

Ethics and Armed Conflict in Afghanistan

Wahid Sheerzuy

Major research paper submitted to
the Faculty of Human Sciences and Philosophy,
School of Ethics, Social Justice and Public Service, Saint Paul University,
in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts in Public Ethics

Ottawa, Canada
January 7, 2021

Statement of the problem

Afghanistan's geopolitical importance to the West and the former USSR has had a tremendous effect on Afghanistan's people. The country was used as a war zone both in the Cold War and post 9/11 between the United States, Russia, and other countries as well as groups like the Mujahedeen, Al-Qaeda, and Taliban militants. Looking at the country's historical situation, it is clear that it has been a disaster place for the people of Afghanistan. Thus, they have become more vulnerable to such struggles due to the country's long war. Conflicts are very common. On many occasions, they are the ultimate constructive drivers of societal change. As Afghanistan has been grappling with different forms of conflicts and civil wars for over four decades which resulted in the death of more than 2 million people and displacements of millions of people, it is important to look at the country's ongoing conflicts from the ethical point of view (Maley 163). During forty years of conflict starting from 1978, various forms of inhuman and intolerable violence occurred; women have been assaulted, and children have been abused, forced to participate in violence, and are coerced to do labour jobs. Many credible national and international human rights observers have reported the continuous and prolonged killings and tortures of the war prisoners as well as breach of the Geneva accord, and human rights laws. It has also been reported that prisoners have been mass-massacred, and women and children have been group-raped during the civil war in the 1990s (Maley 198).

All of these human rights violations and mass tortures provide solid reasons for this paper to analyze the ethical aspects of the armed conflicts in Afghanistan. This paper argues that conflict in Afghanistan is the continuation of the proxy war of the major international players as well as that of the neighbouring countries specifically Pakistan's core strategic interest. Moreover, this paper argues that all involved parties in the conflict committed numerous war

crimes and breached national and international laws and regulations pertaining to conflicts.

These crimes and violations include human rights violations, torture and abuse of children and women abuse, destruction of civilian entities and properties resulted in billions of dollar losses, wrecking the economy, as well as driving the country into the ditch of poverty, backwardness, unemployment, internal displacement, and flux of outward refugees.

Section 1: A Brief History of Armed Conflict in Afghanistan

The current conflict and political unrest can be traced back to Daud Khan's presidency (July 1973- April 1978). When he consolidated his power, Daoud Khan appointed several of his family members and close friends to different government positions. The newly appointed high-ranking officials tended to widen their influences and proceeded to enrich themselves from the public purse (Baker 164). The flaw in his government was aggravated by the strategic decisions he had made. For example, he had attempted to juggle the political ball between two extremes- "Scylla" and "Charybdis" - as he had isolated both left and right ends of the political current. Soon after his second *coup d'état*, Daoud Khan had shifted to the left and developed a closer relationship with the USSR. This had benefited the country by utilizing a source of aid, technical advice, and international support that resulted in the strengthening and expansion of the local Communist Party (Baker 164).

The Communist Party (People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan- PDPA) was founded on unique socialist groups in 1965. From 1973 onwards, the PDPA had been assisting Daoud's government; however, their relations had become unstable by the beginning of 1978 (Baker 165). "When Daoud Khan tended to push the ship of the state from one corner to the other and build up a relationship with the West, and with countries such as Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. This

shift resulted in isolation of his local supporters. At the same time, the USSR began to wonder whether it could trust him as an ally (Baker 167)". When the members of the communist party realized that Daoud Khan was removing the known Marxist elements from his government, they responded by murdering close associates of the President (Baker 167).

According to Baker, 2011, the USSR backed the Communist party soon after and launched a bloody revolution called the "Saur Revolution". A month after, it was named the "April Revolution". The immediate spark for the revolution was struck on the 17th of April 1978, when a prominent Communist and a founder of the Party, Mir Akbar Khaybar, was murdered in shadowy circumstances. "He was a member of the Parcham faction of the Communist Party, and his death was blamed on the government (although there were other culprits noised abroad in the bazaars in rumour, ranging from other Communist factions to the Central Intelligence Agency "CIA" (Baker 165)".

Over a week later, Daoud Khan and eighteen of his family members (including wife, daughters, and grandchildren, one of whom was a baby) were killed during an assault on his palace in the early hours of 28 April 1978. The assault was carried out mainly (although not exclusively) by an armed member of the Khalq faction of the PDPA, possibly acting on their initiative without the knowledge of their leaders. It is equally possible that they were acting with the advice or at least the tacit support of the Soviets, through Komitet Gosudarstvennoy Bezopasnosti "KGB" officers in Afghanistan. Whoever were the moving spirits behind the "Saur Revolution," it suited Hafizullah Amin, among others, for he had threatened with arrest for speaking out against the government of Daoud Khan. As the armed forces had been equipped with Soviet weapons and the air force flew Soviet-designed aircraft, the officer, technicians, and professionals within the armed forces had generally been trained in the USSR. During their

training, they had inevitably absorbed some socialist ideas. The armed forces' officer corps remained a mainstay of the socialist and secular governments that followed until decimated by ten years of civil conflict. They were supplanted by tribal militia with tribal chains of command (Reunion122) (Baker 164).

As soon as Hafizullah Amin took power, the new government of the Saur Revolution indicated that it intended to modernize Afghanistan by installing democratic values based on respect for Islam, Afghan nationalism, and neutrality in foreign affairs. The revolutionary council had the ultimate authority, and Taraki was announced as president and Prime Minister at first. However, Hafizullah Amin was later appointed the Prime Minister, and Babrak Karmal was given Ministership. Hafizullah Amin guided much of what happened next in his role as the Prime Minister (Baker 166). The new government revealed that its goals were to modernize Afghan society, especially its feudal aspects. To achieve these objectives, it was necessary to reform Afghan laws by imposing principles of secular laws in place of Islamic laws (Baker 167). This prospect invoked opposition, which the government put down vigorously. At first, the new regime targeted conservatives, professionals, and moderate tribal leaders whom the government believed might likely to oppose the new regime. The government also eliminated many people on ideological grounds, such as mullahs and other clerics. Some scholars estimate that those who disappeared under Taraki/ Amin's rule ranged from 11000 to 30,000 (Amin 126). Baker stated:

Those who were not killed often become, refugees. In 1979, there were the first (of many) outflows of refugees from the country, as the elite of a nation fled the violence. Up to 400,000 Afghans left their homeland, so seek refuge in neighbouring countries. Gradually, opposition against the government grew towards the end of 1978. The

opposition appeared first among the non-Pashtun tribes. The rebellions originated from the north and reached Kabul destabilizing the central government. (Baker 167)

The resistance against the government sparked in different parts of the country. For example, the uprising in Herat province commenced in March by the Islamic fundamentalists led by Ismail Khan. These protesters were almost certainly inspired by the Islamic Revolution that took place in Iran (Baker 170). They massacred hundreds of officials of the central government including the Communist Party members, as well as hundreds of Soviet advisers and their families (Runion 52). The government responded to this brutality in the same way. A strong contingent from Kandahar was accompanied by the airpower and the overwhelming military strength of their armoured formations to devastate the city. This revolt and the suppression of the revolt resulted in death of around 20,000 people in Herat province.

It also provided an opportunity for the United States to amplify its interest. On the one hand, President Jimmy Carter approved financial aid for the Mujahideen rebels as well as a covert mission by the CIA to be directed against the Communist regime of Afghanistan. This resulted in war and casualties. On the other hand, there remained some humanitarian aid programs operating under the U.S. auspices to help the victims of war. However, much of the fortress were eliminated by remorseless air attacks. (Baker 169)

In September 1979, when the modernizing communist government was under threat and needed to be pulled together, a bloody internal fight broke out between the followers of President Taraki and those of the Prime Minister Hafizullah Amin. The two factional groups clashed openly on September 14th, 1979. According to Hassan, the followers of Taraki ambushed Amin and wounded him on his way to meet Taraki at the presidential palace (Maley 77). The result of

this internecine fight turned out to favour Amin, who was able to call on his supporters in the military to come to his assistance. They attacked on the presidential palace. During the clashes between the parties, Taraki was killed. Thereafter, Amin's followers searched over Kabul to wipe out any resistance from Taraki's followers - even though the latter were a member of the Khalq's factions, as were Amin's followers. As a result, many more died in this sweeping operation (Baker 172).

Hafizullah Amin had exclusive control of the Afghan government; however, the opportunity he had attained by violence was contaminated. The venom in the system was that the Soviet government depended on sustaining his military, and his regime had been more supportive of the former president, Taraki. Amin moved to widen his options and requested military assistance from Pakistan and the United States, arguing that the previous excesses were all Taraki's fault (Baker 165). Reunion 2007, revealed that Hafizullah Amin had several confidential meetings with the senior American diplomats in Kabul including J. Bruce Amstutz. However, Amin's expectations that the United States would interfere on his behalf and support him was forlorn (Reunion 48).

By seeking American's help, Hafizullah Amin lost his trustworthiness for the Russians. According to many credible scholars who specialize in the Afghan war history, the Kremlin believed that Hafizullah Amin's tough oppressive measures would lead to his rejection by the Afghan people. Amin 2016 indicates, "They also had a concern about his loyalty to his supporters in Moscow, and so they declared that Amin was secretly working for the CIA". He further states:

On Christmas Eve 1979, around 80,000 Soviet troops and 1800 tanks of the 40th Soviet Army under the command of Marshal Sergei Sokolov made a full-scale invasion of Afghanistan". One of the targets of the Soviets was Amin himself (Baker 172). Amin and several of his followers died three days after the invasion when his headquarters in the Tajbeg Presidential Palace was attacked by Soviet Special Forces (some of them dressed in Afghan Army uniforms). The Soviets quickly overran all the country and then arranged for the former leader of the PDPA (Baker 172). The moderate Babrak Karmal returned from Europe to be the new Prime Minister and President of the Revolutionary Council. The affair was cloaked with legality with the Afghan ruling body, and the Afghan Revolutionary Central Committee dutifully elected Karmal to his offices. (Amin 74)

Russia's Afghanistan invasion sparked international condemnation. For example, "The General Assembly of the United Nations passed a resolution condemning the invasion by a margin of 104 to 18, with 18 abstentions (Runion 86)". On 14 January, a resolution was carried in the Security Council which was immediately vetoed by the USSR. There was also condemnation from the Islamic Conference meeting in Pakistan. At a meeting of the Non-Aligned foreign ministers meeting in Delhi, there were calls for respect for Afghanistan's independence and sovereignty. Ethically, those abovementioned organizations voiced their concerns and condemned Afghanistan occupation by USSR. However, practically, it did not change the reality on the ground, and USSR continued its Afghanistan occupation. Afghanistan turned to a bullying ground for the cold war players. On the other hand, historically, Afghans have never accepted foreign invasions and have instead fought and fought for their country's autonomy and freedom.

However, there has been debate about the USSR's strategic aims following its invasion of Afghanistan (Maley 158).

The Pakistani government (then a military regime under General Muhammed Zia-ul-Haq) had been hostile to the Marxist regime in Kabul not only because it was itself heavily influenced by the Islamic fundamentalism but also because of its benefits in extending its influence in its western neighbour (Baker 176). Financial and military assistance were funnelled through to the Afghan Mujahideen groups. "The financial and military assistance came from states as diverse as those of Colonel Gaddafi's Libya, the Revolutionary Islamic Republic of Iran (at that time in the thrall of Ayatollah Khomeini), the conservative and wealthy or oil-rich states of Saudi Arabia and the Gulf" (Baker 177). Iran was also supporting the Afghan resistance. But for reasons of geography and ethnicity, it would not prove to be the main supporter of Pakistan. Conversely, the Mujahideen's resistance was not as successful as it should have been due to the profound tribal divisions that had long-degraded Afghanistan, including those between the Pashtun majority, the Uzbeks and the Tajiks. Unity among these tribes as well as other tribes was proved to be almost impossible (Coll 193).

Resistance continued to become more organized during the mid to late 1980. It escalated out of the tribal structures and loyalties that had survived nearly two years of violent Communism. During most of the 1980s, the Soviet and Afghan government forces were able to contain the resistance (Maley 128). They waged various military sweeps to disarm tribesmen in an attempt to keep the peace. However, several groups obtained weapons, either stolen from supply depots of the Afghan army or channelled through Pakistan from foreign sources such as China and Egypt. Their abilities grew and with that their confidence (Amin 62). The foreign

backers supplied light arms and heavier weapons such as a Chinese three-inch recoilless rifle capable of stopping light armoured vehicles (Coll 216).

From 1978 to 1992, the PDPA (Communist Party) attempted mediation by the United Nations (UN) and pursued a host of reconciliatory approaches to a truce aimed mainly at facilitating a solution leading to the withdrawal of the Soviet Union. Initially, the non-aggression pacts were complemented by financial and logistical assistance, which allowed local Mujahideen commanders to be in charge of security in their areas as long as they did not target Soviet or Soviet-backed Afghan security forces (Mason 57). These negotiations were unsuccessful at the height of the war because the Mujahideen leaders used government assistance to expand their influence and strengthen their positions without any hope of preserving long-term stability or reconciling with the government (Mason 57). Essentially, the Soviets were in a cage with a lion, and their strategy was to feed the lion. The national reconcile process was proposed by Najibullah and appealed to the united nation to convince the Mujaheddin parties to come to an acceptable peace process by all involved parties. Najibullah eventually realized that a political solution could end the war in Afghanistan, not a civil war. He understood that the regional and international supporters of Mujaheddin, such as the United States, Arabic countries, and Pakistan, tried to push mujahedeen to win the long-lasting conflict by violence and defeat Kabul's government and install a pro-Pakistani regime in Afghanistan. Knowing that the Mujaheddin parties are fighting to gain power, he initiated the national reconcile program to eventually transfer the power peacefully to Mujaheddin. Najibullah's peace coalition is very close to the Taliban stance today—there can be no settlement as long as external powers are in the region. By the late 1980s, after the Soviets had withdrawn, Najibullah sought to integrate the Mujahideen into post-Soviet Afghanistan through power-sharing. Still, he relied heavily on

money subsidies from the Soviets to pay the Mujahideen not to combat the army. In the lion's cage, analogous to the fall of the Soviet Union and the subsidies payments (the food) dried up, the lion ate Najibullah. Similar payments to the Taliban today not to fight would not be a credible option for the same reason (Mason 58).

Section 2: Main Causes of Armed Conflict in Afghanistan

The Afghan people are deeply patriotic and have always been ready to make great sacrifices to protect their country against foreign countries' attack and invasion. Unfortunately, for their cause, mostly, the resistance has been divided along the lines of ethnicity, geography, and personal rivalry. The resistance movement was divided within the country and outside the country. "although major players in Peshawar, Pakistan attempted to dictate matters, the leaders within Afghanistan itself became the more notable parties" (Coll 287). The Islamic Party (Hizb-i-Islami) was one of the main parties because it was based among the predominant ethnic group, the Pashtuns. The Islamic Party operated as two groups. One group was led by Yunis Khalis who carried out the operation to the east of Kabul, Jalalabad and Paktia provinces. The other arm of the Islamic Party was a splinter group led by Gulbadin Hekmatyar, who conducted resistance in the center and south of the country. Hekmatyar proved himself adept at fundraising into the Mujahideen movement from the Middle East and the United States (Williams 47).

Besides this prominent party there exist other influential parties that continue to exist in Afghanistan. In the south-east of Afghanistan was another Islamic Party, very traditional and based upon family links. This was the Afghan National Liberation Front (Jebha-e-Nejat-i-Milli-Afghanistan) led by Mujadiddi Sibghat Allah. The National Islamic Front of Afghanistan (Mahaz-i-Milli Islami-yi Afghanistan) was another party which drew its strength from the

Durrani tribe of Pashtuns, and which had close ties to the Afghan royal family. In the north, there was a constellation of political groupings, mainly centred around non-Pashtun ethnic groups such as the Tajiks and Uzbeks. They all used the term Islamic Society (Jamiat-i-Islami) to describe their resistance, but their unity was only in name. It was led by Burhanuddin Rabbani, a Tajik. The most prominent battlefield commander of the Islamic Society was Ahmad Shah Masoud (Baker 179) (Maley 163).

In the north was the Revolutionary Islamic Movement (Harakat-i-Inqilab-i-Islami). The north-west was the optimistically named Organization for Victory group (Sazuman-i-Nasr) which drew most of its support from the Shiite Muslim community of the country, and which had strong backing from Iran. Moreover, in the north not far from China, was a group called Eternal Flame (Shula-i-Jawed) which followed a Maoist philosophy and received arms and resources from China. The other small group was the Movement of the Islamic Revolution (Harakat-i-Inqilab-i-Islami) Mohammad Nabi Mohammadi led it (Baker 175) (Maley 147).

Although few of these resistance groups were ready to work together on a formal basis when fighting against the government, they indeed fought against each other from time to time because of their different backgrounds and beliefs. As allies they were able to build support in rural areas and deprive the central government. Its Soviet backers were of claims of nationwide control. The larger groups were successful at fundraising from international sources, but there were many smaller resistance groups sometimes with a base in just a group of villages. Their needs for funds and resources brought about growth in old evils that were renewed under the disguise of patriotism—drug dealing, kidnapping, and blackmailing (Williams 75).

The resistance groups conducted various attacks against the central government. The first major offense against the resistance took place in early 1981. The mujahideen groups had triumphed in seizing and holding several small towns in the south-east and began to infiltrate Kandahar city. The government conducted a large-scale wipe up operation in the area and made airstrikes on targets within Kandahar itself. Nonetheless, The Mujahideen continued to operate within the city. In the north, in the Panjshir Valley in July 1981, several the Islamic Society resistance groups under Ahmadshah Massoud leadership managed to seize control of urban centers. It threatened the Soviet supply line (Baker 183) (Maley 128).

These proxy wars resulted in more Russian troops' involvement while the central government gradually lost control over the country. "The Soviet deployed a total of 120,000 men in its peak in early 1982 in addition to 30,000 soldiers and air force personnel" (Baker 185). In June 1982, negotiations were initiated between the Afghan and the Pakistani government to wind down Pakistan's support for the Afghan resistance. Each government efficiently acted as proxies for the Soviets on one side and the Americans on the other, with the United Nations officials as international participants. During 1983, it became clear that the Afghan resistance was becoming more pervasive and more effective. By that time, the Soviet-backed government-held perhaps less than 20 percent of the country, although they controlled much of the population and held the main cities and towns (Baker 187).

The CIA and the Middle East countries funnelled their numerous support and increased resources to the Afghan resistance. Mujahideen opted to develop new tactics during 1984, concentrating their attacks on communication lines and the electricity system, and using a new weapon against the Soviet and the Afghan army bases. —Small and simple missile were randomly fired by the mobile team within the bases (Baker 188). "By 1985-86 American funding

totalled US\$ 600 million per year, and the Gulf states gave a comparable amount” (Baker 189). The American assistance provided by the CIA (through a program called Operation Cyclone) was funnelled through the Pakistani intelligence services, the Inter-Services Intelligence “the ISI”. The Mujahideen who benefited were recruited from Arab countries, including a young and wealthy Saudi Arabian businessman, Osama bin Laden (Coll 327).

By 1986 it was clear that the USSR and its Afghan allies could not overcome the Mujahideen forces. The Army of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan was built up and re-equipped, but its performance in battle was disappointing to the Soviets. The balance of the resistance was changing, and so were Soviet attitudes. The USSR leader, Mikhail Gorbachev, was seeking a geopolitical realignment, and in doing so, he needed a solution to the Afghan imbroglio. At the time, the USSR was facing financial constraints, and a continuing war between Iraq and Iran was further complicating Central Asian strategies. In 1986 the USSR pressured the man they had installed as Premier, Babrak Karmal, to resign. On the 4th of May, Afghan media reported that the Premier had resigned for health reasons, and he was replaced by Muhammed Najibullah formerly the chief of “Afghanistan’s Secret Police.”

Shortly after the regime change, Gorbachev announced the intention of the Soviets to withdraw from Afghanistan. The withdrawal negotiations were drawn out. It was not until new peace talks arranged by the United Nations in February 1988 that arrangements for the peaceful withdrawal of Soviet troops were finalized. As a result of these negotiations, the USSR agreed to withdraw completely from the country and the United States agreed to cease all support for the Mujahideen. The agreement was named the Geneva Accords.

The first half of the Soviet contingent was withdrawn from May to August 1988, and the second half withdrew from November 1988 to February 1989, with the last troops withdrawn on the 15th of that month. While the Soviets were making their withdrawal, Premier Najibullah had taken the means to broaden the popular appeal of his secular government by granting privileges to the Islamic groups, amnesty for the selected Mujahideen, and new constitution values in the exercise of the *Loya Jirga*. The election was held in April 1988, which reduced the influence of the PDPA. These moves won some local support, but the bulk of the Mujahideen pledged to continue their struggle (Baker 191-193).

The Soviet union's occupation of Afghanistan ended in February 1989. During the nine and a bit year of their presence in Afghanistan, there were substantial civilian casualties. According to Coll 2005, "The Kabul government announced the deaths of soldiers and civilians at 243,900. However, another source assessed that perhaps one million Afghan died and another three million had been wounded because of the landmines in roads and fields. In addition, the entire communities had been impoverished, and millions of refugees were displaced. Not only civilian casualties but also Afghanistan had been burdened with a huge bilateral debt to the USSR (later to Russia)".

Najibullah renamed the PDPA the Homeland Party and abandoned any remaining links with Marxism. His government continued to hold on to power tenuously, but in March 1991, his government lost strategic territories along the border with Pakistan. A major financial and military strike hit Najibullah's regime when the USSR itself fell apart in August 1991. Najibullah had lost his most important source of arms and support, although he had still managed to hold on for another six months (Baker196). Unlike Najibullah, the Mujahideen were lucky enough for receiving continuous external support. The CIA and other sponsor countries

continued their funnelled support through Pakistan (Maley 182) (Baker 197). The decisive push against Najibullah's government was inflicted by the militia of General Abdul Rashid Dostum, the Uzbek leader, who was in strategically vital areas to the north of the Salang Tunnel and Kabul's lifeline of communications and supplies. Dostum had been a reliable ally of Najibullah's regime throughout much of its rule. It had even been decorated as a Hero of the Republic. However, the temptation to carve out a territory of his own was apparently too much. He joined forces with Massoud to launch a new offensive attack in March 1992 (Maley 137).

Kabul was a city almost without food and fuel when it was captured in April. Ultimately, the regime collapsed. Najibullah sought refuge in a United Nations compound, where he stayed as a virtual prisoner until the Taliban killed him in 1996. On the other hand, the northern forces concluded a new agreement and installed Sibghat Allah Mujadiddi as President of Afghanistan on 27 April 1992 and Masoud becomes defence minister (Maley 162). The agreement did not last long for the power of the northern rested on the Tajik, Uzbek, and Ismaili ethnic groups, while the Pashtun strongly opposed them. Masoud, a Tajik leader, and Hekmatyar, a Pashtun leader, wanted to carve out fiefdoms for themselves in Kabul. On 4 to 5 May, Hekmatyar's artillery (much of it captured from the armouries of the former regime) carried out heavy shelling on various targets in Kabul that left fifty people dead. President Mujadiddi announced the new cabinet, but again there was dissension and not unreasonable calls for all the heavily armed militia units to leave the city. Shortly, although the factional leaders objected, Burhanuddin Rabbani becomes a leader because of his ethnicity. Despite their objective, in July 1992, Rabbani, as the Mujahedeen Coalition nominal leader, becomes the new President of Afghanistan. Still, he had never been able to impose a unified government and bring stability in the country (Baker 196).

Unfortunately, the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan tumbled in a chaotic state from late 1992 to 1993. These civil wars resulted in further destruction of the country and hundreds of thousands of civilian casualties. The Human Rights Report of the US Department of State reported around 34,000 deaths in Kabul in 1994 (Baker 200). These continuous civil wars and chaos paved the way for a new resistance, the Taliban.

In 1994, In the south-east of the country, a small group of mainly-Pashtun resistance fighters gathered around a veteran of the anti-Soviet resistance, Mullah Muhammed Omar Akhund. He had been born and raised in Kandahar. His followers came to be known as the Taliban; a word derived from the Pashtun word for the students. The Taliban religious students' movement is not a recent phenomenon. It had its origins in an ultraconservative Islamic revival taught in a madrassa (religious school) in Deoband, India, founded in 1866. According to the global security journal, Deobandism is a conservative Islamic orthodoxy that follows a Salafist egalitarian model and seeks to emulate the life and times of Prophet Mohammed. (Deobandi Islam, 2020).

The Deobandi philosophy was founded in 1867 at the Dar ul-Ulum (Abode of Islamic Learning) madrassa in Deoband, India. Deobandi madrassas flourished across South Asia, and they were officially supported in Pakistan when President Mohammed Zia-ul-Haq assumed control of the Pakistani government in 1977. The fundamentalist Deoband Dar-ul-Uloom brand of Islam inspired the Taliban movement and had widespread appeal for Muslim fundamentalists. Most of the Taliban leadership attended Deobandi-influenced seminaries in Pakistan. The Taliban was propped up initially by the civil government of Benazir Bhutto. In coalition with the Deobandi Jama'at-ulema Islam (JUI) led by Maulana Fazlur Rehman (who by 2003 was the elected opposition leader at

the Center in Islamabad and whose protégé is now the Chief Minister in the NWFP). Traditionally, Sunni Islam of the Hanafi school of jurisprudence was the dominant religion of Afghanistan. The Taliban also adhered to the Hanafi school of Sunni Islam, making it the dominant religion in the country for most of 2001. (Deobandi Islam 4)

In the 1980s, members of the Taliban movement received training from ISI officers in Quetta, Pakistan. The links with Pakistani were close and remained close (Arbabzadah 47) (Maley 182). It has been reportedly claimed by the political analysts and Afghan conflict experts that the movement of the Taliban was founded by the Pakistani Intelligence Service (ISI) (Maley 183).

The Taliban entered world headlines in September 1994 when they overran a number of small border posts and captured the town of Spin Boldak near the Pakistan border from the militia of Hikmatyar (Maley183). In November, the city of Kandahar fell under Taliban control. Provinces close to Kandahar, namely Oruzgan and Zabul, also came under the tutelage of the armed group, and it was clear that they had growing popular support in rural areas. The new force was heavily armed, even by the Afghan militia's standards, and had tanks and fighter aircraft. It was likely that in its early days, at least the Taliban had received these heavy weapons from Pakistan (Arbabzadah 52) (Maley 183). The Taliban established a stronger connection with the northern fighters, notably the Hazara and the Uzbeks of General Dostum. With these new allies, they encircled Kabul, and in September 1996 by capturing Jalalabad, the capital of Nangarhar province, and hence took control of Kabul's lifeline to the east. Later that month, Massoud had to withdraw from the capital, and the Taliban took possession (Maley 191).

By the end of 1998, the Taliban claimed that they had controlled around 90 percent of the country, and they had been imposing strict Islamic rules. Until events in the latter months of 2001, the Taliban maintained their rule over most areas in the country, despite some signs of growing unrest with their hardline religious dictates (Baker 206). One key factor in that sequence had come about in May 1996, when a friend of Mullah Omar, Osama bin Laden, was allowed to establish camps to train Mujahideen fighters who wished to take their struggle with the infidel to foreign countries. Osama bin Laden was a former Saudi Arabian millionaire who had had to flee to the Taliban-controlled Afghanistan, escaping pursuit by Western intelligence agencies and others. Bin Laden was flown into Jalalabad airport to be met by high-ranking Taliban officials. He brought with him the policies and strategies and personnel of a group called al-Qaeda.

The result of the insertion of this terrorism bacillus was that the Taliban became even stricter and more doctrinaire. Shortly afterward, Mullah Omar ordered the most significant cultural vandalism of the twentieth century; the destruction of the 800-year-old statues of Buddha at Bamiyan. The resultant international criticism had little effect on the Taliban regime (Baker 206) (Maley 213). Eventually, these Taliban rebels fought against the Afghan people, culture, education, economy, human rights and destroyed Afghanistan's history. The Taliban, who was against humanity, justified their war as *Jihad* and fighting the Godless people and considered themselves the followers of Amir-ul-Momeneen, which means the leaders of Believers (Coll 368). In addition, this insertion of al-Qaeda into the Taliban's terrorist group led to the 9/11 attack.

The date of 11 September 2001 has been imprinted in the American history as the date when a terrorist attack by al-Qaeda, under the tutelage of bin Laden, struck hard at the

center of American culture and capitalism in the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center in New York, at the Pentagon, and in prospect at a fourth but unknown target using fully fuelled passenger jets. (Abbas 115)

As a result of that day's attacks, which killed more than 4000 people in the United States, the government of President George W. Bush concluded that those responsible for the atrocity would have to be tracked down wherever they were (Maley 216). This resulted in launching attacks on Afghanistan and eventually its invasion.

At first, the Americans expected to topple the Taliban government through a bombing campaign starting on October 7th. The Americans launched their indirect intervention within two months of the attack on the World Trade Centre. In late October 2001, they commenced a second sustained bombing campaign against targets related to the Taliban government and in support of a ground offensive by the northern militias. The campaign was named "Operation Enduring Freedom" by the United States (Maley 218). Eventually, with the aid of the bombing, and through the insertion of Special Forces of the United States, Canada, and Australia, the Taliban were forced out of their position and had to retreat before the attack of the forces of the Northern Alliance. Finally, Kabul was quickly retaken on 13 November by the Northern Alliance (Coll 358).

The United Nations Security Council approved the establishment of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) on 20 December. The ISAF was meant to be the body authorizing and coordinating international assistance for Afghanistan and had received input from forty-two countries (Baker 207). However, the U.S. troops made up one-half of its forces. Following a conference sponsored by international agencies in Konigswinter, Germany, during

December 2001, and deliberations at a *Loya Jirga* in Afghanistan, a new government was formed by a loose partnership of anti-Taliban groups, namely the northern ethnic militias and some Pashtun who were also anti-Taliban. A Pashtun named Hamid Karzai became the leader of the new State, taking office as interim president in June 2002 (Maley 228). Hamid Karzai had been named the first chairman of the interim government in December 2001 and then interim President in June 2002. On taking office, he had pledged to bring peace and development to Afghanistan and end the conflict that had bedevilled the country since 1978 (Baker 211). In 2004, a new constitution was ratified by the Afghan people, and that constitution established the nation as an Islamic state with a strong central government. Nevertheless, after the constitution was ratified, presidential elections were held, and Hamid Karzai was inaugurated as president for a five-year term (Baker 217).

Section 3: Armed Conflict, Human Rights and The Role of the International Organizations as well as The United Nations

Armed conflict is defined as a contested mismatch that concerns a government and a territory where the employment utilization of armed forces between two or more parties, whereby at least one of them is the government of a nation, brings about no less than 25 battle-related killings in a single calendar year. Conflicts are very common, and on many occasions, they are the ultimate constructive drivers of societal change (Maley 183). In today's international laws, for a situation to be termed as an armed conflict, two variables are utilized: the amount of violence, and the involved parties' level of organization. If one of these variables is not fulfilled, the situation is considered to be a disturbance. Internal disturbances are the situations where there is no international armed conflict; however, confrontation within the state is present, and is characterized by specific gravity or duration, and encompasses acts of violence (Maley 131).

Protecting civilians is an important aspect of international law consideration regarding armed conflict (Maley 251). The United Nations organization was established on the concept of maintaining international armistice as well as security in order to curb armed conflicts, and to avoid the atrocities that happened during WWII from ever reoccurring. Violations of human rights, some on a colossal scale, went on during the vehemence of decolonization. Also, the cold war, but with less intergovernmental acts possible during the UN's diverged period.

The protection of unarmed civilians from dangerous human rights violations should be an issue of global concern and attention. In contrast, the international community failed to curb these abuses. Protecting civilians should be the key international humanitarian law and should mould a fundamental element of international criminal laws. Such laws and standards should be put in place to shield non-combatants from abuse during war times and otherwise curb the conflict's impact on them by putting legal constraints in place and assigning accountabilities to the conflicting parties (Andersson 83). However, geopolitically, Afghanistan's conflict is not an internal issue; rather, it involves regional and global players, with everyone having their strategic interest. During the past four decades of conflict in Afghanistan, these players' direct or indirect support has formed too many political parties. Even though the humanitarian organizations have been actively involved in Afghanistan to assist in the conflict-affected areas, they continuously informed the involved parties about the international mandates and ethical norms regarding protecting civilians and civil institutions from being harmed. Practically, in a chaotic country like Afghanistan, it is challenging to implement international laws and ethical mandates due to the rebellious nature of the warring parties.

Abuses have continued in major and low-intensity conflicts. In recent years, the UN Security Council has increasingly concerned itself with the protection of civilians. The scale of

the idea in the United Nation's work, however, is still unclear. The question of how to define civilians' protection has been raised continually since its first use in the council in a presidential statement (Lango 56). The council raised the matters of targeting civilians, preventing humanitarian aid, incitement of violence, distributing small arms, and the all-inclusive gap between the letter and adherence to the international humanitarian laws. The Security Council has not yet provided a clear definition of the idea, so its intentions have to be interpreted from the evolving wide range of matters that have been reflected in previous security council practices, resolutions, and presidential statements (Lango 75).

Another factor closely related to armed conflict is sexual violence. It has been observed that in conflict, women, girls, and even boys have been victims of sexual violence. In the 1990s, conflicting parties employed rape as a weapon of war, terrorizing populations, intimidating their opposition, and forcing communities to flee internally and across borders. The council's agenda on women, security, and peace encompassed sexual violence but was later developed as a separate agenda of its own. Resolution 1888, founded in 2009, precisely focuses on sexual violence and requested the secretary-general to assign a specified agent on sexual violence in armed conflict. However, the security council has not yet established a subsidiary body to receive reports or take any form of action (Andersson 94).

In addition to human rights relations with ethics and armed conflicts, it is worthwhile to inquire whether the existing armed conflict laws are adequate to protect our environment during the international armed conflict periods. According to Mach, it is an indisputable fact that environmental destruction and armed conflicts are considered to be two sides of the same coin, hence former effects cannot be prevented in the event of the subsistence of later cause. It is out of this realization that numerous international interventions have policies to reduce and protect

environmental destructions in times of warfare. Our environment is under daily threats. It is not a notion but represents the quality of life, living space, and health of humans, including the unborn generations.

A third probable cause for instituting a relation between the environment and armed conflicts is that the environment is sometimes the reason or the extender for lengthening armed conflicts. The situation becomes clear when extraction, extortion, and commercialization of natural resources become the keys and conspicuous elements of the conflicts. Irrespective of the tenacities for establishing any armed conflict, there will always be direct and instantaneous impacts on our environment over the targeted regions and long-term consequences on the universal climate system (Mach et al 34).

Different from the 17th & 18th centuries of traditional warfare and their outcomes, the entirety of contemporary armed conflicts is not restricted to human miseries only. Massive destructions of homes, infrastructures, and forestry are some of the usual and obvious results of warfare. Besides, armed conflict requires both combatants and civilians to go through expatriation or exile. This has proved to be the case so many times in recent history. The environment is always in existence, and therefore, it cannot be separated from survival or human life (Mach 137).

Section 4: An Ethical Critique of Armed Conflicts in Afghanistan

From the ethical criticism perspective of the armed conflict in Afghanistan, the assault on the civilian population was appalling. While certain areas were insulated for most of the 1980s from the worst effect – notably Kabul, with its security belts – the rural areas in which the bulk of the population lived were acutely vulnerable to the kinds of weapons that the Soviets and

Afghan Armies employed (Maley 215). “Data collected in refugee camps relating to patterns of war-related mortality concluded that between 1978 and 1987, unnatural deaths in Afghanistan amounted to 876,825. On average, this represented over 240 deaths every day for ten years straight, or over 60 Afghan deaths for each Soviet soldier who died because of war” (Maley 128). In assessing the social effect of the war, however, it is also necessary to consider the injured and the disabled’s position. In 1995, the World Health Organization estimated the physically disabled as totalling nearly 1.5 million persons and in society as damaged as Afghanistan (Maley 128).

This must be added to the effects of displacement. In the 1990s, over 6 million Afghan refugees were outside the country. Therefore, the refugee exodus was destructive not only of the psychosocial wellness of those driven into exile, but also of the new generation of Afghans’ ability to function as farmers, herdsmen, or people in the business. Such disruption to human capital formation can fuel a cycle of conflict in a country where war-torn societies are often easier to train uneducated and unskilled youths to fight than to farm. In addition, to external refugees, countless Afghans were internally displaced during the war (Maley 128).

The armed conflict’s impact on Afghan women, for the most part, was especially devastating. However, some women visitors were impressed by how they found Kabul. Also, one even reported enthusiastically that there were female employees and several female volunteer soldiers at Po-el-Charkhi prison (Coll 385). The impact of women’s abuse which regularly took place in the regime’s prison was akin to praising Heinrich Himmler as an equal opportunity employer because there were women guard at Belsen. Nothing the combat techniques deployed by the Kabul regime and its backers to protect women. Nancy Hatch

Dupree observed that Women shared more than equally in these events; often only women with their children occupied the mud-brick housing flattened by air and ground fire (Maley 129).

Furthermore, in Pakistan, women in refugee camps in the most conservative parts of a conservative state were forced to endure an existence that was stultifying in the extreme. Therefore, of male relatives in a society where the family is a key unit and men are typically the breadwinners, the consequences of male war deaths continue to be very widely felt (Maley 130).

During this period, the Mujahideen and other ethnic groups were involved in a case conflict in Kabul's southern suburbs and destroyed the city. On the other hand, in a countryside area, the kinds of bombardments which caused such massive casualties during the 1980s largely ceased. As a result, the average levels of mortality in the post-communist period across the county were sharply lower than those of the 1980s (Baker 176). There are some ethical frameworks and moral theories developed by some scholars pertinent to the conflict that can be applied while waging war against a belligerent. This ethical guidance should be applicable ideally; however, implementing such ethical modules is practically difficult, and there is no guarantee for their implementation.

For example, in his work (*The Ethics of Armed Conflict: A Cosmopolitan Just War Theory*, 2014), Lango argues that;

Truly, some uses of armed force are just, and some uses of armed force are unjust. The problem of just war theorising is to formulate and support moral principles employing which responsible agents can determine whether a particular use of armed force would be just or unjust. Lango further indicates that "Just war theory is a moral theory, and just war principles are moral principles. Ideally, just war principles ought to morally constrain

responsible agents from using armed force unjustly. A particular just war theory is a particular theory about the nature, justification and application of just war principles. (Lango 16-18)

Whereas the moral principles theory is about nature (normative ethics), justification (metaethics) and application (applied ethics) of those principles (Lango 18). Presently, there is not any unanimously accepted single just war theory. According to cosmopolitan just war theory, the contemporary nature of conflict requires revising and rethinking the just war theory to be compatible with the current geopolitical atmosphere under which the war is being paid. The traditional just war theory is a state-centric one. On the other hand, the cosmopolitan just war theory tends to apply the war principle from the security council's standpoint. According to this module, the just war principle ought to be generalized and temporalized, as illustrated by the just cause principle. Further, the Ethics of Armed Conflict requires interstate wars to suitably generalize just war principles so that they can apply to armed humanitarian interventions, counterinsurgency operations, armed revolutions and so forth (Lango 18).

Unlike the just war theory, the cosmopolitan just war theory encompasses both top-down and bottom-up frameworks. Its core purpose is to protect the world population from the plague of all forms of armed conflict, “by both morally constraining responsible agents from using armed force unjustly and by morally constraining responsible agents to use armed force justly” (Lango 13). The core moral ideals of cosmopolitan theory support the UN Charter. “Ideally, state-centric just war principles ought to morally constrain states from using armed force unjustly. Ideally, cosmopolitan just war principles ought to morally constrain the Security Council from authorising unjust uses of armed force. Both the Security Council and individual states ought to

be motivated basically by a cosmopolitan ideal of the equality of interests of every human being everywhere in the world” (Lango 13).

Finally, the cosmopolitan just war theory proposes that “received just war principles of just cause, last resort, proportionality and non-combatant immunity should be generalized so that they are applicable to all forms of armed conflict.” Consequently, they would be applicable not only to interstate wars but also to civil wars, armed humanitarian interventions, armed revolutions, counterinsurgency operations, counterterrorism operations, military operations by UN peacekeeping missions and so forth (Lango 14).

Section 5: The Impact of Armed Conflict in Afghanistan on Education

The armed conflict in Afghanistan effectively impacted education equality and human rights. Essentially to Afghan men and women to have an equal opportunity at work, education, social life, and day to day activities are to solve the problems together in Afghanistan. However, there are gendered inequalities in Afghanistan. Among many other inequalities, men have access to education, whereas women have lost such fundamental rights due to armed conflict. These inequalities include for instance, access to education, working, being a part of social life, and an equal opportunity at work.

The conflict and the country’s important location to the West and the previous USSR had a tremendous effect on the education system in Afghanistan. Afghanistan’s location continues to be important to the West and previous Soviet Union who used it as a war zone both in the Cold War and the post 9/11 by supporting Taliban, Al-Qaida, and other terrorist groups. The Afghan people become more vulnerable to such struggles in the sense of conflict and gender inequality due to the protracted conflict in the country to its historical situation. Nevertheless, such vigorous

progress in terms of education in Afghanistan can, by and large, be attributed to the Afghan-Soviet alliance.

The Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan on December 25, 1979 (Lukanovich) led to the solidarity of culture in Afghanistan against the notion of modernity in education. This cultural solidarity was later reinforced by the United States' political motivations and neighbouring countries through their Afghanistan interventions. For instance, the second operation, Cyclone against the Afghan people by the United States Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), actively armed and financed the Afghan mujahedeen before and during the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. This support turned them into extremist fundamentalists (Brown 68).

In addition, through Pakistan, the United States' strategic mission to change the Afghan youth mentality were the textbooks. The main methods that the Afghan teachers and students use since the 1980s to learn and educate themselves were textbooks. Under the Soviet invasion, the textbooks passed a very positive message of equality between the genders in the education system. According to Sarvarzade and Wotipka (2017), "these depictions encourage youth to welcome the change in outfits as a sign of a more modern era where men and women work as labourers, doctors, nurses, teachers, and librarians. Overall, both the textual and visual analyses suggest equal gender representations in the 1980s DLA textbooks of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan" (Wotipka 587). However, under the Soviet invasion, the textbooks were changed by USAID to twist all young generations against the Soviet presence in Afghanistan. The United States of America spent millions of dollars changing the Afghan children's school textbooks to exclude only boys and men and change their ideology to have them fight the USSR and win the cold war.

For instance, according to Sarvarzade and Wotipka (2017) state, “one such source was a \$60 million grant from USAID for textbook development through the University of Nebraska Omaha (Spink). Referred to by Afghans today as J is for *Jihad*, these textbooks included Dari, mathematics, science, history, and geography lessons. They were intended for Afghan children in refugee camps in Pakistan” (Wotipka 587-588). These new textbooks, included images of Jihad, weapons, and violence against the USSR presence in Afghanistan, ban women from the schools' curriculum and made men present themselves as the dominant owners of the society particularly matters relevant to work to politics. Moreover, the study of such textbooks particularly increased a sense of dominance, masculine in men who could fight the super-power USSR regime at the time, which severely affected women's education system and social life in the community.

Additionally, the U.S. spent millions of dollars to change the Afghan school textbooks to spread the extremist ideology of *Jihad* (struggle) against the Russian invasion in the 1970s, which also affected most of the students to learn a particular portion of hatred humanity. Besides, those people, Afghanistan have already had problems due to the Soviet Union's attack. The new textbooks increased their support throughout the education system and in the young generations. According to Chossudovsky (2017), who cites the Washington Post of 2002, says, “The United States spent millions of dollars to supply Afghan schoolchildren with textbooks filled with violent images and militant Islamic teaching. The primers, which were filled with talk of *Jihad* and featured drawings of guns, bullets, soldiers, and mines, have served since then as the Afghan school system's core curriculum”. Education, politics, economics, and much other progress were quickly sacrificed for the political ambitions of foreign powers such as the USSR, the United States, and neighbour countries of Afghanistan.

Therefore, they all have various problems to deal with in Afghan society, such as the long history of war in Afghanistan, the spread of Wahhabism Islam, and, most importantly, the strict roles of families' culture on women's presence outside for education. According to McGuire (2013), these four main problems became obstacles to women's education in Afghanistan. There continue to exist "underage marriages, attacks at newly built schools, and the lack of female teachers in the school system and the interpretation of Shari's law (McGuire Paragraph 5)".

In addition to the U.S., Saudi and Pakistan, who are the US allies together, also spent money, provided Islamic ideological studies in Afghanistan. This investment on the education teaching extremism to the Afghan youth turned the Afghan Mujahedeen to fight the Soviet Union in favour of the US's Cold War. The Mujahedeen Islamic ideology is the result of the same ideology backed up in the Taliban regime. However, most of the Taliban leaders were the Mujahedeen parties' member, particularly Mula Mohammad Omar Mujaheed, who fought against Russians and lost his one eye in combat. McGuire also pointed out where they focused on avoiding women's presence outside their homes that made women vulnerable to education.

Among the extreme Islamic ideologies, Wahhabism is the most extremist ideology, which is believed by previous Wahhabi's party the purity of Islam. Followers of this ideology took the most problematic view of Islam translation. With Saudi's growth in the early 1700s, people were also encouraged into such fundamentalist non-liberalization view both in Saudi first and then the idea of Wahhabism was adopted later by the Afghan Mujahedeen. It was later inherited and applied by the Taliban in Afghanistan. In the Mujahedeen case, the U.S.' CIA was involved and called them freedom fighters as the war was in more favour of the U.S.'s policies in Afghanistan. The U.S. allowed religious schools (madrassas) for Mujahedeen training by Saudi Arabia in Pakistan's in the late 1980s. Likewise, Telegraphy (2017) also reports, "In the 1970s,

with the help of funding from petroleum exports and other factors, Saudi charities started funding Wahhabi schools (madrassas) and mosques across the globe. The movement underwent “explosive growth (McGuire paragraph 3)”. As the mosques and madrassas of the Afghan Mujahedeen were also part of this charity, they turned them into this fundamentalist’s ideology against the USSR’s presence in Afghanistan. Later, they began to hate women’s presence in society.

Fundamentalism is a much-disputed term globally, especially for western nations who see non-liberal and non-democratic societies as fundamentalist. According to the author, the ideal period of fundamentalism changed through the West’s perspective, including society who practice Islamic religion. Afghanistan had the traditional practice of Islam before the political intervention of foreigners whose presence changed their view to Wahhabism and against colonizers that damaged the identity of their own and cost the Afghan women education in the long war history after the 1980s (Ghosh 8).

Islam is translated politically to the Afghan people through Arabs and Mujahideen to gain the world victory. The USSR and the U.S. war in Afghanistan cost both the Afghan men and women, which resulted in both losing the basic right to education. The people of Afghanistan particularly paid the price with their blood, tangible and intangible costs. They were forced to sacrifice their education to the Wahhabism brought by the Mujahedeen to Afghanistan, who had the support of the U.S., Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan for their political purposes.

The Afghan people suffered due to the Mujahedeen’s early support by the U.S., who armed the fundamentalists and who fought the Afghan-Soviet war in the 1980s. Some of them adapted Wahhabism ideology. The Afghan people rights were stripped off because of the

intervention by the U.S. and its allies, both western and the Muslim countries such as Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Pakistan who supported the Mujahedeen and turned them into fundamentalist and extremists. It also negatively affected their mentality especially against women's education in the Afghan society (Kolhatkar 13). In addition, it effected “their right to healthcare, employment, access to food and shelter and freedom of association, religion, and dress”. It decreased the literacy rate to only 3 percent at the time (Kolhatkar 14). Therefore, most of the Mujahedeen were turned to hate the presence of women in society and their access to education outside schools. Due to the foreign invasion the already chaotic situation in Afghanistan got worse and contributed to sectarian and tribal hatred amongst Afghans, therefore it made it extremely difficult for the Afghan leaders to get onto the negotiation table and find out a solution for the conflict.

Furthermore, both Afghan Mujahedeen and Taliban who fought against the Afghan government in Afghanistan hate women presence outside of residence because their traditional Islamic school ideology was converted to an extremist ideological Wahhabism. According to Hughes, a scholar on the current government, most allies are those previous Mujahedeen who committed various crimes. Despite all the chaos and negative impacts of the extreme ideology, these Mujahedeen still have U.S. support because they favour helping and complete the U.S. mission in Afghanistan once again. Hughes (2016) further argues that these prior warlords committed various inhuman crimes and heinous human rights violations during the 1990s, a period marked by the murder, rape, and torture of tens of thousands of innocent Afghan civilians (Hughes 57).

Thus, getting the support of the U.S.-CIA, whose purpose was to win the cold war in Afghanistan, turned the Mujahedeen violent against humanity, haters toward women, and

committed various crimes. The impact of armed conflict resulted in the changes to the traditional practice of Islam changes to Wahhabism, the training of Mujahedeen against the USSR, and the ban of people from accessing education in Afghanistan. These negative impacts continue to exist. For example, women face various problems in attending schools and universities to complete the essential part of their life (education), live insecurity without threats, overcome social exclusion, participate in political and cultural activities. The social exclusion in government positions makes it harder for everyone to support women's education because they do not have political power in Afghanistan.

Section 6: Policy Recommendations for Resolution of Armed Conflict in Afghanistan

The Afghan conflict is multi-dimensional - International, Regional, and National. For the Afghan Government to resolve the conflict, it should juggle up amongst all bellow dimensions. This paper makes the following specific recommendations for bringing about peace and stability in Afghanistan.

The Government of Afghanistan needs to put in place all the resources to convince those Taliban who want to denounce violence.

The Islamic Republic of Afghanistan should convince the international community to force Pakistan to stop supporting the Taliban and terrorism in the region.

The Afghan Government should craft policies tailored towards protecting civilians while conducting the offensive operation.

These recommendations will be more effective the key role of Afghanistan is recognized, and the available challenges are addressed. The government of Afghanistan retains the balance of

power and influence between Afghanistan and the Taliban at its current level. However, the most critical and daunting problems to exercise this key role for the government of Afghanistan are:

(1) maintaining the equilibrium of power and control between the government of Afghanistan and the Taliban at its current level.

(2) bringing the Taliban to the negotiating table to begin peace talks with the Afghan government.

(3) getting Pakistan to curb its 17-year support to the Taliban;

(4) start to roll back the pernicious dominance of opium production in the Afghan economy and its corrosive influence on national governance and state-building.

Everyone involved in this project was keenly aware that thousands of dedicated U.S., Afghan, and international military personnel. (Mason 7)

The recommended strategies and recommendations for the Afghan government is to stop tension and insecurity in the region. The Afghan conflict can cause insecurity not only to the neighboring and regional countries but also to global security. For example, the 9/11 incident is an outstanding example of the Afghan conflict's effect on international security. However, if Afghanistan is insecure, the regional economy cannot flourish due to the inter-related economic projects. For example, the gas pipeline project from Turkmenistan through Afghanistan to south Asia (TAPI) has been postponed. The international communities and political and intellectual spaces between Afghanistan and the neighbouring countries have been grappling with these problems for almost two decades to enforce the strategies (Mason 8). Also, silver bullets are used to optimize the country's requirements for development. In addition, as a strong international

ally the U.S. should continue to prioritize its efforts against the significant challenges in Afghanistan and engage the recommended solutions herein for each:

1. The open border with Pakistan and cross-border sanctuary for Taliban forces.
2. The cultivation of opium poppies and its effects on the Afghan government, civil society, and guerilla operations.
3. The challenge of creating and sustaining a capable state security architecture during an ongoing conflict.
4. Reducing the capabilities of a persistent and confident enemy and getting to a negotiated conflict resolution.
5. The Pakistan problem—reducing the Taliban cross-border sanctuary.
6. Decreasing opium profits and Taliban access to them.
7. Improving and retaining Afghanistan's security forces and decimating Taliban cadres.
8. Widening the spectrum of options for reconciliation with the Taliban. (Mason 8).

The Institute of Political Studies and the U.S. Army War College have identified the most critical and challenging issues for the country's stability, which both the determined support mission and the Afghan government are dealing with. It also noted that maintaining the balance of power and control between Afghanistan and the Taliban at its current level for the Afghan and international forces is problematic (Mason 9). The Afghan government and the Taliban are

taking peace negotiations with each other to the negotiation table. On the other side, Afghanistan and its allies have been attempting to deter Pakistan from joining the Taliban for more than 17 years (Mason 5). The support of the Taliban and the negative effect of opium on the Afghan economy, culture, and its corrosive impact on national governance and state-building are insignificant. These problems are the result of the supremacy of opium production.

The pernicious domination of opium cultivation in the Afghan economy and its corrosive effect on national governance and state-building are beginning to roll back. To optimize Afghanistan's condition for successful peace and stability for the Afghan people, the U. S. should continue to prioritize its effort against the significant challenges that the people of Afghanistan and the government of Afghanistan face which it in the last four decades (Reichrath 10). For stability and peace in the region, Pakistan has a central role to play in the region. Thus, Pakistan should stop supporting and reducing the Taliban cross-border sanctuary. According to the report, the Pakistan government indirectly provides facilities for increasing opium profits and broad access to opium industries for the Taliban instead of being against the Taliban and to banning the opium industries from the Taliban (Reichrath 9). The U. S. should improve, equip and train Afghanistan's security forces in decimating Taliban forces. Certainly, the U. S. and other allied countries have to force the Taliban and satisfy them for the spectrum of reconciliation options and the Afghanistan peace process (Reichrath 9).

Furthermore, the Government of Canada and its International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) partners are trying to support the Afghan peace process. These initiatives reflect on the discussion of a comprehensive peace process with the Afghan government, coalition members, international organizations, and neighbouring countries (Reichrath 10). The Afghan government and the Taliban have settled key sticking points that had postponed peace talks for weeks

straightening the path for negotiations to move forward. Talks started September 12 in the Qatari capital Doha but almost immediately faltered over disagreements about the agenda, the basic framework of discussions and religious interpretations (Jaafar 4).

Furthermore, for the peace process and stability for resolution and armed conflict in Afghanistan, the allied countries are developing an international 'Group of Friends' mandated to provide financial support, coaching, negotiation training, and capacity-building for all groups in the Afghan peace process (Reichrath 10). Nonetheless, to attract the Afghan people's attention to the peace process and work together with them. The Government of Canada and its International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) partners Support dialogues and consultations at local, district, and provincial levels, including victims of human rights violations, minority ethnic groups, young people, women, and all other significant stakeholders (Reichrath 10).

Furthermore, the (ISAF) Seeking the effective participation of a critical mass of representative women in all aspects of the peace process, ensures that women's and minority rights are guaranteed in the outcome of peace processes. In the meantime, NGOs and allied countries should support peace education courses for political, civil society, religious leaders, and the media (Mason8). Therefore, International NGOs should support peace education courses for political, civil society, religious leaders, and the media. Besides the International NGOs support coordinates peacebuilding efforts among civil society groups and between civil society, the government of Afghanistan, and the international community (Mason 7). However, the Afghan government, NGOs, and women's groups should lead the privilege of peacebuilding initiatives, including local, district- and province-level dialogues.

On the other hand, it is crucial to provide facilities for enabling representation of Afghan women in national and international peacebuilding meetings with the Afghan government and international stakeholders. Equally important is for International NGOs to support coordinating peacebuilding efforts through civil society groups and between the civil society, the government of Afghanistan, and the international community to stabilize the country (Mason 11). Likewise, the Government of Canada and the (ISAF) partners and NGOs; in addition to the peace process, should support the Afghan civil societies in developing public education and outreach programs to inform the broader population about peacebuilding issues, change public attitudes, and generate discussions in the society (Reichrath 8).

In addition to the key role of the international organizations including the government of Canada and the ISAF, regional cooperation another key factor to solving border disputes between the Taliban and drug dealers as well as between Afghanistan and Pakistan. It requires significant diplomatic initiative for long-term stability in the future (Mason 15).

It is broadly agreed that the U. S. should continue to focus on strategic efforts against three key challenges, which are also important for the Afghan government and the Afghan people (Mason 2). First, reducing the cross-border Taliban sanctuary in Pakistan should be the highest priority of the U.S. effort. Second, incremental improvement in efforts to decrease drug production and its corrosive effects on the Afghan society at all levels is essential if Afghanistan is ever to move out of the narco-state shadow. This dilemma has been troubling the planners for 15 years, and it is time to test out new ideas and reinforce the points of past progress. Thirdly, these techniques need to be improved by growing and enhancing Afghanistan's military capabilities and the efficacy of existing targeting objectives. It is quick to replace Taliban foot soldiers and tactical leaders, but village and district cadres do not (Mason 2).

Reducing cross-border support for the Taliban in Pakistan would require a more rigorous assessment of the factors in Pakistan that support the insurgency and a willingness to take off the support. Everything that has been tried since 2001 has not changed Pakistan's behaviour, and more repetition of the same talking points will not have the desired effect (Mason 5). External sanctuary and funding are a decisive factor in deciding the outcome of the insurgency. As Steve Coll points out in his recent history of Pakistani support for the Taliban, the S Directorate, Western military strategists and planners in Afghanistan have understood for a decade that no insurgency campaign since the Second World War, which has had cross-border sanctuary and support, like the Taliban, has ever lost (Mason 5). Pakistan's strategy of fighting the war through militant groups is organized, orchestrated, and followed by the Pakistani Army. To eliminate global support for rebels in Afghanistan, it will be essential to adjust the Pakistani Army's actions, and this, in essence, involves an accurate evaluation of its actual overall goals and intentions (Mason 8).

Below are the factors that play crucial roles in adjusting Pakistani Army's actions. These are the only key factors that keep this fragile construction together.:

1. The poor inertia of everyday life.
2. The security state (which violently suppresses the nationalist activity through extrajudicial killings).
3. The increasingly strident brand of Islamism (through support for terrorist groups).
4. The theoretical threat of invasion and conquest by India.

Removing any of the legs of this four-legged stool will destabilize Pakistan's cohesion—and at least two of the four legs would work specifically against the government of Afghanistan and U.S. interests there (Mason 7). Supporting terrorism is part of what holds Pakistan together as a society. Therefore, the only lever long enough to alter this inherently. Pakistani calculation will be one that posed a greater danger to Pakistani state stability than the displacement of one of the four points of the stool (applying a type of pressure which constitutes a greater danger than maintaining the status quo). The aspect of Pakistan's policy to preserve the status quo is its stance.

On the other hand, its policy uses militant Islamists by the Pakistani Army as part of the state bond that binds the nation together as agents to sustain its internal battle and retain its control over the Pakistani state (Mason 8). In support of these elements of the Pakistan Army strategy are to stay in de facto control and retain the Pakistan map established by Ali Jinnah in 1947. There is a large network of foundations, companies, and organizations developed by the Pakistan Army. However, over the years, the Pakistan Army has influenced political and economic institutions (Mason 8). As noted, the first is the lack of specified areas of obligation, the artillery duels over the disputed segments, and the consequent effect on Afghan stability. The second negative result is the gain of both countries' smugglers and the grey or black markets, both of whom profit from the status quo, drastically lowering Afghan government taxation and tariff revenues (Mason 11).

The dissemination of fundamentalist extremism and drugs from Afghanistan to its neighbours is a significant concern for all the neighbouring countries in the region. As a result, these countries have a direct interest in controlling these issues in Afghanistan. As China extends its global footprint and "One Belt, One Road" network, for example, Afghanistan's stability is

increasingly necessary to strengthen its reach and impact. Narcotics streaming into Iran destabilizes the country and creates domestic health issues, as some heroin will eventually linger within Iran. Both the Central Asian Republics and India aim to achieve greater mutual access to each other and mitigate extremism and drugs' corrosive social impact on their populations. India is allied with U.S. policy on removing extremism from the region. It could become a greater ally of the United States in Afghanistan by access to ports for expanded trade, sales of Russian-built helicopters from India, and intelligence sharing supporting Afghan counterinsurgency efforts (Mason 12).

The new approach to Afghanistan calls on India to play a stronger role in stabilizing the region. India is wary of provoking Pakistan's bellicose high command; however, Pakistan's action has nothing to lose. Pakistan has continued efforts to convince India to further strengthen its relations with Afghanistan should be stepped up. Pakistan will certainly do its hardest to develop a wedge in the US-India relationship. Still, in the coming years, India is a stronger place for the United States to bring peace and security to the region than Pakistan. The United States wants India's power and prestige, not just in Afghanistan, but also in Iran and the Central Asian Republics (Mason 14).

Thus, Afghanistan and the supporting international alliance will theoretically have a primary role in the development and stability of the Afghan Government (Mason 42). "By one estimate, as of 2017, as much as 60 percent (US\$100-\$300 million) of the Taliban's annual income was believed to come from the distribution of narcotics" (Mason 42). Therefore, to stop, the Taliban and other terrorist groups' source of income need more effective cross-border cooperation to choke drug trafficking routes along the porous Afghan borders to the north, south, and west. The United States should set up an international counter-narcotics coordinating center

or a fusion center in Kabul, Afghanistan, to promote cross-border cooperation. Afghanistan's neighbours express fears about the poisonous impact of drugs pouring out of the region. Greater coordination between them will boost regional counter-narcotics efforts by improving communication and intelligence sharing between ministries of the interior, counter-narcotics, and border police of participating countries. Each regional country, including Iran, should be invited to post counter narcotics agents at the coordination or fusion center (Mason 45).

Two similar initiatives are emerging in Afghanistan today to resolve the task of building local forces ready and able to combat locally against the Taliban and other challenges (the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria [ISIS]), but with national backing and oversight and, most critically, the opportunity to request and obtain the requisite assistance from the Afghan National. One of them, known as the People's Rebellion Force (PUF), is a group of Afghan civilians who arm themselves to fight the Taliban and maintain their villages' security. Most often, funding, training, and equipment are received by PUF (or militia) elements through a coalition (Mason 48).

However, Afghan national support networks maximize the calculated but clumsy strategy of misaligned state patrons mobilizing old Mujahedin networks against the Taliban. So, a counterinsurgent strategy and a final gasp before the U.S. forces left the province its own devices (Mason 46). In addition to the much-required realignment and rationalization of the security architecture, a similar broad revision of dynamic targeting is needed. Operations—currently being performed exclusively by the U.S.-based Afghanistan Commandos. As well as the Special Forces Advisors—have consistently proved to be nothing more than intimidation of the Taliban forces, which blend into the local population after the campaign and return to the protection of government forces within visual range (Mason 57). The U. S. has repeatedly

overestimated the Afghan Government forces' potential to maintain control of the areas after the withdrawal of U.S. firepower. The U.S. has also frequently underestimated the Taliban's potential to replace casualties on land forces, as have done in Vietnam. The U. S. has been killing the Taliban for 17 years, and there are more on the frontline now than there were 17 years ago (Mason 58).

Similar results were achieved in U.S. war in Vietnam. For example, The U.S. killed the North Vietnamese regulars and the Viet Cong (VC) in Vietnam for eight years, and there were more on the battlefield in 1970 than in 1962 (Mason 57). Neither the enemy in Vietnam nor the enemy in Afghanistan will push an erosion into talks. They were both strongly ideologically motivated, and both could offset battle casualties at a far higher rate than the United States could do (Mason 43). Over the past 17 years, conventional operations have focused on killing enemy troops and briefly clearing areas of Taliban militants, with less priority on attacking the underlying Taliban infrastructure in Afghanistan. Similarly, the Viet Cong (VC) cadres in the Vietnam War, the Taliban infrastructure consists of underground bureaucratic structures with functional elements dedicated to intelligence and counterintelligence, media and propaganda, finance, recruitment, and religious affairs. In actuality, these intertwined local cadres support and strengthen the Taliban's national military activities driven by the Quetta Shura (Mason 48).

Pakistan's continued support for the Taliban in Afghanistan must be halted if the U.S. efforts are to succeed. While most of the country is mountainous and arid, Afghanistan can grow high-quality wheat, cotton, timber, saffron, and grapes. However, overshadowing legal crops, poppy production in Afghanistan now contributes more than 90% of opium to the global heroin industry. The result is that drug trafficking has destroyed nearly every part of the government of Afghanistan's drive to establish political stability, economic development, and

the rule of law. Narcotics also provide a significant source of financing for the Taliban. Still, the nature of this funding and the extent to which it would impact the effectiveness of the Taliban insurgency are some debate subjects. However, the elimination of opium cultivation in Afghanistan remains a core priority of Afghanistan's security policy (Mason 41).

Section 7: Conclusion

The current conflict and political unrest can be traced back to Daoud Khan's presidency when Daoud Khan's regime became disastrously defective, with a failing common to many governments of Afghanistan. Daoud Khan appointed several PDPA members in his government as high-ranking officials. The Communist Party (People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan-PDPA) had been founded out of curious socialist groups in 1965. The party has extensively supported the USSR. The Communist Party soon after launched a bloody revolution called the "Saur Revolution."

In the beginning, some sporadic resistance had started in some parts of the country which eventually resulted into large scale resistance against the government in different parts of the country and turned more organized and violent. Russia's Afghanistan invasion sparked international condemnation. For example, The General Assembly of the United Nations passed a resolution condemning the invasion by a margin of 104 to 18, with 18 abstentions.

The Pakistani government (then a military regime under General Muhammed Zia-ul-Haq) was hostile to Kabul's Marxist regime. The financial and military assistance came from states as diverse as those of Colonel Gaddafi's Libya, the Revolutionary Islamic Republic of Iran (at that time in the thrall of Ayatollah Khomeini).

The Soviet commitment to Afghanistan totalled 120,000 men at its peak in early 1982. Also, some 30,000 soldiers and air force personnel contributed to operations from Soviet territory. The CIA and the Middle East countries funnelled their helpful and increased resources to the Afghan resistance. The CIA's American assistance (through a program called Operation Cyclone) was directed through the Pakistani intelligence services, the ISI, and among the Mujahideen. The Mujahideen benefited from Arab countries, including a young and wealthy Saudi Arabian businessman named Osama bin Laden. Soviet union's occupation of Afghanistan ended in February 1989. During the nine and a bit year of their presence in Afghanistan, there were substantial civilian casualties.

A small group of mainly-Pashtun resistance fighters gathered around a veteran of the anti-Soviet resistance, Mullah Muhammed Omar Akhund, born and raised in the Kandahar area. His followers came to be known as the Taliban- a word derived from the student's Pashtun word. By the end of 1998, the Taliban claimed that they had controlled 90 percent of the country, and they had been imposing a strict Islamic rule. Until events in the latter months of 2001, the Taliban maintained their rule over most countries, despite some signs of growing unrest with their hardline religious dictates.

This paper also found out that the Afghan educational system has been largely affected by continued war and conflict in Afghanistan. People of Afghanistan faces problems and struggle to achieve schoolings because of the foreigners' intervention over history. For example, the USSR's invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 created barriers to the education system following the U.S.'s Cold War era. However, the previous achievement' freedom quickly scarifies due to the invasion of Afghanistan by the USSR regime, which the U.S. CIA promptly took the chance to deaf them through arming the Afghans locals by the name of Mujahedeen in Pakistan and Saudi

Arabia. With the rising of Wahhabism in the Afghan Mujahedeen, the Taliban, through the CIA sponsors Madrassas in Pakistan, turned the traditional Afghan Islam to more extremist Islam Wahhabism, which cost the Afghan education.

Promoting and providing quality education is or if the crucial factors that can affect Afghans' life in a positive way and can contribute to the elimination of long-lasting conflict. However, one of the fundamental ways for the Afghan government to have a stable education in Afghan society is to train Mullah (religion preachers). On the other hand, it will support an educational system that will ease every afghan access to education and solve a problem is an option for both the international NGOs, the US/NATO, and the Afghan government to follow and solve this problem.

The widespread conflict amongst the armed parties in Afghanistan has impacted drastically afghans and put them more vulnerable to other societal issues such as gender inequality. Protecting civilians is an important aspect of international law consideration regarding the armed conflict. However, the international community failed to curb abuses and violations against civilians across the globe. Therefore, protecting civilians should be the fundamental international humanitarian law and should mould an essential element of international criminal law.

The Afghan High Peace Council (HPC) has begun to hold talks with the Taliban. The HPC must inspire the Taliban with an agenda that allows them to sit down and talk. Critical points on the agenda would demonstrate that the Taliban will negotiate and cease hostilities by the end of the day and have much to their advantage (Mason 112).

The new Afghan National Army must practise tactics focused on operations for a long time to come. As a result, the army will know the geography and the people, and as soon as it assimilates into the environment, the knowledge will spread more rapidly. However, the political decision to integrate these facets of power was vital to military strategy (Mason 12).

Due to its geo-strategic importance and geopolitical location, Afghanistan has always been under the limelight of invaders for centuries. Notwithstanding all those invasions and occupations by external forces, Afghans have been strongly patriotic and paid a high cost for maintaining their freedom and independence and made a great sacrifice for their land. Over four decades of conflicts and civil war, there happened great destruction and damages to the country's infrastructure.

Afghans have been fighting a proxy war for the cause of great players and that of their hostile neighbours. Millions of Afghans have been killed, injured, and millions have fled the country. Over the past decades, human rights violation has taken place, and all involved parties spared no brutality and oppression against their rival forces. Also, civilians have been affected enormously by conflict. Women and children have been abused; prisoners have been mass-murdered. The civilians continue to pay a great price for the ongoing conflict in the country.

Works Cited

Abbas, H. *The Taliban revival: Violence and extremism on the Pakistan-Afghanistan*. frontier.

New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014.

Amin, H. A. "What Is This Thing Called Jihad or Islamic Holy War? ." *Retrieved from*

https://www.huffingtonpost.com/imam-hassan-a-amin/what-is-jihad_b_8535930.html (

2016).

Arbabzadah, N. " The 1980s Mujahedeen, the Taliban, and the shifting idea of Jihad Nushin

Arbabzadah. ." *The Guardian* (2011).

Baker, K. *War in Afghanistan: a short history of eighty wars and conflicts in Afghanistan and the*

North-West Frontier 1839-2011 (1st ed.). Australia: Rosenberg Publishing, 2011.

Coll, S. .*Ghost wars the secret history of the CIA, Afghanistan, and bin Laden, from the Soviet*

invasion to September 10, 2001. . London: Penguin Books., 2005.

Donini, A., Niland, Norah, & Wermester, Karin. "*Nation-building unraveled? Aid, peace and*

justice in Afghanistan." *Bloomfield, CT: Kumarian Press*, (2004).

Lukanovich, *Women in Afghanistan - Before and After the Taliban*. *Forgetthespin.com*, 2008.

Maley, M. *The Afghanistan war (2nd ed)*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2009.

Mason, Dr. M. Chris. "*Recommendations for Success in Afghanistan.*" *Mason, Dr. M. Chris.*

Recommendations for Success in Afghanistan. United States: Strategic Studies Institute and U.S. Army War College Press, July 2019.

Runion, M. *The history of Afghanistan*. (Second ed., Greenwood histories of the modern nations)., 2017.

Reichrath, Silke. *Afghanistan: Pathways to Peace New Directions for an Inclusive Peace in Afghanistan*. Rep. Ottawa: CARE Canada and Peace build: The Canadian Peacebuilding Network, 2012.

Sarvarzade, S., & Wotipka, C. M. (2017). *The rise, removal, and return of women: gender representations in primary-level textbooks in Afghanistan, 1980–2010*. *Comparative Education*, 53(4), 578-599.

Lango, John. *The Ethics of Armed Conflict : A Cosmopolitan Just War Theory*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014.