Chapter – V

MAJOR STAKEHOLDERS IN THE CRISES
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Whenever and wherever ‘crisis’ takes birth and its resolution is prolonged, ‘stake holders’ comes into play and their interests keep multiplying with the passage of time and hence making ‘resolution process’ complex. These stakeholders are immediate, regional and global neighbours. In Af-Pak crisis also these stake holders are on the same patterns i.e. immediate neighbours, regional neighbours, global neighbours and international institutions.
India’s Stakes:

This section would include (A) India’s objectives in Afghanistan (i) democratic, stable, secular Afghan government; (ii) strong, peaceful & prosperous Afghanistan; (iii) reduce Afghan dependency on Pakistan; (iv) preventing return of Taliban to power; (v) prevent misuse of Afghan territory against India; (vi) increasing soft power of India in Afghanistan and (b) India’s role in the stabilization of Afghanistan, in India’s eyes, is (i) providing only civilian assistance to Afghanistan (ii) no military assistance; (iii) capacity building of Afghan citizens; (iv) infrastructure development: (a) Zaranj-Delaram road connecting Afghan with Chabahar port of Iran (b) Salma Dam Power project in Herat (c) largest Afghan children hospital in Kabul, etc. (v) training of Afghan national Army and national Police (vi) Most popular state among Afghans (vii) Pressure on India to provide military assistance too; Afghanistan in India’s eyes, is not part of Central Asia but part of the Indian subcontinent. It is linked organically to India on account of the record of empires past. In the early 20th century, the famous Indian Poet, Mohd. Iqbal, described Afghanistan as “the heart of Asia,” while India’s Viceroy, Lord Curzon, called it the “Cockpit of Asia”. Throughout its history under Britain it was a buffer against Czarist Russia’s expansion that supported in Central Asia at the River Oxus.106

India has a strong strategic interest in Afghanistan. In fact, it is much more than Pakistan that has been busy destroying the cohesion of Afghan society. In fact, the strategic interests goes beyond

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Afghanistan. It stretches to the Strait of Hormuz and the Persian Gulf in the west, even the eastern coast of Africa as the westernmost border of this strategic space; to the east; to the north, it comprises Central Asia; and to the South, it reaches out to the Antarctica. Africa is a significant link to all these areas. Viewed broadly, India’s interest in Afghanistan is just one element within India larger desire to be able to protect its interests well beyond South Asia. India understands its strategic interest and is working politically to safeguard it in the long run\textsuperscript{107}.

India has faced many significant security challenges since the Taliban controlled Afghanistan in the 1990s. Since the USSR’s invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, the United States promoted, protected and aided Pakistan to raise and support several militant groups such as the Lashkar – e-Tayyeba, Harkat - Ul- Mujahideen, Harkat-Ul-Ansar among others, which also target India. Radical \textit{jihadi} terrorism from Pakistan increased drastically in India after the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan in 1989. India does not want Afghanistan to fall into the hands of Islamic fundamentalist again and became a safe haven for terrorists.

The developments in Afghanistan and Pakistan greatly influence not only India’s national security, particularly internal, but also its social fabric. India boasts of a proud heritage of religious tolerance and secularism. The prolonged Pakistan-sponsored terrorism has caused

the majority in India to believe that Pakistan wants to fragment India, using terror as a tool.

**India’s Interests in Afghanistan:**

India as a responsible regional power in the Asian continent nurses a legitimate and genuine interests in ensuring security and stability in its neighbourhood. Its non-interference in the internal affairs of Nepal despite the invitation by certain quarters in that country, and using all in its clout to bring about peace in Sri Lanka despite overwhelming odds all stand testimony to this objective. So India’s genuine concern in the affairs of Afghanistan in widely recognized by all contested only by Pakistan.

India has both strategic and economic interests in Afghanistan and its sole objective is to support a peaceful, stable, democratic, and a vibrant Afghanistan, which should never be allowed to become a haven for terrorists working against both Indian and international interests.

**Security Interests:**

India seeks to prevent the restoration of any form of a resurgent radical Taliban regime in the country. Moreover, India seeks to limit Pakistan’s influence over any emergent regime in Afghanistan and to ensure that no regime emerges there that is fundamentally hostile toward India. As has been seen in many studies of the Afghan Taliban and the militant groups that have thrived within Pakistan, one major imperative of India policy in Afghanistan is to prevent the rise of the brand of Islamist militancy that has been prevalent over the past six decades. Still fresh in the memory of the Indian public is the dubious
role played by the Taliban in ensuring and facilitating the hijackers of IC-184 to escape to Pakistan. It is, therefore, a central concern of India to foster good relations with the Pashtun majority in Afghanistan, especially now, when that majority holds at least nominal power in Kabul. This is not simply to influence the Afghan ability to prevent a reemergence of an anti-India militant milieu. The rise of Islamist militancy on both sides of the Durand Line also correlates strongly with the rise in militant capabilities in Kashmir and across the Line of Control. The Islamist militant groups supported by Pakistan, at least its clients such as, inter alia, the Lashkar-e-Tayyeba and Hizb-ul-Mujahideen, are well known to coordinate training, resource allocation and logistical support with groups operating out of northwest Pakistan. Thus, as long as central control and legitimacy continue to elude Kabul, the conflagration in Kashmir will have a ready supply of tinder. India’s security and diplomatic concerns in Afghanistan are, therefore, well-founded. India aspires to develop a sufficient diplomatic and intelligence network within the country to be able to monitor Pakistan’s activities within Afghanistan and, if necessary, to work to contain them. India’s growing presence and influence in Afghanistan undercuts the Pakistan military establishment’s long-term obsession in the quest for “strategic depth” against India. This quest, which has its origins in Pakistan’s disastrous defeat in the third Indo-Pakistan conflict in 1971, is not one that Pakistan’s military establishment will easily abandon. Consequently, it will relentlessly work, and go to considerable lengths, to undermine a cordial Indo-Afghan relationship and threaten Indian officials and personnel within
Afghanistan. It is hardly surprising that the United States identified Pakistani involvement in the suicide bombing of the Indian Embassy in July 2008.

**Economic Interests:**

India is seeking to develop long-term diplomatic ties and economic arrangements with a stable, popular and pro-India regime in Afghanistan, which then enables India to leapfrog Pakistan and build robust strategic and economic ties with the energy rich states of Central Asia. In what Stephen Blank characterises as a “great game” strategy, India’s goals reflect the desire to control the overland routes to maritime ports for Central Asian resources by denying both China and Pakistan the ability to threaten Indian assets in the region. As discussed below, even if its involvement in Afghanistan disconcerts Pakistan, it is highly unlikely that India will curb its activities, humanitarian or otherwise, any time soon. This is primarily due to the fact that for the first time in recent history, the interests of India and the United States in Afghanistan dovetail. Both states seek a peaceful, secure and non-Talibanised Afghanistan. It was recently repowered that in order to further these goals, the United States has agreed to directly mediate back channel talks between India and Pakistan regarding the regional war on terror and “the establishment of a ‘fair bargain’ between India and Pakistan over their respective interests in Afghanistan.”

It is, therefore, interesting to note, and important to underscore, that unlike the Cold War Years, India has no neurotic hostility toward either the American role in Afghanistan or the presence of the
International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in the country. Indeed, were it not for Pakistan’s deep-seated anxieties about any Indian activity within Afghanistan, many in India’s policy-making circles would not be averse to an Indian military presence within the country.

**Persian Gulf States:**

The Gulf states are considered a key part of effort to stabilize Afghanistan. As noted, the late Ambassador Holbrooke focused substantial U.S. attention – and formed a multilateral task force-which tried to curb Gulf resident donations to the Taliban in Afghanistan. He maintained that these donations were a large source of Taliban funding. The Gulf states have also been a source of development funds and for influence with some Afghan clerics and factions.

**Saudi Arabia:**

The Saudi goals in the country consist of countering both Al-Qaida and Iran, and contributing to the stability of Pakistan, an important ally. Some analysts say it was as much strategy as ideology that shaped Saudi Arabia’s early ties to the Taliban. Riyadh helped foster the rise of the Taliban beginning in the mid-1990s largely to serve as a proxy force against Afghanistan’s post Soviet leadership, but also aimed at countering Iran. Some other analysts believed Saudi Arabia is motivated by a more strategic end. According to them, Saudis are aiming to be “unifiers of the Sunni community” in Afghanistan. Saudi Arabia wants to prevent ongoing war within the Sunni community, partly because Iran benefits from such a war. Mai Yamani, an expert on Saudi Arabia and a visiting scholar at the
Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, adds: “Everything that Saudi Arabia is doing at the moment is trying to contain Iran.”

Saudi Arabia has a role to play in Afghanistan in part because, during the Soviet occupation, Saudi Arabia channelised hundreds of millions of dollars to the Afghan resistance, primarily. Drawing on its reputed intelligence ties to Afghanistan during that era, Saudi Arabia worked with Taliban leaders to persuade them to suppress anti-Saudi activities by Al-Qaeda. Some press reports indicated that, in late 1998, Saudi and Taliban leaders discussed, but did not agree on, a plan for a panel of Saudi and Afghan Islamic scholars to decide Bin-Laden’s fate. A majority of Saudi citizens practice the strict Wahhabi brand of Islam similar to that of the Taliban, and Saudi Arabia was one of three countries to formally recognize the Taliban government. The Taliban initially served Saudi Arabia as a potential counter to Iran, but Iranian Saudi relations improved after 1997 and balancing Iranian power ebbed as a factor in Saudi policy towards Afghanistan.

Saudi Arabia has played a role as a go-between for negotiations between the Karzai government and “moderate” Taliban figures. This role was recognized at the London conference on January 28, 2010, in which President Karzai stated in this opening speech that he sees a role for Saudi Arabia in helping stabilize Afghanistan. As noted, some reports say that a political settlement might involve Mullah Umar going into exile in Saudi Arabia. This may explain why Karzai has preferred to hold any talks with the Taliban in Saudi Arabia rather than Qatar.
According to U.S. officials, Saudi Arabia cooperated extensively, if not publicly, with OEF. It broke diplomatic relations with the Taliban in late September 2001 and quietly permitted the United States to use a Saudi base for command of U.S. air operations over Afghanistan, but it did not permit U.S. airstrikes from it.

United Arab Emirates:

The United Arab Emirates, the third country that recognized the Taliban regime, is emerging as another major donor to Afghanistan. It contributes about 300 troops to OEF and ISAF security missions in southern Afghanistan, including Helmand province. Some are military medical personnel who have small clinics and health programs for Afghan in the provinces where they operate.

The UAE has donated at least $135 million to Afghanistan since 2002, according to the Afghan Finance Ministry. Projects funded include housing in Qandahar, roads in Kabul, a hospital in Zabul province, and a university in Khost. At the same time, the UAE property market has been an outlet for investment by Afghan leaders who may have acquired their funds through soft loans from the scandal-plagued Kabul bank or through corruption connected to donor contracts or other business.

Qatar:

Until 2011, Qatar was not regarded as a significant players on the Afghanistan issue. It had not recognized the Taliban regime when it was in power, and was said to have little influence with Taliban figures interested in reconciliation. However, since late 2011, Qatar has
increased its profile as host of a planned Taliban political office discussed above. The United States views Qatar as less influenced by Pakistan than Saudi Arabia, and this might explain why the United States has pushed for Qatar to be the accepted host of a Taliban political office.

China:

Like Russia, China would not like any significant long-term US military presence in Central Asia. On the other hand, China, unlike Russia, has not traditionally been a major player of the Afghan “Great Game”\(^\text{108}\). It has no strong ties with any of the Afghan factions, it is not embittered by a previous defeat, and its primary objectives are to limit the spread of Muslim militancy throughout Central Asia and to advance its commercial interests, including access to Afghan natural resources. In this sense, Chinese diplomats probably view Afghanistan through the geo-political lens of China’s own South Asia “Great Game”, since China’s fundamental position in Afghanistan is going to be shaped more by Beijing’s calculus of how to counter-balance India and support Pakistan than by any direct Chinese stakes in Afghanistan. However, its strategic interest in Afghanistan are increasingly linked with Chinese companies’ willingness to protect their growing business cooperation with Kabul, especially in the energy sector. China’s objectives in Afghanistan include:

• Eliminate Western military presence in Afghanistan and Central Asia in the middle term.

• Curb the ability of Islamic extremist groups, such as the Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement (ETIM) to support Uyghurs or to engage in terrorist acts in China or against Chinese interests. According to a report by BBC’s urdu.com, Chinese Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi during a recent visit to Pakistan said that it was the Chinese belief that militants belonging to the ETIM are influencing the Chinese provinces of Xingjian. China has alleged that some cadres of the ETIM have taken refuge in Pakistan’s tribal areas. Abdul Shakoor Turkistani, a Chinese Uyghur, currently leading Chinese militants in the tribal areas of Pakistan has very good relations with all Pakistani Taliban factions. Pakistani Taliban has an anti China stand due to Beijing’s action against ETIM and has never spared an opportunity to attack Chinese in Pakistan. Taliban also blames China for getting the Lal Masjid raided in 2007. Taliban has said that it attacked the Chinese due to China’s anti-mujahidin stance.

• Support Pakistan, Beijing’s oldest and most trusted ally, and insulate it from instability in Afghanistan.

• Reduce both Russian and Indian influence in Central Asia.

• Ensure access to raw materials (such as natural gas and metals) from Afghanistan and Iran over the land route if the security situation is sufficiently stabilized by a peace accord.

• Strengthen the role of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in the region. The SCO, which had been on the sidelines
until now, is gearing up to assume a bigger role in Afghanistan, thanks to new-found interest being shown by China. Afghanistan has been admitted to the SCO as an observer member. There could also be more cooperation between the CSTO and NATO in the post-2014 phase. China has been depending heavily on the security offered by international forces for its investment in Afghanistan.

**United States of America:**

USA must be credited with coining the term, Af-Pak. Richard Holbrooke has very rightly said that even if Afghanistan had the best government delivering the governance that the country needs, there would still be no peace in that country as long as insurgents enjoyed support and sanctuary in Pakistan. President Karzai recently, to the consideration of many Indians, referred to the two countries, Afghanistan and Pakistan, as conjoined twins.

Simply but, history, geography, religion and politics dictate that developments in Pakistan and actions of its strongest institution, the military, have the ability to influence the security environment of Afghanistan, and in turn be affected by it, not always with intended consequences.

President’s State of the Union message to Congress on 23rd January 1980, he argued that the presence of Soviet troops in Afghanistan posed a threat in the Gulf region, an area of vital importance to the United States. Soviet forces were now within 300 miles of the Indian Ocean and the Straits of Hormuz through much a substantial part of
the oil for Japan and Western Europe must pass. America, said carter, had vital stakes in the free flow of oil. The President, therefore, warned that “an attempt by any outside power to gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the United States. And such as assault will be repelled by any means necessary, including military force. 109

The United States thus clearly spelled out its vital interests in the region and the action it would take in the event of the Soviet Union making any further move. While taking economic and political action against the Soviet Union it also explored the possibilities of securing conditions that might enable the Soviet Union to withdraw from Afghanistan. What the United States wanted for itself was a government in Kabul that would not allow Soviet influence to threaten western interests. It, therefore, lent its support to the meaningful advantage by other. It even held direct talks with the Soviet leaders.

Therefore USA’s objectives in Af-Pak crises is

a- Disrupt terrorist networks in Afghanistan and Pakistan to degrade their ability to launch international terrorist attacks;
b- Promote a more capable, accountable and effective government in Afghanistan.
c- Develop self-reliant Afghan security forces that can lead the counter-insurgency with reduced U.S. assistance; and
d- Involve the international community to actively assist in addressing these objectives.

The US will endeavor to safeguard its medium and long term interests despite force withdrawal. Other major regional powers such as Russia, China and India also have their own interests in the shaping of events post 2014. The Muslim state, namely Iran and Saudi Arabia have opposing interests and considerable influence in the AF-Pak region. The US has invested much in Afghanistan in terms of resources including human capital and finance to turn its back on the region entirely. Pakistan continues to view Afghanistan through the prism of strategic depth and will have greater space to influence the occurrences post ISAF withdrawal, partial as it may be. The internal stability of Pakistan will be a key issue to the outlook adopted. The likelihood of the various emerging scenarios post 2014 withdrawal will have to incorporate the re-emergence of Taliban\textsuperscript{110}. However, it will primarily depend on the interplay of interests of the major world and regional powers in the region.

The immediate goal of US of intervention in Afghanistan was to defeat Al-Qaeda and overthrow the Taliban regime for refusing to extradite Osama Bin laden with the aim of seeing a stable Afghanistan in the backdrop of long term interests of USA in energy resources and maintaining a foothold in the region.

When it comes to future US presence, while the US does not seek permanent military bases in Afghanistan, the Strategic Partnership Agreement commits Afghanistan to provide US personnel access to and use of Afghan facilities through 2014 and beyond. The Agreement

provides for the possible retention of US forces in Afghanistan after 2014, for the purposes of training Afghan Forces and targeting the remnants of Al-Qaeda. It commits the US and Afghanistan to initiate negotiations on a Bilateral Security Agreement to supersede the current Status of Forces Agreement. The Strategic Partnership Agreement itself does not commit the US of any specify troop levels or levels of funding in the future, as these decisions will be made in consultation with the US Congress. It does, however, commit the US to seek funding from Congress on an annual basis to support the training, equipping, advising and sustaining of Afghan national Security Forces, as well as for social and economic assistance. The Obama Administration policy goal is to prevent Afghanistan from again becoming a safe haven for global terrorism, but the US criteria for judging achievement of that goal have generally included the degree to which the Afghan government and security forces can defend the country, govern effectively, and develop economically. The US security mission is in the process of changing from combat leadership to a monitoring and over watch role by mid-2013. The transition is being conducted in five “tranches”- the first was announced by President Karzai in March 2011, the second in November 2011, and the third in May 2012. By the end of 2013, the completion of transition in the third tranche would put 75% of the population under the security lead of Afghan forces, up from 50% covered in the first and second tranches. In each areas of transition, the process of completing the transition to Afghan responsibility takes 12-18 months. On 15 March, 2012, President Obama affirmed this shift in
emphasis, and the mid-2013 time frame for it. The major stumbling block in relation of US troops in Afghanistan will be the ability of President Karzai to secure legal immunity for US troops from the Afghan National Parliament for operations post 2014. Failure to obtain the same may force complete withdrawal of US troops from Afghanistan as was the case in Iraq or severely restrict the nature of operational role. Another concern is the publicly states position of the Taliban to continue its opposition to the Afghan government even if a single foreign soldier stays in Afghanistan.

The outline of future involvement has been delineated in the Enduring Strategic Partnership between the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the US of America signed on 01 May, 2012 by President Obama and President Karzai.

The Strategic partnership Agreement includes mutual commitments in the areas of:-

- Protecting and promoting shared democratic values.
- Controlling fundamentalism
- Advancing long-term security
- Reinforcing regional security and cooperation
- Social and economic development
- Strengthening Afghan institutions and governance with strategic partnership
- Control narcotics menace
Russia:

Russia wants to reemerge as a great power and to contain U.S. power in Central Asia, including Afghanistan. At the same time, supporting the “Northern Distribution Network” supply route for NATO forces in Afghanistan, Russia U.S. and NATO efforts to combat militants in the region who have sometimes posed a threat to Russia itself. Its hosting of the “quadrilateral summits” could represent stepped up efforts by Russia to exert influence on the Afghanistan issue. Previously Russia had kept a low profile in the country because it still feels humiliated by its withdrawal in 1989 and senses some Afghan resentment of the Soviet occupation. Since 2002, Russia had only been providing small amounts of humanitarian aid to Afghanistan.

In line with Russian official comments in June 2010 that more economic and social assistance is needed for Afghanistan, Russia is investing $1 billion in Afghanistan to develop its electricity capacity and build out other infrastructure. Included in those investments are implementation of an agreement, reached during a Karzai visit to Moscow on January 22, 2011, for Russia to resume long dormant Soviet occupation-era-projects such as expanding the Salang Tunnel connecting the Panjshir Valley to Kabul, hydroelectric facilities in Kabul and Baghlan provinces, a customs terminal, and a university in Kabul.
Historically, Russians\(^\text{111}\) had been interested in Afghanistan for access to the warm water ports of the Indian Ocean but had to be content with Afghanistan’s status as a buffer zone between their empire in Central Asia and Britain’s in India after the Anglo-Russian Agreement of 1907. Russia views Af-Pak situation largely through the prism of security threats to itself and its Central Asian neighbourhood, where Moscow aspires for soft dominance. Afghanistan is also a bargaining chip in Russia’s wider relations with the US. In the Russian political mind, rational calculations of interests and analyses of threats are superimposed, on the traumatic experience in Afghanistan and on the post-Soviet Russian experience in Chechnya, Dagestan, Ingushetia, and Tajikistan. This scenario, if the ISAF withdraws and the Karzai government falls, carries a sense of Taliban coming to power in Afghanistan, which encouraged Central Asian Islamist and offered training camps to Chechen rebels. Russia fears a rise in Islamist radicalism across the region and does not have sufficient confidence in the solidity of the Central Asian regimes or in its own capacity to insulate the region from the influence of a victorious Taliban.

During the 1990s, after its 1989 withdrawal and the breakup of the Soviet Union, Russia supported the Northern Alliance against the Taliban with some military equipment and technical assistance in

order to blunt Islamic militancy emanating from Afghanistan. Although Russia supported the U.S. effort against the Taliban and Al-Qaeda in Afghanistan out of fear of Islamic (mainly Chechen) radicals, Russia continues to seek to reduce the U.S. military presence in Central Asia. Russia fears of Islamic activism emanating from Afghanistan may have ebbed since 2002 when Russia killed a Chechen of Arab origin knows as “Hattab” (full name is Ibn al-Khattab), who led a militant pro-Al-Qaeda Chechen faction. The Taliban government was the only one in the world to recognize Chechnya’s independence, and some Chechen fighters fighting alongside Taliban/Al Qaeda forces have been captured or killed.

This threat is even more real. Lately, Russia has stopped being a drug transit country and has become a major consumer of Afghan heroin and opium. According to the UN, Russia consumes only slightly less heroin each year than does the rest of Europe combined (70 tons versus 88 tons). Russia officials point out that the production of narcotics in Afghanistan has grown exponentially since the fall of the Taliban and the arrival of the coalition forces. This has been a source of genuine concern for Russian authorities.

**Northern Distribution Network and Other Aid to Afghan Security:**

Russian cooperation is crucial to the U.S. effort in Afghanistan. In February 2009, Russia paved the way for the expansion of the Northern Distribution Network supply route into Afghanistan by

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allowing the resumption of shipment of non-lethal equipment into Afghanistan through Russia (following a suspension in 2008 caused by differences over the Russia-Georgia conflict). There are discussions with Russia over possibly allowing some lethal equipment to transit as well and for use of Russian air base as a hub in the supply chain. About half of all ground cargo for U.S. forces in Afghanistan now flow through the Northern Distribution Network, and the United States is emphasizing this network as relations with Pakistan remain strained, although the costs to ship goods through the route are far greater than the Pakistan route.

Russia has also responded to NATO requests to provide helicopters and spare parts to the Afghan force (which still make heavy use of Russia-made Hind helicopters) as well as fuel. In April 2011, there was agreement to establish a “Helicopter Maintenance Trust Fund” Russia has also delivered 24 helicopters to Afghan forces, financed by the United States. Russia reportedly has pledged to train Afghan security forces.

In November 2010, in its most significant intervention in Afghanistan since its occupation Russian officers reportedly joined U.S. and Afghan forces attempting to interdict narcotics trafficking in Afghanistan. However, the move prompted a complaint by President Karzai because he was not consulted about the inclusion of the Russians.
Uzbekistan Tajikistan and Turkmenistan:

After the Soviet disintegration these countries became “Frontline” states which had to deal with the Major hotbed of instability in Afghanistan\textsuperscript{113}. They have found themselves being encircled by an arc of crises in the immediate neighbourhood torn apart by internal conflicts-encouraged by ethnic intolerance, religious extremism, sectarian violence, regional and tribal conflicts, drug trafficking and external pressures of different kinds. The Central Asian fear in this regard is compounded by the fact that Uzbek and Tajik Diasporas are the largest among the others in Afghanistan. Infact there are more Tajiks in Afghanistan than in Tajikistan itself. Uzbekistan approach to the Afghan issue is shaped by mainly by the fear of an Afghanistan type situation getting repeated in Tajikistan, which in turn would have direct implications for Uzbekistan’s security. The fear is that any solution of the Afghan problem on the basis of Pushtun ethnic affinity will lead to greater Tajik nationalism that will inadvertently undermine Uzbekistan’s national unity.

In the regional security complex of Central Asia, Uzbekistan is appearing to be the key and most decisive factor in the events to come. First, Uzbekistan has become a frontline state after the Soviet Collapse, dealing with multiple threats emanating from the South. Second, notwithstanding Uzbekistan being the biggest state in terms of demography, it is the hub of the Central Asian Civilisation and therefore, has the potential to become the dominant regional power.

The population of Uzbekistan is projected to grow from 23 million at present to 50 million by the year 2010. Third like India in the case of South Asia, Uzbekistan shares borders with all other Central Asian states, including Afghanistan. Fourth, the Uzbek Diaspora is the largest among the ethnic minorities in Tajikistan and Afghanistan. Fifth Uzbekistan has the potentials to diversify its economic resources and may become an economically powerful state. Sixth, it has no border with Russia and China, which makes it easy to formulate independent, foreign and domestic policy postures.

The above mentioned factors of Uzbekistan are bound to generate suspicion between it and other regional countries Uzbekistan-Israel relations, Uzbekistan-US relations, and Uzbekistan –Turkey relations have evolved suspicion in Iran, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, further complicating the Afghan crisis. In short, as the open-ended Russian military engagement may not continue for a long time, the states in central Asia may go closer to the European security structure or look elsewhere, in order to seek a guarantee for their national security. This may generate new circumstances and implications for resolving conflicts like those in Afghanistan and other hot spots in Asia.

Currently, perhaps to avoid offending Pakistan or other actors, Turkmenistan takes a position of “positive neutrality” on Afghanistan. It does not allow its territory to be part of the Northern Distribution Network, No U.S. forces have been based in Turkmenistan. This policy of neutrality continued with, Turkmenistan when the Taliban was in power. During that time, Turkmenistan was the only Central Asian State to actively engage the Taliban leadership, possibly viewing
engagement as a more effective means of preventing spillover of radical Islamic activity from Afghanistan. It saw Taliban control as facilitating construction of the TAPI natural gas pipeline, that was under consideration during Taliban rule and discussion of which has been revived in recent years. The September 11 events stoked Turkmenistan’s fears of the Taliban and its Al-Qaeda guests and country publicly supported the US-led war.

Map 10: Tapi Natural Gas Pipeline
Iran:

Afghanistan is primarily important to Iran\textsuperscript{114} as a means to secure its eastern flank, and prevent the flow of illicit weapons, halt narcotics and migrants across its borders, open up trade routes to Central Asia, and to compete with the US presence in South and Central Asia. Iran maintains close relationships with Afghanistan’s Hazara and Tajik Shias – about 20 percent of the Afghan population-and houses a large Afghan refugee population, estimated at 1.07 million in 2010. Iran’s funding has been intended to support pro-Iranian groups in the west as well as Hazara shietes in Kabul and in Hazara Heartland of Bamiyan, Ghazni, and Dai Kundi, in part by providing scholarships and funding for technical institutes. Iran has used some of its funds to construct mosques in Heart, pro-Iranian theological seminaries in Shiete districts of Kabul, and Shiete institutions in Hazara-dominated areas.. Iran also offers scholarships to Afghans to study in Iranian Universities, and there are consistent allegations that Iran has funded Afghan Provincial Council and parliamentary candidates who are perceived as pro-Tehran. These efforts have helped Iran retain close ties with Afghanistan’s leading Shiete clerics, and as well as Hazara political leaders.\textsuperscript{115}

Although in the past US and Iran shared a common interest in defeating the Taliban and its associates, they do compete for influence

\textsuperscript{114} Rashid Ahmed, Descent into Chaos : How the War against Islamic extremism is being lost in Pakistan, Afghanistan and Central Asia, London, Penguin Group, 2008, p.111.

\textsuperscript{115} Laura King, “In Western Afghan City, Iran makes Itself Felt”. Los Angeles Times, Nov. 14, 2010
both in Afghanistan and the region, and their mutual antagonism prevents more than limited co-operation. According to some analyst, Iran is bringing its proxy war against the Americans & the Sunni Saudi Arabia to Afghan soil and security funding the illicit and illegal activities of some groups operating within Afghan society. Further these reports say that Iran will continue to provoke divisions along fault lines in the society and the Iranian-funded media in Afghanistan will continue to emphasize differences and encourage divisions. Senior Western officials who have considerable knowledge of the pervasive penetration of Iranian influence in Afghanistan stat that some 70 percent of media in Afghanistan today is controlled by Iran. To this end, the Iranian have cultivated relations with members of opposition groups (such as the United Front), Tajik Sayeds, Hazara MPs from Heart and other western provinces.

United Nations:

The ‘Purposes’ of the United Nations are stated in article 1 of the charter. Which it appears that the United Nations is primarily an organization for maintaining peace and security, with the additional functions of developing friendly relations among nations, of achieving international co-operation in economic, social, cultural, and humanitarian matters, of developing respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and providing a means for harmonizing international action to attain these aims.

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Afghanistan was admitted as a member of the United Nations on November 19, 1946, and has had a relationship with the United Nations that goes back more than 60 years. During the 1980s, the United States, along with other countries, funded the mujahedin forces fighting against the Soviet Union, as well as provided humanitarian aid to Afghans who fled to refugee camps in Pakistan. In 1988, the Geneva Peace Accords, brokered in part by Diego Cordovez, a Special Representative of then U.N. Secretary General Javier Perez de-Cuellar, were signed, which led to the Soviet withdrawal nearly a decade after its invasion.\[117\]

With the peace accord in place, the United Nations established an active presence in Afghanistan. It generally maintains separate offices for (1) political and peace processes (Pillar I) (2) humanitarian and reconstruction operations (Pillar II)\[118\]. During the violent civil war that lasted through the 1990s, the United Nations continued to seek a peace agreements, that would allow for sustained reconstruction. However with the failure of several peace agreements. The international donor community focused primarily on humanitarian aid because the conditions were not stable for long-term development.\[119\] Donors also did not want to provide assistance to the Taliban, an Islamic

\[117\] After the Soviet Union left Afghanistan, the United States sharply reduced its aid programs to Afghanistan

\[118\] Since 1988. These offices received a series of different names, but most recently until 2002, the political office was run by the United Nations Special Mission to Afghanistan (UNSMA) and the humanitarian and reconstruction office was run by the United Nations Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA).

\[119\] Usually, the international donor community is considered to be made up of international organizations and individual donor countries.
fundamentalist movement that ruled Afghanistan between 1996 and 2001, when it was ousted by U.S.-backed Afghan factions.\footnote{From FY 1994 through FY 2001, the United State Agency for International Development (USAID) did not have a mission in Afghanistan, but continued to provide aid mainly through U.N. agencies and NGO's.}

Afghanistan was one of the least developed countries in the world when prior to the outbreak of war in 1978.\footnote{In 2007, Afghanistan placed 174th out of 178 countries on global ranking of the Human Development Index (HDI), which fell slightly under that of 2004 and well behind its regional neighbors.} The assistance situation changed dramatically once the Taliban was removed from power following the U.S.-led military intervention in 2001. The implementation of humanitarian assistance and the development of reconstruction plans quickly took shape when Afghans met under U.N. auspices to decide on a governance plan, which resulted in the Bonn Agreement, signed on December 5, 2001. On December 22, 2001, an interim government was formed with Hamid Karazai as its leader. This paved the way for a constitution, considered the most progressive in Afghan history, which was approved at a “constitutional Loya Jirga” (traditional Afghan assembly) in January 2004. Hamid Karrzai was elected president in a nationwide election in October, 2004 and parliamentary and provincial elections were held on August 20, 2009, and the second-post-Taliban parliamentary elections were held on September 18, 2010. The Afghan government has been working with the international donor community on reconstruction programs and plans since a major donor conference in January 2002 in Tokyo.
The Afghan government and the international community face a daunting task. Many problems remain in every sector. Strategic challenges are numerous and continue to put the institution building effort in Afghanistan at risk. In conjunction with security, reconstruction is seen by many as the single most important factor for sustaining peace. According to many observers, successful development could stem public disillusionment with the international effort in Afghanistan, sustain Afghan participation in the reconstruction process, and help keep Afghanistan from again becoming a permanent haven for terrorists.

The United Nations (UN) has had an active presence in Afghanistan since 1988, and it is highly regarded by many Afghans to playing a brokering role in ending the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. As a result of the Bonn Agreement of December 2001, coordinating international donor activity and assistance have been tasked to a United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). However, there are other coordinating institutions tied to the Afghan government, and UNAMA has struggled to exercise its full mandate. The international recovery and reconstruction effort in Afghanistan is immense and complicated and, in coordination with the Afghan government, involves U.N. agencies, bilateral donor, international organizations, and local and international non-governmental organization (NGOs). The coordinated aid programs of the United States and its European allies focus on a wide of activities, from strengthening the central and local governments of Afghanistan
and its security forces to promoting civilian reconstruction, reducing corruption, and assisting with elections.

Some of the major issues UNAMA is wrestling with include the following:

- Most observers agree that continued, substantial, long-term development is key, as is the need for international support, but questions have been raised about corruption, aid effectiveness (funds required, priorities established, impact received), and the coordination necessary to achieve sufficient improvement throughout the country.

- The international community and the Afghan government has sought to establish coordinating institutions and a common set of goals in order to use donor funds effectively. The international donor community has also sought to encourage Afghan “ownership”-meaning leadership and control-of reconstruction and development efforts by the country itself.

- Although the Afghan government is taking on an increasingly central role in development planning and the management of aid funds, the international community remains extensively involved in Afghan stabilization, not only in diplomacy and development assistance, but also in combating insurgents and addressing broader security issues.

**Mandate, Structure, and Funding:**

The role of UNAMA is to promote peace and stability in Afghanistan and to lead the international community in this effort. In support of the government of Afghanistan, UNAMA is tasked to
coordinate efforts to rebuild the country and strengthen governance, development, and stability. However, in practice, in light of the number of donors and their own national priorities, the coordination role has been difficult for UNAMA to implement.

**Mandate:**

Assistance Force (ISAF), and developing greater political outreach with Afghan leaders. Highlights of Security Council Resolution 1917 (2010) focus on promoting international support for the government of Afghanistan’s development and governance priorities, increasing cooperation with international security forces, providing political outreach and support to the Afghan-led reconciliation and reintegration programs, and helping implement electoral reform commitments agreed at the January 2010 London Conference. Security of U.N. staff and expansion of UNAMA’s presence were also emphasized.
