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# A Case-Study of US Intervention in Afghanistan for Eradication of Terrorism and State-Building Processes for Afghanistan; Impacts on Pakistan

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This study has no aim to hurt any ideological or social segment but is purely based on academic purposes.

# **Abstract**

This research paper focuses on the impact of the US intervention in Afghanistan for eradicating terrorism and the state-building processes for Afghanistan, and how it affected Pakistan. State-building is defined as the sustainable development of a state with regards to its economy, politics, institutions, law and order situation of an already existing nation-state. The study raises important questions regarding the US-led international intervention in Afghanistan, its impact on nation-building processes, and its reflection on local autonomy.

The concept of state-building emerged in the twentieth century, primarily due to terrorism and the multifaceted challenges posed by it. Peace, security, institutional setting, and infrastructure stability are critical elements in the state-building process. However, the study highlights that in most cases, the focus is diverted to security concerns while neglecting other aspects, which causes more problems and damage to the cause.

The research paper discusses how the US-led intervention in Afghanistan could help support nation-building processes or further deteriorate the situation. It also explores how the intervention impacted local autonomy. The study is significant in understanding the role of international intervention in nation-building processes and how it affects local autonomy.

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#### Introduction

**Definition:** There is a very narrow difference between state-building and nation-building. One is about identity while the other is about institutional structure, i.e., infrastructure. To understand the question in its true sense, we need to comprehend what state-building is vis-a-vis how we define it in social sciences. State-building refers to the sustainable development of a state in terms of its economy, politics, institutions, law and order situation of an already existing nation-state.

**Explanation:** The concept of state-building emerged or became more popular in the twentieth century, particularly in the aftermath of terrorism and the multifaceted challenges it posed to the concerned states. The international community sought to engage and mitigate those socio-political and institutional

challenges to help support the concerned state to rebuild itself, stand back on its feet, and simultaneously decrease the effects of those challenges on the international community.

When we talk about state-building processes, the most important element and primary goal is peace peace restoration, peace development, and peacekeeping, vis-a-vis security and security-related concerns. Without peace, other aspects such as institutional setting, infrastructure, or stability are impossible to achieve. This makes it complicated to balance all aspects while achieving the goal from all directions. In most cases, instead of achieving multiple goals and targets, the focus or stress is diverted to only one aspect, i.e., security, while relegating all the other aspects and variables. This leads to more problems and damages the cause of state-building.

The study focuses on key important questions regarding the US intervention in Afghanistan and their mission of state-building processes, and the effect or reflection of the intervention on autonomy. It seeks to answer how and to what extent the US-led international intervention can help support the nation-building processes in Afghanistan, or further deteriorate the situation, and how it reflected on the local autonomy.

Literature Review and Analysis: On one hand, Afghanistan remained and remains for centuries at a crossroads for Asian and European due to its geographical location<sup>1</sup>, and, on the other hand, Afghanistan is under the grip of a highly regional centralized power model of international politics, without any positive change throughout the 19th century2 and for the most part in later centuries, being part of the so-called 'Great Game'.3Thus, stability in Afghanistan is a matter of primary concern in the region as well as for the rest of the world, most recently for the past one and a half decades - being the immediate cause of the start of the so-called US-led War on Terror after the 9/11 attacks on US soil. The official 9/11 report summary shows that 2600 people died at the World Trade Center, 125 at the Pentagon, and 256 on four planes which in total becomes about 3000 deaths in the incident of 9/11. The plan was executed by nineteen young Arabs, backed by Al-Qaeda, an Islamist transnational terrorist network, and then harbored in Afghanistan. Although this was one of the biggest attacks in the history of the United States, it was not the first-ever such attack by Islamist fundamentalists against the United States of America, with a series of attacks within and outside the country, e.g., the February 1993 truck bombing of the World Trade Center, mastered by Ramzi Yousef, killing six and injuring hundreds. In October 1993, Somalian tribesmen shot down a US helicopter, killing 18 and wounding 73 Americans. In 1995, a bomb attack on a US program manager office in Riyadh killed five Americans and the June 1996 truck bombing on Khobar Tower killed 19 US citizens, with both taking place in Saudi Arabia. The fact that Al-Qaeda is behind all attacks would be known later, because Osama Bin Laden, Ayman Al-Zawahri and their group openly issued a fatwa declaring the duty of every Muslim to kill any American they finds', In 1998, Al Qaeda attacked US embassies in Nairobi (Kenya) and Dares-salaam (Tanzania), killing 224 people, including twelve US citizens,

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Rodney P. Carlisle, *America at War: Afghanistan War*, ed. John S. Bowman (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 2010), 1-178.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Thomas Barfield, *Afghanistan: A Cultural and Political History* (United Kingdom: Princeton University Press, 2010), 164-272.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Meredith L. Runion, *The History of Afghanistan* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 88 Post Road West, 2007), 131.

followed by the October 2000 attack by Al Qaeda on the US Cole in Yemen, killing 17 Americans. Given this series of attacks, the 2001 US mission was not legitimized by any UN Security Council resolution but was worldwide perceived as a legitimate military intervention under the given circumstances of the time in Afghanistan.

The United Nations Security Council Resolution 2145 (2014) mentioned the following important tasks and commitments for the Afghan transition processes, for which they claimed full support by major international powers, engaged in different development/governance sectors: security, the peaceful transfer of power to Afghan leadership, regional cooperation, strengthening of Afghan security forces, protection of human rights, especially of those of women, the certainty of better governance in all sectors, rule of law, sustainable peace and constitutional democracy. One area highlighted was regional cooperation between concerned states, for instance in the areas of control of narcotics and other forms of illicit trafficking as well as free and fair Afghan presidential elections.<sup>6</sup>

As claimed by the US-led international mission they intervened in the region for a few important reasons mentioned above but out of them the most important two vis-à-vis eradication of terrorism as well as dismantling Al-Quaida and terrorists' networks being functional in the region and the nation-building processes of Afghanistan and the questions arises are; could they, do it? Could they do any of it? To what extent they were successful? Was the intervention fruitful with regards to Afghan state building or it got adverse effects on the policy etcetera?

I will briefly review the ongoing developments in Afghanistan vis-à-vis the above-mentioned tasks and claims made in order to outline and evaluate parameters for potential post-withdrawal political scenarios and their implications. It is important to note that this whole debate was based on predictions and that it is not yet clear how the United States of America and other involved international powers will engage and manage issues such as peacebuilding, an emerging post-withdrawal security vacuum and other political as well as economic transition-related steps and challenges. For instance, it remains unclear (i) how the US-led coalition will politically engage with Pakistan and Afghanistan in the future; (ii) how and if regional actors like Afghanistan and Pakistan, among others, will mitigate terrorism, radicalism and other security-related issues; as well as (iii) if the US-led withdrawal will be beneficial for the region or will generate manifold challenges for the concerned states. And due to all these relegating behaviors of understanding the ground realities of the area they were engaging in, the envisioned results were not obtained, indeed the situation further deteriorated with regard to the state-building process and the region once again fall into the hands of the Taliban.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> "The 9/11 Commission Report: Executive Summary," in "National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon The United States," special issue, 1-31,.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Ben Smith and Arabella Thorp, "The Legal Basis for the Invasion of Afghanistan," *House of Commons Library* (February 2010): 1-10, papers%2Fsn05340.pdf&ei=0-2qVMuQC8P6Uvu0gaAL&usg=AFQjCNF74roxP7xrDI1-GWilovW0M11KUA.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup>Resolution 2145 (2014) (The United Nations Security Council, 17 March 2014), 1-17,.

There is none because this study shifts towards the second part of the question which is **How does this** reflect the changed understanding of autonomy and move on with the actual situation which has happened, is happening and would most possibly prevail in the future in Afghanistan.

There were certain flaws, mistakes or even ignorance manifest in the United States of America and its allies 'strategies and actions, which could not bring the required outputs, as argued by Taddeo in his article;

"If you know the enemy and know yourself, you need not to fear the result of a hundred battles. If you know yourself but not the enemy, for every victory gained you will also suffer a defeat. If you know neither the enemy nor yourself, you will succumb in every battle".<sup>7</sup>

By less success, flaws or problems I think we do not mean any achievements, in fact, the United States of America was the most successful power to initially destroy the Taliban regime within a few days of military operation, but it is unable to quell or weaken Al Qaeda as well as the resurgence of the Taliban until today. The major reason behind this, Junaid and others argue, is the shift in United States Afghanistan's policy, confining it to counter terrorism while neglecting other important elements for this victory: After 9/11, "Democratic norms such as civil rights and the value of law, values touted by the American government as defense retrogressive forces, were set aside in pursuit of the new enemy".8

Biddle calls this a failed political engagement in the Middle East<sup>9</sup>as Al Qaeda is a very large-scale worldwide organization and terrorism a frequent phenomenon that does exist (in every society in some or other forms) and which can be decreased to a certain extent but is difficult to fully eliminate. In an intervention scenario of enemy-centric warfare, one cannot ignore the population, infrastructure, institution-building and cultural understandings of society - the same sort of mistake repeated in Iraq. "I don't think our troops ought to be used for what's called nation-building. I think our troops out to be used to fight and win the war".<sup>10</sup>

There were no positive outcomes in Afghanistan as the policy of airstrikes ignored the local population and the decision to withdraw before visible achievements for the local population can be labeled as a policy failure. Furthermore, another important problem is the lack of understanding between the United States of America and Afghanistan's bordering countries. Having said that, many analysts point out, that at the beginning of the so-called War on Terror and subsequent intervention in Afghanistan, Some

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup>Valentina Taddeo "U. S. Response to Terrorism: A Strategic Analysis of the Afghanistan Campaign," *Journal of Strategic Security* 3, no. 2 (Summer 2010): 1,.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup>Shahwar Junaid, "Terrorism and the State," in *Terrorism and Global Power System* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 73.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup>Stephen D. Biddle, "American Grand Strategy After 9/11: An Assessment," *Strategic Studies Institute* (April 2005): 1-44,.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Francis Fukuyama, ed., *Nation Building: Beyond Afghanistan and Iraq* (USA: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), 1.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup>Taddeo, 2010: 27-38.

mistakes have been done by the international community:(i) carrying out the military campaign against the Taliban regime on behalf of the US Operation Enduring Freedom; (ii) the lack of coordination and common objectives within the international community; and (iii) the lack of regional understanding. In addition, there was a shift from the original intervention objectives in Afghanistan - security, governance and development, with security given more importance.

Prior to this mission the international community and the United States of America were supposed to be knowledgeable about the social structure, in particular the tribal system with its long history and its vital role in vast parts of Afghan society. Apart from this, two other key aspects - transnational drug production and trafficking as well as time and space for nation-building - were disregarded in their withdrawal decision, as targeted achievements were not reached.<sup>12</sup>

This is also true for the country's security forces if we take a quick look at historical facts: Afghanistan first suffered from a communist coup and Soviet invasion, followed by a civil war and then a US-led intervention, which does not and cannot work for peace either way as militaries are trained for fighting and not for peacekeeping, reconstruction and development of local institutions, which were further weakened or didn't develop.<sup>13</sup>NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) forces deviated from their original objectives developed at Bonn conference<sup>14</sup> and the United States of America's focus shifted to more self-interests in foreign and security policies, which were not based on ground realities<sup>15</sup> - the designed strategy could not and cannot work for a rentier state which passed through many different ruling systems, from British colonial rule to the Taliban, as Kuehn argues.<sup>16</sup>

In particular, the US-American policy of security through counter-insurgency resulted in insecurity in local people's everyday life and strategies of nation-building and reconstruction in Afghanistan through security forces is strongly objectionable.<sup>17</sup> As Ali argues: "The region and securitization can be glued together positively where the members have similar threat perceptions, and negatively, when the actors view[s]

<sup>14</sup>Citha D. Maass, ed., "Assessing the Afghanistan Compact: Is the International Community Defaulting on the Compact or is the Compact the Wrong Approach?" in *The Afghanistan Challenge: Hard Realities and Strategic Choices*, ed. Hans Georg Ehrhart and Charles C. Pentland (Canada: School of Policy Studies, Queens University at Kingston, 2009), 13-37.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup>Ann Wilkens, "Governance Crisis and Institution Building in Afghanistan," in *Transition in Afghanistan Post-Exist Scenario: IPRI and HSF Conference* (Islamabad: Islamabad Policy Research Institute, 2013), 18-23.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup>Fukuyama, 2006.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> Conrad Schetter and Rainer Glassner, eds., "The Changing Face of Warlordism in Afghanistan," in *The Afghanistan Challenge: Hard Realities and Strategic Choices*, ed. Hans Georg Ehrhart and Charles C. Pentland (Canada: School of Policy Studies, Queens University at Kingston, 2009), 37-57.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> Florian P. Kuehn, ed., "Supporting the State, Depleting the State: Estranged State-Society Relations in Afghanistan," in *The Afghanistan Challenge: Hard Realities and Strategic Choices*, ed. Hans Georg Ehrhart and Charles C. Pentland (Canada: School of Policy Studies, Queens University at Kingston, 2009), 57-77.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup>Lubna Abid Ali, "Transition in Afghanistan: Imperatives of Handling Internal and External Security Challenges," in *Transition in Afghanistan Post-Exist Scenario*, (Islamabad: Islamabad Policy Research Institute, 2013), 23-35.

each other as part of the problem."<sup>18</sup>Thus, one cannot make a successful counter-terrorism strategy in another state when ignoring important factors, degrading the local government in the public's eyes by making them do certain things which are counterproductive because they are against the local population's opinions such as drone attacks in Waziristan.<sup>19</sup> Weakening local government, a nascent democratic system by taking direct actions shows the inability of the government to cope with problems/challenges as does the exploitation of emotional impacts of violence through media for getting broader public support.<sup>20</sup>After the post-2014 transition period, and looking into the current Afghan situation chances are there that there might be ethnicity-based segregation of Afghanistan's security forces; again Taliban dominancy in the region and, in the case of Pakistan, the spread of the Taliban across the entire country along with a loss of its territorial integrity in the form of a greater Pashtunistan, argues Khaled Ahmed.<sup>21</sup>So historically, Afghanistan remained under different kinds of insurgencies and wars. After the Soviet Union's withdrawal and civil war, the created political vacuum was filled by the Taliban, leading to further problems already discussed.

there has been a public (inter-)national debate(s) on how much has been spent by donor countries in the post-9/11 Afghanistan intervention vis-à-vis outcomes generated: the approximate cost of the Afghan war is said to be 641.7 billion US-Dollars, with (only) 89.42 billion US-Dollars earmarked for reconstruction between 2001- 2013. The United States of America contributed 38 percent, and the European Union 18 percent to Afghan National Security Forces (of a total 58.6 billion US-Dollars), but the results are still uncertain.

Another huge share of funds from the international community is invested in the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF) which is much more productive and fruitful for the nation-building process. The total committed amount under ARTF to Afghanistan (with country-wise contribution) is 1.116 billion US-Dollars, with 934 million dollars being paid. Major contributors to this mission are the United States of America with 400 million US-Dollars, the United Kingdom with 133, and Australia with 89 and Germany with 78, among other countries. People-centric policies like ARTF are very much helpful and must be appreciated and the results of it can be seen in the kind of developmental projects which are going on in Afghanistan.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> Ali, 2013: 24.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> Akbar Nasir Khan "The Us' Policy of Drone Attacks in Pakistan," *Islamabad Policy Research Institute* 11, no. 1 (Winter 2011): 21-40,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> Peter R. Neumann and M.L.R. Smith, *The Strategy of Terrorism: How It Works, and Why It Fails* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 95; Stephen D. Reese and Seth C. Lewis, "Framing the War On Terror: The Internalization of Policy in the Us Press," *Journalism* 10, no. 6 (2009): 777-97,.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup>Khaled Ahmed, "The Afghanistan End-Game and Pakistan," *Monthly Current Affairs Digest* 223 (March 2013): 108-23.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> Anthony H. Cordesman and Arleigh A. Burk, "The Us Cost of the Afghan War: Fy 2002-Fy 2013," *Centre for Strategic and International Studies, Washington DC* (May 14, 2012): 1-13,

# **Reflection on Autonomy**

This intervention and relegation from the targeted goals caused the Taliban victory and strength of terrorism.

- The Taliban is using this propaganda tool that we defeated the USA which means the triumph of Taliban and this will indirectly have motivational effects on K. P's and Pakistan's Taliban groups.
  With this Pakistani Taliban can get further strength
- 2) Spelling over terrorism and the further spread of radicalism. secondly, in the case of the strength of the Taliban as we see currently, there would be further strong bonds between Af-Pak Taliban groups and they will easily come to safe sanctuaries in FATA and KPK.
- 3) Further internal displacements. In the case of the strength of terrorist groups, which seems most possible there will be a continuation of disturbed law and order situation which would most likely cause further displacements from FATA and K.P and all the adjoining areas
- 4) Dry-down of aid, assistance and funding from international organizations and NGOs will affect negatively. With the end of the international mission, the international community saw not much interest in investing in developmental projects and anti-terrorism projects in Afghanistan and Pakistan
- 5) Chance of another civil war. In case of worsened law and order situation and the power struggle between Terrorists and the Afghanistan state or the uprisal of any remaining leftist believers; there can be a chance of another civil war in Afghanistan which will have drastic consequences for Pakistan
- 6) With the uncertain political situation in Afghanistan there will be societal problems of increase in crimes and criminal mind setup in KPK and we have seen the increase in it in the past couple of months
- 7) Chance of Taliban's retaliation from US local supporters against them. There is a possibility that the Taliban would not let those in peace who supported the USA in the war against them after some time of the agreement period with the international community, we have seen them deviate from their promises on many occasions and breaking of their commitments. These attacks and personal targeting would intensify
- 8) Chance of further migration from Afghanistan and burden on K. P's economy. If in case there will be problems in Afghanistan, they will again turn their faces to Pakistan and the K.P government will not be able to handle further migration from Afghanistan
- 9) Political uncertainty on both sides of the border which we do have currently after ISAF and U.S.A withdrawal there is a chance of a security vacuum which will cause of extension and intensification of political uncertainty in the region
- 10) Chance of Pashtun nationalism.

# **Summarization**

Having these (trans) national interests of regional and international actors in mind, along with the lack of tangible achievements of the so-called War on Terror and counter-narcotics missions of the international community, those siding with this potential scenario foresee that regional powers will not stand by, not

engage and watch weak Afghan Security Forces not or inadequately addressing the above-mentioned joint challenges, as they cannot afford to do so. Every country has its own reason for being involved in Afghanistan's affairs after the US-led withdrawal.<sup>23</sup> Apart from this, among the involved states are three are nuclear powers - India, Pakistan and Russia, while a fourth one is a growing nuclear power, Iran. Given the predicted post-withdrawal security vacuum, the situation is perceived as a more complicated one, making the country a territory of proxies by different state and non-state stakeholders, a battleground of warlords, different jihad(s) and freedom fighters, internal and external forces along with their national and geopolitical/regional interests. In such a case, the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa could be used for proxies by any and many regional and international powers like once were used to destroy the Soviet Union. There will be a flow of arms and weapons in the region and to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa once again. There will be support and resistance from Pashtun nationalists and Muslim Jihadists from the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa once again and that can destroy the very structure of this province because we will not be able to handle another such situation.

# Conclusion

In conclusion, the US-led intervention in Afghanistan for state-building and eradicating terrorism has left a negative impact not only on Afghanistan but also on Pakistan. The US neo-colonialization of Afghanistan has caused instability, terrorism, and radicalization to spread to Pakistan. As a result, Pakistan had to face the negative consequences of US intervention, such as the influx of refugees, cross-border terrorism, and a weak economy due to regional instability. Moreover, the US drone attacks in Pakistan's tribal areas have further fuelled anti-US sentiment and increased resentment towards the government for allowing foreign intervention in the region.

The case study of US intervention in Afghanistan highlights that foreign intervention in a region without considering the socio-economic, political, historical, cultural, and ethical understanding of the region can have disastrous consequences not only for the intervened country but also for its neighbors. In the case of Pakistan, the US-led intervention in Afghanistan has weakened its institutional setup, damaged its economy, and increased the threat of terrorism. The US's policy of intervention has led to a sense of neocolonialization, where Pakistan was forced to bear the negative consequences of the US intervention without having any significant role in the decision-making process.

Therefore, foreign powers mustn't intervene in a region without proper understanding and consultation with the concerned country and its neighbors. Moreover, the focus should be on diplomatic engagement, economic development, and building local institutions instead of relying solely on military interventions. This would not only bring sustainable peace and development to the region but also prevent the negative impacts of foreign intervention on neighboring countries like Pakistan.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup>Richard Greco, "Exit from Afghanistan: Strategy Before Schedule," Longitude 6 (July, 2011): 59-61

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