

**FAILURE OF STATE BUILDING IN AFGHANISTAN:  
DESIGN FLAWS AND MAJOR CHALLENGES**

A Dissertation

**Submitted to**

Department of International Relations and Diplomacy

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

Tribhuvan University

In fulfillment of the requirement for the DIRD 526 Thesis of  
Master's Degree in International Relations and Diplomacy

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Registration Number 6-3-28-352-2016

February, 2022

## **Acknowledgement**

I would like to express my sincere acknowledgement to my supervisor Mr. Prem Khanal Professor at Department of International Relations and Diplomacy, Tribhuvan University, for his expert guidance, suggestions and continuous support during my studies in DIRD and my research process.

I am very grateful to DIRD, TU and the faculty members for providing me a great opportunity to expanding my knowledge and deepening my insight through imparting quality higher education. I would like to also thanks staff of the DIRD for their patience and help during my studies.

Finally, I would like to also express my profound gratitude to my friends Jagrit Poudyal and Basu Dev Khanal for their continuous support and encouragement throughout the entire process.

Pamir

Kathmandu, 2022

## Letter of Recommendation

I certify that this dissertation entitled “Failure of State Building in Afghanistan: Design Flaws and Major Challenges” has been prepared by Mr. Pamir Parshahri under my supervision. I, hereby, recommend this dissertation for final examination by the Research Committee, Department of International Relations and Diplomacy, Faculty of Humanities and Social Science, Tribhuvan University in the fulfillment of the requirements for MIRD 526 Thesis for the Master’s Degree in International Relations and Diplomacy.

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Associate Professor Prem Khanal

Supervisor

Date: February 28, 2022

## **Declaration**

I, hereby, declare that the work has been done by myself and no portion of the work contained in this document has been published or submitted in support of any application for any other degree or qualification of this or any other university or institution of learning. In case of other author's information, idea and argument, the sources have been duly cited and acknowledged as per the requirement. The copyright of this research belongs to the author.

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28 February 2022

## Approval Sheet

## **Abstract**

The failure of U.S post 9/11 state building in Afghanistan and Iraq raises serious questions. Understanding the design flaws and major challenge of the post-Taliban state building agenda by U.S. and its allies in Afghanistan is very crucial. The amount of money and blood that has been spent in Afghanistan by Afghans and their international partners seemed gone in vein when the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan collapsed in 15 August 2021, even couple of weeks ahead of the complete withdrawal of the U.S. troops from Afghanistan. Conflict affected countries lack or have less shared vision and trust among their peoples. Restoration and trust among the people and legitimacy of the government in post conflict countries are of paramount. State building agendas and mechanisms should give due consideration to such issues and not consider them secondary because state building is not building a physical structure. This study is an attempt to examine the design flaws and major challenges of state building in Afghanistan with an objective to provide an insight into the matter to learn lessons from the failure of the state building and expand the knowledge on the subject.

**Key words:** State Building, Legitimacy, Fragile States, Design Flaws, Challenges.

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## **Abbreviations**

AIA	Afghanistan Interim Authority
DPD	Democratic Peace Theory
FCSs	Fragile and Conflict-Affected States
IEC	Independent Election Commission
IMF	International Monetary Fund
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
PDPA	People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan
SNTV	Single Non-Transferable Vote
UN	United Nations
UNAMA	United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan
WOT	War On Terror



## **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Context**

The Cold War and particularly the 9/11 attacks on U.S. in 2001 made the state building a hot topic to discuss and very important issue to address. The reason for the importance of the issue is that today the world is more connected than ever before and more connectedness means more affected from each other's good or bad behaviors because in a globalized world no one can operate separately and any implications from malfunctioning of a state may have a huge impact elsewhere in the world, particularly, by the non-state actors and terrorist organizations such as Al Qaeda and those alike.

So, the failed or fragile states has recently drawn attention due to it is security implications and concerns. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in its report titled 'States of Fragility 2016: Understanding Violence' stated that more than 1.6 billion people lived in fragile states in 2016. It further said that the number of people living in fragility is expected to increase up to 3 billion by 2050 and, therefore, such states must be supported to address their challenges to avoid failure or fragility and become stable and secure at the national and international levels (OECD, 2016).

A selection of definitions by Financing for Sustainable Development Report/ILO Development and Investment Branch (FSDR/DEVINVEST) 2016, among others, characterizes the fragile states as facing unique development challenges that have resulted from fragility and conflict including weak institutional capacities and

poor governance, economic and geographic isolation, economic disruption, social disruption and insecurity.

According to IMF (2015) report, the fragile and conflict-affected States (FCASs) are characterized by being trapped in the cycle of low administrative capacity, political instability, conflict and weak economic performances (IMF, 2015).

According to one report of United Nations University (2008), one of the issues with fragile states is that they remain very fragile even during the phase of reconstruction and there is a high chance of being reverted back to conflict. Internal conflict not only undermines the legitimacy of the state but also has spillover effects that reduces the growth of the neighboring countries (UNU, 2008).

The regional aspect of fragility is another big challenge. According to IEO (2018) instability or war in one country would have impact on its neighboring countries with refugees, border insecurity and migration and regardless of tremendous domestic and international efforts, sometimes for decades, many of fragile states face serious problems to their human and economic development (IEO, 2018).

The term of 'fragile states' is a recent inclusion in the terminology of international donors which now partly replaced the terms such as the World Bank's Low-Income Countries under Stress (LICUS) and combines a number of other categories, weak and failed states, post-conflict countries and countries where there is a relatively high risk of violent conflict breaking out or resuming (The Broker, 2008).

Fragile states are commonly described as incapable of assuring basic security, maintaining rule of law and justice, or providing basic services and economic opportunities for their citizens. Since having the state-based international order, there

have also been fragile or failed states but the interest of policymakers in such states took on a new life after 9/11 and subsequent terrorist attacks which made it clear how dangerous failed states such as Afghanistan could be; not only to their own people, but to the communities around the world we well (Grono, 2010).

### **U.S. State Building in Afghanistan**

As per Tilly, 1975, state-building is a term used in state theory describing construction of a functioning state. Tilly described the advantages of state building in Europe as providing for the emergence of specialized personnel, control over consolidated territory, loyalty, and durability, permanent institutions with a centralized and autonomous state that held the monopoly of violence over a given population (Tilly, 1975).

State building is the process by which states tries to enhance their ability to function and the objectives of this 'functionality' may differ according to the factors that affect them such as priorities of the government (Whaites, 2008).

Fukuyama (2004) believes that the military intervention is the central element of the state building by a foreign state or coalition with a clear objective of regime change where the regime has already collapsed, or the regime would otherwise fail if not changed.

According to Leonard (2021), among the more pragmatic justifications for western military intervention in Afghanistan was state failure and there was argument that in the absence of a centralized public authority in war-torn Afghanistan, a fertile soil for Al-Qqaeda was to take root and launch terror attacks against the West. Therefore, the American-led intervention was necessary, as well as morally just, to

transform Afghanistan from a failed state into at least a functioning state so as to prevent such a scenario from re-emerging (Leonard, 2021).

In the wake of 9/11 attacks, president George W. Bush signed into a law a joint resolution, authorizing the use of force against those responsible for attacking the United States on 9/11. In a speech in 2002 Bush stated that by supporting Afghanistan to build a state free from terrorism and a better place in which to live, they are working in the best traditions of George Marshall (Bush, 2002).

The sudden and complete collapse of apparently well trained and equipped Afghanistan's army and the fall of Kabul to the hand of the Taliban on 15 August 2021 have just exposed how a complete failure this state building project was.

In exchange for twenty years of bloodshed and tremendous investment, the U.S. succeeded in replacing a failed state not with a functional Afghan national state, but with a dysfunctional, corrupt pseudo-state whose imaginary authority in Kabul fell sadly short of being able to assert its sovereignty across the country: a so-called state built like a house of cards, which collapsed at the first blow (Leonard, 2021).

It is worthy to look back and see what went wrong and what could have been done better for building a strong state in Afghanistan that could sustain. For FCASs the political process and consensus on post conflict agreements and mechanisms are critical to restore trust among the warring parties and enhance the legitimacy for the state. The prominent cause of the war and instability in Afghanistan is commonly said to be the foreign invasions but deep down the continuation of more than four decades of war and conflict (since coup of 1978) is the outcome of the socio-political dynamics and the complexities of the ethnic rivalries over power in Afghanistan.

The underlying ideology or model for post conflict state building is very important. The same way the role of context should not be ignored. Understanding of compatibility of the model and the context and how to alter or tailor one to another is very crucial if a state building agenda is to be successful. It is important to explore what were missed/ignored during the U.S. campaign of state building in Afghanistan and what went wrong in terms of its overall design or in terms of approaches and objectives.

For example, a peace deal is the essential factor in ending violence and lay the foundation for a successful political process in the FCASs. The ‘Agreement on Provisional Arrangements in Afghanistan Pending the re-Establishment of Permanent Government Institutions Bonn Agreement (2001) (hereafter The Bonn Agreement) (December 2001) which was brokered by the UN and under the influence of U.S. did not include the representatives from Taliban.

Brahimi, 2007 (former Special Representative of UN Secretary General to Afghanistan) argues that State building in Afghanistan was initiated by the wrong approach as well as wrong concept right from the beginning and the idea that power sharing was only to be discussed and shared among the winners proved to be root of all causes. Taliban should have been in Bonn Conference and their exclusion was the ‘original sin’ (Brahimi, 2007).

Brahimi suggests that it is not wise to think to end violence without a peace deal that is not inclusive. The inclusivity of any negotiation and agreement for a post-war peace process and state building is not only important but prerequisite.

Another design flaw was the centralization of power in Kabul and in the hands of a president (the presidential system) which was provided by the Constitutions of

2004 under the influence of U.S. led coalition which ignored or misconceived the realities and the complexities of Afghanistan (Johnson, 2006, Suhrke, 2011).

According to Rubin (2013) states that Afghanistan was again revolving around a highly centralized government which was in place before the coup of 1978 and the years of war and instability that followed:

“Even before the past quarter century of conflict, this highly centralized government had very limited reach...government policing did not extend outside the district center... the state apparatus barely penetrated the country’s economy...hence the system whose legal framework is now in effect was a highly centralized but weak state, with very limited penetration into the society and scope for policy making and implementation” (Rubin 2013, p. 110).

Effective and efficient institution for statehood and good governance is vital. In a democratic system the way the institutions are important for ensuring law and order and service delivery the same way ideas and sentiments and national identities are important that shapes the fate of the states. Another important issue was lack of strong and effective institutions that could restrict power and prevent it from misuse which unfortunately during the process of the state building in Afghanistan was ignored.

Holsti (1996) underscores that the institutionalization and the instrumental capacities of statehood are of paramount importance but it is in the area of ideas and sentiments that the destiny of states is primarily determined. This brings forward a totally different dimensions to the state building which is nation building.

What really Afghanistan needed at first and foremost? Can the institutions work for state building without or less shared values and common feeling as a nation

in the divided societies like Afghanistan? This is the essence of state building in post conflict situations, particularly, those who are having multi ethnic/culture societies.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

The fall of Kabul to the Taliban in 15 August 2021, following the escape of the president Ashraf Ghani (2014 - 2021) which led to the collapse of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, raise serious questions about the nature and process of post 9/11 state building efforts in Afghanistan by U.S. and its allies. There are many questions to be answered and many lessons to be learned.

The quick collapse of the government of Afghanistan even before the completion of the withdrawal of U.S. troops shocked many around the world, particularly, those who were engaged in state building of Afghanistan and spent blood and money. Afghanistan had received not only enormous amounts of foreign aid but military and technical assistance over those years from supporting countries mainly from U.S. Despite the investment of funds and efforts in building state capacity and institutions, the government quickly collapsed once the presence of the U.S. troops came to an end.

Given the less successful accomplishments of the state building historically, and considering the recent failure in Afghanistan, it would be useful to look into the main processes, mechanisms and approaches of state building by U.S. in Afghanistan from 2001 to 2021, which surely would contribute to that expansion of understanding and knowledge in this field.

### **1.3 Research Questions**

Against this background and being a post conflict state building, it is important to understand the root causes of failure. For this, following are the research questions in the context of Afghanistan:

- What were the design flaws and major challenges of state building in Afghanistan? In conflicted affected fragile states, state legitimacy is severely undermined. So, enhancing legitimacy should be given top priority in state building processes and mechanism. Thus design flaws refer to those mechanism and instruments that are crucial for post conflict state building.
- What lessons can be learned from state building in Afghanistan?

### **1.4 Research Objectives**

- To learn about design flaws and challenges of U.S. post 9/11 U.S. intervention and state building in Afghanistan
- To learn lessons from Afghanistan and to expand knowledge about state building.

### **1.5 Delimitation of the Study**

The study is delimited in many ways. First, being a case study, the generalization of its findings may not be applicable to other cases. The case studies face challenges in application or generalization since every case study focus on a particular country that has obviously its unique features and complexities in its political and socio-economic context. Second, individual researcher has to face so many obstacles while undertaking research work. This research was mainly based on



the published secondary data. Since the study was carried out in other country, it might have limited the research due to scarcity of resources.

This study focuses on major design flaws and challenges of state building in Afghanistan that led to failure and draws its conclusion accordingly.

As the topic of the study is a recent phenomenon, some of the data may remain classified. Subjective biases and interpretation are avoided as much as possible.

### **1.6 Organization of the Dissertation**

The paper consists of six chapters. Chapter one introduces the background of the study along with research questions and objectives. Chapter two examines the existing literature related to the topic of study and finds out the gap needs to be scrutinized. Chapter three sets the conceptual framework of the study and design the research methodology. Chapter four will provide a brief history of the war and conflict in Afghanistan since the coup of 1973. Chapter five would discuss and provide an analysis of the overall design flaws and major challenges of the U.S. state building in Afghanistan to answer the research questions. The final chapter will conclude the paper.

## CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

### State and Fragility

The more commonly used definition to define a state is given by Max Webber (1864-1920) which puts emphasis on monopoly over the means of violence. Webber defines state as a human community that successfully claims the monopoly of legitimate use of physical force within a given territory (Gerth & Mills, 1946). This definition considers that the fundamental function of a state is monopoly over means of violence through a central authority that has legitimacy. Thus, state building means strengthening government institution to have or restore such a central authority and monopoly with an implied meaning that the state formation is about depersonalization and formalization of political power (Fritz & Meoncal, 2007).

Starc (2001) states that there is no single definition for ‘fragile state’ and stakeholders in international community have their own perception of the concept and use different benchmarks and indicators for assessing state weakness. However, a general approach and benchmark for identification of a fragile state is the comparison of them with the ideal type which is a Western state that historically developed in Europe as a liberal constitutional democracy with an industrialized market economy (Starc, 2001).

Given the Weberian definition of state which is characterized by monopoly over means of legitimate violence, control over its territory and population and delivery of basic services, then a fragile state would look the one that is unable to perform such functions. Irrespective of different theoretical approaches, most scholars and donors agree that the core functions of a state are provision of security, representation, welfare and justice (Lister, 2007).

OECD in its report of 2016 titled ‘States of Fragility 2016, Understanding Violence’ defines fragility simply as the combination of risk exposure and inadequate capacity of the state/system or community to manage, absorb or mitigate those risks (OECD 2016).

### **History and Concept of State Building**

OECD (2011) concludes that the history of state building evolved neither linearly nor evenly and the matter have been subject of dispute and redefinition. Likewise, viewing state building in a historical context shows that not only it has often been a tumultuous and lengthy process driven by internal and sometimes external upheaval but also that the historical predecessors of any state are interrelated and fundamentally important to its contemporary character (OECD, 2011)

Scholars such as Posipsil and Kuhn (2016) states that engagement in the form of interventions existed throughout history somehow but the modern state building has existed over the past five decades with its discourse being influenced by historical events such as the second WW II, decolonization, Cold War and WOT.

By the end of World War II, states had become the principal unit of internationally recognized sovereignty. On the other hand, the normative terms of the ideal social contract were also set forward in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (and successive international human rights covenants). These gave rise to the idea of citizens as right-holders and state as duty-bearers; this reciprocity profoundly influences international law, as well as perceptions and expectations of how legitimate states ought to behave, especially, towards its constituency in responding, protecting, and fulfilling their human rights and legal obligations (OECD, 2011).

Also, the end of WWII ended fascism and imperialism and gave rise to the norm of territorial integrity which altered the rule for intervention and, a certain understanding of legitimacy emerged (Lame - Hebert, 2009).

The post-colonial time state building is characterized by the rivalry of the two blocs led by the Soviet Union and U.S. who were shaping the state building efforts in the form of aids, projects and technical assistance. After the collapse of the Soviet Union and subsequent collapse of bipolar world order many countries emerged as the fragile states which were characterized by weak governance and humanitarian as well as economic crisis (Fukuyama, 2004).

As per Pospisil & Kuhn, as time passed, gradually the knowledge about the connections among the state failure, state weakness, conflict and insecurity supported the idea of strengthening of state capacity in order to enable fragile state to claim the monopoly over the means of legitimate violence to provide security and reinstate law and order. Therefore, a new dimension was emerged in state building by brining security into the state building policies (Pospisil & Kuhn, 2016).

### **Definition of State Building**

Boege et al (2008) defines state building as sustainably strengthening state institutions to enhancing the capacities of state actors for control, regulation and implementation, particularly in the core fields of statehood, namely internal security, basic social services, the rule of law and legitimacy of government (Boege et al 2008).

State building is a general term used to describe the re-construction of functional states which means states that are capable of providing basic functions and services to

their peoples as well as meeting their responsibilities and obligations as the members of the international community (Henning 2017).

Also some scholars stressed on the military aspect of state building. They view state building at its core, as an intervention by a foreign state or coalition characterized by military means with a clear goal of forming a new government because either the former regime collapsed or would fail and collapse otherwise (Fukuyama 2004, Dobbins et al. 2007).

### **Challenges of State Building**

According to Grotenhuis (2016), the present approach of state building concentrates only on building and enhancing the capacities of state institutions in order to increase state functionality which is based on the Western model of statehood where well-established states exist. As a critique of such an approach and notion, Grotenhuis argues that nation building is equally important since the state building and nation building are intertwined and stresses that nation-building has values of itself that should be explored and developed. The focus of interventionist/donors on institution building reflects the realities of their societies not the fragile state. This view on fragility that focuses solely on institution-building, mirrors the reality of donor countries more than that of the developing countries (Grotenhuis 2016).

Grotenhuis further, criticizes the following views expressed by Francis Fukuyama:

“Nations – that is to say communities of shared values, traditions, and historical memory – by this argument are never built, particularly by outsiders; rather, they evolve out of an unplanned historical-evolutionary process. What

Americans refer to as nation-building is rather state building – that is, constructing political institutions, or else promoting economic development. This argument is largely true...” (Fukuyama 2006, p.3)

By theorizing the nation-building as a process that takes place away from any influence or control, Fukuyama views national building as similar to the state building. National cohesion and a sense of belonging cannot be defined outside of the involved community and there is no template with indicators to measure (Grotenhuis, 2016).

Some relates nation building to the earlier discourses around decolonization and independence in Asia and Africa. Dinnen (2007) argues that in those times, nation building was referring to policies, projects, mechanisms and institutions that were means to bring about a new independent government which wanted to transform itself from tradition. However, among others, it also meant the self-conscious production, cultural and educational policies of new states, construction and promotion of national identity through schooling, mass media, and the iconography and ceremonies of the state (Dinnen, 2007).

Sufficient time for deliberation on drafting and adoption of the constitution is important as well as the election as mechanism of strengthening legitimacy. Brahim (2007), among others, enumerates the adequate time for constitution, the significance of the elections as a mechanism for peace and not an ultimate goal and developing the required capacities by UN agencies engaged in state building as key features for effective state building.

Conflict resolution and settlement are of paramount importance. Consultation arriving at consensus is very important but it may not be easy and simple because in

most post conflict state building instances either the shared vision does not exist or is not shared within the country or region (OECD 2010).

### **Democratic Peace Theory (DPT)**

The theory defends that it is least likely that war among the democratic countries happen because the war seems unattractive to them (Doyle, 1983). In addition, democratic peace notion not only challenges the validity of the other political systems (i.e., fascism, communism, authoritarianism, totalitarianism), but also the predominant realist views of on international relations, which emphasizes balance-of-power calculations and common strategic interests in order to explain the peace and stability that characterizes relations between liberal democracies (Placek, 2012). The reason that the policy makers have promoted democracy and democratization for decades is to improve wellbeing of the people, boost economic growth, protect the freedom and prevent war and genocide (Reiter, 2001).

It was Kant who recognized the connection between peace and democracy in 1700s. It was argued by Kant that people generally do not go to war simply because they do not have interest in war and will not vote for war in democratic republics. The world, therefore, would be peaceful with democratic republics and this argument has become the central thought within DPT (Gat, 2005).

For the West, particularly, the U.S., democracy became not a value but also an instrument of foreign policy and it was in this context that the U.S. former President Bill Clinton in 1994 stated that eventually the best strategy to ensure our security and to build a long lasting peace is to support and promote democracy elsewhere (Owen, 1994). In view of this, it was no surprise that Bush in 2001 stated that U.S. had liberated Afghanistan from a primitive dictatorship, and had a moral responsibility to

leave behind a democratic Afghanistan that would be a hopeful alternative to the vision of the extremists (Bush, 2010).

It shows that state building efforts means building institutions, reconstructing and strengthen the state for being able to function the way democratic states functions. It is a model that is seen by policy maker workable to ensure peace and security in fragile states.

Scholars explains how the two main variants of DPT namely the structural and normative in a democratic state, shape the attitude of citizens to see the war unattractive. The structural one argues that institutions of representative government would hold the elected officials and decision-makers accountable and, therefore, it makes the war unattractive option for both the government and the citizens. Also, war has expenditures and dangers and would affect the people so it is logical for the people remove any leader from power that wishes to go for unnecessary war (Russett, 1993). This view does not consider that all citizens and elected representatives have liberal mind set, but just that democratic structures that give citizens power over government decisions will make it less likely that a democratic leader will be able to initiate a war with another liberal democracy. Thus, even with an illiberal leader in place, institutions such as free speech, political pluralism, and competitive elections will make it difficult for these leaders to convince or persuade the public to go to war (Owen, 1994).

On the other hand, the normative variant in contrast argues that it is not the institution but rather the shared democratic and liberal values which best explain the peace between democratic states (Elman, 1997).



According to this view, democratic political environment inspires and promotes peaceful means for conflict resolution that goes beyond domestic political process to other democratic states because leaders in both countries hold a reasonable expectation that their counterparts will also be able to work out their differences peacefully. Political ideology, therefore, determines how democracies distinguish allies from adversaries- democracies that represent and act in their citizens' interests are treated with respect and consideration, whereas non democracies that use violence and oppression against their own people are regarded with mistrust and suspicion (Owen 1994).

## CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

### 3.1 Conceptual Framework

Legitimacy is perhaps one of the most important means for governments recovering from civil war (Lake 2010).

Zaum (2015) also puts the legitimacy at the core of state building efforts in conflict affected states. Another important point that Zaum underscore is regarding the external state building efforts which he argues that legitimacy is considered as instrument of ensuing sustainability of the state institutions once the material support to external state builders diminish (Zaum, 2015).

According to the views expressed by scholars and writers among the them Lake and Zaum, the legitimacy plays a vital role in post conflict state building. State building cannot be achieved if the political issues are unsettled by the processes and mechanisms that state building stems from them. In 2001, when the Bonn Agreement was made among the different Afghan parties, the Taliban were excluded from the talks. This significantly undermined the ground for the post conflict state building in Afghanistan. The Bonn Agreement did not end the civil war as it since of the main warring parties, the Taliban, were not invited and the peace was not achieved before the state building begun.

According to Suhrk et al. (2002) the Bonn Agreement, which provided a legal and political framework for postwar activities, was not a peace agreement between belligerents and was merely a statement of general goals and intended power sharing among the victors of a conflict in which their erstwhile common enemy, the Taliban, was suddenly deposed by the intervention of a deus ex machine (Suhrke et al. 2002).

Lakhdar Brahimi (former Special UN Envoy to Afghanistan) viewed the idea of power sharing among the winners fatal for state building efforts and called the exclusion of Taliban in Bonn Conference (2001) the ‘original sin’ (Brahimi, 2004).

In post conflict state building in Afghanistan, most of the mechanisms and processes ignored the importance of legitimacy.

Design flaws in this research refers to all those processes and mechanisms that were crucial to legitimacy building in Afghanistan such as Bonn Agreement, Constitution, the system of government provisioned by the 2004 Constitution, elections etc. For example, it is accepted that elections are crucial first step toward strengthening social contract that subsequently lead to building legitimacy.

The major challenges refer to more elements that are existing in the Afghan society such as societal cleavages, weak sense of nationhood and lack of effective and strong institutions and mechanism that ensure check and balance.

The framework this research is conceptualized on the foundation that of legitimacy of ideas, mechanisms and processes of the post conflict state building initiatives is the main factor that supports and reinforces the states building and failure or success of the whole process heavily depends on this.

## **3.2 Research Methodology**

### **Research Design**

While conducting any research, the issue of choosing the most suitable methodology for conduct of the research of is paramount importance because there is a direct link between what is explored and how/by which to be explored. The

phenomenon that can be quantified would surely need a different methodology to be explored than that which cannot be quantified. For example, behavior of a persons or a community in a certain situation cannot be quantified. Choice of research methodology is of paramount importance as it is the tools by which the conduct of the whole research is guided and the quality and accuracy of findings of the research is ensured. For this study, the qualitative research approach is applied different reports published by different agencies including the journal and newspaper articles are analyzed. The study is descriptive and analytic in nature.

### **Nature of Data**

Being a very recent phenomena and considering the situation in Afghanistan, it was difficult to collect primary data through primary data collection techniques and approaches. Therefore, the secondary data have been used in this study.

### **Source of Data/Data Collection Method**

Secondary data has been collected from books, websites, archives and international sources, dissertations, journal articles, news, reports, interviews, official documents and statements for this research work.

### **Method of Data Analysis**

Descriptive and analytical methods have been employed for data analysis in order to draw conclusions in this research. Detailed description and explanation of the findings are done to fulfill the research objectives

## **CHAPTER 4: BRIEF HISTORY OF WAR AND INSTABILITY IN AFGHANISTAN**

### **Republic of Muhammad Daoud Khan (1973-1978)**

Amid charges of corruption against the royal family and deterioration of economic conditions caused by the severe drought of 1971-72, the former Prime Minister (1953 – 1963) and cousin of the King Zahir (r. 1933 – 1973), seized power in a non-violent coup on July 17, 1973, while the King was on a trip to Italy for medical treatment (Wahab & Youngerman, 2007).

After declaring Afghanistan a republic and himself as the first President of the Republic of Afghanistan (1973-1978), Daoud Khan intensified the establishment of an Afghan (Pashtun) state, aiming at cultural and linguistic homogenization as the precondition for consolidating Afghanistan. Daoud Khan, thus, made the learning of Pashto language an obligation for all state employees and government officials, prohibited the use of ethnic surnames and ethnic names - with the exception of those referring to Pashtun tribes; and put an end to a modest plurilinguism on the national radio instituted under his predecessor (Centlivres & Centlivres, 2009).

The stability that King Zahir (r.1933-1973) had strived for, particularly, during the last ten years of his reign which is called the Democracy Decade (1962-1973) was not achieved, and in one swift move the rule of the monarchy as begun by Ahmad Shah Durrani in 1747 was abolished (Runion, 2007).

According to Rahi (2020), although as patriotic figure, Daoud Khan formulated many economic projects and reforms to improve the economic and social situation of Afghanistan, but he failed due to his political mistakes in domestic and foreign policy

and his Government was a republic by name only since he had all powers and founded a one-party system and only members of his party could be appointed to positions of power. By suppressing political activities (though ironically not banning political activities in the army) and founding a one-party system, Daoud laid the foundation of his own demise (Rahi, 2020).

Daoud's major foreign policy blunder was that he upset the delicate balance of interest between major stakeholders (major powers and neighbors) in Afghanistan which from the outset of World War -I until Daoud's coup in 1973, the stakeholders had maintained a balance in Afghanistan, where no one's interests were threatened by its competitor but Daoud upset that arrangement (Rahi, 2020).

### **The Coup of 1978 and the Soviet Invasion (1978 – 1992)**

The communists [Khalq & Parcham factions] successfully launched a coup in 1978 that ended Dauod's life and his republic as well as 230 years of dynastic rule in Afghanistan (Barfield, 2010).

This shift, caused an incontrollable conflict in the wake of the Soviet invasion and occupation of Afghanistan (1979 - 89), raising the question of political legitimacy that who had the right to rule and on what basis which was not resolved even after the Soviet Union withdrew in 1989 and the collapse of its client regime in 1992 (Barfield, 2010).

Between the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) coup in April 1978 and the beginning of Soviet operations in the territory in December 1979, Afghanistan faced a period of over 20 months in which all the problems of the weak and fragmented state came to the surface and further the party itself was marked by

harsh factionalism between the Khalq and Parcham military leaderships, all aiming at coercively implementing their reforms in order to prevail (Ciavari, 2016).

The People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) government under the Khalq leadership (a faction of PDPA) launched a radical campaign of land reform accompanied by mass repression in the countryside that resulted in the arrest and summary execution of tens of thousands. Deployment of Soviet forces in 1979 further deteriorated the situation in Afghanistan. To control the country, the government intensified its efforts to crush the uprisings with mass arrests, torture, and executions of dissidents, and aerial bombardments and executions.

The 1979 events were seen as blows to American international prestige and power and many in Washington thought that it was time to strike back at Moscow by outspending the Soviets in the arms race, and turning Afghanistan into a "Soviet Vietnam" by aiding the anti-Communist insurgency there (Gaddis, 2005).

The National Security Advisor to the President Carter, Zbigniew Brzezinski in an interview after the Soviet-Afghan war stated that the CIA was providing full covert support to Afghan Mujahidin six months before the Soviet invasion and further claimed that the U.S. intention in providing this support was to draw the Russians into the Afghan trap (Brzezinski, 1998).

The Mujahidin was provided with weapons by U.S. through the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) in cooperation with Pakistan's Inter-Service Intelligence Directorate (ISI). According to the State Department about \$3 billion in economic and covert military assistance was provided by the U.S. to the Afghan Mujahidin from 1980 till the end of the Soviet occupation in 1989 (Katzman, 2017).

Eventually, due to stalemate in the war and the systemic problem of the Soviet, the 1988 Geneva Accords (formally “The Agreements on the Settlement of the Situation Relating to Afghanistan” was signed on 14 April 1988 at the Geneva headquarters of the UN between Afghanistan and Pakistan, with the United States and the Soviet Union serving as guarantors that ensured the withdrawal of the Soviet Union by 15 February 1989 (Katzman, 2017).

### **The Mujahidin Era (1992 - 2001)**

By retreat of the Soviet army, the Civil War begun between the Soviet backed government of Najibullah and the Mujahidin who toppled the government in April 1992 (Runion, 2007). The Mujahidin, particularly, the seven opposition parties were the successors to the Najibullah regime in 1992 but it was soon becoming clear that the long-feuding Mujahidin parties and militias could not unite which led to anarchy and the warlords controlling their areas (Wahab & Youngerman, 2007).

The various Mujahidin resistance groups, without any political unity, plunged the country into civil war and paved the way for the rise of the Taliban. These clashes intensified and shattered the formal structure of government that they fought for. All ethnic and regional groups in Afghanistan became politically and militarily powerful and reversed the process of centralization that was initiated by Amir Abdul Rahman [r.1880 - 1901] (Barfield, 2010).

The Mujahidin government faced with huge challenges of authority. In June 1992 Burhanuddin Rabbani, the Tajik leader of Jamiat-e- Islami party, became president of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (ISA) that continued till the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan in 2001.



## **The Taliban (1994-2001)**

From 1992 to 1994, different parts of Afghanistan were controlled by different factions and militias. In this backdrop the Taliban emerged in Kandahar claiming to fight corruption and restore stability. The word Taliban simply means student. They were students of religious Madrasas (religious schools), mostly based in Pakistan that were established for Afghan refugees during Soviet time. The Taliban received their education in madrasas, which were generally located on the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan. There, during the Soviet occupation and the warlords' era, Afghan refugees received free education to the Islamic Law and were trained for the Afghan jihad. With the foreign financial support of U.S. and Pakistan, together with the donation of Wahhabi textbooks from Saudi Arabia, the most radical madrasas spread and educated the students to a form of violent Islam (Ciavari 2016).

Only handful of older Taliban had fought the Soviet Red Army in the 1980s but more fought the regime of President Najibullah (1947- 1996), whereas the vast majority had never fought the communists and were young Koranic students, drawn from hundreds of madrassas (Islamic theology schools) that had been set up in Afghan refugee camps in Pakistan (Rashid 2000).

In April 1996, as the siege of Kabul was still under way, some thousand rural clerics gathered in Kandahar to acclaim Mullah Omar as the Amir al-Mu'mineen, the "Commander of the Faithful." This was the title adopted by Prophet Mohammed's second successor (also named Omar). By assuming this title, Mullah Omar was equating himself with the most revered religious personalities in the annals of Islamic history (Ansary 2012).

The Taliban seized the capital, Kabul by September 1996, and managed to prevail their rule over much of Afghanistan. The era from 1996 to 2001 under the control of the Taliban may be regarded as one of the darkest periods in the history of Afghanistan which during this time, only three countries offered diplomatic recognition- the United Arab Emirates, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia (Runion, 2007).

The International Community was concerned that the Taliban support terrorist organizations, particularly, al-Qaeda which was posing a threat to regional and international security w. The United States invaded Afghanistan after Taliban refused to hand over Osama bin Laden, the mastermind of the 9/11 attacks (Maizland, 2021).

### **9/11 And U.S. Intervention (2001 – 2021)**

The U.S. and coalition forces attack on Taliban begun on 7 October 2001 with a heavy bombing campaign by American and British forces. Other countries, such as Australian, Canada, France and Germany assisting with logistical support. The Northern Alliance [as media in the West named them] who were already resisting the Taliban for five years [1996-2001] served as the ground forces to launch offences against Taliban under the aerial support of U.S. and UK (Timeline, 1999-2021).

The U.S. led invasion of Afghanistan was the beginning of 'WOT' and was a response to the 9/11 terrorist attacks on New York and Washington D.C.

The military invasion of Afghanistan was not specifically mandated by UN and there was no specific Security Council Resolution that authorized the invasion but it was widely (although not universally) perceived to be a legitimate form of self-defense under the UN Charter (Smith & Thorp 2010).

Article 2(4) of the UN Charter prohibits the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state. The accepted exceptions to this are where a competent organ of the UN (almost always the Security Council) authorize it, or where it is in self-defense under article 51 of the UN Charter (Charter of UN, 1945).

After the fall of Mazar-e-Sharif [a major city in the north of Afghanistan], on November 9, 2001 and other major cities including the capital Kabul in December 2001, the UN Security Council passed the Resolution 1378, calling for a 'central role' for the United Nations in establishing a transitional administration and inviting member states to send peacekeeping forces to promote stability and aid delivery (Timeline, 1990-2001).

Once it was thought that the defeat of the Taliban is apparent, the prominent anti-Taliban political and military figures of Afghanistan along with the representatives of the former King Zahir gathered in a conference in Bonn which was hosted by Government of Germany under supervision of UN to chalk out the future roadmap and framework for post-Taliban Afghanistan in terms of political and security/military arrangements including the state prospects (Johnson, 2006).

According to Johnson, 2006, the Conference led to an agreement called 'The Agreement on Provisional Arrangements in Afghanistan Pending the Re-Establishment of Permanent Government Institutions' in short, the Bonn Agreement. In terms of political mechanism and framework, the Bonn Agreement provided for the setting up of an Afghanistan Authority (AIA) and the convening of Emergency Loya Jirga (A traditional Grand Council to decide upon an Afghanistan Transitional Authority (ATA), including a broad-based transitional administration. A

Constitutional Loya Jirga was also provided for within the 18 months of the Afghanistan Transitional Authority (ATA), in order to adopt a new constitution. Finally, the election was provisioned by the Bonn Agreement to be held two years after the Emergency Loya Jirga.

The Bonn Agreement laid the ground work for the following:

- The formation of Loya Jirga
- Emergency and Constitutional Elections
- The role of the United Nations in Afghan reconstruction
- Reorganization of Afghan military forces
- Establishment of an Interim Security Assistance Force (ISAF)
- The discharge of humanitarian and reconstruction aid (Johnson, 2006, p. 2-3).

## CHAPTER 5: DESIGN FLAWS AND MAJOR CHALLENGES

### Ideological Aspect

The collapse of USSR provided the opportunity for the U.S. to use its power in an unprecedented way which was not aligned with the patterns in its foreign policy during the earlier decades (Mandelbaum, 2016). Policy analysts also believe that during the Cold War the U.S. foreign policy was focusing on defending the West but on the contrary after the collapse of the Soviet Union its foreign policy shifted towards expansion western ideologies and transformation of other countries in terms of socio-political aspects (Walt, 2021).

Lozard (2016) states that although the U.S. had military intervention to other countries before Afghanistan such as Haiti, Bosnia and Kosovo, but those had humanitarian nature while the intervention in Afghanistan was intended to transform the country. Lozard also suspects that interventions to other countries were in the interest of the U.S. and states that the U.S. foreign policy upheld protecting human rights and, therefore, launched war missions to democratize other countries in places that were not necessarily in the vital interest of the U.S. (Lozard, 2016).

A week after the terrorist attacks on U.S. (18 September 2001), the president George W. Bush signed into law the Authorization for Use of Military Force (AUMF) that was allowing him to utilize all the possible means and appropriate forces against those nations, organizations, or persons he could determine planned, authorized, committed, or aided the terrorist attacks that occurred on September 11, 2001, or sheltered such organizations or persons, in order to stop them from future acts of international terrorism against the United States by such nations, organizations or persons (U.S. Congress, 2001).

In a speech in 2002, Bush further stated that by building an Afghanistan that is free from terrorism and a better place in which to live, U.S. is working in the best traditions of George Marshall who knew that America's military triumph against enemies in World War II had to be followed by a moral victory that result in societies and countries and human beings (Bush, 2002).

By defining state-building in Afghanistan as a strategic and moral necessity, Bush tried to fit state-building within the neoconservative approach to foreign policy (Witter, 2016). Neoconservatives supports the idea of promoting democracy and American national interest in international affairs, including by means of military force and is known for its anti- communism and political radicalism (Crossette Library, 2107)

Bush Administration viewed the war in Afghanistan as a massive operation for state building that aimed at fundamentally changing the political and societal structure of Afghanistan in a bid to ensure no groups that is regarded as hostile to the United States would be able to take shelter and operate in the country (Witter, 2016).

Bush in his memoir 'Decision Points, 2010, stated that U.S. had liberated the Afghanistan from a primitive dictatorship, and U.S. had a moral obligation to leave behind something better. Bush also, stated that U.S. had a strategic interest in helping the Afghan people build a free society so that a democratic Afghanistan would be a hopeful alternative to what the extremists desire for (Bush, 2010).

Witter (2016) quotes Fukuyama that the state-building as a principal-agent problem where principal (the state builder) acts upon the agent (a government established by the principal) in order to meet a common set of goals. There must be a shared vision by them. For example, if the defeat of Taliban, the Bonn Agreement and

democratic processes are considered the same goals by the agent (the Afghan government) then it would be logical to assume that the Afghan people share the same goals as the U.S. government. The dual belief in democratic development in Afghanistan and the capacity of Afghanistan as a state to act in American interests necessitates a belief that the Afghan people also want to see the Taliban defeated, al-Qaeda destroyed, and a unified Afghanistan that promotes democracy, liberal values, and free markets. Fukuyama is skeptical of this dual belief but the ability of the U.S. and Afghanistan to eventually establish a successful principal/agent relationship to defeat the Taliban and build a democracy in Afghanistan [was] central to the ethos of the do-more school (Witter, 2016).

Although the liberalism and democracy is not necessarily the kind of government that is only relevant to the West but many neoconservatives think that it is in the interest of the U.S. to force liberal democracy on other states instead of allowing it to develop organically (Witter, 2016). Post-Cold War changed the world power dynamics and U.S. viewed that assisting fragile state to evolve into democratic states would help promoting of liberalism and therefore, the interest of the U.S.

Critiques such as Golden (2021) stresses on the flaws of the ideological and conceptual foundations of the Euroamerican strategic thinking. Golden quotes from Philip Quinlan (former Irish Army officer and a veteran of peace missions in Somalia) that landing into a country on an intervals of 6-12 months to try to change a culture seems a terrible mix of conceit and naivety.

Ben-Ami (2021) by claiming that failure of U.S. in Afghanistan was foreseeable because the country never had a state in the Western sense of the term, further states that a country that is socially fragmented, lacks a tradition of political pluralism, and

is situated in an unstable, non-democratic region is a fundamentally improbable candidate for democratization (Ben-Ami, 2021).

According to Rahimi (2017), Afghanistan undergone drastic social and political changes since 1970s and during the continuous war and instability. Rahimin asserts in its entirety the big changes that followed after the coup of 1978 not only caused to end the iron walls and the government-imposed suppression, exclusion and isolation of other ethnicities, political groups and discourses, but as the outcome of the structural disruption, a new space opened for the emergence of new discourses to challenge the colonial and the official discourses (Rahimi, 2017).

This is a matter of debate whether Afghanistan is conducive for democratization or the U.S. approaches caused the failure but many views that the liberal values and democratization ideology that the U.S. was pursuing in Afghanistan failed because it was not suiting to country like Afghanistan. One the other hand the data shows that people in Afghanistan had a favoring opion for U.S. intervention. In 2005, 83% of Afghans expressed a favorable opinion of the United States which is unheard of in a Muslim nation and later dropped to 47% by 2009 (Cordesman & Burke, 2009). Some other data shows similar trend and figures and it is logical to ascertain that it was not the invasion but the consequence and what was carried out after it that declined the optimism towards U.S. presence among the people. The main developments that took place from the beginning of invasion in 2001 until 2005 was the Bonn Agreement, Constitution adoption and the presidential election of 2004. All three main components that were providing legal framework and legitimacy to the post conflict reconciliation, state building and democratization were flawed both in terms of design and in terms of procedures and applications.



The state building on the liberal based values in Afghanistan proved to be very challenging not only because Afghanistan does not have potential to be one due to following reasons: U.S. did not have a clear picture of the latest socio-political changes and dynamics of the context to understand what needed to be altered to bring relatively a match between the ends i.e. the state building agenda and the context; a relative compatibility is required to be made. U.S. continued to ignore the current context of Afghanistan and focused on institution building without trying to examining the underlying root causes of the war and instability which to a great deal has political and social aspects as well. Socially Afghanistan is a mosaic of different ethnicities where highly centralized governments of Afghanistan through last 20 were never been able to penetrate for legitimate exercise of power and service delivery. Politically, Afghanistan which was ruled by the Pashtuns since 1747 changed during the Soviet occupation in 1980s. During the Soviet occupation, the U.S. and the West had one intention and that was to defeat the Soviet and, therefore, began to provide weapons to Mujahidin who were fighting under the banner of Jihad and who were comprising of all ethnicities. Once every tribe and ethnicity had weapons and garnered political awareness, the dynamic of power rivalry changed and, therefore, the whole political dynamic changed. Afghanistan in 2001 was not the Afghanistan which was before the Coup of 1978 and the Soviet invasion. The U.S. did not understand the current situation of Afghanistan and treated the political and social issues of Afghanistan as before, ignoring all the massive changes that were resulted from the Soviet invasions of 80s and civil war of 90s.

The state building based on tribal power sharing which took place in Bonn Agreement was against any liberal values and democracy and was a design flaw. Neither, the state building with the liberal democracy agenda was tailored according

to society of Afghanistan nor the society was altered according to the state building that U.S. wished to implement. U.S. launched the state building based on older understanding of Afghanistan's society that was the hierarchy of tribal power and this was the biggest flaw.

### **Approach**

Historically, U.S. has exercised three types of state building over the past century: first, building loyal and politically stable subordinate states; second, legitimate states; and more recent one which is building legitimacy for new states through providing security and essential public services to their population which rests on social contract theory with its core tenet that legitimacy follows from providing effectively for the basic needs of citizens (Lake, 2010).

Although the U.S. wanted a 'light footprint' engagement in Afghanistan it later embarked on a full state building process i.e. type three of state building which put emphasis on the legitimacy and providing the citizen for their needs. It was not only a regime change and establishing of a royal government but a full involvement and establishing democracy including elections, convening of parliaments and promoting other democratic institutions.

The light footprint that was adopted by the U.S. at the beginning of offensive against Taliban and al-Qaeda had disadvantages. The components for light footprint included a small number of troops, intelligence operators, airpower and anti-Taliban militias that was not sufficient for chase and attack the enemy around the country in deteriorating environment (Armitage et al. 2010).

Scholars criticize the invasion of U.S. for lack of a clear picture and objectives. The weak state was compounded by “mission creep” and strategic impatience in the West. The gradual change in the strategy from counter-terrorism to counter-insurgency that was transformed later to democracy-building, state-building and nation-building efforts failed to comprehend that the embedded culture and social institutions win over the western ones. (Herd, 2021)

The consistency of strategy matters. Over time the strategy of U.S. in Afghanistan could not keep the consistency and witnessed changes. What was a time-based approach during the Obama administration shifted to condition-based approached at the beginning of Trump administration but again changed to time-based approach at the end of Trump which became more complex with other challenges and, therefore, could not win the war (Dobbin et al. 2019).

U.S. intervention lacked coordination in many aspects. An ample example is the lack of coordination between the diplomatic and military levels. On one hand the Obama administration announced troops surge in 2009 intensify the combat and on the other hand diplomatic apparatus initiated peace negotiation with the Taliban and called them no longer an enemy (AFP, July 16, 2009).

Consistency in any process and actions is of paramount importance. Sadly, the U.S. objectives did not have clarity and consistency across its diplomatic, military and development agencies which led to failure (Azizian, 2021).

Another issue was the extent of engagement of U.S. in state building in Afghanistan. The views on engagement are divided into two schools of thought in U.S. that are ‘do-more’ and do-less’. As per Witter (2016), the do-more school defends that it was in the strategic interest of U.S. to embark in state building but it

was done incorrectly. The do-more school not only endorses the fundamental transformation of Afghanistan politically, but socially and economically as well. This school was also in the opinion that continued investment in state-building in Afghanistan was the key to suppressing the ability of the Taliban, al-Qaeda, and other terrorist organizations to operate in the country (Witter 2016).

On the other hand, the do-less school was of the view that that it was never in the strategic interest of the United States to embark on state-building campaign in Afghanistan, and the U.S. should have only focused on a narrow military campaign targeted on the organization that perpetrated the 9/11 attacks, as well as other terrorist organizations that pose a threat to the U.S (Witter, 2016). The inconsistencies of U.S. objectives and approaches can be understood in this background of ideological tenets that were prevailing with regard to the U.S. engagements in Afghanistan.

According to Rashid (2008) criticizes handling of Afghanistan by the Bush Administration, and repeatedly slams the Bush Administration's foreign policy. Rashid contends that much of the failure of state-building in Afghanistan was due to flaws in the donor regime. Rashid argues that under Bush, USAID became a fund largely aimed at shoveling money at NGOs, rather than as a useful tool in the reconstruction of Afghan civil society and the promotion of economic development. Rashid quotes a security professional as saying that in terms of manpower and money this was the least resourced American nation-building effort in our history. He also slams the scope of contributions made by allies, calling some of their contributions to state-building pathetic and next to useless (Rashid, 2008).

U.S. engagement in Afghanistan lacked the required clarity from time to time. The campaign of U.S. for state building did not take place based on any of the two

schools. On one hand they did not strictly limit themselves in military operation and opted to a full state building and on the other hand they came short of what was needed to be done for that highly ambitious state building campaign.

### **Bonn Conference**

The first political initiative for state building after U.S. invasion in Afghanistan was the Bonn Conference (December 2001). Once the total defeat of the Taliban was predictable following their removal from Kabul in November 2001, the United Nations invited major Afghan factions including the Northern Alliance and a group led by the former King to a conference in Bonn, Germany which resulted in signing the Bonn Agreement (officially the ‘Agreement on Provisional Arrangements in Afghanistan Pending the Re-Establishment of Permanent Government Institutions’).

The agreement provided for establishment of an Interim Authority until the Transitional Authority is established by the Emergency Loya Jirga (Traditional Grand Council). The agreement provided the legal framework until the adoption of a new constitution. The Agreement called for the integration of armed groups into the new Afghan Armed Forces under the authority of the Interim Authority. The Agreement requested UN to assist in the formation of a national army and for the UN Representative to lend his Good Offices to facilitate post agreement implementation (UN Peace Maker, 2021).

The Agreement has been criticized heavily by scholars and analysts since then. Johnson (2006), views that the UN-brokered deal was heavily influenced by the desires of the U.S. The Bonn Agreement was not a ‘peace agreement’ since the agreement did not include all warring parties and excluded the defeated Taliban who were ruling almost all Afghanistan before the U.S. invasion (Johnson, 2006).

The Bonn Agreement did not try to settle the issues between the parties who were at war for long time. It also did not provide for any inclusion of the moderate members of the defeated Taliban and into the process of government formation.

The Bonn Agreement was also not a ‘peace agreement’ to the decade-long Afghan civil war and conflict between the Taliban and the U.S. led Northern Alliance, as Bonn only brought together the winners and ignored many root problems, most importantly, the ethnic divisions and the distrust that the country was grappling with for decades; drug production and regional warlords (Johnson 2006).

The matter is also emphasized by Suhrke (2011) that the Bonn Agreement was not a peace agreement:

“The U.S. invasion of Afghanistan in October 2001 left little space for constructing a framework for the kind of war-to-peace transitions that by then had become a model for UN-supported peace agreements: a political settlement between the protagonists and demobilization and reintegration of their armies.

The Bonn Agreement belongs to a different category. It was not a peace agreement but a statement about the structure of the post-war order, shaped by the military-political logic of total victory and written by the U.S. and its allies as they were driving the Taliban from power. The agreement was a clever diplomatic improvisation. Yet it showed that even a brilliant operation can leave the patient dying” (Suhrke 2011. p. 21).

The winner Afghan partners of the U.S. led coalition, the Northern Alliance, got the lion share in the Bonn Agreement. This increased the resentment of Pashtuns who were traditionally ruled Afghanistan since the 18 century. They felt that they have not been paid their due share in the process.

This increase in Pashtun representation was certainly an attempt by Hamid Karzai (the then Head of Interim Authority and Transitional Administration of Afghanistan) to increase support to his Pashtun people and to respond to Lakhdar Brahimi (Special Representative of the UN Secretary General), and others who suggested that the Emergency Loya Jirga (the traditional Grand Council) should correct the imbalances resulting from Bonn Conference and more closely reflect the Afghan demographics (Johnson 2006).

Suhrke views the Bonn Agreement as the outcome of time and argues that with the declaring 'WOT' by Bush, it was hard for U.S. to include the Taliban in negotiations and the broader counter-terrorist strategy of U.S. meant that the Bonn Conference was more conceived as an instrument for global U.S. war rather than a path that could lead to peace in Afghanistan (Suhrke, 2011).

The Bonn Conference as Suhrke concludes resulted in two main consequences: first, exclusion of Taliban that meant renewed war because when they were not party of the new arrangement, so they had to live at the mercy of their local rivals or count on assistance of Pakistan to regroup and resist; and second the Afghan factions represented in Bonn hold tight grip on power for years to come (Suhrke, 2011).

Some UN official criticizes the time of the Bonn Agreement as well which was held in December 2001 after the Taliban was ousted from Kabul. They underscore that capturing Kabul by the Northern Alliance provided the opportunity and leverage to them to have a stronger position and win the lion share in the Conference. In an article in 2012, Francesc Vendrell (Once Special Representatives of U.S. for Afghanistan) stated that the first error happened even before the Bonn Conference when the UN Headquarters delayed convening of the Bonn Conference till late

November 2001, despite calls from my office to convene such a meeting in October before the Taliban's removal from Kabul. Vendrell further states that the strong representation of Northern Alliance in Bonn Conference led to their successful claim over the share for ministries in the Interim Administration, that in turn enabled the NA's warlords and commanders to retain or be appointed to many provincial and district governorships and to key positions in the Afghan National Army and Afghan National police (Vendrell, 2012).

### **Constitution**

The Bonn Agreement 2001 envisaged adoption of a new constitution and for this it stipulated that a Constitutional Loya Jirga (Traditional Grand Council) to be convened within the eighteen months from the establishment of the Transitional Authority, in order to adopt a new constitution for Afghanistan. It further provided that to assist the Constitutional Loya Jirga prepare for the Constitution, the Transitional Administration with the assistance of the United Nations, should form Constitutional Commission within two months of its commencement (Bonn Agreement, 2001). As per the agreement, the Constitutional Loya Jirga was held on 14 December 2003 with the 502 delegates participating that finally adopted the new Constitution after 21 days of deliberation and most of the disagreements were revolving around the power of presidency (Johnson, 2006).

As per the agreement, the Constitutional Loya Jirga (Grand Assembly) was held on 14 December 2003 with the 502 delegates participating that finally adopted the new Constitution after 21 days of deliberation and most of the disagreements were revolving around the power of presidency (Johnson, 2006).



It is argued that while being very progressive Constitutions, it did not take into consideration many social realities in Afghanistan. The most critical issue which is frequently pointed out by scholars and analyst is the political system it put in place for Afghanistan.

“The single biggest flaw in the constitution of Afghanistan is that it created an over-centralized, unitary state in an ethnically diverse, mountainous country where local leaders, communities, and tribes often effectively rule themselves. Although historically, Pashtuns, who form the majority in the eastern and southern provinces, have been the country’s dominant group, no single ethnic group forms a majority in Afghanistan... A state that should have been set up like Switzerland, with multiple, autonomous cantons, was instead centralized like ethnically homogenous Japan” (Pillalamarri, 2021).

Maley (2013) argues that the 2004 Constitution created serious problems where some of the aforementioned features were concerned. Maley further states that main single weakness in the Afghan constitution was that it put in place a system that provide for the presidential system that mostly depends on near-superhuman capabilities on the part an incumbent president, and can easily run into difficulties if the occupant of that office falls short of expectations. Furthermore, presidential system is infamously very difficult to revise because the initiative to move away from a presidential system must come from the very individual who occupies the presidential office, and who is least likely to be willing to acknowledge that system is dysfunctional (Maley, 2013).

The dysfunctional nature of presidential system of Afghanistan has been stressed upon by many scholars. Suhrke (2011) states that the presidential system

proved dysfunctional in many ways: i) Karzi had to work as both the symbolic Head of State and the Head of Executive branch each of them is a full a time job; ii) Karzai had to manage single handedly all the interagency coordination issues; iii) and most seriously, in presidential systems, every subordinate actor almost inevitably looks up to the president to provide guidance and in both policy development and implementation. Suhrke adds that one of the reasons that the United States supported a presidential system for Afghanistan was that the U.S. top leaders believed that a strong chief executive was required to do both i.e. to drive policy and to provide a simple point of contact for Afghanistan's key external supporters (Suhrke 2011).

According to Jayakody (2015) for both historical and practical reasons the drafters of the 2004 constitution provided for a strong Executive Branch that only centralized power but the executive was also given extensive powers to keep the whole of government functioning. It is further emphasized by the author that the convergence of all power in the hands of executive, significantly undermined both the separation and balance of power among the three branches of government and as result, executive overreach has been one of the biggest challenges to constitutionalism in Afghanistan over the last decade (Jayakoda, 215).

Joyakody (2015) also points out that the textual weaknesses in the constitution and a historical lack of institutional capacity have also made the judiciary unable to fulfil its constitutionally mandated role as an independent arm of government (Jayakody, 2015).

The Constitution is also criticized on its hasty process. It is believed that there was less time were given to have a full public debate on many important issues including the role of Islam and relations between the Kabul and provinces. Although the Constitution is very significant achievement of Bonn Process, but insufficient time

caused lack of full public debate before its ratification on two decisive issues which are the role of Islam and the specification of relations between the Kabul and the regions (Thomas 2006).

The 2004 Constitution envisaged forming a state system under the name of republic that was similar to the earlier ones. Barfield views that the 2004 Constitution was hardly distinguishable from earlier Afghan monarchies and dictatorships and there was no delegation of authority to the local level under the constitution. The provincial governors, police officials, and even schoolteachers were appointed exclusively by the central government in Kabul without consultation (Barfield, 2009).

Rubin (2013) also reiterates that the highly centralized system was in place even before the war and conflict in Afghanistan. The Constitution provided a system that had very limited reach in local levels where majority of population centers has been governed by tribal laws and customs that have largely remained unchanged for hundreds of years (Rubin, 2013).

## **Elections**

Among the many functions of election, providing and strengthening of legitimacy to those in power is the most important and main function. Providing the democratic legitimacy and to those in power is considered to be one of the basic functions of elections (Raciborski 2003).

Elections are the essential part of state building based on the democratization. Therefore, heavy investment is made by the international development agencies for building democratic institutions in those states that are emerging from conflict (Bjornlund, 2004). Democratic legitimacy requires legitimate processes and mechanism. The efforts for elections are made on the assumption that democratic

elections strengthen the domestic legitimacy of governments through increasing willingness of citizens for acceptance of a government and to be governed by it. Once the people perceive that a fair and transparent procedure is followed for selecting a person or government they consider the government more legitimate (Levi et al. 2007). Definitions of legitimacy vary but it is generally considered to be the quality and character of a political authority which makes people willing to accept the state institutions to have the right to issue certain commands, and in turn, they have obligation or duty to comply with (Lake, 2010).

From the above it is clear that one of the main functions of election is proving legitimacy to person or government and the legitimacy comes from the willingness of the population and subsequently the willingness of the people comes from the fact that they realize the person or the government is selected through a fair procedure. So, the fairness of procedures is the significant feature of the elections.

From the invasion of U.S. in Afghanistan in 2001 until U.S. withdrawal on 30 August 2021 following elections were held/scheduled:

2004 Presidential Election

2005 Parliamentary Elections; Provincial Council Elections

2009 Presidential Election; Provincial Council Elections

2010 Parliamentary Elections

2014 Presidential Elections (two rounds); Provincial Council Elections

2018 Parliamentary Elections

2019 Presidential Election

2023 Parliamentary Elections

2024 Presidential Election

(Source: SIGAR, February 2022)

As per Larson 2021, the election planning was unfortunately affected by insecurity even from the first election in 2004. The Joint Election Management Body JEMB had to struggle how to hold election in the presence or threats from the Taliban as well the warlords in many areas across Afghanistan. Demobilizing, disarming, and reintegrating of ex-combatant was behind schedule which means that it became increasingly clear that the international community was encouraging an election in an insecure environment but was not willing to shoulder the cost of deploying more troops to enhance security (Larson, 2021).

Johnson, 2006 states that that Karzai, by de facto was supported by the U.S. and European governments and took advantage of U.S. assets during his campaigning was also alleged that much of his campaign funds came directly from foreign countries which is direct violation of Afghan election laws. The appearance of favoritism in the ethnically charged climate of Afghan politics makes it seem that the goal of the campaign was to elect a president at any cost, especially in the eyes of the often ignored and abused non-Pashtuns (Johnson 2006).

Democracy would not thrive in the absence of political parties. It is very clear that for a democracy to thrive, encouraging and strengthening of the political parties are vital.

Government/Karzai decided to use the single non-transferable vote (SNTV) to marginalize the political parties electoral formulate for election, meaning that Afghan voter had to cast a single vote even though there would be multiple members to serve their respective electoral district (Johnson 2006).

As endorsed by the Murtazashvili (2022) the democratic development was also hampered by electoral law of Afghanistan where the SNTV were used in provincial

multimember constituencies to elect members of parliament. This system was selected partly to undermine the strength of the Mujahidin as it was feared they might resist to a new central authority. In the 2005 elections for the 249 seat of parliament (Wolesi Jirga/Lower House) the candidates were not allowed to affiliate themselves with political parties. Although that regulation was later changed, the SNTV system weakened political parties and hindered the formation of a healthy opposition to the president and denying citizens an important link to the government and voice in policy development (Murtazashvili, 2022).

SNTV encouraged candidates and their supporters for fraud. The SNTV with bigger district area and a lack of political parties creates a wide distribution of votes across candidates and this strong incentive to manipulate voting, compounded by a weak election commission had failed to prevent widespread fraud during the 2009 presidential election (Berman et al. 2014).

Appropriate election laws could have pushed political parties to pursue alliances across ethnic groups but Karzai's fear of a multiparty system proved to be extremely counterproductive that hampered thriving of a viable multiparty system (Johnson 2006).

The more time passed, the image of election more tarnished. The presidential and provincial council elections held on August 20, 2009 were widely characterized as marred by lack of security, violence, extremely low voter turnout, and widespread ballot stuffing, intimidation, and other electoral fraud.

A top UN official, Kai Eide publicly accepted that the Afghanistan's presidential election had been marred by "widespread fraud," and his remarks were

intended to reject allegations by his former deputy that he was covering up fraud to benefit president Hamid Karzai (Tavernise & Wafa, 2019).

According to New York Times (2009) over 2,800 complaints were received by the Election Complaints Commission (ECC), with the largest proportion concerning irregularities at the poll, including ballot box stuffing and voter intimidation. New York Times further wrote that fraud was so prevalent that almost a quarter of all votes were thrown out.

In the 2009 presidential elections and the 2010 parliamentary elections irregularities and fraud increased and the voters number fell in both elections which was the indication of growing public frustration and disillusionment with the process as a result of insecurity, systematic fraud, misuse of power by government authorities and the warlords and lack of awareness about procedures (Akbar & Akbar, 2011).

CNN (2010) reported that president Hamid Karzai criticized the international community for meddling in national elections by saying foreigners, not his supporters, were responsible for widespread fraud. Almost a third of president Karzai's votes were invalidate by a UN backed fraud monitoring panel because of clear and convincing evidence of fraud. The elections were seen as a key test for Afghanistan's struggling democracy, and the allegations of fraud sparked tensions between Karzai and his international allies, especially the United States (CNN, 2010).

Peter Galbraith (former UN Deputy Dhief in Afghanistan) who was in disagreement with the UN chief for his early criticism of the presidential vote was fired by UN for trying to prevent that kind of fraud (CNN, 2010).

As was seen, the transparency of the IEC was strongly questioned. There were serious violations of election laws and procedures that undermined the credibility of the whole process.

“Strong allegations were made concerning the lack of impartiality of the IEC in 2009 and this became a common and prevailing conception, especially after reports about extensive election fraud. Strong allegations were made concerning the lack of impartiality of the IEC in 2009 and this became a common and prevailing conception, especially after reports about extensive election fraud by IEC staff were made public. The Afghan-led Commission was expected to create a sense of ownership of the process among Afghans; however, many Afghans did not trust the commissioners as completely impartial individuals because they are Afghans” (Akbar & Akbar, 2011, p. 6).

The presidential election of 2009 and the parliamentary election of 2010, marked not only by decrease in turnout but also decline in observers as well. Although several international observer missions were present in the 2009 and 2010 elections in Afghanistan but with a sharp decline in the number of international observers and lower political status of many missions in 2010 (Akbar & Akbar, 2011).

According to Bijlert (2010), people generally considered the 2010 election as exhibiting a “hands off” approach on the part of international actors and the mess of 2009 elections resulted in considerable fatigue on the international side and with too little time and political will to use the lessons learned. After the announcement of the final results of the 2010 election at the end of November, the UN and the U.S. quickly



welcomed them which many saw it a move from a messy and protracted process that leaves people feeling dissatisfied and wronged (Bijlert, 2010).

U.S. Institute of Peace (2018) reported that no effective steps were taken based on previous lesson and experiences to improve the election bodies and process. For example, people could vote anywhere in the country for the presidential election and anywhere in the provinces in the parliamentary and provincial council elections.

“This along with the double number of registration vote helped a large scale of fraud in elections. The key problem with voter registration in Afghanistan is that there are many more voter registration cards (23 million) in circulation than there are legitimate voters (approximately 13-14 million). Such a large number of duplicate cards makes it easier to commit fraud, a phenomenon that has undermined the credibility of past election results” (U.S. Institute of Peace, 2018).

A report by National Democratic Institute (2009) stated that the independence of IEC was under question right beginning but more doubt was cast when angered president Karzai removed international experts from the IEC due to what he called interference. The IEC leadership comprised of seven individuals, all of whom were appointed by the president. This connection to the executive, compromised the autonomy of the commission and in instance the senior electoral officials began to make comments in support of Karzai’s campaign in 2009 elections (National Democratic Institute, 2009).

The UNAMA, (UN Special Political Mission) established to assist the state and the people of Afghanistan in laying the foundations for sustainable peace and development were criticized for continuously failing or ignoring the irregularities and

fraud in elections of Afghanistan. The electoral fraud was a direct consequence of failure to build the capacity of government institutions (The Crisis Group, 2009).

Since the 2004 presidential elections, the international community – UNAMA in particular – repeatedly turned a blind eye to the looming crisis of credibility rooted in an unsound process. The polls severely damaged UNAMA’s ability to function effectively, weakening its internal morale and sharply eroding Afghan confidence in Kai Eide, the Special Representative of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon (The Crisis Group, 2009).

The ballot counting in 2014 presidential election was another additional challenging job to the other technical problems behind which was resting political motivation of Karzai and its circles to bring in power Ashraf Ghani (2014-2021) (Larson 2021).

Finally, in 2014, following a disputed runoff between presidential candidates Ashraf Ghani and Abdullah Abdullah, the entire eight million ballots cast were recounted by a UN delegation. Even in this case, however, contrary to the agreement signed by both candidates ahead of the recount, results were never finally released. The National Unity Government that was formed as a means of resolving the dispute was based simply on a political agreement and not on votes at all (Larson 2021).

The National Unity Government caused more conflict and ethnic division in Afghanistan. It acted just the opposite of what its name indicated. Following the same trend and scenario, the election of Afghanistan further degraded and lost its legitimacy completely in the 2019 presidential election. The unpleasant experiences by the people from the elections along with the worsening security, polling center

closures, tighter voter registration requirements etc. combined together to disillusion people with election and to lose motivation for participation in the 2019.

Larson (2021) states that right from 2004 election onward, the relationship between elections and democracy was not up to expectation partly due to U.S. strong impact on the outcome of elections such as pressuring Karzai to run for president in 2004, having U.S. ambassadors visit opposition candidates ahead of the presidential election in 2009 in an effort to dissuade Karzai from running, brokering the negotiations that led to the National Unity Government in 2014, and downplaying the significance of the 2019 elections because of simultaneous peace talks with the Taliban that excluded the Afghan administration. There has been some sort of US involvement that has altered the process (Larson, 2021).

### **Nation Building Vs State Building**

The coup of 1978 followed by the Soviet occupation in 80s and subsequent wars and instability in Afghanistan during 90s drastically changed the socio-political dynamics of Afghanistan.

Many scholars see the nation building and state building intertwined and they insist that any state building agenda should consider the importance of nation building in the fragile states and should not limit or underestimate the role of national building (Grotenhuis, 2016). Grotenhuis criticizes the following definition given by OECD:

“Actions undertaken, usually by national actors, to forge a sense of common nationhood, usually in order to overcome ethnic, sectarian or communal differences; usually to counter alternate sources of identity and loyalty; and usually to mobilise a population behind a parallel state- building project. May or

may not contribute to peace building. Confusingly equated with post-conflict stabilisation and peace building in some recent scholarship and U.S. political discourse” (OEDD, 2008).

Grotenhuis argues that the problem with the OECD definition is its instrumental notion of nation-building, which is defined as a ‘supportive’ process that has its value in mobilizing people behind the primary, state-building objectives. Grotenhuis underscores that the Nation-building has values of itself that should be explored and developed. The OECD’s instrumental notion is not helpful if a genuinely intertwined approach that considers both nation-building and state-building as equal components in the process of building stable nation- states in fragile contexts is absent (Grotenhuis, 2016).

Also, building on the legitimacy approach stresses the need to take into account the complex nature of the modern nation-state. As a state represents more than the mere expression of its institutions, the state collapse encompasses more than the failure of governmental institutions.

Lemay & Hebert (2009) describes that to be effective, state building has to take into account not just the rebuilding of state institutions, but also the complex nature of socio-political cohesion, or what some refer to as nation building. Where external actors confront the challenges of state collapse, state building without nation-building is unlikely to succeed. Externally-led state building efforts must take into account the impact on legitimacy of their interventions, particularly on socio-political cohesion the process whereby outsiders shape the conditions under which citizens come to share common values (Lemay-Hebert 2009).

Grotenhuis sees the nation – building as an open process and its result is predefined:

“As Nation-building is an open process that does not have a predefined result and therefore there is no straight way forward to attain that result. The open-ended character of nation-building requires a mindset different from state-building for domestic people and international partners: Nation- building is process-led, not results-led. The process of nation-building is self-referential: Only the people involved in the process can decide what the meaning is of their sense of belonging and their shared identity. Although they are intertwined and complementary, they are different in nature and dynamics.” (Grotenhuis, 2016, p. 80)

The international efforts for state building under the U.S. led to continuation of the status quo which was the main underlying cause of the backwardness, war and instability in Afghanistan since 1919 when the formal narrative of the Afghan nation was began which has continuously failed to build a nation. The state building process right from the Bonn Agreement was pursued on the wrong assumption that what Afghanistan needed for legitimacy of the state was building institution and sharing power along the ethnic lines without paying attention to the elements of nation building.

Among other scholars, Bogdandy et al, 2005, underscores that the question whether a country needs only state building or nation building as well after military defeat of political regime or civil war is crucial one and the difference between state building and nation building is not always appreciated.

Ben-Ami (2021) is in the view that that in Afghanistan, the US stuck a weak political entity into a deeply sectarian society. This meant that state-building was considered similar as to nation-building. And while Bush considered nation-building essential, the nature and scope of the task is far beyond the capacity of any external force

State building is more about building institution, many scholars differentiate it from nation building and links it to a more non tangible phenomena such as common believes and shared values and sentiments. state building can be achieved by building institutions, the nation building is more understood by what those institutinons do and how they channel the feelings, believes and sentiments of the people and represent and reflect the common ideals.

From the above it is ascertained that the state building and nation building are intertwined but encompassse separate components of a state. The state building connotes more of physical components of the state which are more seen and they are objective while the nation building encompasses more non-physical components such as feelings of belongingness, cohesion, identity, and it is more felt and seen on others and in our surroundings.

### **Socio-Cultural Challenges**

For most of its history, Afghanistan never constituted a single state because its territories were parts of larger empires. Under these regimes political legitimacy was anchored only in a ruler's ability to maintain order and provide security (Barfield, 2012). The legacy of ethnical rule created challenges for nation-building in Afghanistan and divided Afghanistan not only based on ethnicity but also based on the religion of different ethnicities of the people of Afghanistan with different land

tenure systems, local government administration, educational systems, and judicial systems (Daily Outlook, 2022).

So based on above, it is very important for any state building effort to take into consideration the role of context. Without having a clear understating of the context and its complexities, efforts that are made for implementation of state building may fail as the case in Afghanistan.

Roy (2009) stresses that exploring and understanding the process of nation-building, democratisation and institution building in Afghanistan have to be the lens of divisions that exist in Afghan society and has to consider imposing a central form of government in an ‘tribal’ society where society and polity in practical life is decentralized. One must understand the structural constraints and historical heritage inhibiting Afghan nation-building which some argue that it would be surprising if a strong state did emerge as the country is fragmented along ethnic, religious and ideological lines and geographical/topographical constraints (Roy, 2009).

Although modernization of Afghan society has made considerable progress from the 1950s, its impact was restricted almost entirely to the educated elite of Kabul where even this small educated class was itself deeply divided along ethnic lines, between Pashtuns and non-Pashtuns, bitterly resenting the virtual monopoly of power and pretensions of the Pashtun elite (Barth, 1969).

Afghanistan was always divided into distinctive communal, ethnolinguistic, and religious groups. Moreover, these groups possessed a social system that emphasized loyalty to the local social group (qawm) rather than a higher-order abstraction like the state. The geographical barrier set by the Hindu Kush Mountains created a barrier between Kabul and the rural areas and retarded the development of centralized

political institutions, which could only expand in power at the expense of local loyalties (Goodson, 1998).

Afghanistan is a mosaic of different ethnicities. Given its geography and formation, most of the larger ethnic groups have significantly greater populations in neighbouring countries. Governing the territory with such a demographics has always been a core challenge to any state. Maintaining harmony among these groups is one of the biggest problems confronting Afghanistan today and a key determinant of whether its future is to be one of peace and reconciliation or conflict and discord (Siddique, 2012).

Roy (2009) underlines that are certain challenges in the way of nation-building in Afghanistan process that are difficult to overcome and emphasizes that the societal cleavages between competing ethnic, linguistic, religious, regional and economic groups often cause or intensify fragmentation, undercut the concept of the nation and thereby posing a huge challenge to reconstruction and other aspects of peace-building.

Lack of census always been the bone of contention when it comes to representation in different national representation. Determining the true percentages of various ethnic groups is problematic and can be contentious. Furthermore, simply defining various ethnic identities is not always easy because the idea that ethnic groups are solid cultural units, which are divided by obvious boundaries and have engaged in conflict for centuries is not applicable to Afghanistan (Conrad, 2004).

There have been fierce debates among political leaders and the people about the ethnical makeup of the country and their percentages but surprisingly but surprisingly no initiative was taken, throughout the state building campaign in



Afghanistan, for census which could have provided a fair and transparent ground for many political processes and contributed to their transparency and effectiveness.

Hussaini (2021) states that historical experiences points that where there is already relatively national integrity in a country, it does not face serious difficulty for modern nation- state building. Conversely, the countries with intense superiority of sub-national ethnic, linguistic, and religious interests over national identity faced serious problems in modern nation-state building. The history of Afghanistan is a clear example of ethnic-religious divergent society, lack of national identity, lack of centralized state, and historical hatred. Such a context has worked as a serious challenge for modern state-building during the last 100 years in the states of Amanullah, Zaher Shah, and Karzai (Hussaini, 2021).

The political history of Afghanistan depicts the deep rooted traditional political discipline based on the autonomy of ethnic-religious groupings. Thus, the efforts to create modern and official political discipline even in Karzai's state have not had any favorable result. Despite some achievements and actions on nation-state building, such a discipline is still considerably far from the favorable point (Edwards, 2010).

In summary, the of socio-cultural structure of Afghanistan along with its geography and weak political entities and leadership has deprived Afghanistan from developing a strong sense of nationhood.

### **Public Administration and Capacity Building**

Some scholars see the public administration and capacity building from a different point of view and while recognizing the need for capacity building, the stresses also on building strong institutions that put restrictions on power and limit it.

Murtazashivilli (2016) underscore that in Afghanistan, the efforts were enhanced for capacity building but less attention was paid on the restraints for checks.

Murtazashivilli argues that problem in Afghanistan was ignoring the essential constraints on state capacity and the prioritization of capacity over constraints had three consequences. First, is the vast corruption as a result of massive influxes of donor funds. Second, the drive to build capacity quickly that reduced incentives for meaningful reform of the system of public administration and instead revived the old, unresponsive Soviet-influenced centralized bureaucracy. Finally, donor influxes overwhelmed what limited government capacity existed, further undermining governance because donors and Afghans turned to parallel structures to get things done (Murtazashivilli, 2016).

Another challenge to address was the corruption. Armitage (2010) asserts despite efforts that were made to build capacity for security less attention was given to develop mechanisms that could curb and prevent officials from corruption. The lack of institutional capacity for absorbing funds was another issue that led to corruption and theft. A number of U.S. policy makers points out that apart from the shortcomings of U.S. policy in state building in other countries, the failure is also connected with the culture of those countries. The overall Afghan leadership and institutions are characterized by corruption, weak governance and opposing agenda to those of the U.S. (Armitage, 2010).

Parallel structure to the government was another challenge. State building in Afghanistan developed a parallel structure almost in all level of the government. About 60 donors and 37 troop contributing countries were operating in the country and foreign consultant existed everywhere almost in all levels (Suhrke, 2010).

Some other scholars and authors such as Shah (2021) points not only at the issue of check and balance but at the incompatibility of the precedential system itself, among others. In an article in *Diplomat*, while enumerating the causes of problems, Shah emphasize on the political and economic institutions, corruption, ethnic conflict, foreign interventions, and a lack of political will. Shah further argues that most all of these are interrelated and suggest that institutions are the key to mitigate the challenges of good governance in Afghanistan but the international community, however, simply flooded funding into a centralized system in Afghanistan that was weak, corrupt, and unaccountable to Afghan citizens (Shah, 2021).

The issue of politicization of institution may be the most difficult challenge within the government of Afghanistan that is responsible destroying the administrative and economic system. Over the past decade, political leaders and politicians, in order to seize power and keep influence illegally hire their supporters in government administration system and change the administrative process in their favor (Bizhan, 2018).

In summary public administration and institutions remained ineffective and inefficient in Afghanistan despite of funds and resource due to corruption, nepotism, politicization, lack of strategic planning and defined responsibility and coordination. The problem was compounded with the parallel structure that donors and aid agencies that instead enhancing the government capacity rather undermined it.

## CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

In conflict affected countries, peacebuilding is more important than any other issue. Violence would not stop unless the underlying causes that trigger it do not stop. Peacebuilding should be considered the foundation of successful state-building. State building possibly calms down people and keeps them busy for a while but does not address the reasons why people fight in the first place.

In post conflict situations, improving the trust deficit through ensuring fair and transparent rules and procedures for political and social activities is very important. A fair and free election is the backbone of legitimacy and democratization. Therefore, the credibility of elections must not be jeopardized at any cost.

A ready-made western style of state building does not necessarily fail if a clear picture of the context is available and it is implemented in a phased manner rather being pushed in a hasty way. Western democracies and nation states are the product of several centuries of social and political changes and development. Having an ambitious and extensive agenda for an overnight change would lead to an unpleasant failure.

The failure of Afghanistan proved that the government's capacity and institutions do not necessarily help to restore and strengthen legitimacy if there is no effective and strong institution that put restrictions on the state power. Democracy does not thrive in the existence of institutions that exert authority, but in the existence of institutions that restrict power. In democracies, the real power is the power that curbs the power.

Establishing an appropriate political system to exert authority effectively and match the socio-cultural realities of the country is crucial. A highly centralized government in a multi-ethnic country is a recipe for disaster. Therefore, the concentration of power in the hands of one person must be avoided and proper mechanisms should be devised to ensure check and balance as well as the delegation of authority to the local levels.

One of the main factors for corruption in Afghanistan was influx of donors funds. Therefore, maintaining a balance between the influx of funds with the overall capacity of the government to absorb them may prove useful.

In general, the state building campaign in Afghanistan was launched on flawed assumptions and implemented with the wrong approaches.

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