PEACE BUILDING IN AFGHANISTAN:
REVISITING THE GLOBAL WAR ON TERRORISM
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PEACE BUILDING IN AFGHANISTAN:
Revisiting the Global War on Terrorism

SAIRA YAMIN
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Preface

This report was prepared as South Asia advanced towards a historic step in accepting Afghanistan in its fold. As of April 2007 Afghanistan has become a full member of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). SAARC is the world’s largest regional grouping, comprising approximately 1.5 billion people. Afghanistan’s membership of the SAARC is sufficient cause for optimism. Regional cooperation, research reveals, is an effective means to ensuring development and stability. Hopefully the SAARC platform shall provide the space and incentives to key players in Afghanistan as they explore avenues for trade, development, and income generation. Creating stakes in the development of the country would also create a demand for peace and stability amongst various ethnic cleavages in Afghanistan. Of greatest concern are the children, youth and women who have suffered untold misery through the years that Afghanistan has been plagued with war. The paper explores avenues for peace-building and development in post-war Afghanistan. It makes recommendations for economic cooperation among SAARC countries in ways that would benefit Afghanistan and the rest of the South Asian community through trade, human resource and infrastructural development. Ultimately a win-win approach for all stakeholders would augur well for building peace and the capacity of the voiceless masses.

I am particularly grateful to the RCSS (Regional Centre for Strategic Studies), Colombo, for publishing my work as a special monograph in the light of recent developments. I am especially thankful to Dr. Rifaat Hussain, Executive Director of the RCSS for his cooperation and consistent encouragement. My gratitude is due also to Professor Dennis Sandole, at the Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution, George Mason University, Virginia, for his invaluable guidance in writing this paper.
It is a pleasure for me to write this Foreword to Ms. Saira Yamin’s special monograph, “Peace Building in Afghanistan: Revisiting the Global War on Terrorism,” which she has prepared for the Regional Centre for Strategic Studies (RCSS) in Colombo, Sri Lanka. This monograph developed from Saira’s final paper prepared for my course on “Peacebuilding” (CONF 746) conducted during fall 2006 at the Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution (ICAR) at George Mason University. Saira is currently a doctoral student at ICAR on study leave from her duties as a Lecturer in Defence and Strategic Studies at Quaid-e-Azam University in Pakistan. I was so impressed with her paper (I awarded it an A+) that I enthusiastically encouraged her to try to get it published, which she has obviously done with great success!

But far more important than this monograph being an example of a student getting one of her final course papers published – no mean feat in the competitive world of publishing – is the subject matter that Saira has tackled, which is no less than an analysis of the causes, conditions, and possible responses to one of the most intractable conflicts of our times, with profound implications for global terrorism.

For many political commentators, Afghanistan, straddling South and Central Asia, is one of the great examples of a lingering “failed state”, with spillover potential for the region and globally. Civil war and the brutal Soviet invasion and occupation of Afghanistan in the 1970s and 80s, led to the establishment of the Taliban regime (created in part by US and other assistance to anti-Soviet elements in the region). Afghanistan, where the Taliban had provided sanctuary to al Qaeda, was then invaded and occupied by US-led forces shortly after the devastating terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001, planned and executed by al Qaeda personnel trained and/or based in Afghanistan.

Although the Taliban and al Qaeda were initially routed by the US-led invasion, they have since regrouped, resurfaced, and renewed
hostilities against the US-led coalition and NATO-led *International Security Assistance Force* (ISAF), especially after the US-led invasion and occupation of Iraq in March 2003. In addition, according to a recent report by the UN Office of Drugs and Crime (<www.unodc.org>, Afghanistan “now account[s] for 92 percent of global production” of the poppy plant from which opium, morphine, heroin and other opiates are derived. 1 Depressingly, British officials have declared that “Bringing down drugs production [in Afghanistan] will take 10 to 15 years”. 2

Responding to this challenge, Saira has employed the “3 pillar framework” (3PF) 3 to comprehensively analyze the conflict in Afghanistan and consider innovative options for the international community to use in best responding to it, in the process demonstrating that one person, including a young doctoral student/lecturer, can, indeed, try to make a difference in today’s complex, globalizing world!

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1 September 2007

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1 Aunohita Mojumdar and Demetri Sevastopulo, “Record Afghan opium harvest predicted”, *Financial Times*, 28 August 2007, p. 3.
2 Aunohita Mojumdar, Alex Barker, and James Blitz, “Karzai hits at west as poppy growth soars”, *Financial Times*, 30 August 2007, p. 5.
MAP OF AFGHANISTAN
Afghanistan is a “round-about,” with routes converging traffic “from all quarters of the compass and from which routes radiate out to all quarters of the compass again.” Arnold Toynbee
Objectives

The paper attempts to gain a fresh insight on the present scenario in Afghanistan with a focus on developments since 9/11. Drawing from the research studies of various analysts and practitioners I shall elucidate upon the scope of reconstruction work in war ravaged Afghanistan as well as presenting a strategy for peace-building interventions in the country. The correlation between the internal and external dynamics of the conflict shall also be given due consideration vis-à-vis the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT) and its implications for Afghanistan and the region. I will be applying the Three Pillar Approach articulated by Dr. Dennis J. D. Sandole to provide a framework for analysis, and as a premise for strategic peace building interventions.4

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Afghanistan is a landlocked and mountainous land that has been beset by turbulence and instability for nearly a century. Littered with landmines and plagued by internecine fighting, the country came close to ruination during its US backed proxy war against the Soviets which started in 1979 and went on for nearly two decades. After ousting Soviet invaders in a relentless struggle, the country fell under the control of the Taliban - a pre-dominantly Pashtun, militant group conceived and armed to the teeth with US support during the Cold War and which remained in control of about 90% of Afghanistan until late 2001.\(^5\)

To their credit the Taliban banned and eradicated poppy cultivation (three-quarters of the global supply comes from Afghanistan\(^6\)), however their otherwise extremist doctrine manifested in the destruction of the Bamiyan Statues, oppression of women, inter alia, left them in a state of isolation and strong condemnation by the global community. The Taliban regime was accorded diplomatic recognition only by three countries including Pakistan, UAE and Saudi Arabia (and the unrecognized government of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria) at the time it was dismantled by the US led coalition in the GWOT as a response to terrorist attacks on Sept 11, 2001.\(^7\)

The Taliban’s gravest strategic error had been to continue to provide a safe haven to Osama bin Laden and his Al-Qaeda network

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Peace Building in Afghanistan

of terrorists in taking on “western infidels” for their support to the occupiers of Palestine and their military presence in Saudi Arabia, home to the Holy Kaabah. Ironically Osama bin Laden had been co-opted by the CIA during the Soviet Afghan War in 1979 when the CIA launched its largest covert action ever, in response to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in support of the pro-Communist government of Babrak Karmal.

With the active involvement of the CIA who wanted to turn the Afghan *jihad* into a global war waged by Muslim states against the Soviets, some 35,000 Muslims from 40 Islamic countries joined Afghanistan’s fight between 1982 and 1992. Tens of thousands more came to study in Pakistani *madrassahs* (religious schools) where they were trained in warfare and the concept of Islamic *jihad*. With the passage of time over 100,000 foreign Muslim recruits joined the Afghan *jihad*. These *jihadis* eventually came to be known as the *Taliban* a word which literally means “students” or “trainees” and has its root in Arabic.

Having defeated the Soviet Union, the then military superpower, in an unmatched show of resilience in the Afghan *jihad*, Bin Laden’s eyes turned toward the West as the prime enemy. His vociferous anti-Western stance had emerged very powerfully in the post Cold War scenario. Taliban’s alliance with Al-Qaeda therefore became a major irritant for the United States. Subsequently the 9/11 terrorist attacks masterminded by Bin Laden provoked the US to launch the

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11 Vamik Volkan draws from Freud’s thesis on Thanatos (the death instinct) to propose that aggression is a necessary defense against psychotic anxiety, that people need enemies and when they lose one they will by implication need another one. He argues that collective history, shared memory of grievances and trauma often feed into or are fed into collective identity in groups. Read more on the hypothesis in Volkan, (1988) and. Nye, Robert D. *Three Psychologies: Perspectives from Freud, Skinner and Rogers*, (1999).
Brief Historical Background

GWOT, and the entire Afghan people who were already in a state of destitution after twenty years of high intensity conflict, were made to relive the trauma. This time the US-led carpet bombing brought one of the most fragile states in the world as close to annihilation as possible with conventional weapons. The devastation wreaked by the GWOT was a humanitarian catastrophe perpetrated by humankind itself. Afghanistan’s physical infrastructure was effectively flattened and reduced to rubble.

To add insult to injury the hapless Afghani populace who had lost over 1.5 million lives in the Soviet Afghan war experienced more deaths by armed violence, starvation and disease; loss of property; displacement and homelessness in below freezing temperatures, to name just a few of their hardships. The trauma for the Afghan people has been unceasing and there appears no respite yet.

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12 See country profile on Failed States Index (FSI) http://www.fundforpeace.org/programs/fsi/fsindex.php
This multi-dimensional analytical tool designed by Sandole provides a practical framework for examining the root causes, issues, drivers and the local, regional and global context of the conflict. I shall discuss its rationale briefly hereunder.

**Pillar I** is designated for the identification of the parties in the conflict. Identification and classification of the parties is an extremely important exercise as it provides an understanding of who are the primary stakeholders and key players. Additionally we learn who is at the helm of affairs and capable of taking decisions. We are also able to recognize potential spoilers and the extent of their political clout, with regard to their representation in a participatory problem solving/decision-making process. Identifying the parties helps us also to observe factions within parties and their relative balance of power and hierarchical structures. Furthermore we are able to distinguish between primary and secondary parties.

Secondary parties are those that may not have a direct stake in the outcome but have underlying interests, owing to which they have played some form of covert or overt role in shaping the course of the conflict. This process also guides us in understanding and distinguishing between the internal and external actors engaged in the dispute. Personalities of decision-makers in each party offer invaluable insights to their behavior and attitudes towards the antagonists and prospects for conflict resolution.

Understanding the issues (basic human needs, tangible interests, and values) of the parties also falls under Pillar 1. This step helps us to separate the parties’ positions from their underlying interests for any meaningful third party intervention and problem-solving process. We may be able to observe how the issues may have evolved
with the passage of time; if there are any common grounds between the parties; and if there is likely to be some flexibility on the part of the adversaries in some areas. It would be helpful to prioritize the issues for all parties in order to have some point of departure for launching a peace building initiative. It is pertinent to identify the issues at stake so that an effective strategy can be designed for lasting peace.

Pillar 1 also recommends that we consider the objectives and goals of the parties. Finally one must examine the means available to the parties and the tactics they employ in their conflict behavior which has implications on the course of the conflict. Sandole suggests that under Pillar 1, one should also consider:

- the parties’ orientation to the conflict and conflict resolution mechanisms;
- the environment in which they are interacting.

**Pillar 1:**

**Ethnic and sectarian mosaic**

Before I identify the primary political players it is imperative that I make a mention of the ethnic and sectarian cleavages to illustrate the plural culture of Afghan society.

1. **Ethnic make-up:** the population stands at 31 million. Ethnic make-up: Pashtun 42%, Tajik 27%, Hazara 9%, Uzbek 9%, Aimak 4%, Turkmen3%, Baloch 2% and other ethnic groups 4%).
2. **Sectarian divisions:** religious grouping 80% Sunni and 20% Shia

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13 See country profile on Failed States Index (FSI) http://www.fundforpeace.org/programs/fsi/fsindex.php
14 ibid.
To borrow from Kumar,

“Frequently the primary protagonists in a conflict, by dint of their weight in materials and resources draw the most attention. International organizations and hierarchies, also tend to focus primarily on prominent actors with biggest international outreach….However merely identifying the top players may not be enough”.15

This perspective suggests that the grassroots communities in Afghanistan need to be recognized as primary stakeholders, as they are at the receiving end of the infighting between various political and militant groups; the resistance against the NATO led ISAF (International Security Assistance Force) and the US forces; as well as the insurgency against the Karzai government. Unbeknown to most, years of civil and inter-state wars have brought the Afghans

15 Cousens & Kumar, (2001) p. 188-189
to the lowest levels of global poverty. “Human security represents a new focus on the human costs of conflict, on human needs and on human rights.” While it is important to identify key players in the conflict, unless we recognize the voiceless masses as primary stakeholders, by introducing a mechanism that would empower them, and in ensuring that they are able to partake in deciding their own fate, we shall be turning a blind eye to injustice. The grassroots communities need to be mobilized and given due representation in political systems and institutions in order to pave the way towards the structural ramifications of positive peace.

I would like to support my position with Lederach’s pyramid on actors and approaches to peace-building in which he places the grassroots level communities’ leadership at the base of the pyramid. He positions the middle level leaders which are presumably the representatives of the civil society in the center. Finally right at the apex of the pyramid which indicates the smallest proportion, yet clearly the most influential cadre, he positions the elite leadership.

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17 Sokalski, (2003) p. 27

18 Galtung put forth a definition of “positive peace,” with a vision for social justice, which is achievable in the absence of structural violence. This is in contrast to “negative peace,” defined as the absence of direct physical violence. It is noteworthy that Galtung’s theory of structural violence and “positive peace,” frees the question of “peace” from being an exclusive activity of the sovereign state, and re-conceptualizes it as a social question. This alternative perspective on peace in relation to everyday social life can be seen as part of a process of democratically reconstructing the concept within civil society. Johann Galtung “Violence, Peace and Peace Studies” (1969).

19 Ramsbotham, Woodhouse & Miall, (2005) p. 24 Fig.1,10
In the case of Afghanistan as far as the internal players are concerned the conflict dynamic is controlled and shaped entirely by the top level leadership who are warlords and the US backed Karzai government. The civil society and the grassroots community do not figure in as players although by virtue of their proportion (as indicated by the pyramid as well as the local context) they are primary stakeholders. Any peace-building initiative must therefore be structured in a manner informed by Lederach’s pyramid as I shall demonstrate subsequently. Briefly, however, the process would entail reconciliation and integration at the grassroots communities’ level; mobilization of a mid-level leadership to engage in problem-solving consultations and dialogue; and high level negotiations between all political and influential decision-makers, including the spoilers i.e. Taliban and the Northern Alliance.
Primary Internal parties:

Main Political Players

i) The Karzai government – President Hamid Karzai is ethnically a Pashtun but is against the Taliban. Karzai’s coalition government is represented predominantly by the Northern Alliance.

ii) Northern Alliance: predominantly Panjshiris (Tajik group that put up a strong resistance against Soviets under the command of Ahmed Shah Masood). Other groups include Uzbeks, Hazaras, etc.

iii) Taliban: The ethnic makeup of the Taliban is predominantly Pashtun,

External primary actors

1. USA and allied forces
2. NATO led ISAF
3. Foreign Taliban

Secondary external parties

1. Pakistan
2. India
3. Iran

Issues and Objectives:
Internal primary stakeholders

Karzai government
- To establish authority and legitimacy beyond Kabul
- Internal security and stability by weeding out terrorism (internal and external sources)
- Good governance and development
- Economic opportunities for the unemployed
- To curb poppy cultivation and drug trafficking
- Small arms control
Regional economic and political cooperation

**The Northern Alliance:**
- Maintenance of political position
- Competition and claim over economic resources

**Taliban:**
- Restoration of power
- Ouster of western military presence
- Enforcement of Shariah law as interpreted by the Taliban

**NATO’s ISAF (International Security Assistance Force) (30,000 strength):**
- SSR - Security Sector Reforms
- DDR – Demobilization, Demilitarization and Reintegration
- Providing security to the Afghan government
- Protect the Bonn Agreement and UN resolutions
- Eradication of narcotics trade and poppy cultivation

**US led military coalition (15,000 strength):**
- Counter terrorism (to protect the United States and its people from Al-Qaeda)
- Counter insurgency (protection of Karzai government from insurgency)
- Weeding out the Taliban
- Eradication of terrorist networks

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Means and Orientations of Primary Parties:

Means and tactics employed by all the primary parties have been coercive and self-serving. According to recent news reports the Taliban have regrouped and consolidated themselves in the South of the country and there are insurgencies underway against the US backed Karzai government, US and NATO forces and amongst warring factions. According to BBC’s Lyce Doucet: “Afghanistan is still a place awash with guns, where commanders and local officials can impose their will with impunity, where many Afghans say their lives have changed little.”

The Bonn process which was supposedly “Afghan led” excluded the Taliban as well as the Pashtuns as major stakeholders and key players. The external actors’ thrust has been on demobilization and demilitarization which they have failed to achieve due to massive arms stock piles and induction of corrupt and power thirsty war lords in the civil services.

As suggested by recent news, very high levels of armed infighting prevails in most parts of Afghanistan.

External Secondary Parties:
Pakistan
- Fulfillment of its role as an important ally in GWOT
- Settlement of border issues with Afghanistan
- Close alliance with the Afghan government to protect its vision of strategic depth (vis-à-vis nuclear posturing with India).
- Stability in border areas in Baluchistan and North West tribal regions where mini-insurgencies are taking place due to the involvement of terrorist groups coming from Afghanistan – Pakistan’s security
- Curbing infiltration and proliferation of narcotics, small arms, and contraband

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- Repatriation of nearly 4 million Afghan refugees – strain on economy

**Means and orientations:** Pakistan is bound by its obligations to the US to provide military bases and military support for the GWOT. Having made a u-turn in its Taliban policy it is facing the brunt of al-Qaeda and Taliban terrorist attacks creating instability within the country. It seeks a close partnership with the Afghan government, however, the Northern Alliance and the Karzai Government are distrustful of Pakistan owing to its former alliance with the Taliban. Taliban and al-Qaeda are also involved in insurgencies in border areas within Pakistan.

**Indian Interests and Objectives:**
- To build a close strategic partnership with Northern Alliance to counter Pakistan from the west
- Strategic partnership with Afghanistan for regional clout.

**Pillar II – The Conflict Environment:**
These are the conflict causes, conditions, and drivers of the conflict at the individual, intra-national/societal, international and global/ecological levels. The diagram below attempts to place the conflict in Afghanistan in this context.
Nation Building Initiatives and Challenges – A SWOT Analysis:\(^23\):

December 7, 2006 marks the Karzai Government’s 5\(^{th}\) anniversary. However as the paper demonstrates, the security situation has deteriorated since the inception of the Bonn process.\(^24\)

\(^{23}\) SWOT: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats
\(^{24}\) “Officially the Agreement on Provisional Arrangements in Afghanistan Pending the Re-Establishment of Permanent Government Institutions, the Bonn Agreement was the initial series of agreements intended to re-create the State of Afghanistan following the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan in response to the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, an invasion which ended the twenty-plus-year-long Afghan Civil War. Since no nationally-agreed-upon government had existed in Afghanistan since 1979, it was felt necessary to have a transition period before a permanent government was established. A nationally-agreed-upon government would require at least one loya jirga to be convened; however, in the absence of law and order in the wake of the rapid victory of American and Afghan Northern Alliance forces, immediate steps were felt to be required. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bonn_Agreement_(Afghanistan)
I would like to refer to Jeong, Reycheller & Paffenholz and Junne whose writings reveal the following facts about Afghanistan. Their studies have also examined the peace-building initiatives undertaken thus far and their scope. The information has been tabulated in a SWOT framework for further diagnosis and prescription for an effective peace-building strategy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• amongst the largest post-conflict reconstruction programs in the world</td>
<td>• highly cleavaged ethnic society (identity issues)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• high levels of donor support</td>
<td>• historical grievances – nearly a century long experience of civil war and ethnic divisions</td>
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<td>• accessibility to regional resources</td>
<td>• sectarian “Shia Sunni” hostilities</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• insurgencies by militant groups and suicide bombings -warlords and private militias</td>
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<td>• high levels of violence and insecurity</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• severe competition for depleting environmental resources</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• military and political intervention of external actors and other states</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• difficulties in maintaining law and order by western forces due to mountainous terrain in three quarters of the country</td>
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<td>• widespread violation of human rights</td>
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<td>• vested interests in a war economy</td>
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<td>• narcotics growth and culture</td>
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<td>• aid economy “capacity confiscation”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• inefficient program implementation by donors – coordination issues</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• low per-capita development assistance</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• ineffective reintegration of local communities</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• inadequate economic opportunities</td>
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**Peace Building in Afghanistan**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opportunities</th>
<th>Threats</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>• slow infrastructural development by central government and donor agencies</td>
<td>• suspicion, resentment, and fear of western forces owing to devastation wreaked by GWOT</td>
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<tr>
<td>• poor ownership of reconstruction efforts by local communities</td>
<td>• absence of government authority</td>
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<tr>
<td>• misuse of aid resources for political purposes</td>
<td>• dysfunctional parliament – liable to becoming a kleptocracy</td>
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<td>• state delegitimization - authority of central government does not extend beyond Kabul</td>
<td>• weak military</td>
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<td>• corruption in government</td>
<td>• corrupt judiciary</td>
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<tr>
<td>• landlocked economy and poor indigenous resource base</td>
<td>• civil service dominated by warlords</td>
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<td>• landmines</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• disease</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• amongst lowest global poverty scales</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• IDPs (Internally Displaced People) and refugees – sustained and chronic displaced</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• DDR (Demobilization, Demilitarization and Reintegration) does not address a visionary and solid needs assessment plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>• tense relations with neighboring Pakistan and border issues</td>
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<tr>
<td>• failed PRTs (Provincial Reconstruction Teams) including the US led Coalition and ISAF</td>
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**Opportunities**

- Loya Jirga – grand council of Islamic scholars
- Potential for mitigation of conflict through religious engagement – role of forgiveness and trauma healing

**Threats**

- Suspicion, resentment, and fear of western forces owing to devastation wreaked by GWOT
• global and regional stakes in stability
• Nato and US led coalition; and international donor presence
• availability of an abundance of regional/international expertise and resources
• potential for drawing more aid resources
• The Bonn Agreement 2001 – an Afghan led process – inherently a state building exercise
• gateway to Central Asian resources and markets for much of South Asia
• S A A R C membership and potential for regional integration

• rise of factionalized elites supported by the United States coalition
• half-hearted and irregular mobilization of coalition forces due to risk factor
• small arms proliferation - gun toting tribal culture
• opium threat
• waning international donor support-pledge gaps and delays
• terrorism – suicide bombings
• demobilization and disarmament goals limited to Taliban rather than nationwide implementation
• donor-driven development agenda
• dilution of coalition objectives: overarching agenda not to build peace but to destroy terrorist networks
• Coordination problems between ISAF and US led command owing to their different perceptions of security
• lack of common overall goals of key players
• waning US commitment due to military demands and preoccupation in Iraq
• mistreatment of Afghan detainees by Bush government
• regional suspicions (Iran, China, Russia, Central Asian States) over continued US presence/military bases in Afghanistan
• American interference in allowing Afghanistan to forge economic agreements with Iran
• Afghan representation overlooked at high level donor agency meetings
• Regional inter-state politics
• Poor plan predictability
• Ecological problems– severe floods and landlocked region – surrounded by unstable states – regional spillover
International and Societal Causes and Conditions:

Afghanistan in the aftermath of the war with the Soviets and in the post 9/11 developments stands amongst the poorest countries in the world with an extremely weak political, civic, economic, legal and military infrastructure. The Human Development index places its populace among the world’s hungriest, most illiterate and destitute. The average life span in Afghanistan is 46 years with more than 45% of the population under the age of 14.25 Women and children continue to face an “acute emergency” because of exceptionally high maternal and child mortality rates. “Infant mortality and under five mortality are very high, girls’ enrolment is one of the lowest in the world and malnutrition affects almost half of the country’s child population,” as reported by UNICEF.26

Displacement, landmines, disease, unemployment and abject poverty remain some of the country’s most serious social issues. Most Afghans are either internally displaced or refugees. In neighboring Pakistan there are between 3 to 4 million Afghan refugees.27 The influx started in 1979 when the Soviet Afghan War began. The 1,450 mile long rugged and difficult to patrol border between Pakistan and Afghanistan provides easy passage to the refugees. Many of them have been born in Pakistan and have never been to their ancestral land. For subsistence a great majority of them in Pakistan are seen scavenging in urban centers! A large proportion of them are children, women and the elderly. Their conditions are most pitiable as most of them do not have the means to afford the most fundamental human needs such as clothing, nutrition, healthcare, and shelter. Unfortunately, however, while many of them are being given monetary incentives to return to their homeland through UNHCR’s repatriation initiatives, they return to Pakistan for lack

of basic amenities such as drinking water, health facilities and safe shelter.28

One Afghan refugee woman in Islamabad told the author that in Afghanistan she could not even thrive by scavenging as she could in Pakistan! This is food for thought for players such as the UNHCR working on repatriation of Afghan refugees and the Afghan government which claims to be making slow yet steady development in its reconstruction efforts. There is a dire need for poverty alleviation strategies in Afghanistan. To borrow from Sokalski, “Every step taken toward reducing poverty and achieving broad-based economic growth also marks a step toward conflict prevention, especially in many poor countries, where poverty is often coupled with sharp ethnic and religious cleavages.”29

The Human Development Report (see diagram on next page) puts Afghanistan amongst the least developed countries of the world. Geographically Afghanistan is strategically placed between the Middle East, Central Asia and the Indian subcontinent along the ancient silk routes and spice roads. Afghanistan has long been the victim of imperialist designs. Many a mighty conqueror and empire has vied for influence in the area. Its rugged and mountainous terrain has made it virtually invincible for those unfamiliar with it. Now with millions of landmines embedded in its soil it is one of the most dangerous places on earth to tread upon!

Empirical data suggest that since the launch of the GWOT the ground realities in Afghanistan vis-à-vis its security environment, civic infrastructure, and economic situation have deteriorated. Some of the most blatant indicators of the worsening scenario include the restoration of poppy cultivation in the post-Taliban era, failed governance structures, high and escalating levels of violence, human rights abuses, abject poverty and chronic displacement.

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28 Some of the data are based on personal observations of the author.
Peace Building in Afghanistan

The evaluative aspect of human development is measured by three of the most important basic and universal capabilities: The ability to lead a long and healthy life, to have access to and make use of knowledge, and to earn a decent standard of living.

The Human Development Index (HDI) estimated at 0.346, puts Afghanistan at the bottom of the 177 countries ranked by the global Human Development Report 2004, way behind all its neighbours and just above Burundi, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger and Sierra Leone.

The Gender Development Index (GDI) which reflects the level of discrepancies between men and women in terms of the HDI, with a value of 0.300 places the country further down in the scale of low human development just above only Niger and Burkina Faso.

While the HDI measures average achievements, the Human Poverty Index (HPI) concentrates on deprivations and portrays poverty as more than just a lack of income. The 59.3 value ranks Afghanistan just above Niger and Burkina Faso and far below Iran and Pakistan.

The Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM), which shows the participation of men and women in political and economic life, was not calculated for Afghanistan because of lack of data on indicators of women's participation.
The Failed States Index (refer to map and table below) uses social, economic, political and military indicators to place the country at number 10, on the list of failed states.\textsuperscript{30} In its assessment of the Afghanistan context the FSI does well in identifying issues related to legitimacy of the state (which does not extend beyond Kabul), displacement, group grievances, security environment, violation of human rights, poor economic indicators, inter alia.

\begin{table}
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
\textbf{Year} & \textbf{Social} & \textbf{Economic} & \textbf{Political/Military} & \textbf{Leadership} & \textbf{Military} & \textbf{Police} & \textbf{Judiciary} & \textbf{Civil Service} \\
\hline
2005 & 90.0 & 60.0 & 80.0 & 74.0 & 68.0 & 75.0 & 81.0 & 80.0 & 90.0 \hline
2006 & 98.0 & 73.0 & 61.0 & 61.0 & 81.0 & 80.0 & 82.0 & 80.0 & 100 \hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{Afghanistan}
\end{table}

The FSI quite ably examines the performance of key state institutions in Afghanistan to present the state of affairs in war torn Afghanistan. Consider also the increase in the levels of violence in the past couple of years in Afghanistan as illustrated in the next diagram. It suggests that the GWOT strategies in the country have not had a decreasing impact on the scale and magnitude of armed


In my humble opinion I feel the ranking is rather an optimistic view of the reality in Afghanistan especially since it places Pakistan at number 9 in its global ranking of failed states for the year 2006 bringing it down 30 notches from 2005! I would like to suggest that putting Afghanistan above Pakistan may be a misrepresentation or distortion of fact, or possibly even misinterpretation of data.
conflict. In fact there has been a growth in insurgency in Afghanistan against the western and government forces. As I write this there are reports that the South of the country has been completely taken over by the Taliban forces. Clearly western military interventions in Afghanistan since 9/11 and the institution of the democratically elected “puppet government” in Kabul have not been successful in their DDR and SSR (Security Sector Reform) objectives in coordination with ISAF and the US troops.

Reconstruction efforts in post war Afghanistan in the words of Lakhdar Brahimi, UN’s special envoy to Afghanistan, have been “lousy….. We are too late, too bureaucratic, and frankly we spend too much money on ourselves rather than developing the skills of Afghans.”

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Pillar III:

This deals with devising a strategy for conflict intervention. The goal of any sincere conflict resolution design would entail a vision for positive peace, that is the creation of conditions whereby the structure promotes a harmonious and equitable co-existence for all stakeholders and the root causes of the conflict have been addressed. This would include a continuum of strategies including preventive diplomacy/conflict prevention, conflict management/peacekeeping, conflict settlement/coercive peacemaking, conflict resolution/non-coercive peace making and finally conflict transformation and peace building.

My proposed peace plan seeks guidance from the Post-war reconstruction/withdrawal matrix and the Intervention, Reconstruction, Withdrawal (IRW) operations: (phases, nested tasks and withdrawal stages) proposed by Ramsbotham, Woodhouse and Miall. The various phases and nested tasks of the IRW proposed in the model are as follows:

1. Phase 1: Intervention — peacekeeping/elite peacemaking
2. Phase 2: Stabilization — structural peace building — withdrawal phase 1
3. Phase 3: Normalization — cultural peace building — withdrawal phase 2
4. Phase 4: Continuing transformation — Post Intervention

Additionally the matrix suggests pursuing the following strategy:

Sector A: Security
Sector B: Law and Order
Sector C: Government
Sector D: Economy
Sector E: Society

33 Ibid. Please see for detailed guidelines for action in each sector on p. 199
CHAPTER 3
Afghanistan Peace Building Proposal

Strategic long-term objectives:

National level: restoration of peace and security by coercive peacekeeping, good governance through key institutional reforms and societal development; promotion of a common Afghan identity and national unity.

Grassroots level: provision of justice and empowerment (directed at the masses with special attention to women, children and minorities: security, literacy, social well being, economic opportunities, development of national identity (through reconciliation and reintegration processes).

Mid-level: creating a civil society by developing mid-level leadership.

Top level: power sharing formula accountable to the grassroots communities.

Regional level: promoting Afghanistan as a key regional economic player.

International level: withdrawal of international troops, calling for a renewed interest and commitment to Afghanistan by reviewing the weaknesses in the Bonn process and international military interventions in the post 9/11 scenario: providing an alternate and sustainable mechanism for rooting out terrorism and promoting stability in Afghanistan in particular, and the region in general; building regional and international economic and strategic partnerships.

In view of ground realities in Afghanistan and the opportunities and resources available I propose a phased, multi-task and multi-

34 Interventions may include promoting “durable interethnic models of cooperation and understanding at the municipal level, replicable models for increased social interaction in ethnically mixed localities, and horizontal linkages between government structures in addressing community social needs in education, health, social services, income generation, and drug abuse prevention among youth.” Sokalski, (2003). p. 158
track peace-building strategy for Afghanistan. Rome wasn’t built in a day and it is going to take a long time to restore order and build positive peace in Afghanistan. My peace-building plan envisions the following approach:

- **maximum capitalization of donor resources** available to Afghanistan,
- **phased withdrawal** of western troops
- **a Herculean peace keeping effort** to curb the violence in Afghanistan
- **restoring law and order** by training and building an effective Afghan police force
- tapping **regional resources and devising collaborative strategies** for development in Afghanistan, opening up Afghanistan as a trade route to Central Asia for the entire world; construction of **communications infrastructure** and all other benefits of trade; channelizing trade with regional countries through SAARC
- **development ranging from the micro level to macro:** **human resource development and key institutional reform**
- developing a sense of common **identity and reconciliation** through religious strategies; education and awareness raising; and an aggressive media campaign; empowerment of the grassroots communities especially women and minorities
- building a civil society by giving space to **NGOs** (paying special attention to women and child rights)

  -- effective formulas for **power sharing** between warlords (spoilers) with built in accountability by the grass-roots communities
- creating opportunities for **micro and macroeconomic reform**

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35 Civil society works by “reducing demands on the managerial capacity of the state and improving a society’s capacity to articulate and meet public needs. It also generates employment and careers outside the bureaucracy and the army. UNTAC helped open a space for hundreds of new indigenous Cambodian NGOs. In step with the moderating of civil war, traditional Buddhist organizations began to reestablish their role as spiritual guides and community organizers in the countryside”. Cousens & Kumar, (2001) p. 106.
• reviving agriculture as the economic base of the country, promoting cottage industries and developing the industrial sector.

MODALITIES OF THE PEACEBUILDING DESIGN

Short-term phased goals:
PHASE 1

i) Security objectives:

• Constitution of a new United Nations Peace Keeping force of at least 100,000 troops. The troops should not be from neighboring and non-western countries but may have representation from countries such as Sri lanka, Nepal, Bosnia, Albania, Nigeria, Guatemala, Cuba, Venezuela, Nepal, and Turkey. The reason why troops from neighboring countries would not be advisable is that some of them may have ethnic affiliations with various Afghan groups. Afghan people are also hostile to western presence; therefore, a phased withdrawal of US troops and ISAF is encouraged. The objectives of the UN peace keeping forces would entail demobilization, demilitarization, and demining. However during their operations they must refrain from taking sides with local players although the latter are quite likely to develop their own views of impartiality.  

Furthermore to ensure success the UN peacekeeping forces must follow the ten commandments prescribed by Sokalski in his book: do not abuse or misuse authority; respect local customs and traditions, and laws; do not accept bribes and be courteous, refrain from immoral activities and exploitation; respect human rights; show appropriate military courtesy to your colleagues irrespective of their origins; respect the environment; do not engage in alcohol or substance abuse; and honor your commitments to confidentiality.36

37 ibid. pp. 120- 121
• Identify key areas for building zones of peace for restoration of peace in various parts of Afghanistan starting with the most turbulent and volatile regions such as the south of Afghanistan where the Taliban are in control. A mapping of the most violent and vulnerable areas would be useful. The process would involve highly coercive peacekeeping as opposed to the present light footprint presence of the NATO.

• Training a highly professional Afghan police force with the involvement of foreign development agencies to ensure law and order in the “zones of peace”.

The Japanese are already funding and coordinating with the UN on Disbandment of Illegally Armed Groups (DIAG) which are estimated to number around 1,800. The Japanese may be persuaded to mobilize their resources towards this end as well.

ii) Political objectives:

• Keep the Karzai Government in place for a period of 4 more years until elections could be held again in the country to oversee the initial phase of rebuilding. At the governmental level this should include establishment of legitimate, transparent and non-corrupt state institutions. Proportional or quota based representation of women must also be guaranteed in the process. The process should be overseen by UNAMA (United Nations Assistance Mission to Afghanistan). Established in 2002, UNAMA’s original mandate involved supporting the process of rebuilding and national reconciliation as per the Bonn Agreement. In the developments since then, UNAMA has adapted its mandate which is renewed annually to: “provide political and strategic advice for the peace process; providing good offices; assisting the government towards implementation of the Afghanistan Compact; promoting human rights; providing technical assistance, and continuing to manage all UN humanitarian relief, recovery, reconstruction
and development activities in coordination with the government.  

This would require honoring all the aid pledges and committing to incremental increases in aid flows to Afghanistan based on need. The diagram below presents a comparative view of post-conflict countries receiving aid which is indicative of the low priority Afghanistan has received thus far.

**Figure 2: Security and Economic Assistance in Peace/Nation/State Building Operations**

* Shows peak security presence and average yearly per capita economic assistance for the first two years of each operation, including Afghanistan in 2002–2003.


*38 UNAMA website: home http://www.unama-afg.org/about/overview.htm*
United States (and aid from UK and France) has been utilized to build an Afghan National Army (ANA), a Ministry of Interior and a police force. A revamping of efforts is required by aid and expertise from these countries under the auspices of the UN to build and train the ANA. The ANA must also recruit female medical professionals. US led coalition and ISAF should be engaged for this purpose for a minimum of two to three years (after which they must withdraw completely).

- Judicial reform - courts composed of judges of top legal, scholarly, and personal credentials, trained in Islamic, civil and constitutional law including minorities and women.

- Civil service competitive exams and training of inductees: Foreign donors should commit to provide training locally and support exposure visits in their home countries.
• Providing monetary incentives to highly educated expatriates and local employees of aid agencies to join civil services: international media campaign to call Afghan expatriates to the country to rebuild Afghanistan. Rebuilding the motherland should be the theme of this campaign.

Phase II:

i) Withdrawal of ISAF and US troops

ii) Structural interventions and reconciliation:

• Mobilizing the Loya Jirga at district, town and village level for community dialogues based on the Islamic values of brotherhood, forgiveness and tolerance which is very important in Afghan culture and traditions but needs to be explored. Using the Friday congregation in mosque sermons (Khutbas) to create awareness and importance of a common Afghan identity; running a high profile electronic and print media campaign that instills the values of a common Afghan identity (social marketing); using educational texts and institutions to raise a generation of better integrated Afghan community.
• Religious integration – inter-faith harmony to be promoted by dialogues at village level.
• Literacy programs for children, youth and adults (female and male). These could be formal and informal, government run and community/home based with monetary incentives for community members from donors/government.
• Legal prohibition of poppy cultivation and giving tax exemptions to warlords as an incentive for alternate agriculture and conversion of the war economy.
• Micro-enterprise development: identifying the potential for cottage industry and indigenous resources base and
providing vocational training to Afghan youth, women, and the unemployed. Community mobilization and participatory project management strategies must also be promoted.

- Building and training district level political constituencies with proportional representation of women and all ethnic groups including minorities.
- Supporting traditional mosque based dispute resolution mechanisms
- Constitution of proportionally representative civilian peace, human rights, and institutional corruption monitors

ii) **Regional integration and stability:**

- Confidence building measures with Pakistan including joint projects to develop border regions where terrorists find safe havens and vulnerable human power. As in December 2006 Pakistan Foreign Minster Khurshid Kasuri was on a mission to visit border areas in Afghanistan and Pakistan to negotiate and explore avenues for cooperation with tribal leaders. Such initiatives need to be pursued extensively.
- Resolution of border issues with Pakistan
- Repatriation of Afghan refugees in Pakistan – UNHCR and relief agencies to help build model villages.
- Pakistan and India may also like to provide expertise in civil society development
- Health assistance from the wider South/South-east Asia region
- Cultural exchanges with neighboring countries. This would inevitably also lead to increased tourism.
- Collective security and cooperation agreements with all the neighboring states in Central Asia and Iran, Pakistan and India.
iii) Regional and international economic linkages and opportunities:

• Afghanistan has acquired membership of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) as of this year. It should explore free trade agreements with SAARC countries and formalize illegal trade to generate revenue. It should open its borders to various countries as a gateway to Central Asia. It could generate considerable revenue by charging transit fees. Such flow of trade would inevitably bring development along the transit routes.

• Trade giants like India which seek access to Central Asia should be asked to invest in and assist in the development of roads and other communications infrastructure.

• Quite recently Afghanistan was considering an agreement for the import of energy resources from Iran but the United States stepped in to curtail the project due to its souring relations with the latter. In the interest of countering terrorism Afghanistan should be freely allowed to pursue all ventures that serve its development goals.

• As it is a landlocked country Afghanistan may like to explore an agreement with Pakistan that gives it access to sea transit.

• Afghanistan is a beautiful country with a rich history and cultural heritage. It has immense potential for opening itself up for tourism. It should call for regional investment for development of infrastructure related to tourism. This objective, however, can only be attained once peace has been restored and stability ensured. Afghanistan will need to encourage its private sector in developing its tourist industry. This may be a good opportunity for attracting FDI (Foreign Direct Investment) but would be contingent on restoration of viable peace in Afghanistan.
Phase III:

i) **Elections:**

- International supervision of countrywide elections, framing a new constitution as a joint project between all political stakeholders. Implementation of a new power sharing system with proportional representation of women, minorities, and political representation

ii) **Withdrawal of peace-keeping forces**
CHAPTER 5

Conclusion

The peace plan envisages a win-win outcome for all stakeholders in the Afghan imbroglio and, therefore, the prospects of its viability are strong. The plan builds on developing the capacity of indigenous stakeholders which will determine its sustainability. It entails a participatory process that encourages local, regional and international involvement, thereby creating an interest and stakes in the outcome for all those involved. It sees to it that by allowing Karzai’s government to stay in power for a few more years American and Western interests are not threatened and some level of national stability is ensured. At the same time the plan calls for a phased withdrawal of western forces, initially by channelizing their energies in nation-building rather than violent peace-keeping which they are failing to achieve. Furthermore, the plan entails, as per Sokalski’s vision:

“regional and international cooperation based on expanded trade, economic, political, and cultural relations….confidence-building measures, including macroeconomic stability, essential to the development of a propitious climate for business initiatives and for attracting foreign and domestic investment in agriculture, industry, and service sectors, and thereby promoting employment……upgrading of physical infrastructure required for the development of industry, including….roads, and rail roads, and communications networks, tourism and trade…..protection of the environment and health as well as the country’s diversified cultural heritage.”39

The international community must be urged to pledge greater funds to Afghanistan in view of the fact that the region is highly vulnerable to conflict spillovers. Insurgencies in the border areas of Afghanistan and Pakistan are already brewing and US military operations in these areas have contributed to the exacerbation of the

insurgencies against the government. Pakistan is a nuclear power and further instability and turbulence could have consequential implications for the entire region. Neighboring Central Asian States are also witnessing high levels of turbulence and upheaval. It would, therefore, be in the international community’s interest to review their policies in Afghanistan and withdraw without doing any further harm.

The proposed peace plan entails a comprehensive humanitarian dimension to supplement peacekeeping and enforcement initiatives. Development goals are equally important in the consolidation of peace and political transition in the country. Instituting gender sensitive programs in health, the corporate sector, and strengthening civil society institutions would be accorded high priority. Conversion of the war economy to constructively engage the unemployed and benefit all sections of the society must remain at the forefront of plan implementation throughout the country.

Religion has been referred to as a source of “intolerance, human rights violations, and extremist violence, but also of non-violent conflict transformation, the defense of human rights, integrity in government, and reconciliation and stability in divided societies.” 40 Going by the recommendations of various scholars and practitioners a plan for building solidarity among religious communities has also been included.

Finally the kind of aid and technical assistance required by Afghanistan should be at par with the Marshall Plan which was put in place in Europe by the US after World War II. It was a reconstruction plan that was operational for four fiscal years. During that period economic and technical assistance worth approximately $13 billion was pumped into Europe equivalent to about $130 billion in 2006. 41 The Afghanistan case merits a similar investment and effort.

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