

US POLICY TOWARDS POST-2014 AFGHANISTAN

Achievements and Emerging Parameters

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Abstract

Afghanistan has not been a success story for the United States till now; nor has it been an unmitigated disaster. Some national interests have been achieved with hard struggle, but the cost in doing so has been high, and it has taken a very long time. Withdrawal of International Security Assistance Forces from Afghanistan in 2014 does not proclaim the stability in Afghanistan. After the withdrawal of International Security Assistance Forces, Afghanistan again emerged as an arena of instability and chaos. Though United States and other members of Resolute Support Mission are active in Afghanistan but the burden of security finally relies upon Afghan government. In this backdrop, the present paper aims to highlight major achievements in Afghanistan since 2001 and the emerging problems in Afghanistan after 2014.

Keywords

US Withdrawal, Resolute Support Mission, National Interest, Emerging Afghan Problems, NATO, Counter Terrorism, ISAF, International Security, Policy Failures, Military Coalition.

Introduction

United States entered in Afghanistan in October 2001 to dismantle, disrupt and retaliate from Taliban and to make Afghanistan a stable state.¹ Alongwith international community, United States served thirteen years with multiple objectives in Afghanistan. The first major aim was to oust Taliban from power. Second aim was to establish US friendly regime in Afghanistan for long run. After waging the longest war in the history, killing Bin Laden in 2011, United States finally announced the partial withdrawal from Afghanistan. Withdrawal of NATO forces from Afghanistan does not mean withdrawal of United States but the withdrawal of United States led International Security Assistance Forces. In spite of Withdrawal in 2014, 9800 US troops are still stationed in Afghanistan which reduced to 6800 by the end of 2016. During these thirteen years of Operation Enduring Freedom, in Afghanistan, the U.S was not at a stage of winning. United States both achieved and lost in Afghanistan and it is an open truth that United States failed to eliminate Taliban and its other allied groups like Haqani

Network, Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan Islamic Jihad Union etc. from Afghanistan. This was debated by the academia that whether withdrawal of US led forces was a choice or a force. Taliban mockingly declared that withdrawal of NATO led ISAF is a defeat for United States and victory for Taliban.²

At the NATO Summit held in Chicago (USA) on May 20-21, 2012, NATO and ISAF partner nations made a strong pledge of long-term support for the security and stability of Afghanistan. The summit concluded with the commitment (including the U.S.) of \$3.6 billion per year for the ANSF starting in 2015 and running through 2017. This summit is a major milestone for the security and stability of Afghanistan in the forthcoming years. The Afghan government also agreed to provide roughly \$500 million annually and gradually increase its share of financial responsibility for maintaining its security forces over time. NATO and ISAF Partner Nations also recommended NATO Strategic Plan for Afghanistan (NSPA), which defined a strategic approach for the pre- and post-transition Afghanistan.

In 2014 United States has made a ten-year financial commitment to Afghanistan for the period 2014-2024, and has signed a Strategic Partnership with Kabul, which includes a military presence in Afghanistan for the next decade, in the form of intelligence operations, Special Forces and training activities. But this continued involvement cannot mask the U.S.'s expected future disengagement. It reveals that, United States is likely to remain an active partner of Afghan Government in the years to come. United States priorities in international security have clearly been reoriented toward the Asia-Pacific region and the 'Greater Middle East'³. At the same time, the situation in the Middle East has changed after the Arab Spring (2011), the civil war in Syria and renewed Israeli calls for greater support. This will probably lead to Afghanistan and Central Asia becoming a secondary priority. The sense of future American disengagement is also visible in the State Department's 2011 'new Silk Road' narrative. It is thus expected that, after 2014, United States will modify its perception towards Afghanistan and might reduce its economic flow to Afghanistan. During the 2014 State of the Union Address, President Barack Obama said:

"After 2014, we will support a unified Afghanistan as it takes responsibility for its own future a small force of Americans could remain in Afghanistan with NATO allies to carry out two narrow

missions: training and assisting Afghan forces and counterterrorism operations to pursue any remnants of al Qaeda”⁴

One of the major strategic developments between United States and Afghan government a few months before the withdrawal of ISAF was the approval of a security agreement. On September 30, 2014, the United States and Afghanistan signed a Bilateral Security Agreement providing the framework for a continued mission to train, advise, and assist the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces (ANDSF) after December 31, 2014. On the same day, the United States, Afghanistan, and NATO allies signed the NATO Status of Forces Agreement, confirming that international efforts to train, advise, and assist the ANDSF would also continue after 2014. On January 1, 2015 the United States and NATO formally ended their combat role in Afghanistan and the ANDSF took full responsibility for securing their country. United States opened a new chapter in its relations with Afghanistan under Resolute Support Mission. The United States and NATO continue to support the ANDSF through train, advise, and assist efforts, however, Afghan forces now lead all combat operations.⁵

US Major Achievements in Afghanistan After 2001

Afghanistan has not been a success story for the United States till now; nor has it been an unmitigated disaster. Some national interests have been achieved with hard struggle, but the cost in so doing has been high, and it has taken a very long time.⁶ During the last 14 years, Afghanistan has been transformed, politically, educationally, socially and economically despite large scale conflict. The pool of human capital has been enormously expanded and extended, especially among youth, many of whom make up a mass of aspiring and motivated citizens eager to make a positive difference. Even if the outcome of the 2014 presidential election was contentious, the core notion of democracy has grown, with citizens increasingly expressing their demands for participation and accountability.⁷ The status of women, while still uneven and subject to much debate has changed profoundly. Girl education which was zero in 2001 has made significant change. There is a pluralistic media and a level of political sophistication that would not have been imaginable 13 years ago. While challenges still abound and Afghanistan remains a country at risk, unfortunately the narrative of failure has drowned out some of the successes; the troubles of the Kabul Bank make headlines,

but the very favourable scores on the public expenditure and financial accountability assessment do not. Perhaps most impressive, what has been achieved has been achieved despite on-going conflict.

Afghanistan has achieved three successful presidential elections in the past 14 years (2001-2014). With regard to the development of military, the country built up more than 350,000 national security forces in the past years. Progress has also been achieved on the economic level: per capita GDP increased from 115 USD in 2001 to 678 USD in 2012.⁸ Furthermore, Afghanistan is well on its way to joining the World Trade Organization (WTO). The Government of Afghanistan also got the membership of World Trade Organization (WTO) at the 10th WTO Ministerial Conference in Nairobi, Kenya, on December 17, 2015 and became 164th member of World Trade Organisation.⁹ Despite these economic and security transformations Afghanistan is still facing important challenges of Taliban and: the country is experiencing a threefold transition process, on the political, security and economic level. 2014 is an important year for Afghanistan because at the political level there was a political transition and the transfer of political power shifted from President Karzai to his successor Ashraf Ghani. At the security level, NATO forces withdraw its most of troops, leaving with 9800 troops in Afghanistan to train Afghan soldiers and Afghan forces. Afghan Forces are not so competent to take the responsibility of security amid ongoing insurgency led by Taliban. At the economic level, there will be an economic transition, the belief that international donors might reduce the economic assistance to Afghanistan in the post 2014 period and with significant reduction of NATO military spending in Afghanistan as a result of the troop's withdrawal. NATO has spent more than 100 billion dollars a year in Afghanistan, which had a significant economic spill over on the local economy. The uncertainty about 2014 has had a negative impact on foreign investment and contributed to capital flight from Afghanistan to other countries.

During the past 13 years, United States remained as the chief architecture in the nation building of Afghanistan and spent billions of dollars in the reconstruction of Afghanistan. Despite getting success in the field of health, education, reconstruction, security, social sector, etc., United States also lost its 2238 precious lives

in Afghanistan who have sacrificed their lives while fighting with Taliban. United States through its International agency named United States Agency of International Development (USAID) spent billions of dollars in Afghanistan in various sectors which includes;¹⁰

Agriculture

- ❖ Distributed vouchers for improved agricultural inputs to more than one million Afghan farmers across the country for agricultural improvements.
- ❖ Afghanistan cultivated more than 118,000 hectares of licit agricultural crops with USAID assistance since 2009.
- ❖ More than 400 veterinary field units were established.
- ❖ Administered more than 26 million vaccinations to livestock.
- ❖ Trained more than 633,000 men and women in improved farm and business skills since 2009.
- ❖ Established a \$100 million Agricultural Development Fund (ADF) to provide loans to Afghan farmers and on-lending organizations, directly benefitting more than 5,000 farmers across 17 provinces

Democracy and Governance

- ❖ Helped extend the outreach of the government by strengthening the Civil Service Commission, resulting in the recruitment of 1,100 new civil servants in insecure provinces
- ❖ Increased the participation of women in Afghanistan's two-year judicial training program by 20 percent; notably, the top ten graduates of the May 2011 graduating class were women
- ❖ Strengthened the institutional capacity of two key governance institutions: the Afghan Parliament and the Independent Election Commission as well as a number of Afghan civil society organizations working on a range of issues from electoral reform to gender empowerment
- ❖ Strengthened the capacity of 112 women-led and/or women-focused organizations, launched the Afghan Women's Advocacy Coalition, and funded a national policy dialogue conference to discuss policy reform priorities
- ❖ Increased access to independent media by supporting the establishment of 75 active TV stations, more than 175 new radio stations, several hundred print media, and several dozen websites
- ❖ Created more than 100 district level councils, who serve as

governance bodies at the district level, advocating for community members, resolving disputes, and serving as a vital source of stability

- ❖ Provided media training to more than 700 female journalists across the country
- ❖ Built the capacity of elected members of the provincial councils and provincial governors in all 34 provinces, strengthening constituent outreach, advocacy, service delivery, and budget planning
- ❖ Increased revenue in 33 municipalities and improved service delivery based on community input

Economic Growth

- ❖ Helped increase revenue collection, improve the legal and regulatory framework for private sector investment, grow small and medium sized businesses, implement regional trade agreements, and strengthen the government's capacity to manage the economy
- ❖ Created 490,000 new jobs, which can be directly attributed to USAID programs
- ❖ Helped the Afghan Government increase customs revenue by 400 percent during the past four years, as a result of implementing a centralized collection system, and Increase total public revenue by 225 percent to \$1.6 billion
- ❖ Expanded access to telecommunications services from one million to 14 million; there are now four mobile network operators with more than 14 million subscribers, with mobile money services that include salary disbursement and utility bill payment applications
- ❖ Assisted in the licensing of 17 licensed commercial banks with \$840 million in outstanding loans and \$3.5 billion in deposits
- ❖ Facilitated more than 830,000 micro-finance loans to Afghan women during the last eight years and developed more than 175,000 micro- and small-businesses
- ❖ Launched 50 public-private partnerships leveraging more than \$95 million from private sector-partners in insurance, communications/media, apparel, information technology, natural resource extraction, and food processing

Education

- ❖ Contributed to increased enrolment from less than one million in 2003 to more than seven million today, 37 percent of whom are girls, and an increase in teachers from 20,000 to 164,000 (30 percent female). According to another source in 2001, only 900,000

children were in school, basically none of them were girls. In 2014 the figure had increased to 8.5 million, of which 39 per cent are girls.¹¹

- ❖ Contributed to increased enrolment in universities from fewer than eight thousand students to 63,000 in 24 higher education institutions and trained more than 53,000 teachers (31 percent female) in 11 provinces
- ❖ Provided community-based schools for more than 103,000 (68 percent female) children in remote areas and supported the development of more than 1,900 school management councils
- ❖ Trained more than 223,100 adult learners in literacy, numeracy, and productive skills courses
- ❖ Printed and distributed more than 97 million textbooks and supported development of the national teacher training curricula, manuals, and materials, which are used in all 34 provinces
- ❖ Supported 132 professors and civil servants in obtaining graduate degrees from U.S. universities
- ❖ Developed the only Master's in Education degree in Afghanistan at Kabul Education University, graduating 44 professors (50 percent female)

Health

- ❖ Financed 530 health facilities, including six hospitals, in 13 provinces; these facilities served approximately 11,000,000 people in 2011
- ❖ Trained more than 21,000 healthcare providers, including more than 1,700 midwives (accounting for over half of all midwives trained in the past 10 years) and 3,612 community health workers, contributing to a 40 percent contraceptive prevalence rate in the 13 USAID-supported provinces, more than double the national average
- ❖ Contributed to a 16 percent decline in mortality rates for infants during the last 15 years; medically-assisted deliveries also rose rapidly, from 14 percent in 2003 to 34 percent in 2010, contributing to a significant decline in maternal deaths
- ❖ Supported the implementation and institutionalization of the first National Health Accounts, which provide critically important health financing information for planning and long-term sustainability of the Ministry of Public Health
- ❖ Created the Disease Early Warning System, a national system of infectious disease surveillance that collects information on

15 targeted communicable diseases on a weekly basis from 274 sentinel sites across all 34 provinces

- ❖ Developed the national Health Management Information System in the Ministry of Public Health that strengthened monitoring and evaluation of health services and created a culture of evidence-based decision-making

Infrastructure

- ❖ Strengthened Afghan capacity to design, build, and maintain roads; increase the supply of reliable electricity; expand access to potable water; and design and construct schools, clinics, and hospitals; since 2006, USAID has invested more than \$1.5 billion on infrastructure improvements
- ❖ Rehabilitated nearly 2,500 kilometers of regional and national roads increasing access to marketplaces and international trade; eighty percent of Afghans now live within 50 km of the improved Ring Road, giving Afghans better connections to their country's major transportation routes, and facilitating their access to markets, schools, health clinics and government services
- ❖ Supported the addition of 230 megawatts worth of new electricity generation, providing power to 1.5 million residents
- ❖ Strengthened Afghan capacity to expand access to potable water, manage trans-boundary issues, and govern the water sector
- ❖ Implemented water and sanitation projects in Kabul and rural areas to expand access to water for more than 300,000
- ❖ Supported 230 MW of new electricity generation, providing power to 1.5 million Kabul residents
- ❖ Expanded transmission and distribution nationally while improving technical and management capacities of the national utility

Withdrawal of International Security Assistance Forces: A Choice or Force

Donald John Trump is an American businessman, politician, television personality, author, and candidate for the Republican nomination for President of the United States in the 2016 election says that United States policy after 9/11 in Afghanistan to attack Taliban was a mistake but he recommended that troops in Afghanistan needs to stay after 2014 to avoid collapse of government and maintain stability¹² About 54 per cent of American believe the decision to send US troops into Afghanistan in 2001 was not a mistake, according to a June 2015 Gallup

poll. Still, 42% of Americans say the war was a mistake, according to the same poll.¹³

The visit of the Afghan President and Chief Executive to Washington this week is crucial because it is likely to lay down the framework for future US engagement and involvement in Afghanistan. Reports in the US media suggest that Afghan leaders are going to urge the American President to stall the pull-out of US troops and rejig the withdrawal plan.¹⁴ For its part, the Obama administration has already made some adjustments in the draw-down schedule and has also allowed US troops to engage in combat operations against the Taliban if US interests are at stake or in danger. But whether or not the US will accede to the requests of the Afghan leadership and extend its military mission in Afghanistan beyond 2016 will depend on not just how much the Afghan leaders can convince the Americans about their future plans but also on domestic politics in the US. Moreover, global geopolitics and new hotspots in the Middle East could divert US attention and commitment away from Afghanistan.

The decision to slow down the US troop withdrawals for at least this year has certainly infused a degree of confidence among most Afghans that they are not being abandoned or thrown to the wolves. While the panic bells have stopped ringing for now, the sense of gloom has not dissipated entirely, and for good reason. But for the alarming rise and the lightening advances made by the Islamic State in Syria and Iraq, which at one point threatened to over-run even Baghdad, chances are that the Obama administration would have stuck to the original withdrawal schedule. Post the emergence of the challenge posed by the IS, the Americans realised that with their troops pulling out, Afghanistan could easily suffer a similar fate, something that would reduce to dust all the blood and treasure that had been spent to rebuild Afghanistan. The problem, however, is that this is at best a temporary readjustment, a last throw of the dice if you will, and by no means a strategic decision to stay the course and finish the job of eliminating the Taliban/Al Qaeda combine in Afghanistan.

Clearly, delaying the drawdown is not going to change the dynamics in Afghanistan in any significant way. At best, continued US presence will prolong the military stalemate. It will not solve the problem of the Islamists running rampant across the length and breadth of Afghanistan. After all, if nearly 150,000 foreign troops with the most awe-inspiring

weaponry and technology couldn't pacify the country, much less decisively defeat the Taliban/Al Qaeda conglomerate, there is no way that 12,000 odd troops would be able to make any difference in changing the ground situation. But even the stalemate will be temporary because while the US presence might be able to keep the Taliban at bay in 2015, the next year will be a different story, or even the year after. What is more, the stalemate means continuation of the high attrition rates in the Afghan security forces. While they have held up reasonably well for now, no army can sustain such high attrition rates indefinitely. The Taliban, on the other hand, have managed to not just carry on their fight but also force the exit of foreign troops despite suffering enormous casualties. To expect them to enter into a peace deal at this stage when they see themselves on the cusp of victory is akin to wanting the moon.

What this means is that by prolonging its troop presence in Afghanistan, the US will not be solving anything. In fact, it will only be reinforcing failure. Worse, it will make it impossible for the Americans to address the root of the problem in Afghanistan – Pakistan. As long as US troops stay in Afghanistan, they will remain dependent on Pakistani Ground Lines of Communication (GLOCs). It was precisely this factor that forced the US to turn a blind eye to the double game that the Pakistanis played for more than a decade, a double game which was recently acknowledged by the former dictator, General Pervez Musharraf.

In terms of casualties among the Coalition partners, United States shares the largest number of casualties of its soldiers, as per data, 67.77 percent of total casualties were of American troops. This statically tabulated data is also a source of worry for the American community that is why some percent of civil society recommended the withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan.

Coalition Military Fatalities¹⁵ (2001-2016)

Year	US	UK	Other	Total
2001	12	0	0	12
2002	49	3	18	70
2003	48	0	10	58
2004	52	1	7	60
2005	99	1	31	131
2006	98	39	54	191
2007	117	42	73	232

2008	155	51	89	295
2009	317	108	96	521
2010	499	103	109	711
2011	418	46	102	566
2012	310	44	48	402
2013	127	9	25	161
2014	55	6	14	75
2015	22	2	3	27
2016	11	0	2	13
Total	2389	455	681	3525

Moreover, United States took unilateral decision for withdrawal from Afghanistan whose implications might be tolerated by the Afghan Government. The decision of withdrawal was thus US oriented not Afghan oriented because United States does not want to lose its forces in Afghanistan further and finally handed over the responsibility to Afghan forces. United States thereafter relied on aerial attacks on Taliban as a ‘Safe Strategy’. Through this, United States have the minimum possibilities to lose its forces and maximum chances to destroy and disrupt Taliban. As a part of this strategy, United States killed Mullah Akhter Mansur in Pakistan areas.

Emerging Problems in Afghanistan after the Withdrawal of ISAF

Withdrawal of International Security Assistance Forces from Afghanistan does not proclaim the stability in Afghanistan. After the withdrawal of International Security Assistance Forces, Afghanistan again emerged as an arena of instability and chaos. Though United States and other members of Resolute Support Mission are active in Afghanistan but the burden of security finally relies upon Afghan government. Apart from security there are various other issues and challenges which Afghan government likely to face after the withdrawal of ISAF. The most important ones follow:

Corruption: Corruption has been a problem in Afghanistan since long. The United States and other prominent donor nations have continued to pour billions of dollars into the country for development and reconstruction but without a comprehensive anti-corruption strategy or policy. In 2010, about 19 people stole nearly \$1 billion from Afghanistan’s largest private bank.¹⁶ Throughout the past 13 years, high

levels of corruption and bad governance have seriously thwarted the international community's efforts to stabilise Afghanistan. Millions of dollars that were allocated for the reconstruction and development of Afghanistan were misused or wasted.¹⁷ According to Transparency International, Afghanistan in 2015 ranked 166th-worst out of 168 countries, ahead of only Somalia and North Korea when it comes to public perceptions of corruption.¹⁸ Ninety percent of Afghans say that corruption is a problem in their daily lives. From 2006-2015, more than 76% of Afghans surveyed, on average, said that corruption is a major problem in the country.¹⁹ Despite government efforts to curb corruption, 89.9% of Afghans say that corruption is a problem in their daily lives, the highest percentage reported in a decade, with 61.1% saying it is a major problem and 28.8% saying it is a minor problem. Helmand (84.8%) and Kabul (81.3%) are the two provinces where the highest proportion of residents say that corruption is a major problem, and Panjshir (11.0%) is the lowest. This year, over half (53.3%) of Afghans who had contact with police within the past year say they paid a bribe, up from 45.1% in 2014 and exceeding the previous high of 53.4% in 2011. The frequency of bribes paid to officials in the municipality/district office (66.0%), the judiciary and courts (63.4%), customs office (61.2%), provincial governor's office (60.9%), when applying for a job (58.7%), state electricity supply (54.9%), ANP (53.3%), public health services (52.6%), ANA (43.2%), and admissions to school/ university (43.0%) all rose in 2015.²⁰

Issue of Rising Drugs: As Matthieu Aikins in December 2014, pointed out that, "After 13 years of war, we haven't defeated the Taliban, but we have managed to create a nation ruled by drug lords".²¹ He further added that about 6400 tons opium was produced in Afghanistan in 2014 which is about 90 percent of the world's total. It is interesting to mention here that this 90 percent is cultivated in Taliban Controlled Areas only. The opium industry accounts for about 15 percent of Afghanistan's GDP, a "figure that is set to rise as the West withdraws." The US has spent more than \$7.6 billion trying to crush the Afghan opium trade, but it's stronger than ever. Sopko has said in the past that recent gains in areas like women's rights, health, and education are in jeopardy due to the country's booming narcotics trade. The problem now, he writes, is that the United States no longer sees fighting narcotics as one of its top priorities in the country. In 2015, 97% of total opium cultivation in

Afghanistan took place in the Southern, Eastern and Western regions of the country, which include the country's most insecure provinces.

Security and Stability. Since the formation of the National Unity Government, President Ashraf Ghani and Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah have been cooperative and committed partners with the United States and international community on security matters. President Ghani remains active and engaged in his role as Commander in Chief as he contends with complex internal political and security challenges. President Ghani is a willing and welcoming potential partner in the Resolute Support Mission and wants to see both U.S. and Afghan interests met. One of Ghani's first acts as president was to sign the Bilateral Security Agreement, and he remains a strong advocate of a continued U.S. presence in Afghanistan. The United States is in a position to support Ghani as he leads Afghanistan into a new decade of transformation that includes a long-term and effective Afghan-U.S. security partnership, although he will face tough requirements to preserve the security of the country even so. According to a United Nations report, 2015 was the deadliest year for Afghan civilians with more than 11,000 killed and wounded - the highest number recorded since the U.S.-led invasion in 2001. The report documented 3,545 civilian deaths, a 4% increase from 2014, and 7,457 injuries, a 9% increase.²² A recent report cited in the Long War Journal counted 35 of Afghanistan's 398 districts under Taliban control, with another 35 being contested.²³ In October 2015, the Washington announced that its forces will remain in Afghanistan at their current levels (6800) throughout much of 2016. This is because of perpetual clash with the Taliban forces in various contested zones whose number ship according to Long War Journal is 35. Thus, many areas continue to face significant threats by Taliban fighters, particularly in Helmand and Kunduz provinces. In the first half of 2015, the casualties civilians in Afghanistan from war reached a record high, with more than 70% of the casualties attributed to actions by the Taliban and other anti-governmental non state actors. This is one of the serious security issues in Afghanistan in the Post 2014 period. Taliban and other non-state actors are the overt cause of casualties, while ground engagements and improvised explosive devices (IEDs) remain the other leading cause of casualties. In January 2009, United Nations Mission in Afghanistan (UNMA) has started to record civilian casualties and according to its report until June 30, 2015, more than 19,000 civilians have been killed,

and more than 33,000 injured in the ongoing conflict in Afghanistan.²⁴ Moreover, as per United Nations report in 2015, due to insecurity, more than 1, 20, 000 people in Afghanistan has applied for political asylum in 44 countries in the world.²⁵

Weak Afghan Security Forces: the biggest challenge for Afghan government in post 2014 is the development of competent Afghan National Army and Police which is still weak. According to Pentagon Report, the security situation in Afghanistan has deteriorated in the year 2015 with more Taliban assaults and higher casualties among Afghan security forces. This report further alarmed that ISIS is becoming a greater threat in that country. The covert emergence of ISIS is a major threat the security apparatus of Afghanistan. One of the major cause of weak Afghan forces according to Military Times is weak leadership. About 70 percent of the Afghan military's problems stem from weak leadership.²⁶

In October 2015, Taliban occupied Kunduz province of Afghanistan which posed a threat to the Afghan Security Forces and United States as well. Since January 26, 2015 a branch of Islamic State of Iraq and Syria called Wilayah Koharasan (Wilayah an Arabic word means to administer and Koharasan is a part of Afghanistan which in the past was with Iran) is active in Afghanistan which is not only an opponent of Afghan government but Taliban also. This group according to various sources killed 327 peoples and injured more than 670 from 18 April 2015 to 24 October 2016. Not only ISIS but the regular attacks of Taliban in the post 2014 period is an indication of the emergence of a new era of war in Afghanistan which is likely to exist between Afghan Forces and Taliban and ISIS.

Financial Weakness: Financially, Afghanistan is one of the poorest countries in the World. Afghanistan's domestic revenues accounted for less than 40 percent of the total budget in 2013, a figure that's unlikely to change soon.²⁷ Thus, the financial issue in Afghanistan is a big problem in the coming years because Afghanistan is among the poorest countries with low Gross Domestic Product and has been a rentier state since 2001. The evidence of low GDP and other parameters of developments in Afghanistan strongly suggests that Afghanistan lacks the capacity or ability to enhance financial, technical, managerial, or otherwise to maintain and support much of what has been built or established from the last 13 years through international assistance. Moreover,

Afghanistan lacks skilled labour, technological innovation, capacity building and training which are the important parameters of prosperity.

Lack of Coherent Strategy of Contracts and Inaccuracy: Afghan civil society does not know the financial utilization in Afghanistan development and reconstruction. Nobody knows how much we've spent on contracts for Afghan reconstruction since 2002. A 2013 SIGAR estimate put the value at roughly \$37 billion between 2002 and 2013. Many of the contracts appear to lack overall management and controls for things like shoddy work and "widespread lack of compliance with published rules, policies, and standards." Plus, US civilian oversight officials can safely access only a fifth of the country.

Afghan Officials and Management of US Aid: For years, most American support to Afghanistan came in the form of contracts and grants. Afghan officials didn't have much control over how the money was spent. But since 2010, the US has tried to funnel more aid through the Afghan government. But pervasive corruption, lack of capability, and inadequate oversight leave Sopko thinking that Afghanistan's leaders can't manage the money going forward.

War and Reconstruction Issues: Planning for military success and reconstruction goals doesn't always mesh, and Sopko sees that problem getting worse in the months ahead. The failure to ensure that American efforts in Afghanistan are making things better, he writes, "threatens to cause agencies and projects to work at counter-purposes, spend money on frivolous endeavours, or fail to coordinate efforts to maximize impact.

United States Policy Towards Afghanistan After 2014

After 2014, United States again opened a new chapter in its Afghan policy by introducing the Resolute Support Mission. Train, Advise, Assist and Command (TAAC) emerged as the principal initiative as a part of US Policy in Afghanistan in the post 2014 era. With support from the Afghan government and the Afghan people, United States forces are conducting two well-defined and complementary missions as part of US policy, i.e. Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Freedom's Sentinel (OFS) to achieve US objectives and build upon the gains of the last 14 years. Regarding the missions of operation Freedom Sentinel US in Afghanistan after 2014, US Defence Secretary, Shunk Hagel, said that, the mission will include two important components:

working with allies and partners on Resolute Support and continuing counterterrorism operations against the remnants of Al-Qaeda to ensure that Afghanistan is never used to attack United States again.²⁸

NATO led the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan from August 2003 to December 2014. ISAF was deployed at the request of the country's authorities and mandated by the United Nations. Its mission was to enable the Afghan authorities to provide effective security across the country and ensure that the country would never again be a safe haven for terrorists. ISAF conducted security operations, while also training and developing the Afghan security forces. Following a three-year transition process during which the Afghans gradually took the lead for security across the country, ISAF's mission was completed at the end of 2014. With that, Afghans assumed full responsibility for security. It is now fully in the hands of the country's 352,000 soldiers and police, which ISAF helped train over the past years.²⁹ However, support for the continued development of the Afghan security forces and institutions and wider cooperation with Afghanistan continue. ISAF helped create to a secure environment for improving governance and socio-economic development, which are important conditions for sustainable stability. Afghanistan has made the largest percentage gain of any country in basic health and development indicators over the past decade. Maternal mortality is going down and life expectancy is rising. There is a vibrant media scene. Millions of people have exercised their right to vote in five election cycles since 2004, most recently in the 2014 presidential and provincial council elections, which resulted in the establishment of a National Unity Government. While the Afghan security forces have made a lot of progress, they still need international support as they continue to develop. At the NATO Summit in Wales in September 2014, ISAF troop-contributing nations underlined their commitment to continue to support Afghanistan post-2014. Following the completion of the mission of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) at the end of 2014, a new, follow-on, NATO-led mission called Resolute Support Mission was launched on 1 January 2015 to provide further training, advice and assistance for the Afghan security forces and institutions. At the NATO Summit in Warsaw, Allied leaders decided to extend the presence of RSM beyond 2016. Some 13,000 personnel from NATO member states and partner countries are deployed in Afghanistan to support of the Resolute

Support Mission (RSM) led by NATO. The mission operates with one central hub (in Kabul/Bagram) and four spokes in Mazar-e Sharif, Herat, Kandahar and Laghman.

Key Functions of the Resolute Mission Include³⁰

- ❖ Supporting planning, programming and budgeting;
- ❖ Assuring transparency, accountability and oversight;
- ❖ Supporting the adherence to the principles of rule of law and good governance;
- ❖ Supporting the establishment and sustainment of such processes as force generation, recruiting, training, managing and development of personnel.

Afghanistan war is not over, now after 2014; it is the war between the Government of Afghanistan and Taliban. The occupation of Kunduz province of Afghanistan by the Taliban forces put a question mark on the credibility of Afghan security forces as well as US training mission so called 'Resolute Support Mission'. It becomes clear that the Afghan war is still raging with no end in sight as the Taliban are ever more resurgent with deadly effect. The major shocking suicide bombing, led by Taliban was occurred on June 30, 2016 which killed 30 police cadets and injured another 58.³¹ It took place in the capital, Kabul, presumably the safest city in Afghanistan. As mentioned earlier, the US and its NATO allies began Mission Resolute Support in January 2015 by giving the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) full security responsibility. More than 18 months on, ANSF continues to struggle with many security challenges, discipline, staffing, lack of adequate leadership, and so on. However, President Obama, calling the security situation precarious, announced that 8400 troops will remain in the country through the end of his term.³² As President Obama reaffirmed on October 15, 2015, current U.S. strategy and objectives in Afghanistan are to disrupt threats posed by al Qaeda, support the Afghan National Security Forces, and give the Afghan people the opportunity to succeed as they stand on their own. The U.S. strategy in Afghanistan remains centred on working with NATO partners and the international community to provide financial and advisory support to the Afghan government to enable a well-trained, equipped, and sustainable ANDSF to provide security in Afghanistan; and continuing efforts to defeat the remnants of core Al-Qaeda and disrupt other extremist groups to ensure Afghanistan does not again

become a safe haven for terrorist groups to plan and execute attacks against the United States, United States persons overseas, or allies and partners.

The United States and Afghan governments agree that the best way to ensure lasting peace and security in Afghanistan is reconciliation and a political settlement with the Taliban. Success of an Afghan-led peace process will require the Taliban and other armed opposition groups to end violence, break ties with international terrorist groups, and accept Afghanistan's constitution, including its protections for the rights of women and under-represented groups. In the meantime, developing ANDSF capabilities, Afghan security ministry capacity, and supporting Afghan leadership are critical to enabling the Afghan government to secure the country against a persistent insurgent threat.

First, through OFS U.S. forces are continuing the counterterrorism mission against al Qaeda and its associates in Afghanistan to prevent its resurgence and external plotting against the homeland and U.S. targets and interests in the region. Second, in coordination with NATO Allies and Resolute Support partner nations, U.S. forces are conducting a TAA mission to continue building the capabilities and long-term sustainability of the ANDSF. The U.S. supports the institutionalization of ANDSF gains by conducting functionally based security force assistance (SFA) as part of the NATO RS mission. U.S. and coalition forces conduct TAA efforts at the ANA corps level, the ANP equivalent level, and with the Afghan security ministries to improve their ability to support and sustain the fighting force, and at the tactical level for special operations units and the AAF.

Based on the requirements of the U.S. counterterrorism mission and RS objectives, the U.S. presence in Afghanistan will undergo a phased reduction over the next two years. On October 15, 2015, after a review of the 2015 fighting season by the Commander, Resolute Support and the National Security Council, President Obama announced that U.S. forces will maintain their current force posture of up to 9,800 military personnel through most of 2016.³³ Additionally, rather than draw down to a normalized Kabul embassy-based presence by the end of 2016, the United States will maintain 5,500 military personnel at a small number of bases in Kabul and Bagram with regional outstations, including in Jalalabad in the east and Kandahar in the south. NATO Allies and RS operational partner nations will undergo a similar phased reduction in

2016 and may maintain a similar limited regional presence through a continued NATO mission. The planned reduction to 5,500 military personnel will allow the United States to tailor TAA efforts to continue developing key ANDSF capabilities in areas such as aviation and special operations as well as maintain a U.S. capability to deter threats in the region. This refocused force posture will maintain U.S. efforts to increase the sophistication and sustainability of the ANDSF and provide the presence necessary to achieve U.S. objectives in countering the remnants of al Qaeda or other extremist groups. This posture reflects a consolidation of U.S. forces as well as those efficiencies gained by working with and sharing functions with NATO partners and the ANDSF.

Conclusion

United States did not quit from Afghanistan, there is partial withdrawal of NATO led ISAF from Afghanistan. The policies in Afghanistan are being changed according to situation. Though there is withdrawal of ISAF from Afghanistan but, United States have changed the nature of its Afghan Policy aftermath 2014 from 'combat to support'. One of the major turning points of withdrawal is that the full-fledged combat mission has come to an end and in its place Operation Resolute Support has been initiated. As a part of Bilateral Security Agreement (BSA), 9800 US troops stationed in Afghanistan which subsequently reduces to 8600 in 2016. Moreover, currently there are three missions working in the development of Afghanistan; Resolute Support Mission led by United States NATO, EU Police (EUPOL) Mission in Afghanistan led by European Union and United Nation Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNMA) led by United Nations.

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