and the Afghans were forced to accept it. The current international condition has changed drastically. It is difficult today to hide an adverse issue from the condemnation of international society. Therefore, talking in straight terms with the *Taliban* and laying equal emphasis on all other parties could lead to balanced and comprehensive talks. However, negotiating with a defeated party is not the policy of the US. Nonetheless, whether publicly or privately, the US must accept that the war has had no victors, only losers. The image of the Americans as supporters and promoters of human rights has been affected with the civilian casualties in Afghanistan running into thousands. As a renewed military attack approach is out of the question with the international economic crisis looming over and other pressing problems to be dealt with, talks are the only option left. The US must not merely hand over the reins of power to the men who have been enjoying political power while looting the financial resources of the country. Talking to all parties including the *Taliban* could renew confidence and prevent Afghanistan from slipping into turbulence and turmoil.

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Banking on the International Community

Foreign interference has been the predominant irritant in Afghanistan, exacerbated by continuous intrusions and interferences in the economy, polity and territory of the country. Cooperation, positive engagement and rationality

from the international community would help in rebuilding the country as well as in resolving conflict and building peace. Neighbouring countries need to realise that an unstable Afghanistan is a threat to the entire region. The US must play a positive role in bringing the countries flanking Afghanistan to the table. However, although the Americans have a lot of work to do before packing their bags, they are unlikely to undertake it.

First, the US needs to change its policy and approach towards Iran, which it considers a part of the “axis of evil”, has tagged as a notorious nuclear power and imposed sanctions on. Although Tehran has in the past attempted to build positive relations with Washington, the latter has not reciprocated. Instead, it has worked on building a negative image of Iran, pitting all other countries against it. This needs to stop for the sake of Afghanistan as well. The onus of a peaceful and stable Afghanistan lies as much on the international community as on the Afghans themselves. In fact, Afghanistan will be what the international community makes of it. Iran has responded positively in containing the Afghan problem. It has faced and continues to face a mammoth influx of refugees spreading crime, using local resources and adding to the crisis caused by American and United Nations sanction. In addition, the drug problem also needs to be addressed. The US should enter into talks with Iran or at least implicitly support its efforts to diffuse the crisis.

Pakistan is next, where Pashtunistan is the main problem. Islamabad fears that if Afghanistan is able to overcome its present state of crisis, the Pashtuns may demand their own land. This is one issue because of which Pakistan continues making its military relevant to its public. However, it is unlikely that Afghanistan would face fragmentation within its territory. Although it is composed of diverse ethnicities, the Afghans are also loyal to “Afghan land”. Despite more than three decades of war, the country has not shown signs of fragmentation. Fears have only prospered among scholars and writers. Neighbouring countries support their own ethnicities, as they did in the post-Soviet withdrawal years, but their aim has remained the protection of kindred populations from discrimination and persecution at the hands of the dominant section, not secessionism or taking over troubled regions. Pakistan and other neighbouring countries need to take comfort from the fact that the question of splitting or secession has never arisen, although Afghan Pashtuns traditionally claim the Northwest Frontier province of Pakistan which was included in British India when the Durant Line

was drawn. If the international community pledges not to intervene or fuel the ethnic issues, many of the problems could be solved. Thus, Pakistan should concentrate on its own domestic terrorism rather than making its military operate outside its borders.

Russia too cannot be left out as extremism from Afghanistan could spill over to neighbouring areas. The penetration of militants into Central Asia and Chechnya is a great worry for Moscow. Permission for NATO aid to transit through Russian territory affirms their apprehension. The Russians do not want the *Taliban* to be a party in the rebuilding process because of their repressive and fundamentalist policies. China is also concerned about fundamentalism, given its restive Xinjiang province and has been making inroads in trade and economic matters in Afghanistan. The Chinese have invested heavily in the Mes Aynak copper mines, the second biggest untapped resource in the world. This is the largest infrastructure project in the country. The positive engagement of big players is the need of the hour. India, though geographically separated from Afghanistan by Pakistan, needs to continue engaging positively in the country by building hospitals, power lines, roads and schools and colleges. The largest project undertaken by India so far has been the building of a road in southern Nimroz, providing a link for landlocked Afghanistan to the port of Chabahar in Iran. This road reduces Afghanistan's dependence on Pakistan for its transportation links. India cannot and should not counter Pakistan militarily but must continue support and build Afghanistan.

Saudi Arabia was one of three countries (along with Pakistan and the UAE) to establish diplomatic relations with Mullah Omar's government. The *Deobandi* theological ideology of the *Taliban* is close to the *Wahhabism* of the Saudis and in cooperation with Pakistan, the Arab kingdom had helped shape the *Taliban's* policy. Since 2001, Saudi Arabia has been cautious in its dealings but the *Taliban* would prefer the Saudis as well as Qatar and the UAE be included

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in the reconciliation process, to which they could contribute immensely. The support of Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan too would be required in the rebuilding process. Lastly, the South Asian Association of Regional Countries (SAARC), which until now has been tagged as irrelevant, could come into its own and establish its importance. Afghanistan is a SAARC member and the organisation could become a platform for bringing neighbouring countries to the table to discuss and engage in the conflict resolution process. Its importance must not be undermined.

CONCLUSION

The international community is closely watching the troop withdrawal drama in Afghanistan, but the question is, for how long? The *Taliban* are also waiting before they make their move. To succeed the peace process must be all inclusive. On 5 December 2001, the *Bonn Agreement* was signed for establishing an interim authority and setting the course for future action in the country. Before the withdrawal of troops, one agreement must be signed with all opposing Afghan forces and another with the international community to pave the way for positive intervention and engagement in Afghanistan. As Barnett R Rubin (*The Fragmentation of Afghanistan: State Formation and Collapse in the International System*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002) has aptly summarised:

“If the situation in Afghanistan is ugly today, it is not because the people of Afghanistan are ugly. Afghanistan is not only the mirror of the Afghans, it is also the mirror of the world”.

As an Old Persian proverb states:

“If you do not like the image in the mirror do not break the mirror, break your face” (Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: Islam, Oil and the New Great Game in Central Asia*, London: IB Tauris, 2002).