

## **The United States Role in Afghanistan: A Post Exit Policy Perspective in Indian Ocean (2014-2020)**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The United States has adopted multi-faceted policy in Afghanistan since 2001 to 2020 as the alone superpower in the contemporary world politics. The Washington administration has preferred its own policy of capturing power and influence in the region. The research aims to elucidate the vested interests and objectives of the United States in Afghanistan for last 20 years along with to indicate major causes of perpetual instability in Afghanistan. How the United States and other regional powers have played their respective role in the changing geo-strategic environment of Afghanistan with reference to rolling back the stability or to develop political infrastructure and institution building process. The research work consists the qualitative analysis with the support of empirical data, how the United States has applied different variant security strategies in Afghanistan to acquire certain settled interests and objectives in Afghanistan. The research widely emphasis on the United States drawdown plan 2014 and its aftermath, outcomes, implications and the probable environment of instability in Afghanistan. The United States has fought the longest war of history in Afghanistan, but yet could not find out any agreed and acceptable solution without any conclusion of its withdrawal. Despite costing a huge investment, struggle and sacrifices the question arsis that Afghanistan still remains a zone of violence, uncertainty, instability, militancy and religious extremism. The United States has adopted the dynamical policy parameters like, coercive diplomacy, regional approach, pressuring tactic, military escalation method, complete disengagement approach, political settlement approach and the status que plus approach, but it could not be successful to bring all the Afghan stakeholders and the regional actors on any undisputed solution of the conflict in Afghanistan.

**Key Words:** **The Drawdown plan, The Cut-off date Approach, Troops Reduction Roadmap, Bilateral Security Agreement & Regional Security Concern.**

## **The US-Afghan exit program 2014**

The United States President Barak Obama gave the future course of action, roadmap and policy of American troops' withdrawal from Afghanistan during his visit to Kabul in May 2012. President Obama expressed that the year 2014 will be expected to witness the withdrawal of foreign forces from Afghanistan through a gradual exit approach. The American troops however will not leave the soil of Afghanistan at once or absolutely. The United States will continue the training of Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) and political institutions for the law and order maintenance and the State administration in the context of future Afghan program. The United States yet have to decide about the remaining presence numbers of American troops whether it is 20,000 and 30,000 thousand to be deployed in future. On the other side the most important questions arise how Afghanistan will deal the presence of militants, rebels, dissidents in respect to run the system of State governance, maintenance of law and order and stability? What will be the position and role of International Security Assistance Force (ISAF)? What will be the extended role of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)? and what would be the role of regional actors and neighbors State can play in Afghanistan? How the interests and actions of regional powers and the United States round Afghanistan will determine the consequences in the future politics of the region. The former Afghan President Hamid Karzai and United Nations Secretary-General Ban ki-moon expressed their interests and will about the Afghans transition plan during the Lisbon Summit of Nov 2010. (The Guardian 2010, Nov 20). The transition plan included exiting international troops from Afghanistan through phases during 2011 to 2014 within the time of 4 years but, the actual US-Afghan exit program was revealed by the United States President Barak Obama in 2012 during his visit to Afghanistan. The American administration adopted cut-off date approach towards Afghanistan as the Afghan army and security forces were established to take over country's security plan. It was decided that the US led NATO forces will provide training and strength to Afghan army and will follow the peace process roadmap for the withdrawal of international forces.

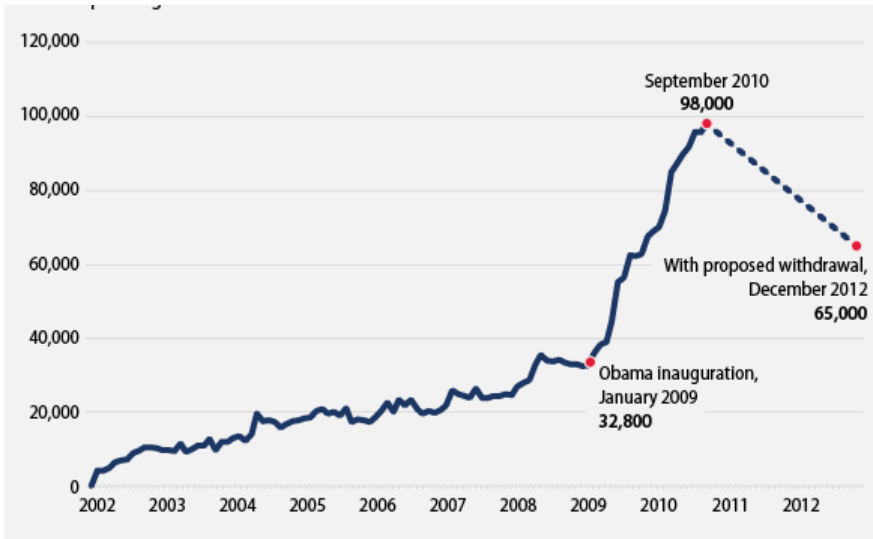
### **The troops reduction roadmap**

President Barak Obama gave the drawdown plan to quit from Afghanistan in July 13, 2011 when 650 American troops departed from Afghanistan to their country. (Nichols, M. 2011, July 25). The NATO and US administration decided to slow down the war in Afghanistan on April 18, 2012 and gave Afghanistan a leading role in combat with the insurgents. Both the parties agreed on keeping some international troops in Afghanistan beyond 2014 to provide support to the Afghan security forces for the maintenance of law and order in the country. (Bumbler, E.2012). Afghan President Hamid Karzai and United States President Barak Obama signed on a strategic partnership agreement on 21 May 2012 in which both

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the States decided the removal of 23 thousand American security forces by the end of summer 2012. It was decided that the forthcoming military operations in Afghanistan would be initiated and led by the Afghan army, whereas the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) forces will provide training and assistance to the local security forces when it is required.

**Figure: deployment of US troops in Afghanistan 2002-2012**



Source: <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/RL33110.pdf>.

### **The drawdown plan**

Drawdown of the US forces from Afghanistan commenced in July 2011. The US led forces withdrawal strategy also included the plan of complete removal of American troops from Afghanistan by the end of 2014. It was committed that only the trainers will stay in Afghanistan to assist the Afghan forces with a small contingent of troops to conduct the special mission of counter terrorism operations against the daunting enemy Al-Qaeda. (Chandrasekaran, R. 2012, may12). The drawdown plan roadmap was prepared to chalk out a comprehensive plan to settle the security issues inside the Afghanistan and to generate maximum global support to Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) to conduct and lead different military operations in Afghanistan. Thus, the thoughtful principles and regulations were set under the Afghan transition plan. (Afridi, 2015, p.2). The Chicago summit decided that the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) mission will be completed in Afghanistan by 31<sup>st</sup> Dec 2014 and the ANSF will take charge of command by mid-2013. The Chicago conference also decided to cutoff British

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troops from NATO forces by 2015. Therefore, the decisions of the above-mentioned summit conference were marked as the milestone for the Lisbon roadmap because NATO showed its commitment to make a gradual drawdown of its security forces to end its operational role in Afghanistan that will consequently be shifted to Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) right by the end of 2014. The drawdown plan will be completed by 2014 in five stages. The remaining NATO forces in Afghanistan will be shifted into supervisory role of training and advice to the Afghan police and military personnel.

### **The probable threat perception**

The major objective to articulate drawdown roadmap was to handle the threat scenario in the future of Afghanistan. It was perceived that the Afghan government will be unable to continue perform its appropriate role and rule due to weaker law and order situation that can provide space to revive Taliban insurgency. (Kalis, 2016, pp. 239.243). The Afghanistan's probable civil war among different warring factions will be another threat. Furthermore, the sudden or rapid collapse of the Afghan political regime can create a critical situation as the neighboring countries will also be vulnerable for prevailing Taliban effort to use their proxies. There can be a protracted civil war like situation in Afghanistan which can cause security dilemma for the regional powers and a huge economic and strategic loss to for the United States and its allies forces in Afghanistan. The neighboring States will have to face Afghanistan as an ethnic and civil war-oriented country. The ultimate futuristic socio, political and economic environment in Afghanistan will be a clear loss of economic, military, political and strategic consumption during 2011 to 2014.

### **Approaching towards withdrawal**

The 23,000 American security troops left Afghanistan on July 22, 2012 following the drawdown policy of President Barak Obama. On the whole 23,000 American soldiers went back to home during 2012. The United States decided to minimize its military troops from Afghanistan in May 2014. The Washington administration aimed to decrease its troops through phases and steps on the bases of gradual exit policy. Beside this the US led allies provided maximum support to bring peace and stability inside the Afghanistan. The NATO force got dual job i.e. provision of security to the Afghan people and maintenance of socio, economic and political governance. The United States intended to improve and increase reconstruction of Afghanistan and infrastructure building related to restore political institutions and democratic values like, public participation in general elections, formation of representative government and independence of media. Thus, United States provided a full fledge support during the Afghan elections of 2014 in which Ashraf Ghani and Abdullah Abdullah contested the Afghan Presidential elections. Similarly, the United States engaged Pakistan to perform its possible diplomatic

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role for regional cooperation, stability and peace keeping phenomenon in Afghanistan.

**The bilateral security agreement**

The US-Afghan bilateral security agreement would go into effective on 1 Jan 2015 and would last until the end of 2024. Both the States concluded different principles and provisions as the supporting documents of United States withdrawal from Afghanistan and the future course of action in the context of security preservation, peace and stability along with the future governance mechanism in Afghanistan. The American forces will perform a supporting role in Afghanistan. A professional but small NATO military contingent will conduct the appropriate operations against Al-Qaeda and its associates groups. The Afghanistan armed forces will lead counter terrorism operations whereas the United States will compliment and respect the Afghan sovereignty their people and homes. The United States continue to provide financial support and funding for Afghanistan security forces and reconstruction process. The agreement envisaged all the remaining United States and NATO soldiers will respect the norms, values and sovereignty of Afghanistan. No American soldier will commit any unlawful act on the soil of Afghanistan. The Afghan government will stand responsible to conduct import and export, personnel entry and exit process in Afghanistan. Furthermore, the bilateral security agreement provided service support activities and special expectations to the contractors in Afghanistan. (Hussain Ijaz, 2015, p.8). The deployment of Afghanistan National Security Forces (ANSF) after 2012 can be estimated as 3,5200 troops including 1,46339 Afghan National Army (ANA), 61,720 Afghan Air Force (AAF) and 146339 Afghan National Police (ANP) to maintain law and order, peace, stability and containment of the activities of insurgents inside the Afghanistan. (Livingston, Ian S. 2014, may 14). The United States experts and the decision-making authorities considered the ground realities, socio, political environment and the transitional institutional building require an effective support from the senior and powerful partner otherwise the guns will remain on the shoulders of the fighters in Afghanistan and the Afghan political system would remain dysfunctional and aimless. Consequently, the domestic socio, political environment of Afghanistan would be restored as the epicenter of violent activities. Therefore, the rational calculus, infrastructure building and the supporting of political mechanism approach with the diplomatic engagement has been adopted by the think tanks to avoid maximum chaos and anarchy in the future of Afghanistan.

**Table: The Afghan security forces on duty, 2003-2013**

Month/Year	Ministry of Defense Forces	Ministry of Interior Forces	Total Afghan Security Forces
End 2003	6,000	0	6,000
End 2004	24,000	33,000	57,000
End 2005	26,000	40,000	66,000
End 2006	36,000	49,700	86,000
End 2007	50,000	75,000	125,000
End 2008	68,000	79,910	147,910
End 2009	100,131	94,958	195,089
End 2010	149,533	116,856	266,389
End 2011	179,610	143,800	323,410
October 2012	190,848	146,339	337,187
September 2013	185,817	152,336	338,153

Source: Livingston Ian S. and O'Hanlon M., *Afghanistan Index*, Brookings, May 14, 2014.

### **The NATO's Cut-off date approach 2014**

After President Barak Obama's announcement to quit from Afghanistan by 2014 the United States administration adopted cut-off date approach to quit Afghanistan. The peace process roadmap along with anticipation of dialogue diplomacy with Afghanistan has been designed by the American policy makers. The Washington administration decided to bring Taliban on the dialogue table for the peaceful settlement of the existing political and security issues in Afghanistan. On the other side Taliban desire to acquire different ministerial positions in the central and provincial governance in Kabul without contesting and winning any election. (Mazahar, 2013, p.262). The United States gave assignment to new Kabul government to arrange peace talk with Taliban and chose backdoor diplomacy in order to bring some of the good Taliban on dialogue table to articulate a new power sharing formula that may work in the post exit 2014 era. The United States administration considered Pakistan role to conduct and manage dialogue with different groups of Taliban in Afghanistan. Pakistan was given task to make possible diplomatic interaction with the ruling alliance led by Hamid Karzai, the change and hope collation led by the non-Pashtuns i.e. Dr Abdullah, Younus Qanooni, Ahmed Behzad and Noor Muhammad, the national front coalition led by

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Dostum and Adalat group led by Hanif Atmar for the future course of action. The major content of the United States security troops exit from Afghanistan is based on the gradual, observational approaches. Furthermore, the United States made it conditional & operational training of the Afghan police security agencies and the armed forces. The rationale considered as the key factor of the announcement by the United States strategy of withdrawal from Afghanistan is based on restructuring of Afghan political system, strengthening the civil bureaucracy, training of security organizations, and stable political and democratic culture along with an effective intelligence network.

### **Political & diplomatic approach**

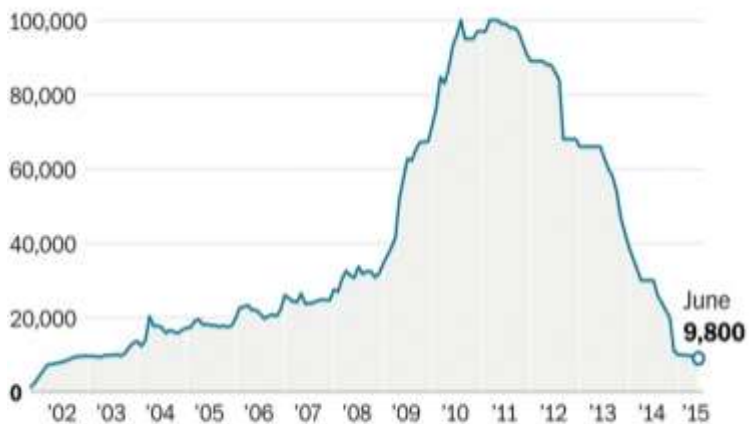
Along with manifestation of democratic culture in Afghanistan, it has been decided that the United States intended to reduce the numbers of US security troops from Afghanistan through different phases drawn by the Pentagon to execute and complete the exit of all-American forces. Because at once quit from Afghanistan would lead to the revival of Taliban control and collapse of the Afghan political infrastructure which will create internal strives, anarchy and civil war in future. Most of the analysts and few think tanks are view that Taliban stronger and more influential rather than they were active and engaged in the past. The United States security intelligencia considers numerous reasons for the challenges in defeating the Taliban or to bring them on dialogue settlement otherwise a weak and ineffective government in Kabul would invite the insurgents to capture the major socio, political governance mechanism of Afghanistan which would be sheer waste and collapse of the peace keeping collective and integrated efforts of global collations led by the United States in Afghanistan since 2001. On the other side the US led western forces focus on Afghan cause can invite Taliban's regime with help of its associate groups across the Durand line, from Iran, Russia and particularly the Islamic States Of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) can play a leading role if the United States and its allies from the Afghanistan without a permanent political peace deal, diplomatic settlement and security oriented agenda of with the guarantee of any sought of risk to the ongoing United States-Afghan peace program.(Johns, 2018, oct 26). The United States needs to develop a clear and candid strategy which may protect the success and achievements in Afghanistan with the solution of existing conflicts. The major task ahead to the United States is to resolve Indo-Pak conflict as a mediator and to establish of neutral Afghanistan because a unilateral strategy can increase high costs and risks in the future course of action and political governance in Afghanistan.

### **The current security environment**

The security situation in Afghanistan seems quite procures and uncertain due to repeated incidents of violence, anomic activities and the sporadic terrorist attacks

since the declaration of US military exit program 2014. The central and local Afghan governments could not acquire the complete command and control particularly in the remote and rural areas of the country. A corrupt and divergent political patronage system continues to implement uncertain reforms which led the national unity of Afghanistan remained divided. Particularly the factions of Afghan government seem still failed to bring persistent peace stability and prosperity for the people of Afghanistan. On the other side the Afghan government since 2016 has followed the sheer dependent policy on foreign funding and Afghan support program which caused the shrunk of economic growth. Furthermore, the working of political and economic institutions has been compromising with the draw down policy international forces especially due to the absence of a solid, coherent and strong working infrastructure. The widening of differences between Pakistan and Afghanistan on security issues have also generated uncertain and ambiguous circumstances in the region. The United States decision to provide of \$23 billion per year financial support to Afghanistan as a subsidies program seems quite uncertain especially when Al-Qaeda's core has been reduced to incoherence. The overall weaker Afghan political infrastructure with a fearful government in the presence of Taliban resurgence would invite to a destructive collapse of the Afghan political system. Consequently, the civil war, anarchy and other local and external terrorist groups would be in position to rebuild their hideouts and sanctuaries in Afghanistan. (Tellis, 2017, may 22).

**Figure 1: U.S Troops in Afghanistan, 2001-2015**



Sources: Brookings Institution, US Air Forces Central Command GENE THORP/THE WASHINGTON POST

### **Contemporary challenges in Afghanistan**

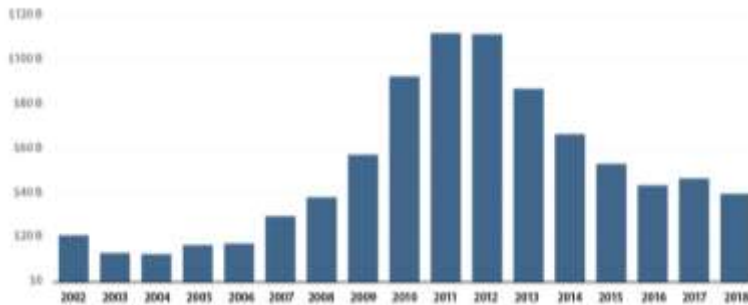
The presence of US led security forces has administered maximum security which is a biggest issue inside Afghanistan. There have been multiple security problems faced by the internal and external military troops in the context of maintain law and order situation, protection of public offices and the people of Afghanistan. The



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entire soil of Afghanistan has been caught by violent and terrorist activities of the dissidents since 2001 to present. Thousands of civil and military lives have been cost along with a huge materialistic loss. Apart from the daunting challenge of security maintenance in Afghanistan the dependent economy, resource management, working of TV, Radio another communications channels both the domestic and internal challenges face quite critical situation on the way of their transmission in the perspective of projects development. Thus, the shambling economic conditions cannot produce the favorable environment for peace and stability in the forthcoming years of Afghanistan. Consequently, the foreign investors and donners will stop their investments projects in Afghanistan. (Tomas & Wagner, 2013). Furthermore, the Afghan currency will not in the position to maintain its worth. Therefore it is assume that after the withdrawal the NATO forces in Afghanistan the economic development, foreign investors and other reconstruction schemes in Afghanistan will be undermined because about 20% of Afghanistan's economic expenditures is being paid by the United States and its allies due to of the incapable and insufficient capacity of Afghan political and economic infrastructure.(Rosenberg, 2013).

**Figure 2: Total US costs of war and reconstruction in Afghanistan**



Source: Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, "Quarterly Report to the United States Congress"(Wasgington:2020),p,48,availableat<http://www.sigar.mil/pdf/quarterlyreport/2020-01-30qr.pdf>.

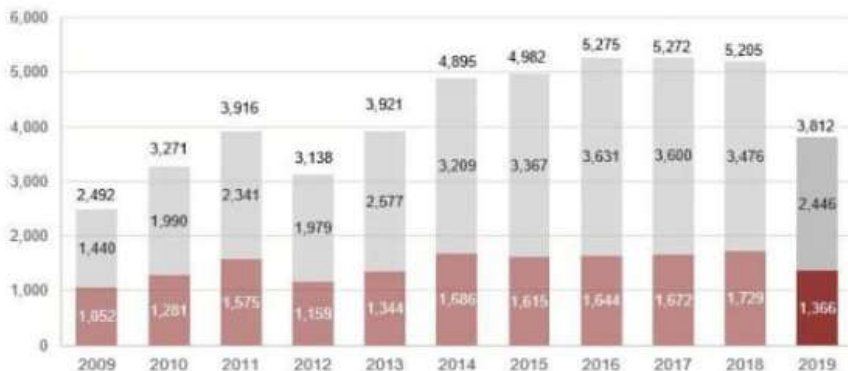
A big threat of civil war exists in Afghanistan because Taliban will be revengeful at NATO forces due to their huge loss and destructions of hideouts after the American exit policy of 2014. If a stable and strong economic, political and institutional framework has not been constructed inside Afghanistan it will lead to start another civil war in the country. (Devine & kasal, 2015). Consequently, instability factor will take increase in the region which will affect the regional States like, Pakistan, Iran, China and Central Asian States. The northern and southern province of Afghanistan are supposed to become the route

passage of ethnic and violent infiltration in the neighboring States of Afghanistan. Resultantly political crises like, disharmony among the heads of warring lords, groups will create great challenge and vacuum in the internal policy of Afghanistan. The feelings of deprivation, question of representation, conflict of power sharing will generate political discontentment and an ultimate chaos inside Afghanistan. Thus, the prevailing political deterioration can compromise and jeopardize the fruits and outcomes of global War on Terror since 2001 to present in Afghanistan. On the whole a huge cost of US led global coalition in both materialistic and live costs can go into the vein.

### **Regional security concern & implications**

The emerging geo-strategic and political environment of Afghanistan carries divergent agendas of the regional players i.e. Pakistan, India, China, Iran, Russia and the Central Asian States. Afghanistan carried on the measures and preparations in order to acquire its security as the US and NATO troops exert to accomplish their “Pullout Scheme for 2014”. After the Afghan exit program the regional powers like, China, Iran and Pakistan have become more alert about the emerging geo-strategic and political environment of the future of war to prone Afghanistan. Even with the presence of 300,000 security forces Al-Qaeda and Taliban exits as a huge threat to the regional and global peace in Afghanistan. Therefore Pakistan, China and Iran do have vested interests in Afghanistan along with the settled Indian role by the United States into the new Afghan-US strategy in post 2014 environment. Thus, a great challenging situation lies ahead in the front of these regional powers. The regional players have become quite alert on all these existing challenges and problems to deal with the drawdown deadline and the post exit environment (Behn, 2012). There have been thousands of injuries and casualties of Afghan people during 2009-2020 in lieu of global and Afghan military operations dealing with the War on Terror led by the United States.

**Figure 3: Total civilian Deaths and Injured in Afghanistan 2009-2020**



Source: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/jul/30/nearly-4000-afghan-civilians-killed-or-wounded-in-first-half-of-2020-un-says>

## **Pakistan's interests and engagement**

Pakistan becomes essential and active regional player with its leading role in Afghan cause since 2001 to present due to its strategic, cultural and ideological affinity with Afghanistan. Pakistan has played an important role along with its continual engagement in respect to arrange and facilitates talks among Taliban, Afghan government and the United States. Despite its role as the facilitator of dialogue diplomacy in Afghanistan Islamabad administration has to face the blame game of Taliban as its proxies in Afghanistan. Pakistan continued its efforts with a great momentum to make the internal situation of Afghanistan non radical and to minimize the anarchic situation with dialogue diplomacy being the important partner of the US led global coalition in Afghanistan. Pakistan has generated certain reservations and apprehensions in the post drawdown environment of Afghanistan due to increasing Indian strategic role design by the United States administration. Therefore, the Islamabad administration perceives its present and future role in Afghanistan not only in discussions and debates, but aspires to contain Indian role in Afghanistan considering the future prospects of the regional politics. Pakistan believes in regional and global peace, but the question arises what would be the level of trouble? What would be the future of Afghan government? Will the Afghan government acquire legitimate position and role? Are the important questions in front of decision-making authorities in Islamabad with the leading interests of relative peace in the region (Khatak, 2012). The post United States withdrawal scenario seems quite difficult for Pakistan in terms of its role for restore dialogues with Taliban for the maintenance of lasting peace in Afghanistan. On the other side situation like tough for Pakistan on the presence of Arial drone technology which can be used across the Durand line. Furthermore, Pakistan has a serious concern of present Indian role in Afghanistan due to the regional security and balance of power has been disturbed. Thus, Pakistan's dynamical engagement becomes an inevitable factor for the normalization of Afghan situation in the forthcoming future. Therefore, the United States has realized to invite and engage Islamabad administration to bring the warring factions particularly Taliban on the dialogue table. Therefore, Pakistan's diplomatic, strategic and regional role cannot be undermined in the peace settlement efforts and for the solution of Afghan cause in the future regional politics.

## **India as the new entrant**

The Indo-Afghanistan relations can be connected back to the ancient time of military conquest of the Alexander the great. Although India has not played any obvious and direct strategic diplomatic role during both the Afghan wars since 1979 to date. But the New Delhi ever promoted anti Pakistan conspiracy theory and propaganda as a terror sponsoring and pro-Taliban State. India occasionally

blamed Pakistan a country as an epicenter for the breeding of extremism and militancy. Particularly across the Pakistan Afghan border. Furthermore, Indian media, statesmen and political leadership propagated that Pakistan played a double game with the United States accepting economic and military support to target terrorist activities, whereas Islamabad administration ever protected and provided shield to Taliban. Thus, with such a standoff India sought major role to play in Afghanistan which led New Delhi to open its diplomatic conciliates in Afghanistan. The Indian government occasionally encouraged to the United States to launch a coercive military campaign in Afghanistan. Resultantly the United States has given a new Afghan roadmap under the changing regional geo-strategic environment with India as an active player in the regional politics particularly to conduct the deal with contemporary Afghan situation. The major policy perspective remains to contain China's increasing role and influence in the region (Mazhar, 2013, pp.71-72).

### **China's role in Afghanistan**

China as an important regional power increased its role and engagement in Afghanistan since 2011 on the perception that the United States was likely to quit Afghanistan. Both the Beijing and Kabul administration sign a strategic partnership agreement in 2012. China generated its security and strategic interests in Afghanistan with a relatively low priority as compare to the United States. The Beijing government emphasized on the preservation of its Belt and Road initiative. China focused on the modest economic opportunity development in Afghanistan. However, China adhered to long standing- all weather friendship policy with Pakistan in respect to secure its interests in Afghanistan. China continued to promote Pakistan's agenda and view point in the post US-exit environment in Afghanistan. On the other hand, the Beijing administration provided political and diplomatic support to host tri-nation dialogues including Pakistan, China and Taliban for the settlement of a future roadmap of a political infrastructure in Afghanistan. Furthermore, China Continues to support a stable, peaceful political Afghanistan in the post 2014 arena, but China yet have to articulate and appropriate strategy for the central Asia (Bhadra Kumar, 2013).

### **The Iranian factor**

Iran shares a direct border with Afghanistan and articulated its Afghan policy based on both the Islamic State and American policy towards Tehran. Afghanistan becomes an important geo-economic and geo-strategic State for Iran. Later Iran has contributed almost \$0.5 billion support in Afghanistan for human welfare development and reconstruction. Iran has strategic stakes in Afghanistan particularly in the context of religion - ethnic factions. Tehran has supported the US led reconstruction process in Afghanistan in the post 9/11 scenario because, an instable Afghanistan would not be best in the Iranian interests but yet Iran has not

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contributed to join United States peace keeping forces in Afghanistan. The Tehran administration could think to contribute with the permission to use the road from Chahbahar port to Zaranj in order to launch a new road for logistics supplies, But it can be simply possible if the Iran and United States relations are restored in normalization because Tehran administration seems skeptical about the United States role and success in Afghanistan. Nevertheless, Iran desire to be an important and significant player of the region looking forward its influential role in the forthcoming geo- strategic, economic and political environment of Afghanistan (Milani, 2006).

### **The Russian concern in Afghanistan**

Russia has started to perform a significant role in Afghanistan in respect to conduct dialogue among different warring factions in Afghanistan in the post 2014 environment. Moscow has shown its deep interests in the promotion of dialogue diplomacy to protect its strategic and geographical interests particularly related to vulnerable southern border. The Moscow's interests in Afghanistan during the post 2014 environment would increase with the passage of time. The Russian government has repeatedly announced the independence and recognition of Afghan sovereignty and extended a sufficient support for the investment and infrastructure building in Afghanistan. The Moscow administration has claimed to pull out all the breeding grounds of global terrorism and the complete elimination of the hideouts of the dissidents from the soil of Afghanistan. The Russian decision makers and authorities are quite familiar with implications of the ostensible northern route to carry both the forces and logistics of the coalition forces in Afghanistan via Russia. Although Russia will provide an enthusiastic diplomatic support to the United States in the War on Terror in Afghanistan as it has evoked relatively a good cooperation in the post 9/11 War on Terror. Despite the bilateral cooperation and understanding in Afghanistan Moscow administration follows wait and see policy how the Washington steps forward under the Trump Afghan policy in future (Tellis, 2017), pp.6-7).

### **The US policy opportunities**

The United States has selected different policy options for going forward in Afghanistan. The Washington administration adopt the objectives including protection of the people of Afghanistan, mitigates the threats of terrorism, peace and stability, conflict resolution, infrastructure development, reconstruction, the survival of economic and political policy and institution building in the future of Afghanistan. The United States believes in the working of a regional solution to end the proxy war in Afghanistan. Furthermore, pressuring of Pakistan to squeeze the Taliban factor would be another strategic depth policy in the context of regional approaches invaded by the United States in Afghanistan. Apart from the

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regional approach option United States can initiate unilateral approach agenda in Afghanistan through a major military escalation and complete disengagement policy. Furthermore, following the limited approaches, the United States can adopt political settlement strategy through the conduct of dialogue diplomacy the warring groups in Afghanistan. The status Quo plus approach can be another option for the United States towards the future settlement of Afghanistan with the enduring counter terrorism partnership policy in the forthcoming years in Afghanistan. The United States will be in a position to adopt a particular one or more strategies as its Afghan policy option in the future course of action (Naqvi, 2014).

**The US Taliban peace deal Feb, 2020**

The Afghanistan peace deal was signed between Zalmay Khalilzad the US special representative for Afghan affairs and Mullah Abdul Ghani brothers the political chief of Taliban in Afghanistan on Feb 29, 2020 at Doha Qatar. The historic peace deal comprises of 14 month Plan for complete Military troops withdrawal, almost 8600 Troops will be pulled out in 135 days, the US Taliban deal will be ratified by the Un security council, The US will not interfere in the domestic affairs of Afghanistan, the intra Afghan war dialogue will be proceeded for domestic peace and stability in March 2020. All the Afghan Prisoners will be released by March 2020. Taliban leadership makes it sure that the Afghan territory will not be used against the United States and its allies in future, Furthermore Taliban will be excluded from the US black list if they promise to cut ties with Al-Qaeda (Dawn, March 1, 2020). Both the United States and Taliban could not abide the agreement as US led allied forces attacked on Taliban and later killed several afghan troops in Kabul due to sheer trust deficit on each & other. Almost 50 Countries representatives including Mike Pompeo the US Secretary of State witnessed the signing of Landmark deal between Taliban & the United States. Pakistan and res of Islamic international community declared the US -Taliban historic deal a ray of hope & stability in the region. International community sought maximum cooperation & creation of suitable environment to make the real compliance of Afghan peace deal.

**Conclusion**

The United States has played a leading role in Afghanistan since the events of 9/11 to 2020 in the context of regional and global political environment. The United States has spent a huge financial amount in respect of military operational network, security arrangements and reconstruction process in Afghanistan during 2001 to 2020. It has provided a sufficient support to Afghanistan through coalited troops, economic development, public welfare program, education and institution building. The United States led security forces and Washington administration aimed to manage insurgent territory control, corruption, violence, poverty, forced

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migration and to get control over opium production along with nourishment of democratic culture in Afghanistan. The United States decided to choose the best-case scenario for Afghan exit in 2014 under a gradual withdrawal approach. The US believed in a gradual phased manner method to pull its troops from Afghanistan with a definite objective of a successful peace building process. The United States announced peace negotiation with all the stakeholders in Afghanistan in August 2017. The United States Senate recognized the importance of Afghanistan's considerable social, economic and political gains in January 2020. The Washington administration seeks to preserve the Afghan gains through a persistent and considerable policy perspective because the United States allies and Afghanistan on War on Terror have invested a lot treasure and blood for last 20 years. The Washington administration keeps different options and objectives to act upon its own gradual exit withdrawal policy i.e. to start and open debate among the Afghan people for maintenance of peace, dialogue among the war lords whether they are ready to sacrifice their hard won gains for the Afghan nation, the cease fire option and joining of development and democratic process in Afghanistan for the best preservation of all the gains and sacrifices. The United States believes to improve Afghanistan's political and democratic culture in more effectiveness and legitimacy over the forthcoming years, which can decrease the United States burden in Afghanistan and will be able to pull its troops under a gradual withdrawal policy from Afghanistan.

The United States and global community intend a wide spread desire to end the war in Afghanistan and an acceptable political settlement along with a success after a long struggle, concentration, sacrifices and materialistic cost in Afghanistan. There are certain recommendations can be discussed in the future course of action and how to get forward ahead in the case of Afghanistan. The United States require to apply an acceptable approach in Afghanistan with a widely acceptable political settlement by the consent of all the regional actors. The United States should persuade Kabul Government to start a broad intra-Afghan dialogue for the sake of political reconciliation among different political groups and war lords in Afghanistan, which can promote an opportunity for a common man in Afghanistan to participate and define the kind of peace and political system in Afghanistan. The United States should acknowledge the participation and representation of the insurgent leadership for the purpose the ending war and to create mutual consent through conversations and dialogues which can lead to nurture democratic values and culture in Afghanistan. The United States will have to engage Pakistan rather than to target Taliban leadership across the Durand Line

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to decrease insurgency, militancy, and terrorists' activities. The Washington administration must review its policy of Indian engagement in Afghanistan as the new strategic partner while ignoring Pakistan's untiring struggle and sacrifices of materialistic loss over \$23 billion and above 80 thousand civilian and military lives. The United States requires to seek a soliciting regional cooperation from the immediate neighbors of Afghanistan and the other important regional States like, China, Iran and Russia for the persistent settlement of Afghan cause with an agreed and acceptable socio- political and governance infrastructure through the possible compensation of the interests of concerned actors. The United States direly need to engage international media, public opinion, intelligencia and statesman to play a considerable and rational role to justify the 20-year economic, political and military investment in Afghanistan rather than to adopt Merely coercive and military escalation approach The United States need to eliminate the extremist's elements and mindset among its foreign policy making think tanks towards Afghanistan and to choose the rational approach with a regional solution to end the proxy war for political settlement along with enduring counter terrorism partnership. The United States needs to concentrate on its changing strategies with preserving gains, objectives and targets without increasing any kind of regional cohesion risk and deterrence in the context of Indo- Pakistan military and nuclear escalation. Instead to choose the tents of offensive realism to acquire ultimate hegemonial status the major objective of the US led forces and regional powers must concentrate on the solution of protracted Afghan crises with a persistent socio- political and democratic infrastructure in Afghanistan.

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