

A Historical Glance at the Problems of Afghanistan and Future Foresights

Afganistan'daki Problemlere Tarihsel Bakış ve Gelecek Öngörülleri

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Abstract

Afganistan's location in the midst of trade centres and routes has been a competition field throughout history. Country qualified as "the highway of conquest". On the other hand, invasions led to waves of migration, and made the region become ethnically complex. This complexity obstructed centralization, and rendered the country vulnerable to outside interferences. In addition, the regional and global effects of its fundamentalist religious structure, as well as its interaction with its neighbor Pakistan are seen as a source of discontent. To solving the problems of Afganistan would form the future of the country.

Key Words: Afganistan, Current Issues, State Building, Federalism, Pakistan

Özet

Ticaret merkezlerinin arasında ve ticaret yolları üzerinde yer alan Afganistan coğrafyası, tarih boyunca rekabet alanı haline gelmiştir. Ülke "fetiht otoyolu" olarak nitelendirilmiştir. Bunun yanında bölgenin birçok ordu tarafından istilası bölgeye olan göç dalgalarını körüklemiş ve bölgeyi etnik açıdan karmaşık bir duruma getirmiştir. Etnik yapının karmaşıklığı merkezi bir yönetimin oluşturulmasını zorlaştırdığı gibi ülkeyi dış müdahalelere de açık hale getirmiştir. Ülkedeki kökten dinci yapılanmanın bölgesel ve küresel etkileri ile komşusu, Pakistan ile etkileşimi de ayrı bir tedirginlik kaynağı olarak görülmektedir. Afganistan'ın yaşadığı sorunların çözülmesi geleceğini şekillendirecektir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Afganistan, Mevcut Sorunlar, Ulus inşası, Federalizm, Pakistan

Introduction

It seems that most of the problems in Afghanistan source from its particular dominant role in a regional geography. Its location in the midst of trade centres and routes has been a competition field throughout history. In the past, many great powers had dominated the area. Destabilizing power struggles among them had also negatively affected the dynamics of domestic politics. Easy access to the trade centres over Afghanistan made this country to be qualified as the highway of conquest.¹ In the 19th century, the country came into history as a part of 'Great

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1 For example see Arnold Fletcher, *Afganistan: Highway of Conquest*, Current History, and June 1950.

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Game'.² England wanted to create a buffer zone against Russia. This idea caused putting Afghanistan out of action in creating a sea route from India to Europe, and it lost its value on trade route. And Afghanistan got stuck in the area as a landlocked country, with eastern borders drawn by the British Empire.

In recent times, what makes Afghanistan -an extensively mountainous terrain with underground resources³ newly unearthed- important for great powers are, its territorial position close to the nuclear states (Russia, India and Pakistan), its being on a transit line for transportation of Caspian Basin oil and gas to the Indian Ocean, and its being at a junction point between the Islamic, Indian and Chinese cultures. For these reasons, Afghanistan, which is considered to be at the centre of global balance of power, becomes a key country. Furthermore, the fact that the global centre moves to the east, increases the critical importance of the country. On the other hand, invasions led to waves of migration, and made the region become ethnically complex. This complexity obstructed centralization, and rendered the country vulnerable to outside interferences.

Today, the U.S.'s struggle against terrorism, which started in 2001 with "Operation Enduring Freedom" in Afghanistan, has produced the fact that this geographical area has reemerged as a contesting region among great powers as it was during the previously mentioned "Great Game". Energy and trade routes passing through the country enhance its strategic importance for major powers. In addition, the regional and global effects of its fundamentalist religious structure, as well as its interaction with its neighbor Pakistan having nuclear weapons are seen as a source of discontent.

Within this context, the article elaborates on Afghanistan's problems and presents some scenarios which would shed light upon these issues.

1. An Examination of Problems in Afghanistan

Since the 1979 Soviet invasion, the civil war atmosphere in Afghanistan has continued without any qualitative transformation even after the interventions of NATO and the USA. Due to current limitations in reaching detailed information, it is hard to estimate the cost of events from 1979 to the present. All problems in Afghanistan are telescopic in all dimensions, and this makes classification of problems even harder. For this reason, the article only takes into consideration the issues related with border, narco-economy, education, ethnicity and violent extremists. The problems are examined according to this classification, and afterwards, some solutions are offered.

2 Great Game was the name of struggle between Russia and England, which argued that, one could dominate all regions, only by controlling the Central Asia and Afghanistan.

3 The United States has discovered nearly \$1 trillion worth of untapped mineral deposits in Afghanistan, far beyond any previously known reserves. This discovery includes huge amounts of iron, copper, cobalt, gold and critical industrial metals like lithium. They are so voluminous and include so many minerals that are essential to modern industry that Afghanistan could eventually be transformed into one of the most important mining centers in the world. James Risen, "U.S. Identifies Vast Mineral Riches in Afghanistan", *the New York Times*, June 13, 2010.

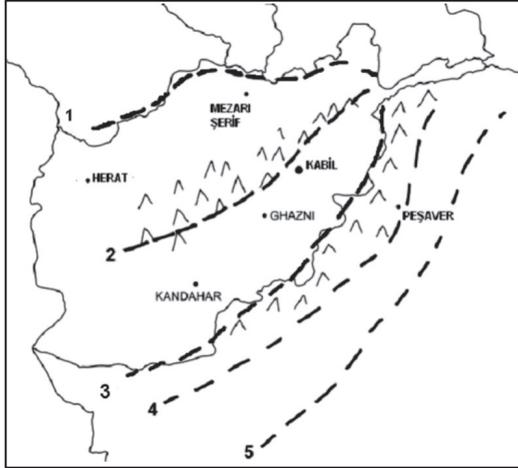
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1. a. Border Problem

Most of the problems in Afghanistan, which are related with Pakistan, directly or indirectly derive from the border problem between those two countries. The demarcation of the border in the process of struggle for influence between the British and Russian Empires over Central Asia constitutes the root of the problem.

The United Kingdom, which clashed with the Durrani Empire in Afghanistan three times, felt some obligation to take measures⁴ against Russia during the 19th century. Accordingly, it had to make an arrangement as regards the borders, in order to prevent Russia from reaching a position to threaten Afghanistan and Northern India.⁵ British India's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sir Henry Durand secured the northern border of Afghanistan through negotiations in the years 1893 and 1896 against Russia, and determined the border between Afghanistan and the Indian colony.⁶ Great Britain's border options with Russia are seen on Map 1. The first and third options came to the fore, but the idea of creating a buffer zone against the Russian Empire led to the adoption of the third option. The fourth option covering the whole border of Pakhtuns conflicted with the *dividum et imperium* mentality.

Map 1: Possible Borders designated by England for Indian Colony⁷



- 4 The struggle between Russia and England on the Straits moved to the Central and Far East Asia till the second half of the IXXth century. Iran, Afghanistan and Tibet were the main factors in this struggle. Fahir Armaoğlu, *the Political History of XX: Century, 1914-1980, (20. Yüzyıl Siyasi Tarihi)*, İş Bank Publications, İstanbul 1994, pp. 34-35. (Turkish)
- 5 Bijan Omrani, "The Durand Line: History and Problems of the Afghan-Pakistan Border", *Asian Affairs*, V 40, No. 2, 2009, pp.177-195.
- 6 The Durand Line was subsequently accepted and confirmed as the international frontier between the countries in the agreements of 1905, 1919, 1921 and 1930. Hasan Khurshid, "Pakistan-Afghanistan Relations", *Asian Survey*, Vol. 2, No. 7 (Sep., 1962), pp. 14-24.
- 7 Omrani, *ibid*, p. 179.

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Known as the Durand Line, the border was not sketched appropriately in the light of demographic, social, ethnic and tribal realities, and they formed the basis of today's problems. In addition, the fact that this route is going through just in the middle of Pakhtuns who cannot be controlled within the boundaries of the two countries, also weakened inspection of the area.

The boundary drawn by Britain, provided an external security to the British colonial administration, but created an internal security problem. The Pakhtun tribes on each side of the border had become a source of instability in both countries.⁸ The border line is still in existence. The borders, despite the fact that they were drawn during the British mandate, have not been modified until now.

The 2,640 km border lasting with the Hindu Kush Mountains is difficult to control, to detect possible points of intrusion, and to close because of the mountainous terrain and harsh weather conditions. In addition, the situation is further complicated with the fact that the vast majority of people who have violated the border region are Pakhtuns who already know the region very well.⁹

However, the border mentioned above was never taken seriously by the Pakhtuns living on both sides of the line and never had qualifications to hinder passages. This perception among the Pakhtuns increased the negative effect of weather conditions and geographical challenges, which made border security control almost impossible.¹⁰

In Pakistan, the area throughout the North West Frontier province border where Pakhtuns formed the majority of the population has been named as the Federal Tribal Areas. The Pakistani central government's direct rule in this region is not in question. Islamabad's effective border control makes the people of the region uncomfortable. On the Pakistani side, the absence of complete border security have allowed Taliban and Al Qaeda militants, as well as their leading staff to infiltrate into Pakistan's tribal regions. Here, both sympathy for the Taliban and Al Qaeda, and the spiritual values they held, that compel to help guests in trouble step in.¹¹

8 Omrani, *ibid*, pp. 188-189.

9 In these highlands, the border security is restricted because of military operations can be possible only on March-October period. STRATFOR, "Afghanistan, Pakistan: The Battle space of the Border", 2008. http://www.stratfor.com/analysis/20081014_afghanistan_pakistan_battlespace_border. Date of access: 15 February 2010.

10 Jayshree Bajoria, "the Troubled Afghan-Pakistani Border", http://www.cfr.org/publication/14905/troubled_afghanpakistani_border.html. Date of access: 15 February 2010.

11 They have very simple ideas, which are enshrined in a tribal code, the way of the Pushtuns or "Pustunwali". There is an idea called "Melmastia" that hospitality and protection should be afforded to every guest. An intention of this is another idea, "Nanawati", that asylum and sanctuary should be given to every fugitive, even if they should happen to be a bitter enemy. If the Pushtun host should fail to protect his fugitive guest against those pursuing him, it is a desperate stain on his honour. Omrani, *ibid*, p. 181. Esedullah Oğuz who was born in Afghanistan and

In this process, the Taliban and Al Qaeda¹² have found an opportunity to recover and resist since 2007. This situation on the border creates a strategic depth which gives Taliban opportunity to retreat when a serious operation happens. This depth is one of the main concerns that provide an environment of refuge for the Taliban until the withdrawal of the U.S. troops in 2011. It is highly expected that, after the U.S. withdrawal, a more powerful Taliban movement will shortly appear.

Furthermore, another problem concerning the Afghanistan-Pakistan border is caused by the government in Kabul, which also has a claim on Pakhtun lands in Pakistan, particularly between the years 1955-1970.¹³ In this period, Afghanistan stressed the two main points of dispute between itself and Pakistan are: (I) that the Durand Line is not the legitimate international frontier between them, and (II) that the trans-border Pakhtuns are not a part of Pakistan, and, therefore, should form a separate nation of their own.¹⁴

Pakistan has supported the Afghan jihad after the Taliban achieved influence over the government in Kabul and it tried to unite the Afghan Pakhtuns under a religious, rather than ethnic identity. With this attitude, Pakistan aims to eliminate the Afghan threat on its territorial integrity by forcing Afghanistan to recognize the border. However, none of the governments holding power in Afghanistan pursues a policy that shows that they give up on the matter of founding a Pakhtunistan.¹⁵

Today, it is difficult for Afghanistan to carry on this kind of problem as a debate agenda, and to be a strict follower of this problem. However, it would be wrong to say that it closes down the case completely. Making a border arrangement seems almost impossible. This kind of arrangement can provoke

worked for years in Afghanistan stated that the groups except Taliban forsake this approach.

- 12 Leon Panetta, the Director of the CIA, said that "The number of al-Qaeda remaining in Afghanistan is relatively small. At most, we're looking at 50 to 100, maybe less. It's in that vicinity. There's no question that the main location of al-Qaeda is in the tribal areas of Pakistan." And also he claimed that Osama bin Laden is in an area of the tribal areas of Pakistan. Jack Date, "CIA Director Leon Panetta: Serious Problems with Afghanistan War but Progress Being Made", *abcnews*, 27 June 2010.
- 13 The Pushtunistan problem between Pakistan and Afghanistan appeared in the period of Prime Minister Davud (1953-1963). The policy of Davud caused Pakistan close the border, and because of that Afghanistan economy was seriously damaged. In these period, Afghanistan signed military agreements with USA and Soviet Union. But because of the closed border, Afghanistan could not get proper US assistance. This situation forced Afghanistan to connect with the Soviet Union. Richard F Nyrop & Donald M. Seekings, "Afghanistan a Country Study", *Foreign Area Studies*, The American University, p. 14, <http://www.gi.iit.edu/govdocs/afghanistan/>. Date of access: 15 February 2010.
- 14 S. M. M., Qureshi, "Pakhtunistan: The Frontier Dispute between Afghanistan and Pakistan", *Pacific Affairs*, Vol. 39, No. 1/2 (Spring-Summer, 1966), p. 107.
- 15 Frederic Grare, "Pakistan: The Myth of an Islamist Peril, Carnegie Endowment Policy Brief", <http://www.carnegieendowment.org/publications/>, pp. 8-11. Date of access: 05 February 2010.

other ethnic groups in Afghanistan and Pakistan into action. Therefore, this border issue depends upon controlling its own border with a stable Pakistan.

1. b. Afghan Economy and Drug Trade

Another problem directly linked to security of the border is drug trade. For thirty years, the ongoing war conditions has made drug trafficking as "legal forms in action", and placed it almost in the center of the Afghan economy.

After the Soviet invasion, Afghan refugees in neighboring countries have established links with groups dealing with smuggling and drug trafficking. The economy of smuggling and drug trafficking created in the war surpassed the legal economic activities, and has become dominant in time.¹⁶

Indeed, farmers prefer to produce opium poppy to produce grain. The most important reason of this is the fact that cultivating poppy needs much less water than grain. The reason behind the farmers' choice can be understood better when one considers the country's arid climate, and the damaged irrigation system.¹⁷

In 2002, total opium poppy cultivation covered 74,000 ha, spread across 17 provinces (the total number of provinces in Afghanistan is 34) and production reached 3,400 tons. In 2009, opium poppy cultivation was observed in 14 provinces, but cultivation increased by 66 per cent (123,000 ha), and production by 129 per cent (6,900 tons) compared to 2002.¹⁸

According to the World Bank data, the largest economic sector of Afghanistan is opium cultivation. In Afghanistan, 1.6 million people (6.4% of the population, or about 245,000 families) participate in the production of opium.¹⁹

In total, 3700 tones of opium are annually produced worldwide. The amount of opium trafficking in Afghanistan corresponds to 3500 tons. Each year 375 tons of pure heroin from Afghanistan is trafficked by using different routes. 40% of heroin (150 tons) over Pakistan, 30% (112.5 tons) over Iran and 25% (93.75 tons) are smuggled over Central Asia. This smuggling has led to the formation of a market of \$ 65 billion worldwide. Opium growers in Afghanistan gain only a billion dollars from this amount.²⁰

16 R. Barnett Rubin, *The fragmentation of Afghanistan: State formation and collapse in the international system*, Michigan: Yale University Press, 1995, pp. 176-179. Indeed, in 1999, the production of opium reached 4.000 metric ton. People's Daily, 2001, 16 February

17 Jonathan Goodhand, "From holy war to opium war? A case study of the opium economy in north-eastern Afghanistan", *Central Asian Studies*, 2000, 19 (2), pp. 265-281.

18 UNODC, "Addiction, Crime and Insurgency: The transnational threat of Afghan opium", October 2009, p. 79.

19 www.worldbank.org/af. Afghanistan Economic Update, September 2009. Date of access: 28 January 2010.

20 Cüneyt GÜRER, "Drug Trafficking Originated from Afghanistan and Its Effect to International

Conditions of war economy becoming a norm in a 30-year-long conflict have created a powerful source of income and economic dynamic by taking the drugs to the center. It is true that drug and war economy is weakening the state structure in Afghanistan, but it is a fact that the weakness of state structures has a role in this case.

Regarding the situation, it would be wise to mention that Afghanistan does not offer a healthy operation center. Drug production and trafficking have created a floor for meeting of insurgents in Afghanistan, criminal organizations, arms and human traffickers, warlords, and even government officials. Drug trafficking will help these groups provide the opportunity and capacity to put their political tendencies in action. Also, the high revenue associated with the trafficking has become one of the goals for the groups to fight.

In addition, the actors getting unearned income from the drug and war economy perceive the state authority as a threat to their own economic interests. Therefore, continuation of this type of economy will require more instability. This is both the result and the cause of the weakness of the state. Consequently, drug becomes positively/negatively important for the security and stability of Afghanistan.

Opium markets in Afghanistan are shown on Map 2. Shown with a yellow triangle along the border are the unofficial transition points. As stated in the border problem, plenitude of points is the indicator of the absence of public authority, or even indirectly the reason. These transition points are critical for drug trafficking.

Concentration of drug traffic in the north arises from the Taliban's harsh reaction to drug production and trade, and especially from the ability to pass easily through Tajikistan. However, it does not mean that the Taliban or its affiliated groups are not benefiting from that trade. Ease of transition to the Pakistani border illegally provides, especially to Pakhtun tribes, more benefits from this material opportunity.

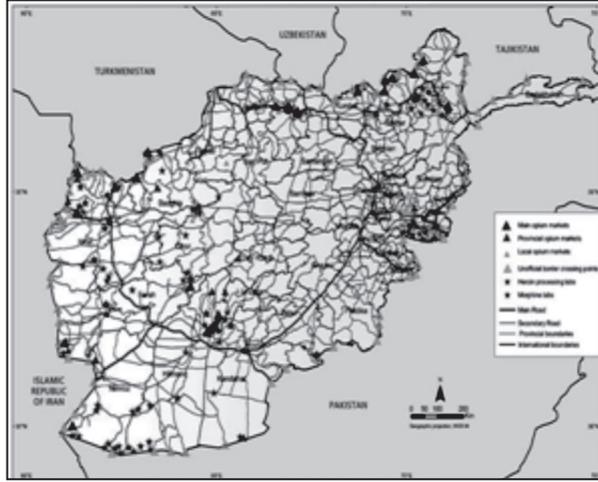
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Map 2: Heroin and Opium trafficking Routes and Unofficial Border Crossing Points in Afghanistan 2008²¹



Eliminating the negative effects of the drug economy in Afghanistan basically depends on the efficiency of political will. Product substitution and the provision of subsidies in agriculture will reduce drug production. For the Afghanistan agriculture²² in general, an improvement of the irrigation system needs to be accomplished to ensure a recovery. The repairment of irrigation systems may be a large shareholder to solve the structure of the narco-economy, to improve country's agriculture and also to alleviate concerns for food safety. Furthermore, cleaning land mines and opening up new areas of agriculture or animal husbandry appears as another requirement.

Improving agriculture beyond opium production will provide food production as well as employment, and this will be a factor in alleviating the socio-economic dimension of current problems. Thus, the revitalization of the agricultural sector would be a priority area for the Afghan government to reduce poverty and eradicate poppy production.

Banning production of opium, which is the main subsistence²³ of Afghan

21 UNODC, *ibid.*, p. 61.

22 Agriculture is the main source of income for the Afghan economy. Eighty percent of Afghanistan's population is involved in farming, herding or both, even though just 12 per cent of Afghanistan's total land area is arable and less than six per cent is currently cultivated. USDA at Work for Agriculture in Afghanistan, January 2010, p. 1, www.fas.usda.gov/country/Afghanistan, Date of access: 17 March 2010.

23 Between 2002 and 2008, Afghan opium farmers earned a total of US\$ 6.4 billion while Afghan traffickers earned approximately US\$ 18 billion. About 2 million people were involved every year, on average, in opium poppy cultivation in Afghanistan. UNODC, *ibid.*, p. 91.

farmers, and burning of opium fields will push people out of the system, and it will create an unrepairable distrustfulness between the administration and public.²⁴ The government must pursue crop eradication only in areas where people have alternative means for living.

Counter narcotics strategy has to include increased access to regional and global markets for products of Afghanistan. Especially the developed countries must open their markets to Afghan cotton and textiles, and should increase the investments in Afghanistan for solving unemployment.²⁵

In addition, the US and others must understand that foreign aid only, cannot solve the economic problems of Afghanistan. First, they must learn and try to understand what the Afghans think and want. Second, foreign aid should be extended directly to the people in order to prevent it from being wasted through corruption.

Besides these arguments, the United States and Afghan government should consider how the Taliban managed to reduce this trade. The Taliban used a simple but effective strategy that could be replicated today: holding village elders and mullahs responsible for poppies grown in their area. Consequently, village leaders made sure to inspect their territories every morning before dawn (the best time for planting poppies) to make sure that no illicit crops were being grown.²⁶

1. c. Identity Problem

Another problem is identity. Ethnic, cultural and religious unity, which is essential for a stable nation is not available in Afghanistan. Integration within the country remains poor and weak. There is neither a common national identity, nor ideology because of the tribal notion, which is recognized as a tradition throughout the country. This is the most important cornerstone of the problems experienced today. In parallel, Oğuz indicates that Afghanistan is not a unitary state contrary to what is known. Inside the country, there has never been a spirit of complete belonging to a nation, and it is impossible to talk about one central identity, because people identify themselves according to their ethnic tribes.²⁷ What comes into prominence in the country is religious identity, and then ethnic

24 According to data from the World Bank, Center Government of Afghanistan achieved his struggle against drugs. They eradicated opium plants on 5300-hectare areas and prohibited optimum sowing in two new provinces. Optimum sowing reduced to 22 %.

25 Agriculture was the dominant economic activity, providing about 63 per cent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 1981. Large Agriculture employed 56 percent of labour force in 1982. Richard F. Nyrop and Donald M. Seekins, *ibid*, p. 15. Today Agriculture is providing about 31 per cent of GDP and employed 80 per cent of the labour force. www.fas.usda.gov/country/Afghanistan, Date of access: 17 March 2010.

26 Gannon, "Afghanistan Unbound", *Foreign Affairs*, v. 83, No 3, May/June 2004, p. 46.

27 Esedullah Oğuz, *Afghanistan (Afganistan)*, Cep Kitapları, Istanbul, 1999, p. 35. (In Turkish)

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nationality rather than Afghan identity, and this turns Afghanistan into a mosaic of tribes and rioting place for religions. There is no folk or community in the name of "Afghan". This word refers to Pakhtuns.²⁸

There is no precise data on rates of ethnic groups in Afghanistan and the studies are based on estimates. Not studying the entire population, having no definite boundaries between ethnic groups, and the lack of precise data make it difficult to obtain ultimate facts and figures. However, despite the country's complex structure, it would not be wrong to mention that Pakhtuns, Tajiks, Turks and Hazaras are the four major groups.

Map 3: Ethnicity in Afghanistan²⁹



The number of languages used in Afghanistan reaches thirty. Afghanistan's official languages are Dari and Pashtunian. In addition, according to the Constitution, a language spoken by the majority of people in the regions can be used by law in addition to Dari and Pashtunian as an official language.³⁰ Pashtunian is the language used only by Pakhtuns. Dari is widely used all over the country as the language of the Palace, the urban elite and the Islamic religion.³¹ Hazaras and Aimaks speak Dari. But Turkish words have been found in cities and villages

28 Ibid. p. 35.

29 <http://geopoliticraticus.files.wordpress.com/2009/09/afghanistan-ethnic-map.gif?w=325&h=411>, Date of access: 02 March 2010.

30 *Afghanistan Constitution* 2004, Article 16.

31 The distribution of the languages in Afghanistan; Pashtunian % 35, Dari % 50, Uzbek-Turkmen language % 11 and others % 4. "Afghanistan Country Profile (Afghanistan Ülke Profili)", *Avrasya Dosyası*, Autumn-Winter 98-99, V. 4, issue 3-4, p. 130. (In Turkish) "Country Profile: Afghanistan", *Library of Congress Federal Research Division*, August 2008, p. 6.

deeper inside the country. Hazaras are exposed to be massacred due to their Shia sect by the Sunni fundamentalist Taliban regime composed of Pakhtunes largely. In addition, due to both their sects and their Persian language, they are open to the influence of Iran.³²

The characteristics mentioned above show that, in Afghanistan, it is quite hard to identify a single identity in ethnic and religious sense. Since earlier history, this country's inability to attain unity and stability derives from its failure to create an Afghan or a specific patriotic identity. However, this liability did not provide any convenience to the invaders of the country during their occupation. These different entities quickly joined their forces and united against the occupants. However, this temporary union transformed into a power struggle after the invasions, and has created the basis of instability.

Today, the most important trump card in the country for foreign powers is the existence of groups, which are against the Taliban governance. In this context, the basic sense of stability in Afghanistan depends on the Pakhtuns' acceptance of system. The thoughts of integrating Pakhtuns into the system with money could be utopian. These people used to work all day for a mere pittance. Instead of the attempts to integrate these people into the system with money, their working and earning needs should be met. This is the most important point that should be emphasized by the countries which are assisting Afghanistan.

In addition, warlords having turned the country into bloodshed after the Soviet invasion, returned to Kabul today as more powerful than before. In order to stabilize the country and establish democracy there, the idea of getting help from these people was one of the weakest policies of the United States and its allies.³³ Even after the Soviet invasion, those people who could not agree with each other assisted by different foreign forces, and accepted those foreign forces demands as an inner policy. Because of that these people would help for democratic and stable Afghanistan only for getting more interest from the existing political system.

1. d. Education System

The effect of this division and power struggle in the country led to a failure in reforming the education system. Throughout history, the education system

32 Özgür Çınarlı, "Afghanistan-Energy, Teror, Drug and Social Destruction (Afganistan-Enerji, Terör, Uyuşturucu ve Toplumsal Yıkım)", <http://www.hrc.hacettepe.edu.tr/af.htm>. Date of access: 21 October 2009. (In Turkish)

33 There are many examples for this argument. One of them is given by Gannon; throughout the discussions on new constitution, Abdul Rasul Sayyaf (a member of the strict Saudi Wahhabi sect of Islam, opposed to the presence of US troops in Saudi Arabia and a fierce opponent of women's rights) met with Zalmay Khalilzad and he convinced him to support the new constitution which accepted more guarantees for women and human rights. Sayyaf subsequently agreed to these provisions; just what he asked for in return is unknown. Gannon, *ibid*, p. 36.

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was dominated by tribal mentality. This approach hindered the creation of a uniform education system to be sustained by the central authority. In addition, wars -lasted 30 years- and the following refugee³⁴ problem are also other factors preventing the establishment of the system.

Karzai government's lack of efficiency across the country is causing an incapable, centrally controlled education system and curriculum standardization. Karzai's government has been using international assistance to rectify the education system. However, a serious Taliban hostility towards public schools is clear.

Especially in the Taliban-dominated southern provinces, it is observed that public schools, especially those reserved for girls, are demolished. The Taliban and their radical ideology are not the only barrier against girls' education; social attitudes and prejudices associated with traditions and the conservative constitution also add up to their plight.

In Afghanistan, the madrasa system was developed not only by reluctance of traditional families to send their sons to government schools, but also by the Soviet occupation. According to ROY: the war against the Soviets had three consequences: politicization, wahhabization, and the enlisting of a second generation of refugees in Pakistani madrasa. Most of the madrasa situated in rural areas between Ghazni and Kandahar turned into military "fronts", often called "Taliban front". They were not organized into a hierarchical teaching system. Their importance often depended on their director and on the money he could attract.³⁵

In spread of madrasa network in Afghanistan, the role of uncontrollable education system in Pakistan and concessions in this system are redundant. Furthermore, the Pakhtun immigrants who took refuge in Pakistan during the Soviet occupation have increased the interaction between the two countries. Established frontiers of madrasas have become safe havens for refugees, and displaced people in order to send their children. These educated young people turn to their own regions or madrasas in the region after training, and they take

34 According to the UN Refugee Agency, today one in four refugees are Afghan. Up to five million refugees returned since 2002. Up to 2, 8 million Afghan live as a refugee and 96 percentages of them are living in Pakistan and Iran. The UN Refugee Agency, "2008 Global Trends: Refugees, Asylum-seekers, Returnees, Internally Displaced and Stateless Person", 16 July 2009, www.unhcr.org/4a375c426.html. Date of access: 10 November 2009. 1, 7 million refugees are in Pakistan as a data on March 2009. Pakistan has given a residency permit till the end of 2012. UNHCR and Pakistan sign new agreement on stay of Afghan refugees, 13 March 2009. <http://www.unhcr.org/49ba5db92.html>, Date of access: 11 January 2010. Approximately 1 million refugees settled in Iran. Pajhwok Afghan News, "100,00 refugees return home", 29 September 2009, <http://www.pajhwok.com>. Date of access: 29 September 2009.

35 Olivier ROY, "Islamic Radicalism in Afghanistan and Pakistan", *UNHCR Emergency and Security Services*, January 1, 2002, pp 9-14.

part in the present madrasas or build their own madrasas.

The Afghan jihad and, after the Gulf War, the West's alienation policies against the Muslim world, together with the mujahids' conflicting interests make these people more radical and automatically contribute to the Taliban's military staff. Today, it would not be wrong to say that madrasas educate a new generation.

1. e. The Security Problem and Intensity of the Conflict

Armed conflict in Afghanistan has been on the rise since 2007. Taliban has limited the effectiveness of the Afghan Government in the southern and eastern provinces, where Pakhtuns live in great numbers. In addition, Taliban has taken intense armed attacks against international forces. Local effects of Taliban, tribal leaders and warlords are much more pronounced than those of the central government.

At present, it seems that Taliban has founded an alternative administration and judicial system in many provinces in eastern and southern Afghanistan. These actions serve both ways; on the one hand they try to gain public approval, and on the other hand they scare the people.

In the areas controlled by Taliban, the Afghan government should increase its presence and enforce them to act in conformity with formal laws. Otherwise, crime and chaos would prevail, whether Kabul's municipal corporations have a finger in embezzlement and bribery or not.

This was the background to the Presidential election in 2009. Corruption of government, international aids exploited by bureaucrats, politicians and national/international corporations were the most important problems in Afghanistan after invasion. This bleak situation causes Taliban's alternative government structures to gain legitimacy.

Presence of foreign armies as well as their policies and strategies increase the groups' (directing armed conflicts in Afghanistan) power of publicity. Despite all kinds of ethnic, cultural and religious differences, the cherished principle of uniting forces against invaders intensifies the influence capability of their propaganda.

To add to this, Tajiks, Uzbeks and Hazards have gained more power in country's governance after the invasion. That directs Pakhtuns to feel sympathy for and support the armed groups against foreign powers.

Violence in Afghanistan increases in eastern and southern provinces where Pakhtuns mostly live. Those eastern and southern provinces lay near the neighboring Pakistan, and this helps finding shelters for some rebellious groups in Pakistan within the context of insufficient border inspections.

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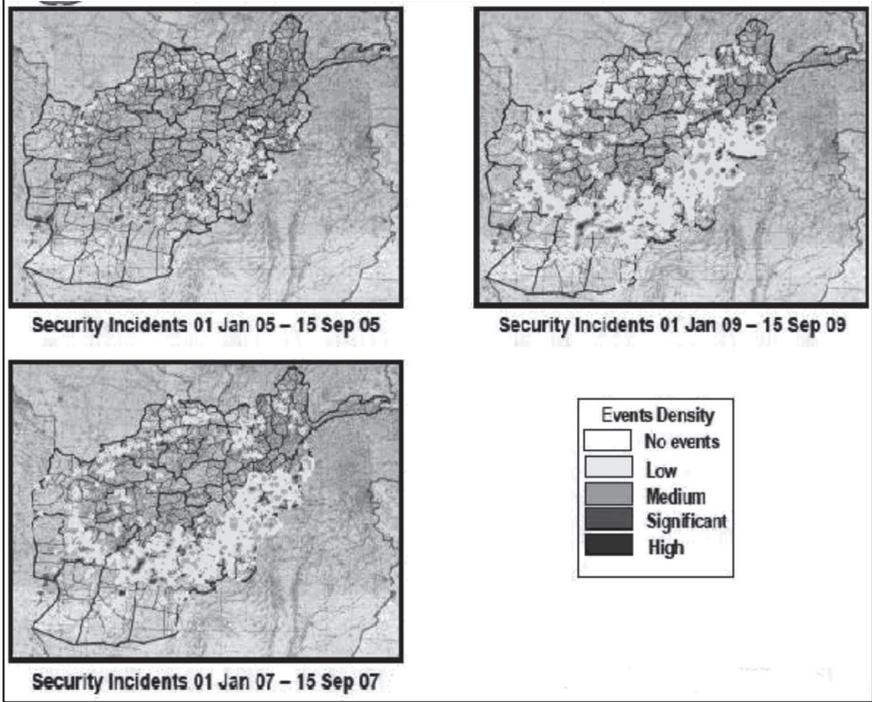
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Besides, no matter how hard it is to relate cultivating opium with violence directly, it is possible to stress that, drug trafficking provides means and capacities for anti-governmental groups. Indeed, because of the 30-year-conflict, the groups in the country have decomposed politically, and this intense decomposition makes drug trade important.

Map 4: Between 2005-2009 Intensity of Violence³⁶



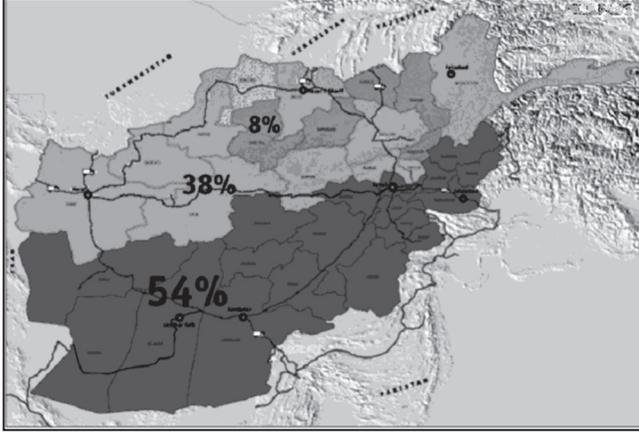
In this sense, although it is seen that the country's northern region is not uncomfortable with the existence of foreign troops, it is remarkable that violence occurred in northern region also increased in 2009. That increment has resulted from Pakhtuns who transplanted to the region for balancing other groups within the Taliban government, and the defection of the groups, which lost power after intervention, to Taliban.

Thus, on Map 5, it is seen that by the end of 2008, the Taliban made its presence felt intensely over 54 % of the country's territories. Although it was not as intense as was seen in the southern divisions, it also made its presence felt significantly over 38 % of the country's territories and had a low activity level in

36 Afghanistan JOIIS NATO SIGACTS Data.

8 % of the country's territories.³⁷

Map 5: The Taliban Control in Afghanistan (as of the end of 2008)³⁸



The Afghan government has been taking steps for the integration and rehabilitation of the Taliban, which establishes alternative structures in regions where state authority is imperfect, and in this way, carries out the administration of justice and collects duty.. Afghan President Karzai, at the London Conference held on June 10, 2010, has indicated that all international forces, especially the USA, is needed to help the Afghan government for the integration of the groups, as well as the Taliban and Al Qaeda into the political system.³⁹

In addition to the Taliban and Al Qaeda, politically-oriented militant groups based in the country such as the Hakkani Network and Hizb-i Islami Gulbeddin⁴⁰ also have to be integrated into the political system. On the one hand, these groups operating especially in the provinces that border Pakistan have been cooperating with Taliban; on the other hand, they sometimes have been conflicting⁴¹ with Taliban. The Government should take advantage of these conflicts for the Taliban and Al Qaeda to be isolated.

37 Kenneth Katzman, "Afghanistan: Post-Taliban Governance, Security, and U.S. Policy", *CRS Report for Congress*, 2010.

38 http://www.icosmaps.net/afghanistan_struggle/maps. Date of access: 24 February 2010.

39 <http://english.aljazeera.net/news/asia/2009/02/200928101412448638.html>. Date of access: 09 February 2010.

40 It is known that Hakkani and Gulbeddin groups are closer to Al Qaeda. Katzman, *ibid*, pp. 26-27.

41 Recently, Taliban tries to enhance its influence against other resistance groups. At the beginning of March 2010, in consequence of the conflict to control Baghlan city and surroundings, the militants of Hizb-i Islami Gulbeddin has decided to join the government forces against Taliban. "Taliban, HIG infighting leads to split in Afghan insurgency in the North", www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2010/03/taliban_hig_infighti.php. Date of access: 24 February 2010.

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Afghanistan policy pursued by the USA President Barrack Hussein Obama has also included Pakistan policy of the USA. The policy is now renamed with a new concept called as "Af-Pak". The basic mistake here is that, both countries are subsumed under the same categories. Namely, these two are believed to bear the same characteristics and suffer the same problems. Certain similarities and commonalities are obvious. However, the priority of Pakistan is India, not Afghanistan. Likewise, Pakistan feels that India, as a hostile country with a specific agenda of destabilizing neighbours, cannot be made part of the regional solution of Afghanistan.

Pakistan, as a result of the activity conducted by country's intelligence service after the Soviet invasion, has been estranged from a security threat originating from Afghanistan. The attacks carried out against the Tribal Areas have been causing trouble inside the Pakistani Army. Excessive amount of civilian deaths during the assaults carried out by the USA with unmanned aerial vehicles has been getting reactions from the people and the opposition.

Besides all these, in the event of failure to provide an increase in the level of welfare of the people of Pakistan, the country would fall into political instability, and more radical figures would rise. Accordingly, the idea of providing stability in Afghanistan would cause a nuclear power to become unstable. This probe would bring about a much greater Afghanistan issue. Moreover, the respective policy would increasingly integrate Afghanistan Taliban and Pakistan Taliban with each other. Thus, the impact of this has come into sight and Tehrik-i Taliban Pakistan has proclaimed that its main purposes are enforcing the Shari'a, allying against the NATO forces deployed in Afghanistan and holding its own location against the Pakistani army.⁴²

Furthermore, this new strategy has been proposing to deploy 30.000 additional troops to Afghanistan; to reinforce the capacity of the Afghan Army for combat resistance; to regain the Taliban members declining to contribute to acts of violence into the political process; and to hand over the responsibility to Afghan Army and retreat from Afghanistan in July 2011.

Washington has been pursuing the objectives of intensifying the attacks through additional troops to break the resistance of Taliban and improving combat effectiveness of Afghan Army. In this situation, the USA has been calculating that the combat will not end in 2011, but it will decrease in density to a level that Afghan Army cope with. But how a force lacking adequate Pakhtun representation will be able to hold its own against the Taliban remains an open question.

It is thought that the withdrawal of US troops will make easier the integration of armed groups into the political system. However, Washington's

42 Hassan Abbas, "A Profile of Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan", CTC *Sentinel*, January 2008, V 1, i. 2, p. 2.

declaration of withdrawal deadline would cause Taliban and the other resistance groups to display a low profile, even to gain time pretending to come to an agreement until 2011.

Moreover, it is quite obvious that joining in Taliban has the meaning of legitimizing themselves, and gaining wide recognition for warlords who wants to gain continuous power. However, some people regard Taliban as an undisputed power to govern the country after the withdrawal of USA and NATO forces.

The last summit of NATO in Lisbon was important to put forward the idea of the 48 nations in NATO. The declaration of the summit expressed that Afghanistan's security and stability are directly linked with global security and a drawdown of NATO and US forces in Afghanistan by 2014, starting from July 2011. The declaration also stated that Afghan forces will be assuming full responsibility for security across the whole Afghanistan.⁴³ However,, the declaration did not indicate how the war would be brought to an end. Besides, the 2014 withdrawal deadline is unrealistic without a change in strategy, and also the deadline to put the Afghan national army in command for security is not realistic

Furthermore, the scenario that after the withdrawal of the USA, UN forces, most of which are composed of troops from Muslim-populated countries would replace the U.S. forces has been frequently uttered. When it is considered that the standoff strategy pursued by Muslim-populated countries, their economic conditions, lack of confidence in Iran, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia which are nested with the issue and the scarce support given by those, it is seen obviously that this force would not be built up only from troops of Muslim countries.

Additionally, the denominational schism also makes it difficult to constitute such a force. However, providing that more Muslim countries contribute with troops to the force built up by the UN would accelerate the participation of the armed groups into the political process.

With all of these evaluations, the failure of the struggle against Taliban, and also the extension of this struggle will make people closer to Taliban. Indeed, the special report of Stratfor has deliberated on this fact and claimed that, "The United States is losing in Afghanistan because it is not winning. The Taliban are winning in Afghanistan because they are not losing. This is the reality of insurgent warfare."⁴⁴

The main problems of Afghanistan, which have been tried to set forth in general terms above, will enable one to make analyses considering the future of the country more accurately. The main issue of the article is not showing the way to solve the problems, but is to make these problems known and to provide that

43 For looking at the declaration of the Lisbon summit; www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_68828. Date of Access: 12 December 2010.

44 Stratford, "Special Report: Afghanistan the Nature of the Insurgency", June 01, 2009, p. 2.

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analyses designed for the future of the country are to be more realistic.

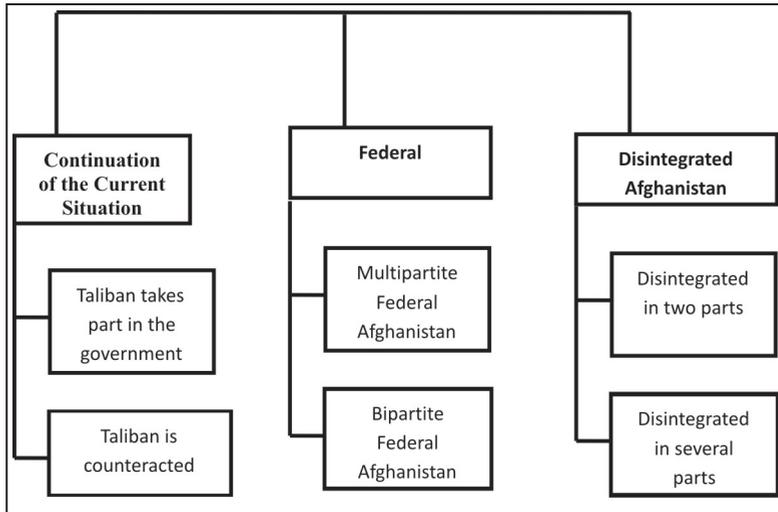
It is sure that some other analyses intended for the future of the country would be made apart from the below mentioned scenarios. The scenarios, which have been tried to set forth in this article, are based on personal researches of the author.

2. Scenarios for the Future of Afghanistan

The current situation in Afghanistan, which has not provided its own domestic stability and has been continually exposed to external interventions since 1919 when the country gained its freedom, has led to differentiating scenarios and complicating perspectives for the future of the country. The main scenarios regarding the future of the Afghanistan are identified as continuation of the current situation, federal Afghanistan and disintegrated Afghanistan.

It is accepted that the continuation of the current situation is dependent on two different features: Whether the Taliban is provided to take part in the government or being counteracted. It has been considered that a disintegrated Afghanistan will be ethnically multipartite or bipartite (north and south); likewise a federal Afghanistan, depending on an ethnical disintegration, will be multipartite or bipartite as north and south, and analyses has been made within this scope.

Table 1: Scenarios for the Future of Afghanistan



2. a. Scenarios for Continuation of the Current Situation

Providing stability and security in Afghanistan will be possible under the conditions of achievement of international efforts, strengthening of central

government and acceptance of the authority of Kabul by regional groups by means of rapprochement. At this point, no doubt that the attitude developed towards Taliban will be determinative on the existing efforts of stability and security. Defeating and eliminating the Taliban or drawing Taliban into the bargain and negotiations will be of key importance.

Within this period, the point that must be noted by both the international forces in Afghanistan and the Karzai government is the necessity of protecting balances skillfully between political and ethnical groups, among which the gap deepened eminently during thirty years of conflict in the country. In this context, it has been considered that the conditions below principally need to be attained as regards the assumptions to be made for a government with or without the Taliban:

- Afghanistan Army's being brought up to sufficient level in terms of its training, equipment and fighting capacity will make it able to struggle against the Taliban,
- By the strengthening of the army, the central government's having a power base to provide an authority and political legitimacy stranded by the military power,
- Corruptions being prevented and the resources being made available for public use,
- Precautions being taken for relieving economy of dependency on narco economy and turning into an economy based on agriculture and stockbreeding,
- By increase in foreign aid and investment, unemployment problems resolved, and so provided an improvement in the economic condition of the people.

2. a.1. Taliban's being provided to take part in the government

Taliban members who declined to contribute to acts of violence and ended their connection with Al Qaeda would be integrated into the political process. The power base of Taliban is the Psthuns. The Psthuns regard foreign occupation as the cause of this treatment.

Accordingly, withdrawal of the USA and its replacement with a UN force that includes also troops of Muslim countries would make easy the integration of Taliban into the political process. Similarly, it would accelerate the integration through which the Psthuns would gain a politically strong position.

Thus, on one hand the central government will be more powerful and, on the other hand the groups other than the Psthuns will be drawn into a rapprochement platform and therefore the contributions by the native warlords may be brought in.

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2. a.2. Taliban's Elimination

The importance of increasing the level of welfare underlies the elimination of Taliban. Increase in the level of welfare will make difficult Taliban to get an upper hand, and the Afghan Army can gain success against Taliban. Additionally, withdrawal of the support given to Taliban and frustration of drug trafficking will create financial distress for the organisation. These would bring armed units of Taliban to the endpoint.

Pakhtuns being more influential in the government, pleased with their current position and elimination of anxiety about Pashuns felt by the other groups in the country will provide an opportunity for the central government to gain power and it will be seen that a unity can be established without Taliban.

2. a.3. Evaluation of the Scenarios for Continuation of the Current Situation

It is assessed that the possibility of founding a strong central government with or without the Taliban (a scenario reviewed within the frame of continuation of the present situation) is low. Consequently, the following results can be drawn from this assessment:

- Throughout its history, the country has been governed by a weak central government in which influential and potent chieftains and native landlords have held real power. Therefore, in Afghanistan, a confederate mentality has always, without excepting the periods when the country was ruled as a kingdom, been dominant.
- The country has been in a civil war for almost thirty years, which deepened ethnic, religious and even sectarian cleavages.
- The other ethnic groups would not accept a Pashun formation, which has the same mindset with the Taliban, gain the central power again. In the case of establishment a central government without the Taliban, the group which will continue to regard the central government as a puppet of the West will continue.
- The formation of a strong central structure is difficult, since a regular army could never be formed throughout history, and there has been no effective elite class which would carry the country to the future.
- Besides, the low probability of providing an increase in the level of welfare in a short time is one of the biggest obstacles to the central structure.

2. b. Federal Afghanistan

Another assumption about the country's unity is the option of a federal Afghanistan. During thirty years of unstable conditions, interactional violence and differences in political agenda deepened the political split. It is considered

that the political split would be easily dissolved in a federal structure. It is seen that two different types of federal division would be experienced.

A federal formation in Afghanistan should basically take place by this way:

- The country should be named as the "Federal Islamic State of Afghanistan". Islamic state notion is important as it covers all the ethnic groups.
- The country should be governed by the "Afghanistan National Assembly", whose members would be elected from federal regions, and the central government should be created by this assembly.
- Each federal region should have its own assembly and government.
- Federal regions should be independent in managing their internal affairs and dependent to the central government in Kabul in managing their foreign affairs.
- States should have authority to sign only economic agreements. These agreements should be brought into force after ratification of the Central Government and Assembly.

The characteristic feature of federalism is to create a common ground between national and regional entities about regional issues with appropriate institutions. As an important result of this dominant feature of federalism is that the control of economic life within the federation is divided between the national government and the regions.⁴⁵ A true federation should eliminate the custom borders within the federal government. National government should exert special effort in order to put tariffs, cut tax, balance trade, control exchange rate and credits, and execute an economic order for the benefit of the people.

- There should be one and only constitutional law in the country, and the states should pass their own bills related with their internal issues in their own assembly in accordance with the constitutional law.
- The armed forces should be subordinated to the Central Government. States should be able to establish police departments to maintain domestic order.

Central control of the armed forces will play an important role in reducing the ethnic tension and in destroying the separatist threat. For the federation, the most obvious principle for formatting the pressure is to provide central control over the armed forces. As the regions control the army, the future of federalism would optimistically be confederation and would pessimistically be the lordship

45 Norman McL., Rogers, "The Political Principles of Federalism", *The Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science*, Vol. 1, No. 3 (Aug., 1935), p. 337.

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of war.⁴⁶

- Official languages of the country should be Pakhtunian and Darici, and states should not use any other official language domestically.
- A standard education should be applied countrywide in accordance with the criteria determined by the central assembly, and language lessons consisting of native languages of ethnic groups should be compulsory.
- Freedom of religion and conscience should be applied as specified in the central constitutional law.
- General elections should be held once in every five years, and the state level elections should be held once in every four years. The states should be represented in the central assembly in proportion to their respective populations.
- In both general and state level elections, the regional election system should be applied for all ethnical groups to be represented.
- The currency of the country should be Afghani, and no other currency should be used.

2. b.1. Bipartite Federal System

Today, Afghanistan has been divided into two parts as South and North with invisible borders. While the Northern groups has been supporting the deployment of USA and NATO forces in the country, and regarding these as a shield keeping them safe from the threat of Taliban, the Southern Pasthuns have been generally objecting to the existence of Western powers in Afghanistan.

Therefore, support given to the Taliban is more in Southern Afghanistan. According to the Pasthuns, after the events of September 11, 2001, with the help of the West, the Northern groups have seized the power by overthrowing the Pakhtun government led by the Taliban. Holding the presidency and the key ministries in the new government forming under the presidency of Karzai has not satisfied the Pasthuns.⁴⁷

Considering the situation mentioned above, two federal regions in the bipartite federal system as South and North have been foreseen. The Uzbeks, Tajiks, Turkmens, Aimaqs and Hazaras have composed the population of the Northern Federal Region.

The population of the Southern Federal Region has been constituted by the Pakhtuns, much less Beluchies and, some Sunni Aimaqs whose population is

46 Brian D. Taylor, "Force and Federalism: Controlling Coercion in Federal Hybrid Regimes", *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 39, No. 4 (Jul., 2007), p. 435.

47 The only exception of this is the rule of a chieftain named Habibullah known as Bece-i Sakav of Tajik-origin lasting nine months in 1929, and the four-year-presidency of Burhaneddin Rabbani who was a divinity professor, again of Tajik-origin, between 1992 and 1996.

even lesser than Beluchies. These two regions will be subordinated to the Central Government in Kabul.

2. b.2. Multipartite Federal System

In this federal system, the country is split into four states except the central government. The Southern State mentioned in the Bipartite System is named as the Pasthun State in this system.

The Northern region is divided into three parts. In the Northern region, the new states' populations are composed of Turks, Hazaras and Tajiks respectively. When the proximity of Aimaqs inhabited in the South to Tajiks is taken into consideration, it is thought that the region would be included within the Tajik Federal Region.

2. b.3. Why Federalism?

We can find many different definitions of federalism. But commonly most of the authors accept Schuck's define: "By federalism, I mean a system that divides political authority between a nation-state and sub-national polities within its territory so that both the national and sub-national polities directly govern individuals within their jurisdiction, and that confers both national and sub-national citizenships."⁴⁸

Rogers's define almost the same: "there is general agreement that the characteristic feature of federalism is the co-existence of national and provincial entities with appropriate institutions to deal respectively with matters of general and of local interest."⁴⁹

Three basic factors for the formation of federalism; security, economic interests, and a created ego should be mentioned. Looking at the history of federated entities, we have seen that these type of political integrations are generated in order to ensure their own security. In particular, this approach has accelerated the idea of the extinction of its own generation.⁵⁰ There are so many examples regarding this issue. The potential inside and outside threats have led to collaborate. Switzerland is the oldest federal state in which people collaborated for the security reasons. As such, the security has become prominent in the process of the formation of the United States. In the time of war, American colonies focused on confederation articles and this confederate union became the political principle of federalism which was shaped by the 13 colonies within the struggle for political independence. Replacing the articles of Confederation with the future American constitution, a fear of war and security request have forced the American colonies to unite under a federal constitution. The reasons that spark Australia for federalism are the rumors that Germany would occupy

48 Peter H. Schuck, "Federalism", *Case Western Reserve Journal of International Law*, Vol, 38:5, 2006, p. 6.

49 Rogers, *ibid*, p. 337.

50 *Ibid*, p. 338.

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New Guinea and the growing strength of Japan. In the same vein, for Canada, the idea of defence has played a crucial role in the success of federation movement.⁵¹

Throughout the history, the security of people has been the main problem in Afghanistan. Since its founding, as people have been in the struggle, by means of war lords, they have fought both against foreign forces and among themselves through the period of more than 30 years of war. As noted in the previous sections, these people have demonstrated that they were likely to form a nation especially against foreign enemies and come together to fight for their country. As a matter of fact, today the main protagonists for a federal model have been the warlords. In this regard, creating such a model on behalf of security seems to be possible.

The second aim of federalism is to provide economic well-being of people who have come together under this type of government and to ensure the sustainability of this prosperity. Economic prosperity is the most important factor for the survival of federalism because units of the growing economic power of the federation would protect the federation against the threats that may occur.⁵²

Today, the most fundamental problem in Afghanistan is about its economy. Detailed problems in the first part of the article are difficult to solve only by the central government. Therefore, establishment of a federal structure with regional partners would solve the problems easier. In addition, the differentiated products and goods between regions are likely to develop further mutual relations between ethnic groups.

The third aim of federalism is to form the national consciousness towards the creation of the community shaped by the federal union and succeed in creating a national entity. The most difficult aim for Afghanistan is to create a national identity. However, it was seen that this identity was produced by the country was occupied. The only problem is the subsequent share issue. Therefore, a true political and economic sharing is more likely to make the creation of national identity easier.

2. b.4 Evaluation of Federal Systems

A federal option for Afghanistan has risks for unity of the country due to the multipartite state formation. A multipartite federal system (just as in the example of the Yugoslavia Federal Republic) does not presuppose any consensus between political groups, and legitimizes that each of the existing groups set their own political agenda. Hence, the factual disunity of the country could be officially registered, and the country would encounter the risk of disintegration in the

51 Ibid, pp, 338-339.

52 Ibid, p. 440.

coming period.

Besides, in a multipartite system, the Hazaras, who will gain a federal structure in the poorest and scarce central part of the country, cannot maintain this structure only with foreign support (from Iran and other Shiah countries), and this situation would lead a potentially conflictual environment.

Moreover, regional disintegration of Tajiks would create a federal government with significant weakness. Apart from all these, a multipartite ethnic federalism brings aforesaid groups into integration with the countries which have the same ethnic origins with them (Turkmens-Turkmenistan, Uzbeks-Uzbekistan, and Tajiks-Tajikistan). So Federal Afghanistan, which will be governed with a bipartite state system, is more applicable than multipartite one.

2. c. Disintegrated Afghanistan

During the Soviet occupation and the subsequent civil war, different ethnic groups would be represented by different political parties. Armed groups subordinated to those parties dominated the certain regions where these parties were strong.

The Tajiks were represented by Jammat-e Islami Party, and the Pakhtuns took sides with some leaders such as Gulbeddin Hikmetyar and Abdul Rasul Sayyaf. Similarly, Uzbeks and Turkmens, both of whom are of Turkish-origin, gathered around the Jumbish-i Milli Islami Afghanistan (Afghanistan National Islamic Movement) Party under the presidency of General Abdul Rashid Dostum. As to the Hazaras, they gathered around Hizb-i Vahdet (Unity Party) under the leadership of Karim Khalil.

Despite the fact that each of these groups had formed their own autonomous governmental regions in several districts of the country at the beginning of 1990's, they have not ever raised the question of disintegration.

In spite of these assessments, owing to the fact that the efforts of international community to provide security and stability remained underwhelmed and inconclusive, presumptions about disintegration of Afghanistan are abound, within the frame of how the future of Afghanistan would be formed. Main factors that could drive Afghanistan into disintegration may be the re-domination of Taliban in Afghanistan and a failed multipartite federalism. Extended continuation of present resistance and conflictual atmosphere in Afghanistan will leave international forces in the country and Afghan government in a difficult situation. If the war loses its legitimacy in the eyes of the American and European public opinion, the allies will be reluctant to continue to combat. In the same vein, the US president Barack Obama's plans for the 2012 elections would accelerate the withdrawal of international forces and the end of the occupation.

Failures in reaching the targets of strengthening the Afghan National Army and integrating the Taliban into the political system will cause the Taliban to dominate a large part of the country, and to alienate people from the

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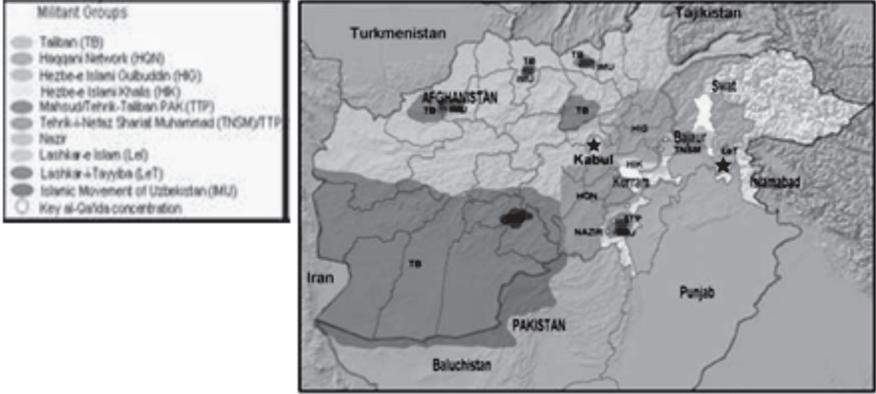
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government in Kabul after withdrawal. Considering the influence area of armed forces in Afghanistan, it is seen that the Taliban is still too powerful especially in the southern region where Pakhtuns are predominant.

Map 6: Influence Area of Armed Groups⁵³



Establishment of a political power based upon Pakhtun ethnic identity by the Taliban brings about possibility of the exclusion of Tajiks, Hazaras, Uzbeks and Turkmens from government and even their exposure to persecution and mass massacres. During thirty years of conflict, it is very likely that these groups, which had become politically conscious and learned how the Pakhtun hegemony affected them by experience, will refuse to accept Taliban hegemony and start an armed resistance again. However, the major difference from the period before 2001 is that, other ethnic groups receive much more foreign aid and do not give a chance to the Taliban to obtain an armed success as happened after 1994. Moreover, India, Russia⁵⁴ and Iran provide all kinds of support to anti-Taliban formations. Besides, the Central Asian countries, perceiving radical religious organizations as a direct threat to their own regimes, have been openly supporting the groups that have the same ethnic origin with them. Therefore, a movement which will be attempted by the Taliban and will take aim at all Afghanistan will cause more violent conflicts and lead to disintegration.

The question to be answered here is how this disintegration would unfold. It is obvious that the Taliban could be dominant in the regions where

53 Anthony H. CORDESMAN, "Afghan War at End 2009: A Crisis and New Realism", *Centre for Strategic and International Studies*, January 2010, p.47.

54 The Russian soldiers will be sent to Afghanistan under a joint initiative with NATO. The plan will be discussed at a NATO summit next month in which the Russian president Dmitry Medvedev will also participate. NATO officials have said that Russia has previously agreed to sell helicopters to Afghanistan and also provide training to the Afghan security forces. "Russia Plans to Send Troops to Afghanistan", <http://tolonews.com/en/afghanistan/895-russia-plans-to-send-troops-to-afghanistan->, Date of access: 30 October 2010

Pakhtuns predominantly inhabited. Therefore, Afghanistan will remain limited only with the Pakhtunistan. However, in case of ethnic based disintegration, a multipartite formation will come out and the stabilization in northern part of the country will become difficult.

2. C.1. Evaluation of Disintegrated Afghanistan

The idea of a disintegrated Afghanistan would trigger a radical country in the south of Afghanistan. Emergence of a political situation, which could be dominated by the Taliban after the disintegration, will mean the failure of an Afghanistan operation for global and regional powers. Hence, none of the global or regional powers, in particular the USA, could desire a country ruled by the Taliban. If the Taliban cannot be subjugated, it will be more dangerous. Therefore, there is an international consensus against such a formation, and the disintegration of Afghanistan.

Conclusion and Suggestions:

It is seen that the main problems of Afghanistan, which were explained in the first part of this article are human based issues. Almost since the establishment of the country, Afghan people have not been able to reach stability and prosperity. The people could not attain proper education, and the resources that are needed to be made available for public use have always been used in accordance with certain groups' purposes and demands. Unfortunately, nothing has changed today; but, the other people (except the Pakhtuns), who have a strong ethnic identity, are more conscious and powerful. The key factor to solve the problems is to provide an increase in prosperity.

Today, the biggest problem of the Afghanistan operation is the fact that the powers fighting and operating in Afghanistan do not know enough about the Afghan people and their culture. It is always ignored that these people have never been governed by a democratic mindset. Imposing Western government mentality on the country just makes problems more complicated. The major mistake is to leave distribution of assistance to warlords who returned to Kabul with a stronger political power, and expecting support in return for building a more "democratic", stable and prosperous Afghanistan. Fighting against corruption should be left only to the Afghan government.

Besides, innocent civil casualties by operations reduce the value of international assistance. In this sense, the most important matter should be making initiatives that will seek to reach a consensus with the people, rather than such methods which are oppressive and based upon armed power for solving abovementioned problems. It should have been realized long ago that the war could not be won with the armed forces in Afghanistan.

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"It is not enough to build a nation if the nation cannot be maintained."⁵⁵ When scenarios about the future of Afghanistan are considered, a Federal Afghanistan, which will be governed with a bipartite state system, is regarded as the most applicable regime for the country. "If the subunits are too powerful, the federation may face the threat of secession or dissolution. If the central government is too strong, it may impose itself on the subunits, rendering federalism a fiction."⁵⁶ From this consideration "Afghanistan needs to create a loosely structured federal government that is adapted to the local and national conditions in post-Taliban Afghanistan"⁵⁷

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