Chapter – VI
CONCLUSION
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In view of the discussions and explanations of various actors and their interests leading to the crisis suggest that the four hypotheses proposed in the study seems to be valid. These hypotheses are:

a. Contemporary Af-Pak crisis illustrates its transnational and regional character.

b. Internal strife and manipulation of outside forces have contributed in generating the philosophy of terrorism.

c. Expansion of infrastructure and the revitalization of economy is the key of reconstruction.

d. Regional cooperation and not competition is the need of the hour.

The study has come to the conclusion that:

a. Af-Pak crisis has acquired international dimension because of contemporary strategic environment in which terrorism has become a global problem.

b. The Af-Pak crisis can not be resolved by use of force by external powers or by domestic government. The reason is that Af-Pak crisis have given birth to various domestic stakeholders which have acquired sufficient strength of their own.

c. The only resolution of the crisis seems to be "confidence building measures" between various actors in the crises. In nut
shell nation building seems to be the only answer where all interested parties could contribute in the process.

No other Country in Asia has suffered so much of physical and material destruction in recent years as Afghanistan. It is the only country which faced the attack and occupation of world’s two super powers, the Soviet Union and the United States in the quarter of a century. The Civil War shattered the entire economic structure and nothing was left in fact from 1992 to 1996, Kabul and other cities saw worst form of destruction. The present day Afghanistan is nothing but a legacy of blood and fire caused by the Mujahideen in fighting and battles between the Taliban and the Northern Alliance forces. It continues to be ripe with instability and there is very little sign of reconstruction. The daunting task of rebuilding Afghanistan involves not only building the security structure but also rebuilding country’s educational, judicial and administrative system. Hence the answer to Af-Pak crisis is “Nation building”.

The term nation-building conveys different meanings to different people. For some national building provides an analytical tool, focusing on the conditions and developments the lead to the establishment of nation-states. For others, it also provides a policy to create nation-states. As a policy tool we can distinguish two variants: nation-building as a strategy for development; and as a instrument for

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competition. This term nation-building became unfashionable after the Vietnam War. However, it has been revitalized since the end of cold war\textsuperscript{125}. A distinction can be drawn between the following three basic elements for successful nation building which are closely interlinked in Af-Pak crisis.

1- An integrative ideology, that might be nationalist, but could also be religious, racist, developmentalist, or shaped along other lines, as long as it provides for integrating the subgroups of the inhabitants of a country into national society.

2- An integrated society, with its several elements communicating more often with each other than with outsiders. This implies a “nation-wide” integration of geographic regions, economic sectors, and politics. It also presupposes a functioning infrastructure and intellectual discourse of “national” scale;

3- An existing state apparatus, which actually fulfils its functions on all of the national territory.\textsuperscript{126}

Culturally, Afghanistan is multi-ethnic country. These groups include Pashtun, Tajik, Hazara, Uzbek, Turkmen, Pashai, Pamiri and others. These ethnic groups participated in the country’s political history and economic development. From time to time they have made great sacrifices for the freedom and protection of Afghanistan from outside invaders. For instance, the Hazara community in the early eighteenth century fought shoulder to shoulder with Shah Mahmood


\textsuperscript{126} Ibid
Hotaky against the Afghan (centre of Safawi dynasty of Persian). They also took part in the Sher Sorkh Jigra that led to the selection of Ahmad Khan as a national leader and the establishment of modern Afghanistan in 1747. Successive Afghan governments have had the support of all tribes running the government’s affair and maintaining peace and tranquility. These groups have always taken active part in observing national ceremonies under the uniformed flag of being Afghan.

Normally, religion has played a pivotal role in Afghan society that has intertwined all ethnic groups. This in turn has brought all Afghans under the banner and direction of Islam and Afghan nationalism and thus has secured political stability and national unity. Practically, in Afghanistan nation building was a domestic process up to year 1978. The central government was robust and it could implement its decisions not only at every province, but also in remote districts without any hindrances.

After the communist takeover in 1978 and the Soviet invasion in 1979 both communists and Islamist groups began to fight each other. The Islamist groups were accused of being reactionary while the communist were accused of being non-Muslims, Ironically, both ideologies had their root in internationalism and did not have a national basis in Afghanistan. However, during the conflict times, the support provided by the foreigners caused the spread of these

128 Kakar M. Hassan, The April Coup of 1978 and its Grave consequences (Kabul, 2010)
ideologies in Afghanistan which consequently had negative impact on
the patriotism and Afghan nationalism.

Significantly, unlike neighbouring countries there has never
been any religious sectarian violence between Shia and Sunni muslims
in Afghanistan, and the proxy wars that have taken place in Afghan
history have never been of a religious or ethnic origin. Even before
Islam we had movements and religions (Buddhism, Zardoshtism)
which had regional fronts, but there was no sectarian violence among
them. They lived in harmony side by side with each other. On the one
hand, Islam is the basic motive behind the defence of Islamic and
national identification of the Afghan people; on the other hand, it
granted unity and homogeneity to the multiethnic Afghan society\textsuperscript{129}.

Politically, Afghanistan has been ruled by one or another
Pashtun tribes since its establishment. The Afghan rulers have tried to
pursue the idea of national unity (integration) because their primary
aim has always been the extension of the central power but not
domination of other ethnic groups. Unlike neighbouring countries, the
Afghan rulers had paid attention to non-Pashtun minorities. Most
Afghans see themselves as Afghans first, though this is not universal.
They identify with their own tribes in their own valleys. This may not
be a sign of backwardness either, but a sign of lack of mobility between
main cities and rural areas. Due to lack of resources the central

\textsuperscript{129} Alif Shah Zadran ‘Mitigating War Effects and Promoting Peace building through
an Effective Education System in Afghanistan: Pitfalls and Developments, A.B Roy
and B.K. Mishra (eds.) Reconstructing Afghanistan; Prospects and Limitations’
2011, pp 238-254,
government could not provide social services and economic development to all remote areas of the country\textsuperscript{130}.

Nearly a quarter century of armed conflict left Afghan state broken its national institutions virtually non-existent, and its economy ruined. Traditional authorities were undermined while many of society’s norms seemed transformed. After this prolonged conflict a political process launched in 2001 gave Afghanistan an opportunity to restore its lost political stability, build a functioning state, started nation building which was affected during the civil war, and launched an economic recovery. Much has been achieved since then, but challenges lie ahead. The progress Afghanistan has made since the 2001 Bonn Agreement offers grounds for hopes.

These positive developments led to the return of millions of refugees to the homeland in Afghanistan. State executive, legislative and judiciary pillars have been built, although the progress is uneven. A new constitution has been adapted. Presidential, parliamentary, and provincial council elections have been held. Seven million children have gone back to school. The Afghan National Army and National Police have been re-established and they should be transformed into credible and trusted national institutions.

Interference by neighbouring countries in support of clientele groups in Afghanistan have been a disruptive force. It has often helped feed resentments among ethnic elements. While competition among external powers can sometimes accelerate development assistance, as it did during the cold war, more often it has served to divide Afghans.

\textsuperscript{130} Ibid
However, since the Taliban’s fall, Pakistan and Iran together with the former Soviet Republics and Russia have recognized their stakes in Afghanistan’s economic recovery. Although none have thus actively worked to stabilize Afghanistan, all continue to hedge their bets and remain patrons to those groups and individuals in the country with whom they have held long association.

**Pre-requisites for Nation-building:**

- The first and prime requisite in nation building in Afghanistan is stabilize functioning of state institutions. A rebuilt administration in Afghanistan calls for a functioning bureaucracy with a reasonable capacity to plan, budget, and recruit personnel, as well as to enforce policy. The recovery of judicial institutions and workable legal framework are necessary to restore an orderly society, protect individual rights, and also attract private economic investment. A national bank and stable currency are indispensable to a regulated economy. To realize a democratic polity, Afghanistan requires creditable elections, a broadly representative parliament, multiple political parties, and institutional means to check the executive. A creditable national army and police, expected to reinforce central authority, is usually cited along with an expanded and more effective police force as necessary to deliver greater security to the society.

- The second requirement is the reviving and strengthening of constructive national myths. These myths and the beliefs are necessary for social cohesion and raising national consciousness. Some consensus on value is essential for the adherence to laws
and exercise of political and societal tolerance. Myths derived from recent and distant historical memories can contribute to resolving identity issues that involve the definition of who is an Afghan.

- The third is the need to resolve or at least manage outstanding, divisive political and constitutional issues. Foremost in Afghanistan is the centre-periphery struggle between the central government and regional commanders or warlords over local autonomy and access to coveted resources. There conflict barely masks ethnic divisions that have intensified in recent years.\textsuperscript{131}

- Finally, state building is likely to falter without a reasonably capable and legitimate leader (leaders). Leadership is essential to providing purposes and direction for an Afghanistan emerging from its national trauma. To the extent that the leader transcends parochial differences and major societal cleavages, he can play a key role in helping to energize the national recovery and unify the country.

According to Rashid Ahmed, (a perceptive observer of the developments in the Af-Pak region), it is necessary to ensure that Pakistan, which gives sanctuary to the Taliban leadership, cooperates rather than sabotages the peace process, and allows the Taliban to hold talks with Kabul on their own terms rather than on terms of Pakistan. Further down the road is the need to ensure the promised international

funding to keep the Afghan army self-sufficient and to allow economic development.

However, all hope is not lost—not as yet anyway. Rashid has written, “The ISI is in the process of freeing one hundred Taliban whom it earlier jailed, either for maintaining secret contacts with Kabul, the United Nations, and the Americans, or simply for refusing to dance to the ISI’s tune. Most of these Taliban are so called moderates who support an end to the war. Now the same ISI is pushing these freed Taliban to renew their contacts and discuss peace with their adversary. Despite continuing points of tension between the two countries, Kabul and Islamabad are finally cooperating rather than abusing each other. The military is now fully behind allowing the Taliban to open an office in Doha and will back Karzai in any initiative he takes.”

While the Taliban have opened an office in Doha, Qatar, and reconciliation negotiations may begin soon, it would be premature at present to expect too much headway to be made. The Taliban have refused to lay down their arms as a pre-condition and the Afghan government will find it difficult to negotiate with guns being held to their heads, even though the US is eager and willing. Unless reconciliation talks are Afghan-led and Afghan-owned, any agreement that might be reached will not last long. Also, the Taliban could be playing for time and the talks could be a ploy to rest, recoup and refit. It is hard to see them being serious about negotiations when they are on
the verge of achieving a moral victory with the impending withdrawal of US forces\textsuperscript{132}.

Peace and stability in Afghanistan are critical for stability in the fragile South Asian region. However, the security situation that is likely to prevail in Afghanistan post – 2014 is a cause for concern, as the ANSF appear incapable of ensuring a violence free security environment when they are given independent responsibility. This is due to the inadequacy of numbers, poor training, lack of the required arms and equipment and the proclivity of the ill-motivated soldiers to desert and refuse to fight. Junior leadership standards also leave much to be desired. It is essential for the international community to organize a “responsible withdrawal” from Afghanistan and not leave the country in the lurch, particularly in the field of security. Otherwise, the fallout from the planned NATO-ISAF drawdown will be extremely negative for the whole region.

The Afghanistan-Pakistan face-off could lead to an ugly civil war if it does not end soon. Under the circumstances, Afghanistan’s regional neighbours need to step in to fill the void. The Taliban and its affiliates like-Al-Qaeda must not be allowed ever again to launch international terrorist strikes from safe havens and sanctuaries within Afghanistan. Regional interests lie in a peaceful and stable Afghanistan that is

\textsuperscript{132} Kanwal, “Post 2014 Transition in Afghanistan options for India”2010, pp 138-139
governed by a broad-based government free of foreign interference in policy-making.\textsuperscript{133}

It is difficult at this point in time to assess as to what extent the Afghans share India’s concerns or are willing to go with India’s interests in the long-run. India’s interests are pretty much well defined. As per official statements: ‘India considers extremist ideologies to be very dangerous and a national security threat. To that extent, India wants to utilise its development programme in Afghanistan to (deny such ideologies space to grow) help Afghanistan stablises and emerge as an economic hub linking South and Central Asia through a network of trade and transit linkages that would benefit the people of the entire region.’ However, India has limited leverages in Afghanistan. It has not nurtured different sections of the erstwhile Northern Alliance well and does not have much influence over them at the moment. The Pashtuns remain largely indifferent towards India. Though India fully supported the leadership of Hamid Karzai, a Pashtuns it is not a neutral country in the perception of the Pashtuns in general given India’s perceived proximity to the Tajiks from the north. For the non-Pashtun groups, India is a possible counter-force to the Pakistan-sponsored Pashtun insurgent groups, especially the Taliban. Also, India hardly figure in the Western strategy towards Afghanistan and Pakistan. India’s presence and relatively huge contribution to Afghan reconstruction has often invited Western scepticism and criticism in view of her

historically adversarial relations with Pakistan. In the Western perception, much of the instability in Afghanistan is due to the India-Pak rivalry. It is generally believed that the Afghan problem cannot be resolved until India and Pakistan resolve the Kashmir issue. Often historical facts pertaining to the problematic relationship between Pakistan and Afghanistan since 1947 and especially after 1970s are missing in the current Western discourse loaded with Pakistan’s India-centric constructs and threat perceptions. Despite all goodwill that India enjoys among sections of the Afghan people, its influence and leverage remains extremely limited. In fact, India cannot be regarded as a major force neither in the Western strategy nor in the regional initiatives pertaining to Afghanistan. Nevertheless, India cannot afford to take its eyes off the developments in its immediate Western neighborhood as Pakistan sponsored networks of religious extremism and terrorism continue to pose ideological as well as physical threats for both India and Afghanistan.

The study concludes with the observation that “all through the ages saints, philosophers, spirituals and religious leaders have dreamernt” how the world could be crises-free, non violent and peaceful? But all of them have failed in realising this dream because crises is inherent in all human relations. The collective wisdom of these people, however, have found a formula to create conditions of peace. This formula is “Prevent the Birth of An Adversary. If Birth could not be prevented, neutralize Adversary before its Activation”. In practical terms, it means-avoid crisis, make peace and learn adjustment”.

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This formula is applicable to all kinds of problems including that of Af-Pak crisis.