

Forum: Disarmament Committee

Issue: The Reestablishment of State Authority in Afghanistan

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Introduction



Picture 1: Ethnic groups in Afghanistan

The situation in Afghanistan dates back to its creation as a monarchy; more specifically, when Amanullah declared himself as a king. After facing a lot of criticisms he was forced to abdicate, and Zahir Shah became the second king of Afghanistan and managed to keep stability for a long period of time. During the same period, the British forces and administration withdrew from, what is now known as India and Pakistan, an immediate neighbour of Afghanistan. Shortly after the removal of the British from the neighbouring countries, the cousin of Zahir Shah, pro-soviet Daud Khan, became the

prime minister of Afghanistan. Daoud Khan sought help from the Soviet Union to keep the stability in the country. As a response to this, US refused to give military aid to Afghanistan, which led to it growing closer ties with the Soviet Union. Daoud was a very liberal leader, who always sought to give rights to the women and was completely against the idea of monarchy. In 1973, Daoud Khan planned a military coup in which his party, known as the Democratic Party of Afghanistan and the Afghan Communist Party, overthrew the king from power- his very own cousin. Daoud abolished monarchy and became the first president ; leading to the formation of the Republic of Afghanistan. Unfortunately, in 1978 his government has also fallen, due to a communist backed coup d'état. In the continuing years, the Afghan guerrilla

(Mujahideen) movement was born. The Mujahideen movement known also as freedom fighters, has contributed in shaping the political, social and economic status of Afghanistan since then.

The overthrow of Daoud Khan in a revolution so called as Saur Revolution led to Nur Mohammad Taraki becoming the president. He proclaimed independence from Soviet influence, and declared that their policies would be based on Islamic principles, Afghan nationalism and socioeconomic justice. This led to USSR invading Afghanistan on December 24, 1979 in order to bolster the faltering communist influence. As a counterattack, U.S, China and Britain started aiding the Mujahideen militarily through Pakistan; they became strong opponents of USSR invasion as well as USSR-backed Afghan army and fought against them. In 1988, Osama bin Laden together with 15 other Islamists formed al-Qaeda for the purpose of continuing their jihad, they viewed USSR and US as two main obstacles to the establishment of an Islam based country. In 1988, the Soviet Union, United States and Pakistan signed the Geneva Accords in which they granted independence to Afghanistan, as well as the withdrawal of Soviet troops. The Mujahideen ousted Najibullah from power, who was elected in the puppet Soviet state in 1986. Shortly after this, an Islamic militia group, Taliban, rose to power promising peace; considering their conservative ideas, U.S refused to recognize the authority of Taliban. In Sept. 11, 2001, hijackers crash 4 planes into WTO (World Trade Organization) towers in New York, Pentagon building in Washington D.C, and a Pennsylvania field, killing thousands. US requested that the Taliban turn over Bin Laden, but after receiving no response, US together with UK began launching airstrikes to Taliban targets. After this, the situation in Afghanistan never settled. There were millions of Afghans fleeing their country, thousands dying from the bombs since every part of their country was and still continues to be controlled by a different group of terrorists, but the most affected are the rural areas, where nowadays, they do not possess any source of electricity or clean water.

Definition of Key Terms

Military coup: This refers to term refers to when people illegally take action to overthrow the government- and usually use violence or threats to make it happen. “The sudden overthrow of a government by usually a small group of persons or in previously in positions of authority” (BBC)

Jihad: Jihad means” *struggle or effort*” (Meforum), it usually doesn’t only mean holy war. Muslims interpret jihad in many ways, three of the most known are: 1. A believer’s struggle to live out the Muslim faith. 2. The effort and the struggle that Muslims put to build a good Muslim society, and lastly the third one, it means Holy War; the struggle to defend Islam, with force if necessary.

Mujahadeen: Also called as *“the ones engaged in jihad”*. In the broadest sense, *“those Muslims who proclaim themselves warriors for the faith.”* The term was mostly used in 20th century, in Afghanistan and Iran. The term is used differently in Iran, since it was directed to a group of people that merged their Muslim beliefs with Marxist beliefs. On the other hand *“the name however was closely related to the members of guerrilla groups in Afghanistan, that fought against Soviet invasion and knocked down their communist government.”*(BBC)

Insurgency: Insurgency is a rebellion against authority. It is *“ a condition of revolt against a government that is less than an organized revolution and that is not recognized as belligerency”* meaning that an insurgency does not occur in a hostile manner (i.e. engaging in a combat)

Al- Qaeda: Al-Qaeda means the base and is an Islamic militia group established by Osama Bin Laden in 1980s. The group’s first purpose was to help Muslims fight the Soviets during the Afghan War. After Soviet withdrew its troops from Afghanistan, Al- Qaeda began fighting the corrupt and foreign influence in Islamic countries. *“The group re-established their headquarters in Afghanistan under the patronage of Taliban.”*

Taliban: Meaning *“seeker of knowledge”*, is a Muslim movement whose militia took over Afghanistan.*“They were overthrown by US-led forces and Afghan groups in 2001 following the events of September 11”*. The Taliban have also controlled large areas in Pakistan. Many observers believe that the only way to reach stability in Afghanistan is when the government in Kabul will negotiate and therefore reach an agreement with the Taliban. (BBC)

Geneva Accords: In 1988, in Geneva, delegations from the governments of Pakistan and Afghanistan signed bilateral agreements to end the war in Afghanistan. At the same time, United States and Soviet Union signed the Declaration on International Guarantees (Mutual agreement was reached on bilateral relations between the two countries and the process of withdrawal from Soviet military units began). These documents, *“have been hailed as the key to Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan and a settlement of the conflict which has held the world spotlight since the Soviet invasion of December 1979.”*(UN)

Bonn Agreement: Was a set of agreements passed on December 5, 2001 intended to recreate the State of Afghanistan following the U.S invasion. Since there wasn’t a government in which the whole nation agreed upon, a transition government was needed before a permanent one would be established. 25 Afghan delegates met in Bonn, Germany to decide on a plan governing the country.

another PDPA member, Hafizullah Amin. Amin couldn't stop the rebellion, and seeing this as a threat of declining communist prosperity, in 1979 Soviet forces entered Afghanistan and took control of the capital city, Kabul. Violence further escalated after the invasion, since it prompted its rivals, U.S, China, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia to support the rebels against the soviet- backed government. Babrak Karmal became the president during that time, he tried to shift into more liberal policies, but the protests and rebellion on the other hand, kept increasing and becoming more violent. The religiously motivated Mujahideen continued on their attacks and massive killings; there were many Arabs that joined their movement, known as Afghan-Arabs, and Osama Bin Laden of Saudi Arabia was one of them. The number of civilians seeking refuge increased. By "1990, there were 6.3 million civilians in exile-3.3 million in Pakistan and 3 million in Iran. In addition to setting up a voluntary repatriation project, UNHCR (United Nations Human Rights Council) established more than 300 villages in Pakistan for the mainly ethnic Pashtun refugees"(UN)

Warlord Rule (1992-1996)

Of the three most known mujahideen commanders, the most influential was, arguably, Rabbani. After the Soviet Union withdrew from Afghanistan in 1989, three years later Rabbani became the president of the Islamic State of Afghanistan. He managed to take over Kabul and ended the bombardment of the capital city. Rabbani constantly fought against many groups, in which by that time were controlling different areas of Afghanistan. Mohammad Omar formed his group named as Taliban that would fight for Islam dominance in the government and in the country. He along with his group took over the province of Kandahar and continued to dominate more on the area.

In 1992, the Rabbani becomes the President of Islamic State of Afghanistan. A year later, in 1993, President Rabbani and eight other local warlords, start negotiating on two peace accords. They agree to *"form a government within 18 months and establish a defence council to set up a national army"*-*" In his annual report issued in September, the Secretary- General observed that although the accords were encouraging, they had neither resolved the problems of the government nor removed the threat of renewed fighting around Kabul"* (UN) However, despite all positive attempts toward a better government, Kabul was seized by Taliban forces, causing more and more conflicts in the region. The most affected by this situation, were the citizens of Afghanistan. By 1994, there were additional 700,000 refugees living in the camps of Pakistan and Iran. In 1996, the Taliban were already controlling much of the parts of Afghanistan, Rabbani joined an opposition alliance, known as the Northern Alliance. Taliban continuously received military and financial support from Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, they also controlled 90% of the area- being the most dominant party in the issue. While the situation was escalating, arms transferring and drug trafficking were destabilizing the whole region. Drug trafficking is one of the main reasons why

Afghanistan is a war-torn country right now. By the late 1990's it is estimated that Afghanistan was the source of 80 percent of the world's illicit opium. In response to this phenomenon, UN Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) formed a reduction project, in which they helped and supported means of agriculture in different ways, so that, there was no need of growing opium.

2000 and beyond

The conflict continued persistently until 2001. Many international organizations tried to provide aid and funding for those at least that are left in the middle of the crisis. Political problems in the absence of an effective government, resulted in frequent interruptions of humanitarian aid. Following Taliban's various attacks on the American embassies of Nairobi, Kenya, Tanzania killing hundreds of people, the imminent threat of Taliban was comprehensively grasped, and consequently a much more coherent action plan was devised. On 11 September 2001, 19 Arab men carried out 4 attacks in U.S. 4 passenger airlines were hijacked. Two of the planes were crashed into the Twin Towers of World Trade Center, the third one in the Pentagon building, and the last one on a field in Pennsylvania. The death toll was 2996 including the 19 hijackers. After this point, U.S launched Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan with its allies including United Kingdom. They managed to drive Taliban from power and therefore built military bases near major cities. In 2003, NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) became involved, some of the U.S troops operated under NATO and some under U.S command. At the same year, Mullah Omen reorganized the group, and launched an insurgency against the government and ISAF (International Security Assistance Forces). NATO, U.S, Great Britain and their allies operated in Afghanistan actively to seize control over the areas to push and destroy Taliban bases. Osama Bin Laden, who was known as the organizer of September 11 attacks, was killed in Pakistan in 2011. And on June 22, 2011 Barack Obama informed that they would withdraw a large portion of their troops from Afghanistan. It is estimated that the Taliban continued on their attacks, as in 2012 there were 28,000 attacks. By 2014, most of the countries already removed their troops, but insurgency as the result of the withdrawals increases, making Afghanistan the center of terrorism. Today, it is known that Taliban are active in 70 percent of the country, thus controlling 14 districts; Islamic State on the other hand is highly active as well, where they still plan on attacks causing on many deaths, alarming not only the region but the whole world.

Today, Afghanistan doesn't have an efficient government, that has full authority over its people. There is terrorism in the country, spreading to the region and causing more tensions. Drug trafficking is present and occurs as a very dangerous phenomenon. According to Hamid Karzai " *the opium trade has become worse cancer than terrorism and even worse than the 1979 Soviet occupation*". It is known that, both sides are engaged in this opium trade; the Taliban and the Northern Alliance. It is further estimated that Afghanistan provides 75 percent of heroin in the world and 95 percent of European market.

In 2017, thirty people are killed and fifty are wounded in an attack by Islamic State on a military hospital in Kabul. They captured the mountainous region of Tora Bora, which was used as a base of Al- Qaeda by Bin Laden. In August, president Donald Trump declared that he would send more troops to fight a resurgent Taliban. But the attacks continue in 2018 as well, in January, Taliban forces siege a hotel in Kabul, where they kill 19 people including 14 foreigners. A week after a bomb-laden ambulance explodes killing 100 people, this attack also is attributed to Taliban forces.

Major Parties Involved and Their Views

Afghanistan

Afghanistan has been subjected to terrorism, inefficient governments, many military coups, which led to an economically and politically unsteady country as a whole. Afghan leaders engaged in many peace talks and tried to shift the power from the Taliban to a centralized government but it didn't result in success. Afghanistan, still today suffers from terrorist attacks of both Taliban and the Islamic State, despite the help of foreign countries and UN, it is not able to stand against these two terrorist groups, since now they already control most of the area, in which they are able to grow and sell opium freely, capture more land each day; threatening the region and beyond.

United States of America

United States was very involved in the situation since the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan; U.S was allegedly aiding the groups fighting against the Soviet Union. U.S became more involved in the situation after the attacks of 11 September 2011, whereas they invaded Afghanistan for the purpose of dissolving Al-Qaeda and Taliban. They sent a large portion of soldiers into the area but they couldn't succeed to capture most of the Al- Qaeda and Taliban participants since they had already escaped to the neighbouring Pakistan or retrained in the rural or mountainous regions. In 2012, NATO, U.S and it allies withdrew from Afghanistan removing most of their soldiers from the area.

USSR

USSR was primarily involved in the issue during the communist era of Afghanistan. They supported communist leaders, and backed a coup. In 1979, they invaded Afghanistan in order to bolster the falling interest in communism. After signing the Geneva Accords, together with U.S, they withdrew their troops from Afghanistan.

Pakistan

Pakistan was one of the first countries that started accepting refugees from Afghanistan, thus sheltering about 200,000 refugees in the camps. It is also known that Pakistan allegedly aided the groups fighting against U.S. Since what U.S sees as a threat to its national interest, Pakistan perceives as a vital national security interest in the region. During the Afghan war, Pakistan and U.S had also loosened their ties with each other.

United Nations

UN's involvement in Afghanistan began after the Soviet invasion. UN's mission in Afghanistan was to create a stabilized country, with no corruption, in which Afghanistan would be free of many abovementioned terrorist organizations. UN imposed sanctions on the government of Afghanistan while it was controlled by the Taliban forces. UN Security Council also created UNAMA (United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan) with the request of Afghan government in assisting it and the people in Afghanistan in laying foundations for sustainable peace and development.

Taliban

The hardline Taliban forces have proven to be the most formidable group in Afghanistan and a major threat to its government. They have managed to destabilize the neighbouring country, Pakistan as well. Despite a major military offensive against them since 2014, they still continue on their attacks and suicide bombings across the country. Their retreat in the years after 2001, enabled them to limit their material and human losses and return with a vengeance. And in 2015, for the first time since their defeat, they seized control of Kunduz, a very strategically important city. From that point, they started gaining power and dominating more in the country.

Timeline of Events

8 November 1933	Zahir Shah became the king and Afghanistan remained as a monarchy for the next four decades
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1973	Mohammed Daoud declared Afghanistan a republic
25 December 1979	USSR invaded Afghanistan
1985	Mujahideen formed an alliance against USSR
14 April 1988	U.S, USSR, Afghanistan and Pakistan signed Geneva Peace Accords
28 April 1992	Civil War begins
1999	UN imposed an air embargo and financial sanctions on Afghanistan
5 December 2001	Afghan groups agreed a deal in Bonn, Germany for interim government
2005	Afghans voted for the first time for parliamentary elections after 30 years
2016- 2018	Both the Taliban and IS control numerous districts of Afghanistan

UN Involvement

<https://www.un.org/News/dh/latest/afghan/un-afghan-history.shtml>

In 1994, UN launched consolidated appeals that contained detailed emergency needs of Afghan people and asked for funds since the government and other NGOs weren't able to provide those needs. At first, it had success, since 75 percent of the funds requested were supplied. But a year after, they managed to fund only 50 percent. UN Centre for Human Settlements helped 10,000 families rebuild their homes.

Apart the aiding and funding, UN security Council tried to stabilize the region many times but it didn't work. It imposed sanctions and embargoes on Afghanistan, they worked with the government so it could be more efficient, as well as to relieve the wounds of Afghan government and its people, but they couldn't help ease the situation completely.

Relevant UN Documents

The council renewed the mandate of UNAMA until 17 March 2018, 17 March 2017, (S/RES/2344)

This was the report of the Security Council mission to Afghanistan from 21 to 28 November 2008, 12 December 2008, (S/2008/782)

Treaties and Events

Bonn Agreement: It has determined the political roadmap of Afghanistan since the removal of Taliban from power in 2001. The agreement sets out a time schedule for the establishment of political institutions in which they also agreed upon an interim power sharing agreement, the creation of a new constitution and elections in 2004. The Bonn Agreement didn't recognize the Taliban government, nor did it invite their representatives to the meeting, leaving space for the Taliban to violate and simply ignore the agreement.

Evaluation of Previous Attempts to Resolve the Issue

There have been more than ten attempts to reach a ceasefire, all of which have failed. The United Nations has put forth numerous resolutions, most of which have either failed or got vetoed by a Member State. Starting from the Geneva negotiations that were mostly benefited from the political will of Soviets and partly of the international community to prevent further East-West confrontation. But it failed to produce a comprehensive settlement for Afghanistan. There existed a donor interest for reconstruction as well, but unfortunately Soviet Union withdrew from the operation. Seeing as none of the solutions were sustainable and they mostly took temporary actions that helped to ease the situation for a short period of time, UN still continued to assist Afghanistan. The UN formula for transfer of power to an impartial body was clearly bypassing the existing armed groups, who were already engaged in consolidating their power base inside Afghanistan. The second phase of the UN peacemaking efforts also suffered from absence of strategic components of peacebuilding inside the country. On the other hand even though, a referendum was held in 1947, after the creation of Pakistan, in which the Pashtun population voted to join Pakistan, Afghanistan chose not to take any further measures, which directly contributed in the Taliban becoming more violent in their attacks. The resolutions passed by the Security Council were unable to contribute to the issue, since the Taliban refused to agree on anything that meant giving up their territory, or stopped

them from engaging further in drug trafficking. It is crucial to address the issue in many points, so Afghanistan reaches complete stability.

Possible Solutions

The key to provide security in Afghanistan would be to increase the number of Afghan and international security personnel. It is estimated that “around 200,000-250,000 national and international troops would be needed”.(Mepc) Considering this number, it is clear that foreign countries need to provide aid and be more involved in the issue. If foreign countries refuse to help Afghanistan with military cooperation, it is highly questionable if the security problem would be resolved at all. Therefore, a change in the security paradigm is needed. Taking into consideration that warlords are ruling the roost in Afghanistan, and a recent UN report suggests that, drug dealers have been transformed into professional drug cartels since both the Taliban and rogue elements in the Afghan government support drug dealers because they are a major source of income, it is clear that Afghan forces should focus on fighting the trafficking as well. One of the major solutions to the narcotics issue would be; strengthening the ties among local warlords, government and anti-al-Qaeda groups against drug barons through international cooperation. After this major step, an anti-narcotics police of Afghanistan with effective means and lethal assaults would be deployed. Looking at the conflict between the different minorities in Afghanistan, one of the major solutions would be to solidify the power of the central government and focusing on keeping in control the minorities, by giving them the right to participate in politics. There is also a lack of emergency care in the country, most of the care is provided by military sector and non-governmental organizations. The long-term goal of quality healthcare for all Afghan citizens will only be met by a combination of specific goal-oriented projects, foreign aid, domestic responsibility, and time.

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