



The Tense Relations Between Barack Obama and Hamid Karzai

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Abstract

U.S. Afghan relations in the 21st century was reestablished after the September 11 attacks in the United States, disintegration of the Taliban regime and installation of an interim government in Afghanistan. President George W. Bush soon after the incident attached the attacks to the Al-Qaida Network, hence this network's identity was constructed and promoted at a global scale. President Bush declared a Global War on Terror arguing that the international community was unified to participate in the war and Afghanistan became a focus of U.S. foreign policy.

This Article assesses the causes for tense relations between President Barack Obama and President Hamid Karzai. Therefore, this study is based on secondary source analysis to assess the two presidents' relations with each other to find out the key factors of the irritated relations. When President Barack Obama entered office, he inherited a war from his predecessor, while the security situation was worsening in Afghanistan and a pessimism was dominating the prospects of the war. Obama announced a new strategy in 2009, that emphasized troop surge in the country.

The conclusion derived from this study describes that The U.S.-Afghan administrations experienced irritated and tense relations in this period. Initially, the opposition of Afghanistan's President Hamid Karzai to Obama's policy in Afghanistan opened a new chapter of distrust and sparked the tense relations between the two administrations. Furthermore, intervention of the U.S. in the domestic politics of Afghanistan was perceived as a violation of Afghanistan's sovereignty by President Karzai and elevated the tense relations. The military surge policy of Obama caused escalation of insecurity in Afghanistan which not only affected Afghan national security forces, but coalition and U.S. troops as well. On the contrary the stabilization strategy was constructive and helpful.

Keywords: Tense relations, Surge Strategy, The new strategy consequence, Insecurity, Stabilization Strategy

Introduction

The 9/11 terrorist attacks against the United States (US) induced the global war on terror (GWOT), which became the crucial part of the U.S. security agenda (Walt 2001). The U.S. President Jorge W. Bush unified the international community to participate in the fight against GWOT to eradicate the sanctuary of Al-Qaida. After the U.S. request from Taliban regime in surrendering Osama Ben Laden rejected (Dobbins et al. 2008). The U.S launched military operation on 7 October 2001 (Larson & Savych 2005, p. 95). The Taliban regime in Afghanistan was finally overthrown on December 9,2001 (Katzman & Thomas 2017). The Bush National Security Strategy 2002 underlined targeting terrorists and its patrons with all possibilities of the United States stipulating that if terrorist or state patron intend to resort to the use of weapons of mass destruction. The U.S. was supposed to eliminate the menace before reaching to its boundaries (THW 2002). Subsequently, counterterrorism became the core charter of Bush administration foreign policy agenda which was stated in his National Security Strategy for Combating Terrorism 2003, known as Bush Doctrine (TWH 2003).

During President Barack Obama presidency whom he inherited war legacy and perceived the continued approach of Bush. The concept and scope of terrorism changed with the emergence of some new terrorist group in both Afghanistan and Pakistan by calling the terrorism decentralized and transnational threat. Hence, Counterterrorism strategy was replaced to Counterinsurgency Strategy and declared stabilization strategy in Afghanistan to unify military and civilians efforts to counterinsurgency and to win hearts and minds of the local population to clear, hold and build areas after clearance of a military operation which was constructive and helpful to Afghan government (SIGAR 2018).

1.1 Background of the Study

Relations between Afghanistan and the U.S. can be traced back in the 20th Century after Afghanistan pronounced its independence from Britain in 1919 during King Amanullah reign. The king sent Mohammad Wali to Europe and America to obtain recognition of Afghanistan's independence (Poullada 1981). United States recognized Afghanistan on July 26, 1921 and entered diplomatic relations during the rule of King Amanullah on May 4, 1935. Later, on June 6, 1942, the U.S. opened its legation in Kabul. Subsequently, it was elevated in Embassy on June 5, 1948, after the exit of Soviet troops on January 30, 1989 from Afghanistan. And due to concerns felt by American government that the new regime would not be able to safeguard the U.S. diplomats the U.S. embassy was closed (Office of the historian, n.d).

US- Afghan relations can also be explained in accordance to the structure of international system. In multipolarity era (1919-1945), the US-Afghan relations had economic character. The economic interactions defined the core relations of both states during the bipolarity phase of international system (1945-1989), when cold war was going on between two poles. The international system was affected by cold war and the political nature was added in the equation of US-Afghan relations followed by economic and military means (Ershad 2014). Although

the US-Afghan relations were not earnest, but United States was specifying the Afghan Mujahedin ratio. In the isolation and silence phase (1989-2001), the United State forgot Afghanistan and there was no motivating reason for shaping relation with Afghanistan. The isolation policy of United States caused domination of Anarchy and appearance of extremist group and insurgent elements in Afghanistan. The country witnessed the domination of Islamic Emarat of Taliban regime which also posed threat for the entire international system. Ultimately, resulted to the inducement of the eminent horror implication for United States 9/11 incident (Ershad 2014).

1.2 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the research is to identify areas of President Obama and President Karzai's ups and downs relations. Specially, the US government expanded its hard power by increasing number of troops in Obama era in Afghanistan with the intention to dismantle, vanquish terrorism, and securitize Afghanistan. But the troop surge policy had negative impact which exacerbated the insecurity.

The overall goal of my research is the following:

- 1- To provide a basic description to clarify what was going on between the U.S. and Afghan governments.
- 2- To explore whether Obama's troop surge policy contributed to the declination of security situation in Afghanistan or the escalation?

1.3 Research Questions

The following research questions are answered in the conclusion of this study.

- 1- What were the causes of the tense relations between president Obama and president Karzai?
- 2- What were the consequences of Obama's troop surge policy in Afghanistan in terms of security and stability in the country?

1.4 Methodology

The methodology used in this thesis is the secondary sources accessed from IAU library databases including scholarly journal articles, eBooks, Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) report, other international reports and internet sources. The mentioned sources enabled me to make comparisons between cases using other people's research findings and considering the new published perspectives on the importance of recent events and gained knowledge to strengthen my own arguments. I will also analyze that the constructivist theoretical approach is best suited in the relationship between U.S.-Afghan administrations.

1.5 The Tense Relations Between Barack Obama And Hamid Karzai

The United States and Afghanistan relations became tense in the beginning of Barack Obama's presidency when two senior western diplomats Marvin Peterson, the United Nations special envoy and Michael Semple, the head of the Europeans Union's (EU) delegation, were expelled from Afghanistan due to having connection with the Taliban after the confession was taken from Afghan citizen by Afghan intelligence who had helped them both in secret visiting Mullah Mansoor in Musa Qala of Helmand province (Glenn 2015, p. 227). Thereby, the seriousness of West was questioned by President Hamid Karzai in the fight against terrorism. From one hand Obama began his criticism from the survival of Karzai in power in the brink of presidential election in 2008 and increased the number of the U.S. forces from 36,000 to 101,000, and from the other hand, president Karzai was opposite of the military surge. He emphasized that the fight against terrorism should take place out of Afghanistan frontiers. Because he had called the Taliban were not terrorist but were unsatisfied individuals from economic condition and powerful influence in the government (Arvin 2013).

President Hamid Karzai made harsh accusations against the United States stating that both the U.S. and Taliban had same goal in destabilizing his country. This had shadowed on the first visit of Chuck Hagel defense secretary (Rubin & Shankar 2013). Then the tensions heightened in the Afghanistan's presidential election controversies of 2009. President Karzai accused some U.S. authorities who were trying to marginalize him from power. His skepticism over foreigner's interference in the election increased when the Afghan election complaints commission annulled hundreds of thousands of his ballots and dropped his vote below 50 percent (Sajjadi 2018, p. 317).

When Obama travelled in Afghanistan at the end of 2010, he only had one phone call with President Karzai from the Bagram military base and ignored visiting him. There was no doubt remained in the fully tensed relations between Kabul and Washington and from one hand despite these tensions. The U.S. and Afghanistan strategic partnership agreement was signed on 2 May 2012 to affirm the cooperation between both states which were based on mutual respect and shared interest. The agreement content reiterated on protecting and promoting shared democratic values and strengthening Afghan Institutions and governance and so forth (TWH 2012). On the other hand, half of 12 years of Karzai's presidency passed in verbal

altercations with the U.S. whom he himself called soft wrestling and psychological warfare against his government which there were five views for underlying factors of the tensions. American view stressed Karzai government was not only weak, but failed, in addition, Karzai has been vigorously criticized even, face to face in the presence of his Cabinet in dinner table Senator Joe Biden had told him that he was leading a corrupt government (USIP 2015). Whereas, Karzai government was criticized due to inability of realizing basic principle of state building by Karl Eikenberry U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan from 2009-2011 (Boon 2010). The lack of White House attention to Afghan government views, as Karzai's opposed establishment of parallel structures, continuing of night raids, and detaining of suspicious detainees in Bagram prison and establishment of Counter Heavy Crimes Center (CHCC) without Afghan government notice which were the crucial axes of U.S. interventions in the internal affairs of Afghanistan induced dissatisfaction from United States (Spanta 2017, p 390). Karzai aim from parallel structure was foreign private security companies and the Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) established in Afghanistan and were operating parallel to Afghan institutions. The direct disbursement of funds, support from provincial officials and granting contracts and spending resources through non-government structure of Afghanistan which undermined Afghan government and became challenge towards government structures development were his other criticism. Karzai called Bagram prison as producing factory of Taliban where innocent people were prisoned and hatred fostered to them against their people and homeland by Americans ((Sajjadi 2018, p. 322).

Karzai revealed U.S. influence, pressures and interferences even, in appointing high rank official of the government. For instance, Americans and British put pressure in changing Helmand governor which caused deteriorating of security situation. British Foreign Minister David Miliband obviously emphasized who should be Interior Minister of Afghanistan. Both the U.S. and British Ambassadors had precisely requested Karzai who should be chaired in Interior Minister to realize reforms (Spanta 2017, p. 220).

Another critic of Karzai from U.S. and NATO allies was from their interventions and encroachments in the presidential election of 2009, as briefly mentioned above which resulted in the second-round. Despite, he won the election in the second round as a result of West mediation. But Karzai viewed that U.S. and NATO did this with the aim to undermine Afghan sovereignty and to create fragility in his political legitimacy. According to his senior national advisor Rangin Dadfar Spanta with posing such criticism Afghanistan's foreign policy was drawn in a new direction with western countries and United States. Hence, a heightened diplomatic tension of Afghanistan in the interaction with the West and the U.S. was displayed, which two factors had impact in the peak of tension firstly, U.S. approach towards Pakistan had never changed and secondly, night raids in rural areas of the country along with civilians casualties continued (Spanta 2017, pp.923-924).

Karzai seriously criticized foreign countries which had direct communication with Taliban and armed opposition groups against the Afghan government and their interference in the dialog between the Afghan state and Taliban. Based on Afghanistan's foreign policy the peak of interventions in Afghanistan's affair escalated when Taliban opened office in Qatar under the name of Islamic Emirate with support of U.S. administration. This questioned Afghan national

sovereignty and intensively confronted with Karzai's criticism. Subsequently, Taliban office was closed after U.S. brought pressure on Qatar government (Sajjadi 2018, p. 320).

Karzai viewed that the U.S. should pay respect to Afghan national interests in its priorities and programs. From his point of view dragging every issue in the circle of Afghanistan's national interest and national sovereignty would lead to tensions between the two parties (Roberts 2014). Afghanistan's national interest lied on three things in the Afghan- U.S. relations: restricting scope of foreign forces operations, security and background for peace and strengthening government institutions specially, the armed forces. Ultimately, Karzai banned air strikes of foreign troops by issuing decree stating that no Afghan forces in any condition can ask foreigner's planes to conduct operations in the villages and home. Then, Gen Joseph Dunford the commander of the US-led NATO forces committed to respect Afghan sovereignty to avoid air strikes in the residential areas (BBC 2013). And other combat operations of these forces were also greatly reduced. The president stressed; if the U.S. forces stay in the country should have limited presences under the condition and framework that the Afghan government sets.

Karzai accused the U.S. and NATO forces several times killing of Afghan civilians during an interview in BBC he mentioned based on UN statistics that 2,754 civilians were killed in 2012, and 587 of them were attributed to governmental and international forces. President had mentioned several times that killing of civilians were intolerable and pointed out who had contradiction with the U.S. in the fight against terrorism and defining of terrorism. He emphasized that the fight against terrorism should take place in the main centers refereeing Pakistan. Thereafter, Karzai believed that the Taliban are dissatisfied individuals and the U.S. can bring them in the negation table (Arvin 2013). There was prevalent dominant belief that the majority of Taliban were moderate which was certified by Karzai regime. Whilst, the president had offered amnesty to all Taliban except some extremist leaders whom were not distinguished in order to marginalize Pakistan penetration and end the hostility. President Karzai had declared in 2003, that there were ordinary, honest and indigenous Taliban and those who were frustrating peace and deteriorating the instability of Afghanistan (Yadav 2010).

President Karzai also emphasized that international aid should be made available to the Afghan government and should be spent according to Afghan priorities. He warned several times if U.S.- NATO did not equip Afghan armed forces his government would resort to other sources and even to the U.S. military rivals including Russian and China. Karzai also cancelled the Provincial Reconstruction Teams program due to having parallel functioning institution alongside government agencies in the field of reconstruction and security. This argument was firstly mentioned in Munich conference that private security companies and military reconstruction teams were hurdling his government to expand its authority across Afghanistan (Dempsey 2011).

Public opinion was affected negatively as a result of the re-emergence of Taliban due to escalation of instability in diverse parts of the country and inability of international forces in removing them, extensive intervention of foreign countries specially, the U.S. in the domestic affair of Afghanistan, expansion of financial corruption in foreign deals and establishment of security companies parallel to the Afghan governmental institutions, unilateral proceedings of

the U.S. forces in launching night operations, inspection of citizens and suspension of some individuals in Bagram prison by the U.S. forces. This negative mentality affected Afghanistan's foreign policy towards NATO and the U.S. (Sajjadi 2018, p. 308).

President Karzai denounced U.S. troops treatment of Afghan villagers and night inspection of their homes and due to not respecting the Afghan sensibilities and culture. Hence, the U.S. special operations and night inspection was called arbitrary which in some cases civilians were arrested and killed. Thus, Karzai's viewed Americans had challenged Afghan national sovereignty at three levels of central government, local government and rural communities both U.S. and NATO had not respected the Afghan sovereignty and took action against Afghanistan when they had opportunity and this was a tense point in relation with them Karzai (Sajjadi 2018, p. 318).

The American media's revelations had also angered Mr Karzai. The United States was assured that Ahmad Wali Karzi the president's younger brother, a senior figure in Kandahar, was corrupt which was verified by Kabul U.S. embassy cables released by WikiLeaks. Accordingly, Ahmad Wali Karzi had access to economic resources, supporting licit and illicit investments in Kandahar and his authority derived from his brother and elite position in the Popalzai tribe (Steele 2010). Hamid Karzai confronted the U.S. media reports about corruption and his family's power and he accused the U.S. propaganda against his government and urged people not to listen to such propaganda.

Hamid Karzai's critics included mainly opposition political groups, number of the Afghan parliament and some media analysts had criticized from soft wrestling between Karzai and the U.S. and most of his key rivals were those served under his administration involved in corruption (Salahuddin 2009). Critics have always stressed that with the presence of foreign forces and the international community in Afghanistan. The Afghan people have a unique opportunity to end the chronic political crisis and build economic infrastructure with international aid, but huge amount of money was lost due to widespread corruption (BBC 2010). And from the critic's point of view, the tension between Hamid Karzai and the US stems from three things.

Firstly, most critics of the Afghan president have explicitly accused him of trying to keep himself, his family and his team in power. When Mr Karzai failed to negotiate with U.S. officials on the issue, this led to tension between him and the U.S. government. Secondly, some even considered the reconciliation program with the Taliban and the Islamic Party and his emphasis on U.S. support for the program, whereas both Karzai and most members of these groups were Pashtuns. According to this analysis, because his interests in this field were in the contradiction with American and global values, the relationship between the two sides were in challenge. Thirdly, the cause of tension between Karzai and the United States was the influence of Iran and Pakistan in circles close to the president's office, as Iran and Pakistan opposed U.S. presence in Afghanistan. Because the United States had restricted Iranian-Pakistani influence in Afghanistan. The two countries were trying to support dissenting voices against the presence of the U.S. and its allies in Afghanistan (Arvin 2013).

President's political supporter's perspective stressed that Karzai aggressive policy toward the United States reinforced his position as an independent and elected leader of the people in

society and this vision exemplified restriction of U.S. strike operation, president's explicit criticism from U.S. mistakes in targeting civilians. But part of the society specially, Taliban and Haqqani groups conceived Kabul government as the puppet of America and due to the presence of international forces in Afghanistan. They even used to target government official, citizens, educational centers, religious figures NGOs, and they were warned that their salaries and wages financed by non-believer's sources (Jones 2008).

The Afghan sociological perspective emphasized that Karzai's government's decision in the interaction with international community units is the outcome of social policy making and some structures. The foreign policy makers were also affected by the country's culture, social traditions. And some of the deep-rooted concepts in people's culture were unconsciously influenced in the government decisions and the social traditions in Afghanistan remained strong and unrivaled. Whereas, these traditions affected all aspects of life. Liberalism and individualism based on Western rationality had not yet opened much in the rigid culture of Afghan society which public policy and even foreign policy were affectable. As Mr Karzai's traditional dress - shirts, pants, hats and slippers - symbolized the importance of these traditions in covering the country first and the effect of these traditions had not only been on the cover of president Karzai, but also on his behavior. The president style of lectures and big decisions reflected this who used to refer to the Jirga, in the country's difficult decision makings, in most traditional way (Arvin 2013).

1.6 The Obama Administration's New Strategy

When Obama came to office in January 2009, he had confronted with the legacy of Bush war in Afghanistan. A pessimism mood was already dominating in the U.S. and other diplomatic officials minds from deterioration of the security situation in Afghanistan. The British ambassador Sherard Cowper Coles was pessimistic from the success of U.S. strategy, because Taliban were strongly growing and even nosing around Kabul. The U.S. Commander Michael Mullen had confessed that the U.S. was unable to win war (Blank 2009). The Taliban operations and cruelty near to Kabul was being intensified. Obama already was opposed to Iraq war asserting that the Iraq war was the outcome of unsuccessful policy. On the contrary, he was a proponent of war in Afghanistan. However, the request for 30,000 extra forces in addition of 35,000 already existed troops by NATO and ISAF U.S. commander Gen. McKiernan from the Bush administration had not been complied. Afghanistan was the priority for Obama who declared a comprehensive strategy by deciding to send 21,000 US forces in addition to the 4,000 trainers training ANA in Afghanistan in March 2009 (Indurthy 2011). During Obama administration the concept and scope of terrorist groups in counterterrorism strategy changed. The Taliban and Al-Qaida were not only perceived international terrorist groups. But based on the United States Security Strategy that terrorist groups could pose serious threats for the United States and the globe covering Neo-Taliban and Hezb-e-Islami Gulbuddin (HIG). which were active and operating as insurgent groups included in terrorist groups. Taliban and Al-Qaida and its allies settled beyond Afghanistan's boundaries in the region of Baluchistan of Pakistan operating as terrorist groups. From the other hand Pakistani

Taliban in the tribal areas stationed in parts of northern frontier state. And any form of small and large groups under the name of Taliban and Al-Qaida that kill people and disrupts public mental security in the world perceived terrorists (Hashimi 2017, p. 94).

The second military surge request took place after the change of U.S. ISAF Commander Gen. - McKiernan with Lt. Gen Stanley McChrystal. The primary evaluation of McChrystal from the security condition for the purpose of implementing the U.S goal in assisting the Afghan government and protecting its citizens delivered to the U.S administration. The administration was asked for 44,000 troops to counter Taliban insurgency on 2 October 2009, in a speech quoted at the International Institute for Strategic Studies in London (Indurthy 2011).

On 1 December 2009, Obama announced sending 30,000 troops in Afghanistan to the Military Academy at West Point. This was termed AF-PK strategy aiming at counterterrorism and its neighborhood, stabilizing of Afghanistan and stressing a coercive approach to force back Taliban (Ali 2010). The objective was to disrupt, mortify and vanquish Al-Qaida in Afghanistan and Pakistan and to hinder their growth not to target U.S. and its allies in the future (Centcom 2009). However, Obama's high rank colleagues were opponent to this surge, finally after holding nine meetings with civilian and Pentagon officials. Obama declared the surge then the U.S. strategy changed from Counterterrorism to Counterinsurgency strategy (Samples 2011).

The strategy stressed on three issues: The Al-Qaida sanctuary should be rejected, the Taliban movement should be denied as well, time should be provided for Afghan administration to train its military troops to be able to undertake and ensure their country's security in the future and develop good governance that the U.S. and coalition forces could return home (David 2015). And to reach to these aims three basic issues required to be applied. A military strategy should be implemented to collapse the Taliban movement and enhance Afghan's capacity within 18 months, work with the international colleague, the UN and the Afghans to follow up a significant civilian plan that the government to be able to gain from security. Obama also focused on safeguarding of Afghan citizen and notified the U.S forces withdrawal from Afghanistan by July 2011; if the situation of Afghanistan well founded (Indurthy 2011).

1.6.1 The New Strategy Consequences

The new Obama strategy led to deterioration of the security situation specially, in the eastern and southern parts of Afghanistan. The international troops along with the Afghan forces suffered from huge casualties in 2009, with the increase of fifty percent in contrast to 2008, which was fatal year for both and around 1,000 Afghan National Army forces more than 500 coalition forces, including 300 U.S. troops were killed. Consequently, insecurity expanded from southern to west and northern provinces including Kabul (Mullen 2009).

Table 1.1: Cause of U.S. troops Casualties, By Year

Year	Improvised Explosive Device	Suicide Bombs	Mortars/RPG's/Rockets	Landmine	Helicopter Losses*	Aircraft Losses*	Other Hostile Fire	Non-Hostile Causes*	Total
2001	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (16.7%)	0 (0%)	4 (33.3%)	6 (50.0%)	12
2002	5 (10.2%)	0 (0%)	1 (2.0%)	1 (2.0%)	4 (8.2%)	18 (36.7%)	12 (24.5%)	8 (16.3%)	49
2003	1 (2.1%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	19 (39.6%)	0 (0%)	12 (25.0%)	16 (33.3%)	48
2004	12 (23.1%)	0 (0%)	1 (1.9%)	1 (1.9%)	2 (3.8%)	3 (5.8%)	10 (19.2%)	23 (44.2%)	52
2005	18 (18.2%)	0 (0%)	2 (2.0%)	5 (5.1%)	36 (36.4%)	1 (1.0%)	20 (20.2%)	17 (17.2%)	99
2006	27 (27.6%)	3 (3.1%)	1 (1.0%)	1 (1.0%)	21 (21.4%)	0 (0%)	33 (33.7%)	12 (12.2%)	98
2007	33 (28.2%)	1 (0.9%)	9 (7.7%)	1 (0.9%)	13 (11.1%)	0 (0%)	35 (29.9%)	25 (21.4%)	117
2008	84 (54.2%)	4 (2.6%)	7 (4.5%)	2 (1.3%)	2 (1.3%)	0 (0%)	36 (23.2%)	20 (13.3%)	155
2009	141 (46.1%)	8 (2.6%)	21 (6.9%)	0 (0%)	13 (4.2%)	2 (0.7%)	89 (29.1%)	32 (10.5%)	306
Total	321 (34.3%)	16 (1.7%)	42 (4.5%)	11 (1.2%)	112 (12.0%)	24 (2.6%)	251 (26.8%)	159 (17.0%)	936

Source: (Brookings 2009)

The UN reported that 2,021 civilians were killed by international, government and insurgent forces in the first ten months of 2009. And out of these casualties 69% was stated that had been killed by government opposition and 23% were attributed to coalition troops compared to same period in 2008. The civilian's casualties had peaked to 1,838 civilians (HRW 2010). The increase in casualties of non-militaries destructed the image of the war endeavors and nourished hatred to the west, thought-out Afghanistan. Specially, the anger from Karzai government, and International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) was growing. The 32 billion USD of international assistance, above hundred thousand ISAF and U.S. forces presence had not been able to maintain security. Whereas, aid agencies could not reach to the two-third part of Afghanistan due to risk and most casualties had root in insurgency assaults. Taliban had been offensively operating throughout 2009, and their attacks increased to 60% between October 2008 and April 2009 (Ali 2010).

The violence raised from June to April covering suicide bombings, roadside bombings and improvised explosive devices (IEDs) increased by seventy percent. By August the security situation worsened, the insurgency assault increased to 630 in 2009, and expanded to thirty three out of thirty-four provinces.

Table 1.2: Comparison of (IEDs) by Province and Regional Command 2008-2009

REGIONAL COMMAND/ PROVINCE	2008			2009			% CHANGE (Successful IEDs)	% CHANGE (Total IEDs)
	Successful IEDs	Failed IEDs	Total IEDs	Successful IEDs	Failed IEDs	Total IEDs		
RC CAPITAL								
KABUL	6	9	15	13	13	26	117%	73%
RC EAST								
PARWAN	3	1	4	3	2	5	0%	25%
WARDAK	9	5	14	18	20	38	100%	171%
PANJSHER	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A	N/A
LOGAR	5	11	16	10	32	42	100%	163%
KAPISA	2	6	8	1	7	8	-50%	0%
KHOST	50	47	97	85	103	188	70%	94%
PAKTYA	8	19	27	20	21	41	150%	52%
GHAZNI	13	5	18	34	21	55	162%	206%
PAKTIKA	18	16	34	25	55	80	39%	135%
NANGARHAR	16	36	52	42	47	89	163%	71%
LAGHMAN	9	36	45	10	24	34	11%	-24%
NURISTAN	0	0	0	0	2	2	N/A	N/A
KUNAR	22	5	27	23	28	51	5%	89%
BAMYAN	1	0	1	0	3	3	-100%	200%
RC EAST TOTAL	156	187	343	271	365	636	74%	85%
RC SOUTH								
KANDAHAR	70	58	128	108	147	255	54%	99%
HELMAND	49	20	69	47	50	97	-4%	41%
NIMROZ	6	2	8	1	10	11	-83%	38%
URUZGAN	10	13	23	27	29	56	170%	143%
ZABUL	20	13	33	41	19	60	105%	82%
DAI KUNDI	0	0	0	0	1	1	N/A	N/A
RC SOUTH TOTAL	155	106	261	224	256	480	45%	84%
RC WEST								
BADGHIS	1	5	6	0	1	1	-100%	-83%
HERAT	3	3	6	5	8	13	67%	117%
GHOR	0	0	0	1	5	6	N/A	N/A
FARAH	4	2	6	8	6	14	100%	133%
RC WEST TOTAL	8	10	18	14	20	34	75%	89%
RC NORTH								
FARYAB	7	8	15	3	5	8	-57%	-47%
JAWZJAN	1	1	2	2	1	3	100%	50%
SARI PUL	0	0	0	0	1	1	N/A	N/A
BALKH	1	2	3	1	2	3	0%	0%
SAMANGAN	0	0	0	0	1	1	N/A	N/A
KUNDUZ	6	5	11	9	23	32	50%	191%
BAGHLAN	7	6	13	3	4	7	-57%	-46%
TAKHAR	1	2	3	2	4	6	100%	100%
BADAKSHAN	0	5	5	3	5	8	N/A	60%
RC NORTH TOTAL	23	29	52	23	46	69	0%	33%
TOTAL, ALL REGIONS	348	341	689	545	700	1,245	57%	81%

Source: (Brookings 2009)

In addition, military operations were launched to bring Kandahar in the east under the control. While, Helmand in the southward was not entirely liberated. Paktia, Paktika and Ghazni in the eastward and Kunduz in the north zone were still under the control of insurgents. Haqqani network and Taliban insurgents were threatening ISAF with IEDs. The insurgents expanded their presence to the areas who had not appeared already. Eventually, the ISAF was unable to defeat them and take the control of the city (Indurthy 2011).

A survey which was conducted by the International Republican Institute in July 2009, while, two thousand four hundred adults throughout Afghanistan had participated in the interview. The result shows the high percent of expectancy from instability. As shown figure 1.1 below:

Question: Is Afghanistan more stable today than it was one year ago?

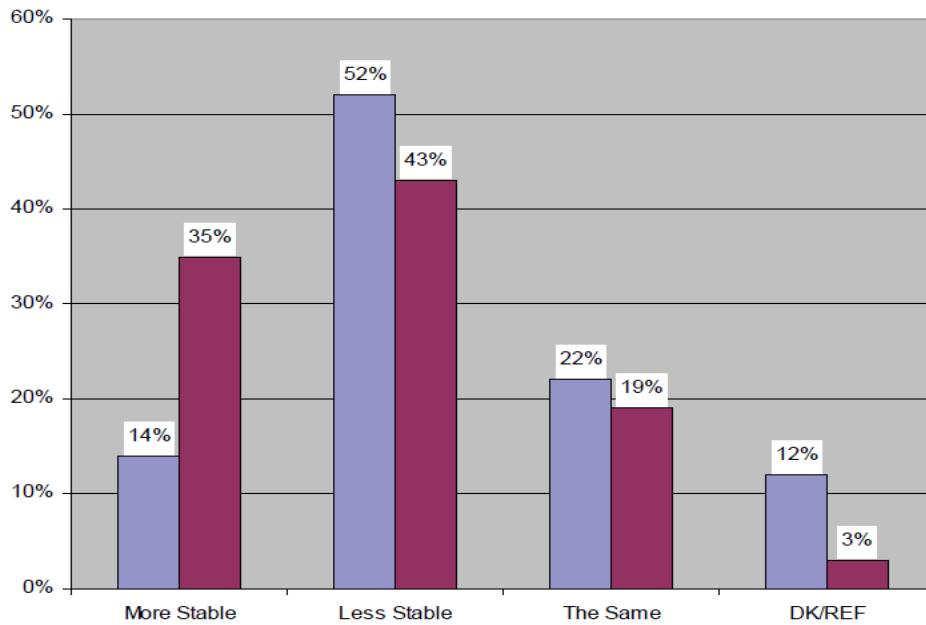


Figure 1. 1: Polling and Public Opinion

Source: (Brookings 2009)

A survey which was conducted by Pew Research Center survey from U.S. adults 49% responded that the U.S. has failed to achieve its goal during 17 years of military mission in Afghanistan. While, 35% of participants have optimistically responded for the U.S. success and 16% did not know whether U.S. has failed or succeeded (Oliphant 2018).

1.7 Stabilization Strategy

The Obama administration pledged to a stabilization strategy in 2010 when U.S. Commander David Petraeus had concluded that the war was not the only solution in Afghanistan. Unless to unify military and civilian efforts to fight insurgents in the insecure districts in the south and east part of Afghanistan. Stabilization was part of Counterinsurgency approach, thereafter U.S. followed two-pronged policy both military and developmental. When U.S. troops used to launch operations in key terrain districts which were under the control of the Afghan opposition elements. The Counterinsurgency approach suggested to clear, hold and build those areas which U.S. donors used to implement infrastructural projects to win hearts and minds of the Afghan local populations, thereby, they assisted the Afghan government to practice its sovereignty. When Obama declared stabilization strategy, he added 50,000 more troops along with hundreds of non-militaries to fight insurgents in the insecure districts in the south and east parts of Afghanistan in order to hold and construct those sites that the Taliban would not be able to return (SIGAR 2018).

When an area was cleared after conducting of a military operation, then stabilized by donor programs with the aim to assist the government to become legitimate and effective. Thus, USAID and Department of Defense (DOD) focused on expanding their resources and programs to vindicate the central authority to reach and practice its sovereignty in the remote areas (SIGAR 2018). Yet, the number of U.S. troops reached to 100,000 by August 2010 (Associated Press 2016). Both DOD and USAID played major role in implementing the stabilization projects in Afghanistan above \$ 4.7 billion was disbursed through their programs which 75% of the efforts took place after 2009. The DOD launched rebuilding of Afghanistan from the bottom up by implementing two programs Commander's Emergency Response Program (CERP) aiming to provide urgent humanitarian and reconstruction projects. The VSO was implemented by U.S. Special Operation Forces (SOF) between 2010 up to 2014 intending to stabilize villages with strategic location and to link the village to district and province and bring it under the shadow of formal government (SIGAR 2018). The CERP program contained diverse categories of infrastructural large- and small-scale projects with noticeable expenditures of funds. Between 2009-2013 years U.S. Forces-Afghanistan (USFOR-A) implemented totally 45,846 projects in different levels and values, 254 large, 2,759 medium and 42,846 small projects.

1.8 CONCLUSION

The expulsion of both UN and EU envoys from Afghanistan by President Karzai due to having covert relations with the Taliban sparked the worsening relations of Karzai with West. While, Obama criticized from retaining Karzai to Power in the brink of presidential election in 2008. The U.S. troops deployment surge in Afghanistan confronted with opposition of Karzai pointing out that counterterrorism should take place outside Afghanistan's border. Interventions of U.S. in the internal affairs of Afghanistan opened a new chapter in the tensed relations between President Hamid Karzai and his counterpart Barack Obama.

The relations further escalated when Karzai accused U.S. and Taliban in destabilizing of Afghanistan, eventuated in abstaining Obama from visiting Karzai in his travel to Afghanistan in 2010 while visiting Bagram military base. The intervention of the U.S. in the internal politics of Afghanistan added to the irritation of relations as well. The establishments of parallel structures likewise, CHCC, prison in Bagram, detention of Afghan citizens. Furthermore, continuation of night raids air strikes targeting civilians, searching Afghan homes, pressing Karzai in appointing high rank officials in the security apparatus of Afghan government and vindication of U.S. from Taliban in opening Islamic Emirate office in Qatar perceived violation and undermining of national sovereignty of Afghan government from Karzai perspective. It was not only U.S. treatment, but the revelation of U.S. medias attributing Karzai's brother in corruption, supporting illegal investment and misusing from his brother's power provoked president Karzai anger.

President Karzai critics included the intervention of U.S. in domestic affairs of Afghanistan violating sovereignty of Afghan government. In contrast, he had also confronted American criticism calling his government not only weak and failed, but corrupt. Simultaneously, he had faced internal oppositions, parliamentarian and analyst critics called soft wrestling between Karzai and Obama, and according to them there were three factors in the tension between both parties. Firstly, Karzai tried to keep himself, his family and his team to power when Karzai and U.S. were unable to conclude this issue led to tensions. Secondly, in the reconciliation process with Taliban and HIG Karzai wanted U.S. to support this program while, most of this group were made of Pashtuns and his interest were confronting U.S. and global values and thirdly, Karzai was surrounded by pro Pakistan and Iran elements in his office. The U.S. had restricted both countries influence in Afghanistan. On the contrary, Pakistan and Iran used to back dissenting voice against U.S. presence in the country.

President political supporter's perspective sounded due to his aggressive treatment towards U.S. Karzai was conceived as independent, elected president, but rebellion group called him as puppet of American for the huge presence of U.S. military troops. Lastly, the Afghan sociological perspective was also dominant which viewed Karzai government's decision in the interaction with international community the outcome of social policy making. Thus, foreign policy makers were affected by Afghan culture and traditions that had shadowed in the government decision, as refereeing key decision of president to grand assembly.

When Obama came to power, he declared a new strategy in 2009, comprised sending large number troops in Afghanistan. The concept and scope of terrorism changed by inclusion of

other armed groups likewise, New Taliban, HIG, and Taliban beyond Afghanistan's frontiers who were conceived threat to the national security of the U.S. which eventuated in declaration of Af-Pak strategy with the aim to counterterrorism in the countries' neighboring. Thereafter, as noticed that the Counterterrorism was changed in Counterinsurgency strategy stressing disrupting, dismantling and defeating Al-Qaida in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

This study aimed to explore the consequence of US troops surge on securitization and stabilization of Afghanistan. In this study I reached the conclusion that troops surge policy of Obama caused escalation of insecurity. The worsening of security not only affected ANA, but coalition and U.S. troops as well. Insecurity expanded from south to the west and northern province and as well as the capital, IEDS and suicide bombings increased. All these accompanied with some incidents and loses among civilians which destructed the image of U.S. international community and Afghan government efforts in the securitization of Afghanistan and fostered hatred in the public mindset. Moreover, A survey result by Pew Research Center showed that 49% had responded that the U.S. had failed to achieve its goal during 17 years of military mission in Afghanistan while 35 percent responded the success the remaining 16% did not know.

On the contrary, stabilization strategy of President Obama was positive and constructive which was declared in 2010 with a surge of 50,000 troops and hundreds of civilians to fight insurgency in the insecure areas. Subsequently, Counterinsurgency stressed on clear, hold and build which these terms entailed special meaning. That after clearing an area and launching military operation USAID and DOD implemented thousands of large medium and small- scale programs in diverse infrastructural aspects through an expenditure of hundreds of millions of dollars likewise, VSO and CERP to stabilize and enable government to practice its legitimacy and sovereignty.

The constructivism theory is best suited in the U.S. Afghanistan's relations, because based on constructivism tenets the reality is socially constructed entailing state's identity, interest and relationships. Therefore, aftermath of 9/11 attacks President Bush for the first time posed the question of the U.S. identity and the hatred of terrorists from America by placing identity in the center of U.S. foreign policy. The president attributed the terrorist hatred to the U.S. freedoms and applied the language of GWOT and oriented his foreign policy on counterterrorism whilst, unified the international community by declaring Al-Qaida terrorist network as a pernicious global threat.

Thereafter, the identity of Al-Qaida was constituted and promoted across the world as well as representing Islamic ideology that launched attack against west. Thereby, Afghanistan was centralized in the axis of counterterrorism approach. It can be argued that how President George W. Bush socially constituted reality and acted based on the constructed reality. How his idea and belief finally effected the world politics through interaction between states and magnification made from the terrorist threat which convinced and harmonized the globe and made alliances to be unified in GWOT.

It can be concluded that the U.S. Afghan relations in Obama era also fits within the constructivist theoretical framework. When Obama declared surge of 30,000 troops, he once again made a clear justification of war against terrorism through directly refocusing on 9/11

attack as a rationale to continue war against Al-Qaida and Taliban in Afghanistan and Pakistan. He demonstrated that how significant it was for the U.S. and its allies that he used the same language of president Bush. If we scrutinize deeply, Al-Qaida was denied, even its leader Osama Bin Laden was killed in Pakistan in 2011. This network did not have physical base anymore, but despite the existence of threat and transnational terrorism phrase which was constructed and used by President Obama provided a justification for continuation of the war. Therefore, declaration of troops surge policy in Afghanistan was an articulation through which the menace of terrorism reconstructed and highlighted that the risk was heightened and decentralized. Thus, the language and practices of GWOT was remained and created the opportunity for the U.S. long term presence in the country. Obama administration stressed its action more on counterinsurgency.

President George W. Bush had constructed GWOT by linking Al-Qaida with Taliban, while President Obama resorted to the usage of transnational terrorism justifying that the world had changed after 9/11 and transnational terrorism should have been vanquished and thereby, AF-PAK strategy was declared to target terrorist to the areas that the designers of the 9/11 attacks habituated.

Consequently, it can be argued that how ideas and identity was created, evolved and put in to practice in the fight against GWOT and shaped the core relations between the U.S. and Afghanistan. And how the global powers were unified and jointly responded to Counterterrorism and Counterinsurgency in the sanctuaries of terrorism.

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