

The Theory of War and the Future of Peace in Afghanistan

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This paper focusses on the theory of war and the possibility of peace in Afghanistan in the post-US withdrawal scenario. The paper takes into account five key parameters of war enshrining upon; the justification of the logic of the causes of war, the decision regarding war taken by the legitimate war, the need to use force with the aim of reformative aspect, the reasonable hope of success that may result in bringing peace and the use of force being proportionate and discriminate. Research objective of the study centers upon the investigation of the theory of war and the possibility of peace in Afghanistan. Research questions of the study focus on the different causes of war, the basic purpose of war whether reformative or the establishment of the hegemonic power in the region or a particular country, the change in the US policy regarding the changing of dates for the total withdrawal of the US forces, and the possibility of peace in Afghanistan in future. The paper investigates the very basic issue of the prolonged war in Afghanistan under different dimensions and the decision of the legitimate authority to justify the logic of war with the reformative purpose and then the possibility of peace in the post US withdrawal scenario. Research methodology centers around qualitative approach wherein the main focus remains on the secondary sources of data. The study is very significant on account of its focus on the very current issues of the US withdrawal and the possibility of peace since different efforts have been in vogue for the restoration of peace in Afghanistan as a result of the peace parley between the Afghan government and the Taliban.

Key words: *Theory of war, Future, Afghanistan, Peace and Scenario*

Introduction

Peace is the most significant phenomenon in the world. It is the crying need of the hour and every society has the most cherishing desire to live within certain rules and regulations so as to stay away from all sorts of terrorisms and wars. The US-Taliban Talks of February 29, 2020 is a land mark in the history of Afghanistan and the United States. It is significant for Afghanistan since the future politics of Afghanistan is going to be shaped by assigning Taliban some role in the politics of the country (Kelly & Ayotte, 2021). While it is significant for the United States in the sense that she had to surrender before a non-state actors whom she and her allied partners had been fighting against for the last twenty years. The question is not just the signing of deal between the US and the Taliban but of the hegemonic designs and acknowledgement of the Taliban by the US and the Afghan government. For the Afghan government the Taliban has now gained great strength and momentum as the Afghan government has to settle some core issues with the Taliban regarding the future of the country. The intra-Afghan talks is more important for the Taliban as this would make them the stakeholders in the future set up of the country and is a step towards the establishment of a hegemonic strength.

Objective of the study

To investigate the theory of war and the possibility of peace in Afghanistan as a result of the US withdrawal

Research Questions

- i) What are the basic causes of war in Afghanistan?
- ii) Does the force have a reformative purpose or it is just used for the sake of establishing hegemony?
- iii) Why does the United States change dates for the total withdrawal of the US force from Afghanistan?
- iv) How can peace exist in Afghanistan? , if so, what are the different parameters of peace in Afghanistan in the post-US withdrawal scenario?

Statement of the problem

Afghanistan has been stricken by the war for the last so many decades; firstly the Soviet Union had to wage war against Afghanistan for about a decade during 1980s and secondly, the United States along with the allied partners remained engaged there for two decades. Now, the US is determined to leave Afghanistan by September 11, 2020 on the occasion of the 20th Anniversary of the 9/11 attacks after completing 20 years during which she remained busy in different military operations and the reconstruction of the Afghan state and installation of a democratic country with particular emphasis on strengthening the security system of the

country. The US withdrawal will provides Afghanistan with the opportunity to govern the country as per free will and choice but at the same time, the Afghan government will also face certain challenges from the different ethnic groups, stakeholders and the non-state actors. This paper focuses on the theory of war and the possibility of peace in the country in post-US withdrawal scenario.

Research Methodology

The paper relies on qualitative approach for which secondary sources have been utilized as there have been frequent changes in the latest developments regarding the US withdrawal and the prospects of peace in the future keeping in view the role played by the different ethnic groups and the non-stakeholders. This study finds its authenticity through the theoretical framework of war concentrating upon five different approaches of war, clearly explained under the theoretical framework.

Significance of the Study

The study is very significant for dealing with the current issue of US withdrawal from Afghanistan and different parameters of peace in the country as a consequence of the US-Taliban talks and the peace parleys between the Afghan government and the Taliban. The study is quite relevant to the needs and requirements of the modern time. It addresses the very core issue of war and the different parameters of peace that may help in shaping the future destiny of the country.

Theoretical Framework

The Theory of War provides the basic fraerowk for the study, which originated in Catholic Moral Theology in the Middle Ages (Connah, 2021). This theory in itself is based upon the doctrine of St. Ahgustine of Hippo and St. Thomas Aquinas who looked upon war as “holy warriors and religious pacifists” (Connah, 2021). The theory revoles around two basic components; the decision to go to war and the conduct during war. In this parlance, the first step is the decision to go to war against a particular country diallating upon the conditions that lead to wage war while the second component deal with the decision regarding the declaration of war (Romsbotham, Miall, & Woodhouse, 2011).

Looking at the US intervention in Afghanistan through the prism of war, is to assess whether the US intervention sticks to war criteria is based upon a brief examination of the right to go to war (Raine, Reynolds , Venables, & Mednick , 2002). Rhines elaborates five main features of ‘war’;

- i) There must be a just cause to go to war against any state
- ii) The decision need to be taken by the legimitate authority

- iii) The need to use force only with the right intention and as a last resort
- iv) The hope of a reasonable success resulting in the peace as its outcome
- v) The use of force to be proportionate and discriminate

These five features explain the basic components of the justification of war and indoctrinate the reason behind going to war. The first important thing is to provide justification to the cause of war. This enshrines upon the reason when the US forces and the allied partners intervened in Afghanistan as a result of the 9/11 attacks when the mastermind of these attacks was allegedly claimed to have taken refuge in Afghanistan. The 9/11 syndrome provided the basic cause to the major powers to wage war against Afghanistan for being involved in these attacks. The decision to wage war against the mastermind of these attacks and initiating the war on terror by the international community led by the United States was a decision taken by the legitimate authority-comprising the international actors and great powers. It was this legitimate decision by the international community that gave a time period of 20 years to the United States and her allied partners to stay in Afghanistan for the rehabilitation, reconstruction, maintenance of security and then provide assistance to the security forces of Afghanistan after the decision of the drawdown of the US forces from Afghanistan was taken in December 2014 (Tariq, 2016).

The third important feature of the war is the use of force against the terrorists and insurgents and that too with the aim of right intention to bring peace and harmony in the particular area. But the great impediment in its way is that the force must be used as last resort only when no other remedy is available to cure the existing ills and evils of the society. The main thing in this case must be the use of force can only be used when there is no other option before the legitimate authority and that too for the sake of eradicating terrorism and insurgency from the country. So far as this use of force is concerned, it was directed towards the Al-Qaeda, the Taliban and other non-state actors for which different military operations were conducted by the International Assistance Security Force (ISAF) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). As a result of this the security forces of Afghanistan got the capability to cope with the issues of security and make the country heading towards peace to a greater extent.

Another important feature of this theory was the reasonable hope of success with the aim of bringing peace as an outcome of this success. It is an admitted fact the US and allied forces have been successful in producing the desired results of curbing the terrorists and the insurgents from most of the sensitive areas. The last important feature of the theory of war is the use of force to be proportionate and discriminate connoting that the as much much force needs to be used against the terrorists and the outlaws as is required to eradicate terrorism from the society. It must be proportionate in the sense that it can only be used against the particular class of people who are involved in terrorism and discriminate in the sense that it must be exercised against the particular class in so far as their crime and activities of terrorism are concerned.



Some of the key indicators that would help resolve some of basic issues and would facilitate the peace process in Afghanistan in the wake of the US withdrawal from Afghanistan may comprise the following areas.

Firstly, the need for the United State to clarify the position of its end state in Afghanistan enshrining the status of the future of the Afghan government; independent, democratic, and the sovereign Afghan state with strong mechanism of governance, political stability and security system to prevent the terrorist groups such as the Al-Qaeda, the Islamic State of Khurasan (ISKP) and other insurgent groups from attacking the United States, and its allied partners (Clayton, 2020). Now it is up to the security forces of Afghanistan as to how do they face the challenges and get the country out of the quagmire in the face of such hardships. It will really be a test of the Afghan security forces since this would eliminate the issues of illicit narcotics, and mass migration that post threat to the security of the of the US, her allied partners and the neighboring countries of Afghanistan. At present, the Afghan state is struggling for protecting and supporting the rights of women, the rights of minorities, the democratic nature of the state and a free press.

Secondly, the finalization of the total withdrawal of the of the US forces from Afghanistan. The withdrawal scenario would greatly shape the future destiny of Afghanistan on account of the direct involvement of the security agencies, other political actors and social mobilizers in the country. This would enable the local stakeholders in Afghanistan to assert their authority in the different spheres of the country to the inclusion of all the ethnic groups and their representation in the legislative assembly of the country. The framework for the US withdrawal is conditioned with the actions of the Taliban and their reactions to the decisions of the Afghan government (Putz, 2021). But the total withdrawal of the US forces is yet to be decided by the US government but there has been change in the policies of the US government from time to time regarding the complete withdrawal of the US forces. But there is still lack of harmony between the US government and the Taliban over some issues relating to security and the exchange of prisoners between the Afghan government and the Taliban.

But it is also a fact that the US has gone beyond the deadline of total withdrawal of US forces from Afghanistan, they have been extending the deadline from one date to another, though it was determined to be May 1, 2021 yet it has been fixed as September 11, 2021 for the withdrawal of the US forces to show the significance of the 9/11 (Yousuf, 2021). Dr. Moeed Yusuf, national Security Advisor of Pakistan is of the view that it “was too late to predict whether [the US] will stick to their words.” He also shares that Pakistan has been supporting the cause of peace and security in Afghanistan and that the hasty withdrawal of the US forces from Afghanistan is not a good idea on account of the current security scenario in the country. He also made it clear that Pakistan stands for maintaining strengthening bilateral ties with the US, which views Pakistan to be a regional player, without compromising on national interest (Yousuf, 2021).



He expressed great concern over the shifting of the US interest from the role of Pakistan and sees both China and India to be more significant in determining the future of Afghanistan. At the same time he denied the blame that Pakistan would provide airbases to the United States after the withdrawal of the US forces. Pakistan is in favor of long lasting peace in Afghanistan based on the doctrine of the power sharing by all the stakeholders of the country (Tariq, 2021). Political settlement in Afghanistan is the *sine qua non* for the future of the country as this would ensure the non-involvement from the foreign aggression and interference from the international actors. But this does not mean that Pakistan can avoid trade and commerce connectivity to the US and China. Pakistan can provide regional connectivity for investment from China and the US as for them Pakistan is the only fulcrum, while the Afghan government and people must understand this fact.

Thirdly, the United State needs to clarify her future commitment about the existing Afghan state apparatus and the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (Tariq D. M., 2021). Support for the Afghan government and the law enforcement agencies would be tentative on the conditionality of the donor agencies agreed upon at the Geneva Conference of 2020 and the resultant contribution made by the Afghan government towards the furthering of the peace process. The peace process must be expedited by the Afghan government with the Taliban so as to show the output of the US-Taliban talks, followed by the intra-Afghan talks. Moreover, this would be fruitful in securing the gains made in democratic, political, human and women's rights, not as an attempt to impose the will of the US on the Afghan government but on account of strengthening the rights which would help in securing lasting peace in the country.

Fourthly, the need for an active diplomatic strategy by the United States to ensure the success of the peace talks both between the US and the Taliban and between the Afghan government and the Taliban (Kelly & Ayotte, 2021). The US is very actor to the peace process in Afghanistan in the form of a part party, part facilitator, and mediator. For speeding up the progress at the talks, the United States needs to promote the presence of a third party mediator. The appointment of a third party as a mediator by the US will make the peace process easy and successful but if the third party is rejected by the parties to the peace then the US should act directly by playing the role of an arbitrator (Maizland , 2021). Direct involvement of the US government would not be a bad bargain would rather expedite the stalemate and would be in a better position to get directly involved with the Afghan government, the Taliban and other stakeholders of the country.

Fifthly, the need for an all-encompassing strategy that help in ensuring regional peace and security since the security of the entire region is closely linked with the peace in Afghanistan. Strategic location of Afghanistan greatly affect the peace and security in the region on account of its location in the middle of the region overwhelmed with rivalries and low levels of trust by the neighboring countries. These rivalries have gained great momentum during the last twenty years despite the presence of the US forces in Afghanistan leading towards weakening the progress of achieving stability in the country. The US withdrawal is going to create a fragile

system in Afghanistan but consensus among the different stakeholders and regional dynamics is very much necessary for the future stability of the country. For the development of this consensus, the United States needs to focus on adopting a diplomatic strategy seeking to consolidate the countries in the region while using their relationship with the Afghan actors by promoting a successful negotiation. In order to get consensus among the different stakeholders and regional dynamics, the United Nations Security Council can play greater role in establishing harmony and consolidation (Kelly & Ayotte, 2021).

Keeping in view the five different scenario in Afghanistan after the US withdraws their forces from Afghanistan, the future of Afghanistan may be shaped by these options to a greater extent. The first scenario aims at remaining committed to the building of the Afghan State in case the negotiations between the Taliban and the Afghan government fails or the net outcome of the negotiations becomes unacceptable to the parties in Afghanistan. In such a case the United States needs to maintain her forces in Afghanistan and build the Afghan state through them by providing assistance to the security forces of the country. The US should keep her forces in Afghanistan till the conduct of a successful negotiations. Staying of the US forces in Afghanistan till a successful negotiations, would ensure the building of a strong Afghan state. This scenario aims at the staying of the US force in Afghanistan for longer time till the negotiations come to a successful conclusion and some positive prospects come out of the negotiations.

The second scenario, aims at a managed withdrawal of the US forces from Afghanistan and would leave the security of the country at the hands of the Afghan security forces. In such a case the different ethnic groups and the stakeholders would engage themselves in a tug-of-war for gaining ascendancy to the throne of Kabul. Such a scenario would follow the doctrine of the theory of bargain based on give and take system in the politics of the country. This would also result in reducing the threat of danger of civil war, terrorism and insurgency in the country. The different stakeholders would be in a position to have a share in the affairs of the state. Moreover, this would also restore the confidence of the people in general and of the different ethnic groups and stakeholders in particulars as they would be in a better position to come up with sound judgments and independent decision making power. Such a scenario would be really a test for the political and security sectors of the state. Thus mutual sharing of power would fill in the gap of the leadership vacuum and result in a better understanding of the different ethnic groups. But there ascendancy of the Taliban to the throne of Kabul cannot be gainsaid in such a circumstances as there are fears that Taliban may not agree to the terms and conditions of the peace agreement and working in a friendly environment with the rest of the parties (Kelly & Ayotte, 2021).

The third scenario deals with the withdrawal of the US forces from Afghanistan regardless of the conditions on the ground and essentially the indifferent attitude to the resulting outcome. This aims at the development of Afghanistan to such an extent that the core objectives of the United States are met in Afghanistan by creating a stable country with the economic



potentiality that remains at peace with herself and with the regional powers (Sopko, 2021). This process seems to be difficult and unachievable since the existence of a stable Afghanistan would pose threat to the security of the regional as well as the global powers. It is also a fact that the United States initiated negotiations with the Taliban in February 2020 which laid the foundations of negotiations between the Afghan government and the Taliban. The negotiations between these two is very much essential of the long standing peace and security of the country. The Afghan war is one of the most expensive wars in the history of the United States in terms of financial costs. During her 20 years of stay in Afghanistan, the United States has spent \$ 2 trillion having caused huge financial loss to the US exchequer (Al-Jazeera, 2021). But it will be still a great challenge for the war stricken economy of Afghanistan and the amount disbursed by the United States to cope with the issues of terrorism and insurgency. It will be great challenge to the security forces of Afghanistan to combat the outlaws, Taliban and other non-state actors. The US has been instrumental in providing financial assistance to the Afghan Security Forces for strengthening the security parameters of the country. Out of the \$5 billion paid by the international community to the Afghan security forces in 2019, the US has been providing the lion's share to Afghanistan (State, 2021). NATO allied partners and has also provided \$379.9 million for 2020 in conjunction with the 2019, Afghan National Trust Fund in Brussels.

But it is pertinent to mention here that the development and assistance fund provided by the United States focusses on promoting peace, self-reliance, and stability encompassing to increase economic growth through export-oriented trade strategy, and enhancing the capacity of civilian institutions. This would result in improving the justice system, help the government to maintain and make improvement upon the gains made during the last ten years in the fields of health, education, and women's rights (State, 2021). The United States has been very much concerned about peace building in Afghanistan and for that purpose remains focused on providing support for the Afghan civil society, by promoting increased respect for human rights, helping to fight against the illegal trade in narcotics, and continuing effort to provide significant humanitarian support.

Power vacuum may face the future of Afghanistan as the US withdrawal from Afghanistan has faced many changing of dates from time to time. At first the date for total withdrawal of the US forces was fixed as May 1, 2021. Later on, it was changed to 4th July, 2021, which is normally celebrated as the Independence Day of the United States. (Yousuf, 2021). US President, Joe Biden, has shown his determination to put an end what can be called as the "forever war" stating that the remaining 2,500 US forces would leave Afghanistan on September 11, 2021 after completing the 20th anniversary of the September 2001 attacks (Yousef, 2021). This end of the US presence in Afghanistan after a period of 20 years will have far-reaching consequences on the politics of war-stricken Afghanistan which may permeate to the neighboring countries and particularly Pakistan.



Discussion and Conclusion

Afghanistan has been hit by the war for the last 20 years where the US forces and the allied partners have been engaged in fighting the war against terrorism and insurgency. During this period, the security forces remained focussed on destroying the various networks of terrorism working under the nomenclature of Taliban, the Al-Qaeda and the Haqqani network but now as a result of the presence of the US forces, the threat has also emerged from the hands of the ISIS and the ISKP. The great tragedy of the situation is that the different non-state actors are at loggerheads with another. So, on one hand the US and the allied forces have been successful in creating peace and harmony in the country but on the other hand, this has also resulted in the emergence of new non-state actors such as the ISIS and the ISKP. When the US intervened in Afghanistan in 2001, she had to deal with the AL-Qaeda, the Taliban and the Haqqani Network but now they have to fight against the ISIS and the ISKP also besides fighting against the Al-Qaeda, the Taliban and the Haqqani network. Most of the terrorist networks in Afghanistan have vanished and have been either suppressed or defeated but the actual test will be the time when the US forces withdraw from Afghanistan by September 11, 2021 and leave the security of the country to the government of Afghanistan.

As far as the theory of war is concerned, it has a valid reason to justify the case of the Afghanistan and the resultant decision taken by the US and the allied powers to justify the reason for declaring war against the non-state actors in Afghanistan since they had challenged the writ of the international community by imposing self-styled laws wherein serious threats were faced by the different communities in Afghanistan with regard to the human rights. The logic behind the US war and the Afghan government against the terrorist networks is also justified on the ground that the United States and her allied partners are leaving Afghanistan in September 2021 as they have been able to install a democratic government and strengthen the security system of the country having the capacity to combat terrorism and insurgency. The success of the US, the allied partners and the Afghan government lie in the fact that they have been passing through the different stages of peace process while focussing on the prospects of peace in the country. The US has signed peace agreement with the Taliban followed by the peace parleys signed between the Afghan government and the Taliban. So, the US withdrawal from Afghanistan would provide both challenges and opportunities to Afghanistan that may help in shaping the future politics of the country (Tariq, 2021).

Different approaches towards resolving the basic issues and the peace process in Afghanistan have been dialted upon by expediting the whole process of peace and establish a government in Afghanistan that could represent the multi-ethnic population of the country by giving them their due share in the government in accordance with their population. Political Stability can only come to Afghanistan provided all the non-state actors pledge to work for the betterment and stability of the country and those who don't cooperate should be dealt with an iron hand by the law enforcement agencies of the state. This can only be possible if the United States can finalize the time period for the total withdrawal of the foreign troops from the country. It



is a bitter reality that US has to change many dates regarding the complete withdrawal of the US forces partly due to the deteriorating law and order situation in Afghansitan and parlty due to the change of policies in the US as a consequence of the change in presidency. Much als depends upon the the strength and potentialities of the Afghan National and Defence Security Forces to cope with the untoward security situation in the country (Tariq, 2021).

The US has adopted a very diplomatic strategy in Afghanistan by bringing the war to an end and leave the country to the fate of the Afghani people. This has been made possible by initiating the process of peace in Afghanistan by signing the peace deal with the Taliban first where the Afghan government was no party to the contract. This signing of peace deal with the non-state actor (Taliban has a great significance for the United States and the international community since they have to enter into peace deal with the forces they have been fighting against for the last 20 years. It is significant for the Taliban in the sense that they have been recognized by the United States, the allied powers, the international community and the Afghan government herself, which give them great importance in the history of their country granting them more legitimacy and authority in the spheres of the Afghan government.



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