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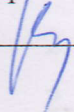
**CHALLENGES OF THE AFGHAN PEACE PROCESS**

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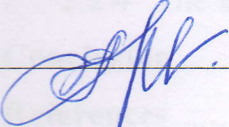
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## Introduction

The most basic and diplomatic way to end the war in every country of the world is peace. Nations of the world, which have fought many civil wars, have been forced to return to peace and have seen their happiness in peace.

Unfortunately, Afghanistan has also witnessed decades of fierce warfare, which has damaged the country's politics, economy, business, and so on.... Moreover, its people are victims of this war and ultimately disrupted the country's entire system. After a few decades of war, world, region, and Afghanistan have taken new directions and promises towards peace and political stability.

Peace efforts have recently begun, which is the only way to come out of war, but they face many challenges.

Purpose of this research: This research aims to study about the afghan peace process from the start till now, the role of regional and international actors, especially Iran which plays an important role. Also, challenges to the afghan peace process at the national and international levels.

Research Objectives:

To achieve the goal, the researcher sets the following tasks

- ✓ To fully understand the stages of the Afghan peace process.
- ✓ To discuss the role of regional and international actors, especially Iran.
- ✓ To describes the challenges of the Afghan peace process.

Research Problem:

There are some researches about Afghan Peace process, but they did not mentioned the challenges specifically in national and international levels. As well as, the researchers mentioned few challenges; therefore, it's necessary to do a research that can describes a huge number of challenges about the Afghan peace process, Specially in national and international level.

Expected results:

1. The stages of the Afghan peace process will be determined.
2. The impact of Iran and other regional and international actors' role will be described on the Afghan peace process.
3. Challenges at national and international levels for the Afghan peace process will be sake out.

This research attempts to answer the following questions:

- What is the peace process according to the US and the Taliban?
- What is the peace process according to the Afghan government and Taliban?
- How are the role of Iran and regional and international actors in the Afghan peace process?
- What are the challenges to the Afghan peace process?

## Literature Review

### Background:

Some scholar has definitions for Peace: Peace isn't about the removal of war; it's also the existence of justice, law, and order—in other terms, government (Einstern, 2018). As well, Peace is a broad and inclusive concept. Peace is characterized as the absence of dispute and war on a macro parochial basis. Peace is contextual on a micro basis, based on internal states of mind, body, and expectations. Overall, economic, political, religious, spatial, climatic, and foreign processes contribute to peace. Peace and cooperation need a balance of force on the international stage (Shahriar, 2018).

On the other hand, due to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, War is a state of active and declared violent military conflict among states or nations. As well, war is a real, intentional, and widespread armed conflict between political communities. The various features and complexities of war waged in a global society, a broader interpretation of who participates (or should engage) in conflict, and how wars can be fought and won in the future are all included in the new definition of war. (Long, 2012).

Be hint a similar example of peace in Afghanistan, More than 500,000 U.S. troops were stationed in Vietnam in 1967, resistance to the United States' role in the Vietnam War became more potent as a rising number of Americans doubted Whether the war effort could successful or morally justified. Peace marches, protests, and acts of civil disobedience were used to demonstrate their frustration. Despite the country's polarization, popular sentiment in the United States started to shift toward "de-escalation" of the battle. This was the backdrop in Paris in 1968 when the US and Hanoi decided to begin tentative peace talks. Despite Nixon's pledge of "peace with honor," the deadlock in Paris will last three and a half years of public and secret talks. The United States began troop withdrawals in June 1969 as part of its "Vietnamization" strategy. The South Vietnamese would eventually take full military responsibility for the war while still receiving weapons from the United States. Although the formal peace process in Paris took place in February 1970, National Security Adviser Henry Kissinger began a series of meetings outside the capital with North Vietnamese Ambassador Le Duc Tao. A tentative cease-fire agreement was done in October 1972. The agreement provided for the evacuation of US troops and the release of American POWs at the same time, followed by a diplomatic resolution on the future of South Vietnam. Nixon wanted to use the stick to punish the North. The U.S. military has flown about 2,000 planes and dropped 35,000 tons of bombs on transport ports, trains, shops, barracks, fuel tanks, factories, airports and power plants in the north in a Christmas attack that lasted 12 days. It was continuous and much focused. Bombing in world history. In just two weeks, North Vietnam's oil reserves and electrical resources were damaged by 25% and 80%, respectively. The United States lost 26 airplanes and 93 airmen. On January 8, 1973, peace talks resumed in Paris, and were reached an

agreement quickly. On January 27, 1973, the peace accord was officially signed. It was strikingly similar to what had been settled upon in October of the previous year. We assumed that those who hated the war in Vietnam would be pleased with our departure, and those who preferred a proper ending would be fulfilled if the US did not kill an ally, as Kissinger later explained. The longest war in American history has come to an end (AMERICAN EXPERIENCE, 2021).

Afghanistan is the home of Jirga. Unfortunately, the war is still going on. For the holy month of Ramadan and Eid-al-Fitre, the government declared a unilateral cease-fire with the Taliban, which the Taliban accepted. Around 30000 Taliban insurgents came to Kabul and other cities under Afghan government troops' security, while high-ranking government officials visited areas under Taliban threat and protection. People were thrilled and took photographs of each other. Taliban ate ice cream in Gul Bahar, a famous ice cream shop in Kabul. On the other hand, the ceasefire came to an end, and bloodshed resumed, despite the government's declaration of a one-month defensive stance and a decline in aggression. Taliban officials have said that if the truce is extended, the rebels will lose their morale and be unable to raise arms against the government (Sultan, Afghan Peace Deal: Challenges and Opportunities, 2020, p. 2).

There has been a long tradition of Afghan stability ever since former Afghan President Hamid Karzai, but the actual change came when Ashraf Ghani became Afghanistan's President in 2014. Without the spilling of blood and the non-interference of foreign intelligence, coordinated by numerous people and organizations with the Taliban and their insurgent alliances, his true inspiration and slogan was transition and stability to establish permanent peace. As US President Trump announced his foreign policy for South Asia, his overarching focus was on Afghanistan, especially ending the Afghanistan war. He said, In weeks, I can finish the war, but bloodbath and extermination of innocent people will be their will, and that will cost almost a million people. He proposed a direct peace settlement of the war. He was appointed Zalmi Khalil ad as Afghanistan's special peace envoy. Khalilzad was also the United States Envoy to Afghanistan and Iraq (CATO, 2018).

Previous Researches on this topic:

“د امریکا او طالبانو د سولي تړون [Peace Agreement between Taliban and United States]” written by Nazar Mohammad Motmain. This book shows the peace processes between the US and Afghan-Taliban in detail. The mentioned book discusses the Changes in the Qatar office. And explain the meeting of Amir Khan Motaqi and US Special envoy Zalmi Khalil Zad. The writer discussed 11 stages of peace talks very descriptively. This book focuses on the peace agreement, President Trump's press conference on the deal, and US-Russian declaration of non-acceptance of the Emirate (Motmain, 2020).

“Ghani’s Peace Offer: Talks with the Taliban” by Dr. Huma Baqi. In this article, Dr. Huma Baqi describes talks with the Taliban. She explains that president Obama increased maximum troop pressure on the Taliban. She argued, 2015-2017 were not better years for Afghanistan due to civilians killed and injured. She puts president Ghani calls for intra-Afghan peace talks with the Taliban. But the response of the

Taliban was icy. The writer discusses the Taliban are eager to talk with the US. She discusses that president Ghani is unable to sign a peace agreement with the Taliban. She says about Afghanistan's peace chances were squandered (Baqi, 2018).

“Afghanistan’s Peace Process” By Mariam Safi. The researchers discuss the evolution, Impact, and Gaps of the Afghan peace process. She has explained the role of women in the peace process, and has mentioned the role of the international community in the Afghan peace process. The writers discuss the legitimacy and the role of civil society. She has also discussed about the peace process in Afghanistan, how to increase the opportunities for success? The writer had explained the security situation of Afghanistan which is not good, as well as the regional security system (SAFI, 2017).

“آینده صلح در افغانستان؛ کشمکش های منطقه ای و استراتژی های جهانی” [The future of peace in Afghanistan; Regional Conflicts and Global Strategies]. This article is written by Ajmal Jalal, where he discussed about Afghanistan and the powerful states in the region, the role of Iran, China, USA, and Pakistan in the Afghan peace process. He has also mentioned about the Afghanistan’s regional policy priorities, describes the return of peace and political stability, focuses on economic development, and regional cooperation in the country, alongside the neutrality in the conflicts between the countries in the region (Jalal, 2019).

“Iran’s Influence in Afghanistan”. Written by Alireza Nader, Ali G, Ahmad Idrees, Robert Stewart, and Leila Mahnad. The researchers described; not only the inextricably links of language, culture, and religion between the two countries, Iran's political role and Economic influence in Afghanistan, and its essential role in the Afghan peace process, but also, Iran’s anti American policies in Afghanistan and, its overall approach to Afghanistan that has been consistent with US priorities. However, Iran's activities have not always been helpful to the United States. The writers discussed that there are some challenges against Iran’s influence in Afghanistan. For instance, Iranian-Afghan relations including water rights conflicts, smuggling of drugs between two counties, the substantial Afghan immigrant population in Iran, and Iran's role in relation with other powers (Pakistan, India, Russia, and China) in Afghan peace process. (Alireza Nader, 2014).

“د سیمې جیوپولیتیک وضعیت او د چین – افغانستان اړیکې” [The Geopolitical Situation in the Region and China-Afghan Relations]. Written by Abdul Karim Khuram former Minister of Information and Culture of Afghanistan, during the first term of the former President Hamid Karzai and later as the director of the President’s office during the second term. In this article, the researcher argued on the new geopolitics situation in the region, the clash of civilization and the geopolitics situation of our region, and raised one question: Is it the turn of Pakistan and Central Asia? Finally, he discussed the relation of China and Afghanistan (Khuram, 2019).

“India’s Role in Afghan Peace Process” by Ghulam Mustafa, Rana Basam Khan, and Aamir Junaid. In this article, the writers explained that India's priorities are divided into security, economic, and regional cooperation. They put, India does not want Afghanistan's territory to be used against its interests, as they have educated

Afghanistan's military officers. And described the support of China to Pakistan for the building of Gawadar in contrast, USA supports India. Also, they discussed that India has a strong relationship with Afghanistan and plays a significant role in the reconstruction, health, education, and sport fields in Afghanistan. Furthermore, they added that Afghanistan is very important for India. At all costs, India will keep its interests and explain the Role of India in the afghan process in detail. (Ghulam Mustafa, Rana Basam Khan, Aamir Junaid, 2021).

“Women’s Participation in the Afghan Peace Process” by Ihsanullah Ghafoori and Shukria Azadmanesh. In this article, the researchers described that Afghanistan's government is committed to ensuring women's inclusion in decision-making in all stages. They explained that women's rights activists and policymakers agree that mobilizing and campaigning is one of the most successful ways to put women’s active and substantive involvement in the HCNR that would get the attention of national and international players. The research was conducted in Nangarhar, Balkh, Bamiyan, And Kabul provinces. They explained, particularly the definition of peace, the role of women in national peace efforts, governmental and non-governmental mechanisms, the steps of women who have taken for peace, and the challenges and threats, in the above mentioned provinces (Shukrian & Ghafoori, 2020).

“The Peace Puzzle: A study of Afghanistan Peace Process” written by Mohammad Mahdi Zaki. In this article, Zaki explains the historical background of the Taliban Movement, Haqqani Network, Al-Qaeda, and their presence in Afghanistan. He describes the process of peace with the Taliban, and argued that peace is the only and best way to end the war. Also, there are some conflicting and indefinite instances in peace talks, puts security and corruption as the sources of conflict to the Afghan Peace. They specified the challenges of the Afghan peace process but, there are only two challenges to the Afghan peace process, First, Taliban has been divided into four groups, second the lack of unity between government actors (Zaki, 2018).

“Afghan Peace Deal: Challenges and Opportunities” which is written by Mohammad Shafiq Sultan. He is an expert writer on peace studies. The writer of the article explains the history of peace processes in Afghanistan. The researcher discusses the role of some stakeholders such as Pakistan, Iran, India, Russia, the USA, and the United Nations. He highlighted the challenges of the Afghan peace process, and raised only few challenges in one page. Mentioned the opportunities of the Afghan peace process that If many people participate in armed groups, work on legitimacy, sustainability, and domestic governance will create significant opportunities for peace. He argued that there are plenty of plot theories about the Afghan peace settlement, Because of their national priorities, non-state actors do not want Afghanistan's stability (Sultan, 2020).

“The Future of Afghanistan: Perspectives from Central Asia & Iran” Kazakh’s well know analyst sultan Akimbekov argued that Afghanistan is neighboring central Asia and Iran. He not only described the term of security, but also the trade and development. He analyses that insecurity of Afghanistan is a major issue for the region. He raised a question: Is it possible for Iran to put its long-standing rivalry with the United States to one side? (Akimbekov, 2020)



As a conclusion, all the above writers pointed out the Afghan Peace process. They explain the US and Afghan Taliban, as well the Afghan government and Afghan Taliban peace talks, discuss the role of Iran and some countries in the Afghan peace process. But a large number of challenges of the Afghan peace process were missing especially at national and international level. So, there is much need to work on the Afghan peace process's challenges at national and international level, besides to find out huge number missing challenges.

## **Methodology**

The research methodology is a systematic design to solve the problem of research. In this study, the research method is a qualitative research approach that is descriptive, explanatory, and analytical to complete this thesis project. According to data collection, this study has used secondary data (library-based), and the data has been collected from books, journal articles, papers, newsletters, internet websites, etc.

Data analysis is another important part of the study. The discourse method of data analysis has been conducted; according to the Time scale, this research started in October 2020, and it has taken nearly one year. In this study, the resources that had used are some physical resources such as computer, internet, papers, desk, printer, etc. Also, this research needs human resources (supervisor and researcher) and time resources (nearly one year). Indeed in this research explains the historical situation of the Afghan Peace process, investigated the Challenges of the Afghan peace process, and analyses Iran's Influence and Role in the Afghan Peace process and the role of national and international actors. Finally, this study has presented the key finding and recommendations for the topic in the concluding section.

## **Analyses and results of the study**

### **1. The Afghan Peace process**

#### 1.1 The US and Afghan-Taliban peace process

Hierarchy is one of the most important forms in any research and educational topics; based on that, I am starting from this topic (The US and Afghan-Taliban). When the Afghan peace process had begun, this was the first step of the Afghan peace process. Then the intra-Afghan peace talks has been started. Peace negotiation is a worldwide historical phenomenon that nations had been gone out of war and got ways to develop the nations. Afghanistan has been a battleground for decades. The Afghan peace talks have been ongoing for two years for two stages: the US and Afghan-Taliban Peace process and the Afghan government and Afghan Taliban Peace process. However, Negotiating with the Taliban is a very hot and crucial issue for the people of Afghanistan and the US government. The outcome of the negotiation is of particular importance. Continuation of negotiations will also have a profound impact on future developments. Indeed, the first stage includes the United States of America and the Afghan Taliban, so at the end of it, both sides signed a peace agreement in Qatar, Doha, on 29-Feb-2020 (Gaouette, 2019). The second phase is among the Afghan government and the Taliban, in which both sides appointed their representatives for Doha, Qatar. Still, Negotiations between the two sides are currently at the beginning stage, and they are postponed to the Biden government's new policies.

After the 9/11 incident, the U.S. and its allies led Afghan intervention. The critical situation in Afghanistan, the insurgency, and the battles, in particular, have spill-over effects on Pakistan and the region overall. Furthermore, many problems such as security, terrorism, drug trafficking, economic crisis, etc., were generated after the watershed events of the devastating 9/11 disaster, not just in the Afghan community, particularly in the region, and also around the world (Nuri, 2003, p. 94). Since then, the Northern Alliance (NA) has been engaging in negotiations on a possible set-up in Afghanistan (Dawn, 2001). Moreover, at the 2010 London Summit, the international community sponsored Peace, Reconciliation, and Reconciliation “Karzai’s peace policy offered to the Afghan Taliban money and jobs in exchange for laying down arms and reintegrating into society, while the Afghan Taliban's top level would be able to negotiate with officials to create a peace mechanism to end the war finally. Karzai pursued the peace process, an attitude formed by the growing distrust and apprehension that he and the US had set during his last presidency, as a personal policy that was to be the prerogative of his own and those of his closest aides (SAFI, 2016-2017).

So, there has been a long tradition of Afghan stability ever since former Afghan President Hamid Karzai, but the actual change came when Ashraf Ghani became Afghanistan's President in 2014. Without the spilling of blood and the non-interference of foreign intelligence, coordinated by numerous people and organizations with the Taliban and their insurgent alliances, his true inspiration and slogan was transition and

stability to establish permanent peace. As US President Trump announced his foreign policy for South Asia, his overarching focus was on Afghanistan, especially ending the Afghanistan war. He said, "In weeks, I can end the war, but bloodbath and extermination of innocent people will be there, and that will cost almost a million people." (Khalilzad, 2018 September). He proposed a direct peace settlement of the war. He was appointed Zalmay Khalilzad as Afghanistan's special peace envoy. Khalilzad was also the United States Envoy to Afghanistan and Iraq (CATO, 2018). Even The Taliban did not want to negotiate with Afghanistan's government. The Taliban say that the Kabul government is America's puppeteer, so it has focused on directly talking to the US government (BBC, 2019). In this situation, the US government talks that "Afghan-led," owned by Afghan and Afghan influence, "will" (RadioFreeEurope, 2018). Despite this, the Trump administration ordered its highest diplomats to launch dialogues with the Taliban in July 2018 (TOLOnews, 2018). Some experts say, in a way, the Taliban's condition that the Afghan government did not engage in the talks was understood by Trump (BBC, 2019). US officials will then discuss the idea of bargaining with Qatar (Nordland, 2018). The more important issue in Peace talks was the departure of the US military, and also there were three conditions on which the Taliban must be convinced: 1st, Afghanistan will never be used as a terrorist act against the West. 2nd, the killing of civilians should be stopped; and third, the Taliban must follow the constitution of Afghanistan and stop their affiliation with terrorists (PURPOSE, 2018). America thinks that the peace process's final decision be taken only by the Afghan people (WALIA, 2018).

Indeed, for the first time peace talks began in Qatar between the US and the Taliban on 12 October 2018 (WSJ, 2018). Before to start peace talks Zalmay Khalilzad went to Isalm Abad, next to Saudi Arabia and then to Qatar and started the meeting with Taliban in Qatar on October 7. The main aim of the meeting was to build trust between each other, but in the meeting on peace was not focused much. In addition, Motmeen told that "On November 5, Abbas Stanekzai, the chief of the Taliban political office in Qatar, told me in Doha, the United States has put pressure on Pakistan to compel the Taliban for talks with the Afghan government". However, I was openly hostile to Pakistan in this regard, and we refute any request of Pakistan in this regard. Last time (October 9), I met Khalilzad in Islamabad because I did not go there; finally, the US delegations should come to Qatar again and talk to our political commission about why we sent the office members. Pakistan also told us that we were under a lot of pressure from the United States. Please cooperate with the US on this issue. Abbas Stanekzai added that the meeting with Khalilzad (October 7) would be good. Khalilzad told me that the US military approach is a failure. We fear that Afghanistan's problem will not worsen, and it is needed to address this issue as soon as possible (Motmain, 2020, p. 38).

On October 2, Taliban spokesman Mujahid issued the following statement regarding the first-round talk in Qatar. The head and members of the Islamic Emirate's political office met with the US negotiating team in Doha. The negotiation team of the political office of Islami Emirate of Afghanistan which comprising from Alhaj Sher Mohmmad Abbas Stanekzai, director of the political office, Molvi Abdul Salam Hanifi,

deputy of the political office, Sheikh shababdin Delaware, members of the political office, Qari din Mohammad Hanifi, Alhaj Mohammad Zahid Amadzai, and Mohammad Sohil Shaheen, met with Dr.Zalmai Khalilzad the US Special Envoy for Afghanistan in Doha , to discuss ending the occupation and finding a peaceful solution to the Afghan problem. The presence of foreign forces is a significant obstacle to the Islamic Emirate representatives establishing real peace (Motmain, 2020, p. 39).

However, there have been done several rounds of talks between the Taliban and the United States. In August 2019, the US and the Taliban organized their eighth round of talks in Qatar. According to the Washington Post, the US was close to reaching an agreement with the Taliban and was planning to scratch its troops in Afghanistan from around 14 000 to as little as 8,000 (ALJAZEERA, 2019). In a September 2019 interview with Tolonews, Khalilzad confirmed that the US and the Taliban had reached an agreement, awaiting President Trump's approval (Tolonews, 2021). However, in reaction to an attack in Kabul that killed an American soldier and 11 others, President Trump ended the peace talks less than a week later (BBC, 2019). After the peace talks were canceled, the Taliban has sent a delegation to Russia to address the possibility of US troop withdrawal from Afghanistan (Ahmad, 2019). On September 18th, 2019, the Taliban announced that their "doors are open" if Trump decides to restart peace talks in the future (BBC, 2019). In December of 2019, the peace talks resumed (Gul, 2019). On February 22, 2020, a seven-day partial ceasefire was declared (Qazi, 2020).

The nine rounds of this dialogue have been started among the US and the Taliban in Qatar on 12 October 2018 (ALJAZEERA, 2019). After the negotiations, chief delegate Khalilzad declared he had reached an agreement with the Taliban. Accordance in such a condition was to be acknowledged (Gaouette, 2019). Based on the negotiated treaty, the situation was that within 135 days of signing it, the US would remove 5,000 troops. On the other hand, the Taliban promised that it would not permit Afghanistan to be used as a Launchpad for global terrorist activities and would start negotiation about Afghanistan's political future with the Ghani administration (RadioFreeEurope, 2019). A group of former US diplomats working in Afghanistan called the peace initiative a "hurry to trump" The disintegration of the Taliban into Al Qaeda is treated with cynicism. The civil war in Afghanistan is predicted again. In Afghanistan, that's stability (Council, 2019). Some officials from the CIA and the Pentagon were also not happy with the agreement's terms (BBC, 2019). Simultaneously, the Ghani administration still seemed concerned about the draft and rejected it, claiming that the new resolution would not guarantee that the Taliban would keep their promises after the US troops left (PACIFIC, 2019).

Kabul Government's satisfaction has not been included in this agreement. Experts say that Khalilzad tried to gain Kabul's trust before and after every discussion with the Taliban, while representing the US in the talks. In such a condition, the Afghan government couldn't run with complete confidence with America. Kabul forced the Taliban to talk to them, and Khalilzad said that he was not an Afghan government official. According to the agreement, the Afghan government would release 5,000 Taliban prisoners by the start of the negotiations; 1000 government soldiers arrested by the Taliban were exchanged in a prisoner exchange (The-Guardian, 2020). Ghani did

not seem willing to release Taliban fighters from prisons in Afghanistan. This can only take effect until the Taliban have promised a full truce, he said (Mashal, 2019). Due to all the controversy, Mike Pompeo was unable to sign the draft (DOZIER, 2019). As a result, the conclusion of the peace talks was declared by US President Trump. Before the peace talks were 'buried,' Trump had already postponed a secret meeting at Camp David with the Taliban and Afghan leaders (ROBERT BURNS, 2019). However, the Afghan Taliban wanted the US to sign the Doha Agreement to engage in the meeting (SCMP, 2019).

The Taliban leader was also not ready to negotiate at Camp David with the Afghan government (ROBERT BURNS, 2019). Predictably, the Afghan government would release 5,100 prisoners by August 2020; and The Taliban would release 1,000 Afghan troops (Huaxia, 2021). President Ghani said that he didn't have the Constitutional power to release these prisoners; thus, on the 7th and 9th of August, he called a Loya Jirga to discuss the topic. The Jirga had decided to release the remaining 400 prisoners. However, The Afghan government has declined to release 400 prisoners on the Taliban's list of those who should be released, although these 400 people have been charged with serious crimes. (Afghanistan-Analysts-Network, 2020). President Ghani delivered a decree on August 10, 2020, to release the remaining 400 Taliban prisoners. The government has released 80 Taliban out of the 400 (Huaxia, 2021), so after a month of bargaining, on September 3rd, 2020, the Afghan government had released the remaining 320 prisoners (Javed, ALJAZEERA).

Although this stage was not without controversy, but it has a significant achievement that paved the way for dialogue between the Afghan government and the Taliban. However, the negotiation of the second phase starts with the Afghan government and the Taliban. The Afghan government wants a permanent ceasefire, but the Taliban do not show interest in it and like it to be a part of the agenda (ALJAZEERA, 2019). During this time the Taliban leaders had visited Moscow earlier to speak about the latest developments in the peace talks where Russia insisted on restarting US-Taliban peace talks (Tass, 2019). The Taliban delegation visited Iran too (ALJAZEERA, 2019), and China (Abdul Qadir Sediqi, 2019).

In conclusion, the war in Afghanistan has been going on for decades, and the country has been facing terrible; the only and diplomatic way to end the wars is peace. Fortunately, Afghan peace talks have been recently beginning. The first stage was between the United States and the Taliban, although this stage was not without controversy, but this phase had three important and beneficial components:

- Release of Taliban prisoners for the upcoming peace.
- Withdrawal of US troops.
- Starting of the peace talks among the Afghan government and the Taliban.

Indeed, if the above three conditions will be implemented very well, there will be more hope for Afghan peace and an end to the 40-years war in Afghanistan. But unfortunately, some parts of the agreement have been broken by the Taliban and the USA as well. Also, Peace talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban are in at primary stage, so this situation is not optimistic.

## 1.2 The Afghan Government and Taliban peace process

As mentioned, the Afghan peace talks have been going on for some time and usually occur in two stages. The second phase of the peace talks is between the Afghan government and the Afghan Taliban; the first face-to-face peace talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban began in Qatar, insisting they are committed to a political settlement to end the country's long war. "We will start our introduction from the left," said Masoom Stanekzai, the head of the Afghan government's negotiating team. In response, Abbas Stanekzai, the deputy head of the Taliban delegation, said in a loud voice, "You are always working from the left, but we are starting the Mujahideen from the right." With these two words, inter-Afghan talks have begun, and now the talks between the two sides are going on behind closed doors

However, for the first time, President Ghani has called for an intra-Afghan dialogue with the Taliban in 2018. He encourages them to work together to protect Afghanistan. He is not only willing to speak to the Taliban to save his government, but he also proposes that the Taliban be recognized as a legitimate political force. Besides, President Ghani has suggested a cease-fire and the release of prisoners. The invitation to talk comes with no strings attached. It includes the Taliban's has facility to open an office in Kabul and a promise to lift restrictions against Taliban officials. The Taliban's demand for a constitutional review, may be considered part of the Kabul peace process; according to Ghani speak. Although, the rights of women would be protected. Furthermore, former fighters are being offered an open invitation to reintegrate into society through jobs and resolution (Baqi, 2018, p. 2)

The new round of attempts to get the Taliban to the negotiating table has begun; in a positive mood. On May 20, 2018, Atturahman Saleem, a Deputy of Afghanistan's High Peace Council (HPC), Asked if the council would wait for the Taliban to respond. Without a doubt. The Taliban should be exposed to the necessary military, political, and religious pressures (Singh, 2018). It will act sooner or later, and the Taliban will have no choice but to enter the peace process. Notably, On February 28, 2018, Afghanistan President Ashraf Ghani addressed the second Kabul Process conference and offered the Taliban unconditional peace talks. We make this offer without preconditions, to contribute to a peace agreement, said Dr. Ghani. The Taliban are expected to take part in the peacemaking process to get the Taliban as a whole to the table for talks (Eurasiareview, 2018).

The events between February 28, 2018, and May 20, 2018, and subsequent events, clearly show that Atturahman Saleem's optimism was completely misplaced. To begin, in the absence of an "official" response from the Taliban, on March 5, 2018, the High Peace Council (HPC) issued an alert to the Taliban, threatening them with dire consequences if they will reject Ghani's peace proposal. Despite the alert, the Taliban has stated that it would not consider the proposal on many occasions. In a recent post (Eurasiareview, 2018). "The Americans gave the Kabul regime orders to start calling for peace and negotiations," Alemarah reported on its website on March 6, 2018. To compensate for their continuous military and political defeats." In a

separate comment (EurasiaReview, 2018), The Taliban characterized the Kabul government as "illegitimate" as well as the peace process. According to a press release, on March 10, 2018, the group described the statement as "propaganda and deceptive."

On April 14, 2018, Ghani reiterated the offer, urging the Taliban to "act as a political party and participate in the elections while taking advantage of the current opportunity and the peace offer," the Taliban responded emphatically. On April 15, it was announced that Afghanistan was occupied. Thousands of foreign troops are stationed in the country, and significant political and military decisions are made by "oppressors." "We have seen people being scammed in previous elections, and John Kerry made the final decision." (Former the United State Secretary of State); according to the statement, the National Unity Government was established at the US embassy in Kabul (Kumar, 2018).

After much efforts of Ghani administration, finally the negotiations started between the Afghan government and the Taliban under the US-Taliban agreement. In September, peace talks between the Afghan sides have begun in Qatar, months after the US and Taliban agreed to withdraw the remaining 12,000 US troops in return for Taliban security assurances and a promise to talk about peace. On April 19, a two-day intra-Afghan dialogue will begin in Doha, Qatar; as warring Taliban leaders sit face-to-face with their colleagues for the second time in less than two months to find ways to end the 18-year conflict in Afghanistan, the message is both optimistic and desperate (Khatak, 2019).

For a while the peace talks stopped, The Afghan government and Taliban insurgents would start peace talks in early January after the sparring parties reached an agreement on procedural ground rules for continuing their dialogue to stop the war. On Monday, members of the Afghan government delegation said they would return to Kabul from Doha. For the time being, we're taking a break and will be able to address the agenda when the talks restart. According to a high-ranking Afghan official in charge of Taliban diplomatic communications, an immediate response from a Taliban spokesman was unavailable. But the Afghan peace process has restarted in Doha, Qatar, after more than two months of talks; the Taliban and the Afghan government have decided on a set of procedures and principles to direct the future process. The second phase of the peace process will concentrate on developing a diplomatic roadmap to a national cease-fire and eventually a permanent political resolution, now that the minor details are out of the way. As violence in the region continues, the peace talks have taken on a new urgency, putting the US-Taliban deal, which was signed up in February 2020, at risk. The Trump administration's post-election troop withdrawal further destabilizes the prospects for a viable agreement, As a result, the Taliban can simply outwait the US until troops are no longer a remarkable bargaining chip. Violence has escalated on the ground in most provinces of Afghanistan. In November, the US Special Inspector General for Afghanistan told to Congress; that violence in the third quarter of 2020 has increased by 50%, compared to earlier years; he explained that 2,561 civilians were deaths 875 civilians were casualties (Nagy, 2021).

However, The Taliban and the Afghan government will hold their next round of talks in Qatar early next month, Although President Ashraf Ghani's recent demands



for them to be returned home, the highest official said. Peace talks started on September 12 at a five-star hotel in Doha. Still, the talks are currently on hold until January 5. Negotiators from both sides decided to have to take a break in December after months of often frustrating meetings stalled by disputes about the basic structure of negotiations and religious interpretations. Before the break, negotiators officially declared that when talks resumed on January 5, they could move forward on primary agenda items. However, Ghani and other senior Afghan officials immediately demanded that the next round of talks be held in Afghanistan. Insisting on having meetings in luxurious hotels is inappropriate. He said, People must observe how discussions take place, which topics are discussed, and why, soon after the break-in talks were announced. The Taliban have not responded to Ghani's call; however, they have consistently declined to hold talks in Afghanistan in the past. The armed group maintains a political office and a negotiation team in Doha (ALJAZEERA, 2020). As well as, Afghanistan's High Council for National Reconciliation spokesperson, Faraidoon Khwazoon, has said: is in pursuit of the country's overall peace process. The council's leadership committee has agreed to hold the talks in Doha. According to a separate tweet from the presidency, Dr. Ghani and Dr. Abdullah Abdullah, met on Sunday. The two sides discussed the venue for the next round of talks.

Negotiators returned to Doha almost a week ago to restart the second round of peace talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban, the US team meeting separately with both sides. On the other side, top Afghan government officials and Taliban leaders have been conspicuously absent from this round of talks. The lack of urgency in the ongoing talks is being blamed on the US administration's change led by President-elect Joe Biden and their Afghanistan stance. After the outgoing Trump administration ordered an accelerated troop withdrawal, Biden will inherit a situation where only 2,500 US soldiers will remain in Afghanistan (ALJAZEERA, 2020).

Unfortunately, despite these negotiations and efforts, violence in Afghanistan continues. There are frequent clashes in the provinces, as well as bomb and rocket attacks in Kabul. In a rare US action since their alliance with the Taliban, US forces launched an airstrike against Taliban militants in Kandahar province last week to defend government armed forces. When the US military bombed them, killing more than 20 Taliban militants, Afghan officials in the southern area told the media that the Taliban were preparing concerted attacks on security armed forces. The Taliban said civilians were killed in the airstrike by the US and the Afghan government (Reuters, 2021).

In conclusion, why are these peace talks historical?

Both sides are working to end decades of violence that had begun with the Soviet invasion and will reach a political settlement.

It's the first time which have been starting direct talks between the Afghan government and Taliban representative; the Taliban have previously rejected any talks with the Afghan government, calling it an American puppet.

This will end the longest-running US-led war in Afghanistan, which has been starting since 2001.

It will be the beginning of a new era of life for war-torn Afghans.

This will be good news for the political, economic, and social development of Afghanistan.

However, this is a good step for a united and prosperous Afghanistan. And it is a good thing that peace talks have begun between the Afghan government and the Taliban; both sides have chosen their representatives for the Negotiations in Qatar. Ongoing talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban is to achieve lasting peace are historic opportunities for all parties. If this process fails, the consequences will be obvious. The United States would leave Afghanistan, and the country will become a center of terrorism, with the same consequences as the 9/11 attacks. And would have bad effect on regional security as well; if the regional countries must not play an honest role in this peace process, they would be instable, as their stability is not possible in the presence of an insecure neighbor. So this situation is not optimistic, and this is not a good situation for the future of Afghan peace process.

### 1.3 Iran's and other actors Role in the Afghan Peace process

#### 1.3.1 Iran's role in Afghan Peace process

Afghanistan and Iran share a 936-kilometer western boundary. Iran is connected to the provinces of Farah, Herat, and Nimruz. The Afghan-Iran border is traversed by rivers and deserts (Emadi, 1995). AS well as, in today's Afghanistan, Iran wields considerable influence. The languages, cultures, and religions of the two countries are inextricably linked. In Afghanistan, Dari is similar to Iran's official common language, Persian. Shia Islam is practiced by up to 20% of Afghans, mainly Hazaras, and some regard Iran as their natural religious and political protector. (Alireza Nader, 2014, p. 5). However, Iran's eastern regions have a similar modern history to Afghanistan's western border areas. Traditions, faith, and language are all shared by both nations. However, sectarian differences cause friction on both sides. Afghanistan has a Sunni majority, while Iran has a significant Shia Muslim population. Iran only sees Afghanistan as a country in which Super Powers has intervened and has substantial consequences for Iran. (Kugelman, 2018).

Iran has made a significant investment in Afghanistan. Iran has a political, social, and economic interest. Iran also has supporters in Afghanistan's various Parts. Iran expressed its wish for stability in Afghanistan. However, Iran, like all other Afghan stakeholders, needs stability on its terms. In Tehran, Iran's Foreign Minister said that any peace deal wouldn't be accepted until the Afghan government is present. Iran's Foreign Minister said that only talks conducted under the auspices of Afghanistan would be accepted. Benefits are being received from foreign powers. They are unconcerned with Afghans (Ghulam Mustafa, 2020).

As Afghanistan's immediate neighbors, Central Asia and Iran stand to benefit the most from peace and stability in Afghanistan, not only in terms of security, but also in terms of improved regional cooperation, commerce, and growth. On the other hand, if the Afghan peace process stalls and Islamist movements gain over, they stand to lose

a lot of ground, considering their geographical proximity and traditionally mutual cultural and religious links and ethnic affiliations with Afghanistan. Although Central Asian states' participation in Afghan relations has remained limited to infrastructure construction and diplomatic support for the Afghan government, Afghanistan's insecurity remains a serious security problem for the country (Akimbekov, 2020).

When the nine rounds of peace talks have been started between the US and the Taliban in Qatar on 12 October 2018 (ALJAZEERA, 2019). After the negotiations, Khalilzad said we have reached an agreement with the Taliban. Accordance in such a situation was to be acknowledged (Gaouette, 2019). And due to this agreement the Taliban should decrease their violence. But, after the signing of the peace deal, the security situation in Afghanistan has worsened, Overnight, the Taliban attack raids on provincial capitals as well as security troops and the Afghan army, The capture of the suburbs of cities and provinces have heightened the security situation in Afghanistan and spread unrest. Aside from Afghanistan's insecure climate, the domestic political situation in the country is unstable. Divergence of political and social powers in Afghanistan has resulted from a diversity of views and approaches among political leaders and hostile rivalry within the government. Differences in state, regional, and foreign actors' interests have led to Afghanistan's lack of political stability. Trump's position on the removal of US forces from Afghanistan, as well as a rift between the White House and the Pentagon about how to do so, have intensified Afghanistan's internal conflict. The careful activity of other countries whose troops are stationed in Afghanistan as part of NATO alongside American forces has had no impact on restoring peace and calm. The internal situation in Afghanistan is worsening day by day (SCFR, 2020). In Afghanistan, as the country's insecurity increased and the country's uncertainty spread, the second phase's negotiation starts with the Afghan government and the Taliban. The Afghan government wants a permanent ceasefire, but the Taliban do not show interest in it and like it to be a part of the agenda (ALJAZEERA, 2019).

Khalilzad's efforts came to a halt even earlier than he had expected due to the Taliban's lack of flexibility in negotiations and the Afghan government's red lines during the negotiations. The situation became challenging for him. Dr. Abdullah Abdullah, the recently formed High Reconciliation Council's head, made his third regional trip to Tehran in this context. He met with senior Iranian officials to discuss Afghanistan's latest developments and the region on his visit. He became familiar with Iran's stance on promoting the Afghan peace process. Issues such as the need to coordinate the peace process with the Afghan government, the need to protect the Bonn Summit successes and the democratic framework of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, and the disastrous repercussions of establishing an interim government in Afghanistan are among Iran's principled positions in favor of the peace process. On October 18, 2020, though intra-Afghan peace talks are underway in Qatar's Gulf state, Top Afghan peace officials have arrived in neighboring Iran (RadioFreeAfghanistan, 2020).

Dr. Abdullah Abdullah's visit to Tehran and senior Iranian officials' meetings have yielded several crucial points for the Afghan government. Though senior Afghan

officials have long been entangled in internal trouble and have missed the ability to meet with officials from other nations, they now hold talks and consultations with senior officials of the Islamic Republic of Iran in their capacity as leaders of the trained nation of Afghanistan, and by receiving Tehran's support participate in the peace dialogues. Another message conveyed by Dr. Abdullah Abdullah's visit to Tehran is Iran's regional involvement and status. Despite Trump's foreign policy team's attempts in Afghanistan to disregard Iran's position in the peace process, Dr. Abdullah's presence in Tehran demonstrated that the peace process is difficult without Iran's assistance and that any player who ignores Iran's role and interests in Afghanistan would fail to achieve their objectives (SCFR, 2020).

On the other hand, Iran has close relation with the Taliban; Iranian hardliners have been mostly called "Iran's Taliban" after the Taliban took control of Afghanistan in 1996. During the Green Movement post-election demonstrations in 2009, Iranian protesters chanted down with the Taliban in Kabul or Tehran. Twelve years later, Iranian officials were forced to defend the Taliban delegation's actual existence in Tehran. In Afghanistan, the trip did not go down well. Although, The Afghan population has a negative reaction to this view (Aman, 2021). As well as, On January 26, 2021, a high-ranking Taliban group has arrived in Tehran to hold talks with Iranian officials on the peace process in war-torn Afghanistan. The delegation's visit, headed by deputy leader Mullah Ghani Baradar, is based on an invitation from Tehran, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzada said. During the visit, the delegation will consult with senior Iranian leaders, including Foreign Minister Javad Zarif and Ebrahim Taherianfard, Iran's special envoy for Afghanistan. During the talks, the current intra-Afghan peace process and the US troop withdrawal from the war-torn nation are set to take center stage. During the second round of intra-Afghan talks in Doha, the tour takes place. Just days after the current US administration said it would review an agreement concluded between the rebel group and the outgoing Donald Trump administration about US troops' withdrawal from the war-torn region. Even as Afghanistan's conflict rises, the second round of talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban, which resumed on January 6, has made no progress. In recent years, Iran has strengthened its relations with the Taliban, with top Taliban leaders visiting Tehran and having discussions with senior Iranian officials. Mullah Baradar is making his second official visit to Tehran in the last few years. In November 2019, he flew to Iran to meet with Zarif. Iran has recently expressed support for the Taliban's participation in Afghanistan's potential political system and has called for removing US troops from the region. However, when the top Iranian diplomat recently said that the Taliban remain on the Iranian and UN lists of "terrorist groups," he sparked a hornet's nest. Taking issue with Zarif's remarks, Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said the group was "not on any UN terror list" and urged Iranian officials to stop making "irresponsible statements." (Mehdi, 2021).

As well as, Iran's government had begun to support the Taliban in Afghanistan against the US. Iran played both sides of the field, keeping the Afghan government in its efforts to prevent the United States from attacking Iran's nuclear facilities. The Taliban benefited from the conflict between the United States and Iran. Iran's

participation in Afghanistan is currently can see through the prism of American-Iran competition, such as, The United States faces some difficult decisions, which will be influenced by many factors, including the war in Afghanistan, Pakistan's growing insecurity, and whether the US should aggressively seek geopolitical interests in Central Asia in the face of Russian and Chinese stresses and benefits. Iran has contributed to Western Afghanistan's reconstruction efforts, but it has also backed several attacks against US forces and manages the UN's main food supply road. Iran is extending its position in Afghanistan. It will pursue improved security for Shiite minorities and expanded economic and political clout in the region, not only in Western Afghanistan but also with Kabul's government (Robert M. Shelala II, 2012). The relationship between Iran and the United States is worsening day by day. Iran no longer wants the United States to be present in Afghanistan. Iran considers the American presence in Afghanistan to be a threat to its national security.

But some analysts argued that, Iran is in an altered position (positive-negative) towards peace in Afghanistan. Although, stability in the region is more important for all countries, it also impacts on the balance of economic markets in favor of Afghanistan. Iran does not want Afghanistan to be connected with any of the world's economic market; on the other hand, stability in Afghanistan means the ability of controlling its water resources, saffron farms, and other agricultural products. While, Afghanistan becomes stable the neighbors industries will be less functionalized, meanwhile Iran doesn't want peace in Afghanistan for its interests such as making conflict of Salma and Kamal Khan dams, Saffron international brand, and so on. On the other side, Iran wants peace in Afghanistan, for influencing the peace processes of Afghanistan, therefore, Iran has given the friendship and cooperation hand to the Taliban for securing its interests (Jalal, 2019). For instance, after the building Salma Dam, security situations in Afghanistan have become worst; according to Afghan authorities, a gasoline tanker exploded on February 13, 2013, near the Iranian border at the Islam Qala, Herat province of Afghanistan, injuring at least 60 people and sparking a major fire that engulfed more than 500 trucks carrying natural gas and fuel. Nasa satellites saw two blasts at the border crossing that was powerful enough to be seen from orbit. The first explosion occurred at 1.10 p.m. Afghan time (8.40 a.m. GMT), and the second occurred at 1.42 p.m. local time (9.12 am GMT) (THEGUARDIAN, 2021). However, Iran has taken over Saudi Arabia's role in Afghanistan, and Saudi Arabia has reduced its support for Taliban insurgents, on the opposite side, Iran is supporting the Taliban.

Iran is providing arms and financial assistance to a group of Taliban insurgents, which is creating obstacles to the peace process, which makes its position unclear in the process, besides Iran is developing a hedging strategy, and simultaneously helping Taliban insurgents and the Afghan government.

The Taliban insurgents based in Pakistan are supporting the peace movement, while Iran does the opposite, which the source of it comes from the water disputes, as they believe that Taliban will have a lot to say in the future of Afghan government, so relation with both Afghan sides is essential, thus Iran's position is unclear, as the

country has already opposed the US-Taliban peace agreement. (Ghulam Mustafa, 2020).

However, some experts claims that Iran is not opposing the peace process because of its interests in the country and region, tries to steer it to its own benefit, also Iran has many priorities, including reducing ISIS' influence in Afghanistan and establishing land relations with China, Russia, and Central Asian Republics (CARs) for peace and to stand with South Asia.

Regardless of its interests, Iran's contribution to the peace process is critical, and has been encouraging rather than launching a peace process for this cause and has had several direct talks with the Taliban in Tehran to maintain a powerful presence in the area, and the peace talks will be insufficient if Iran is not included (Ashraf, 2019).

Iran has aided Afghanistan's economic growth, and also wants to boost people-to-people interaction, made investments in education to achieve this aim, has opened a university in Kabul, and has revealed plans to open campuses in Afghanistan for well-known Iranian universities. (Ghulam Mustafa, 2020, p. 428).

Consequently, Iran is a significant neighbor to Afghanistan, where cultural, political, and religious links are shared. Meanwhile, Iran has strong ties to the Northern Alliance and has deep roots in Afghan society, and also has relations with Taliban hardliners, so Tehran wants to maintain connections with both sides at the same time. Therefore Iran is working on a hedging strategy towards Afghanistan showing clear indications that after the withdrawal of America, the Taliban will be in power.

The peace deal is a ray of hope for a peaceful and stable Afghanistan, but a lot of work has to be done. In Afghanistan, mutual values between India, Russia, and Iran should prompt Washington to recognize Iran as a key regional player in its stabilization. As a result, including Iran in regional and international discussions about Afghan security is worthwhile, especially if Iran accepts any remaining global force in Afghanistan. Peace could be reached with all parties' intervention and all sides of the conflict, including the Afghan government, the Taliban, neighboring countries, the international community, civil society women's organizations, and NGOs.

### 1.3.2 Other actors role in Afghan Peace Process

Beside Iran, there are more regional and international actors that affects the Afghan peace process. Twenty years ago, the beginning of war in Afghanistan and the support of international society was a matter of coercion. Under the guise of defending national interests and security, the United States has been able to convince, or force, its global and regional allies to side with or against the United States. The aftermath of 9/11 had discouraged opposition to the war. When the vast majority of countries, including Pakistan, Iran, Russia, China, and India, succumbed to the American yoke, at the same time, each country sought to protect its short and long-term national interests in Afghanistan.

1- USA, Russia, and China Recent activities and movements towards peace in Afghanistan shows that USA, Russia, and China has come to believe that peace in Afghanistan is a regional need. The reason for this belief is mostly economic issue. These three superpowers play a critical role in Afghanistan's foreign policy. They control non-state players, the Taliban, and the Afghan government. The US has sway over the Afghan government and Pakistani government. The USA should use whatever force necessary to get the Taliban and the Afghan government to the negotiation table. China keeps friendly ties with the Afghan government and has welcomed the Taliban to China on many occasions. In such a situation, first of all, China needs to bring peace and stability to Afghanistan. China has done a lot in this regard. China initiated the QCG series of four-way meetings. These meetings were inconclusive. The last meeting was held in China in a tripartite manner, with China, Pakistan, and Afghanistan meet to improve relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan and pave the way for peace. This is not expected too much because the Afghan government is following the US decision. The US still wants the war in Afghanistan to continue. The deteriorating security situation in Afghanistan, and the rapid opening of ISIS to northern Afghanistan have raised concerns in China. To prevent terrorists from entering China, Beijing has proposed building a border brigade in Badakhshan to be made up of Afghan forces and paid for by China. These are all good measures. But in my opinion, a positive result will not come with it because these measures do not eliminate the causes and ignore the reasons (Khuram, 2019).

Furthermore, China thinks economically and thinks about political stability in the region in order to protect its macroeconomic projects from dangers such as ISIS. A multi-billion dollar project (one road - one belt), which connecting China to the world. Finally, Russia has repeatedly welcomed the Taliban Doha delegation to Moscow to support the Afghan peace process. While Russia invited an Afghan delegation to Moscow to hold talks with the Taliban, only political parties and the Taliban attended. The meeting lacked practicality because the Afghan delegation declined to go. Several meetings were held between these three nations. (Sultan, *Afghan Peace Deal: Challenges and Opportunities*, 2020, p. 5). As well, a few days ago, Russian offer to host peace talks, In addition to Taliban and Afghan government emissaries, delegates from the Afghanistan High Council for National Reconciliation (HCNR), factional and powerful officials, and representatives from the United States, China, and Pakistan will attend the March 18 meeting in Russia (SALAHUDDIN, 2021). Based on the basic reason Russia want to have close relation with the Taliban, such as Russia sees a fundamental difference between the Taliban and other armed groups (especially ISIS) in the region. The Taliban ideology is local and limited to Afghanistan. While other armed groups (even Uzbek groups) do not believe in local doctrines, they think global. For this reason, they can easily be a threat to the national security of any country in the world. As an active threat in the region, ISIS threatens Russia's interests in Central Asia. Although still operating in a limited area of Afghanistan, they have claimed effectiveness in operations in other parts of Afghanistan.

2- India. Since 2002, India and Afghanistan's governmental ties have been increasing. President Karzai has also traveled to India many times during his presidency. President Ashraf Ghani considers India to be a friend and has visited the country to strengthen mutual relations. India has aided Afghanistan on many occasions and has shown a strong interest in the country's restoration and recovery efforts. The Role of India in the Afghan Peace Process to retain its presence in Afghanistan, so, India is assisting the Afghan government. Afghanistan is now a member of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). India builds some fundamental projects such as Salma Dam, International cricket grounds in Kandahar and Nangarhar, And India has so far refrained from establishing a formal military presence in Afghanistan. India's initiative aided both countries in their efforts to get closer. (Ghulam Mustafa-Rana Basam Khan-Aamir, 2021, pp. 132-133). India has always look positive to Afghanistan as a true friend, particularly the Afghan government. And India has a vital role in the Afghan peace process.

3- Pakistan. Pakistan is showing interest in Afghan peace for economic reasons, but with serious regard for border issues. Now Afghanistan-Pakistan relations strained, Pakistan has been deprived of Central Asian markets and facilities, and trade between Afghanistan and Pakistan has fallen from \$ 2.7 billion to less than \$ 1.7 billion in 2015. Afghanistan has traded 70 percent of its trade with Iran, India, and China in recent years, which means Pakistan has lost more than 50 percent of its market share. Thus, Pakistan is in a complete economic crisis. Although Pakistan initially opposed the US military invasion of the United States, it eventually became a direct participant in the war. On the one hand, Pakistan is concerned about providing safe passage for US military convoys and raising millions of dollars for direct cooperation in the war, On the other hand, the US military support army in Afghanistan, as well as Afghanistan has good and close ties with India is a concern for Pakistan's military (YUSUF, 2010). For this reason, as a strategic friend of the United States, it joined the ranks of the so-called "war on terror" and received \$ 11 billion in military and economic aid between 2002 and 2008 (Bajoria, 2010). And allowed the Taliban and other groups to take refuge in Pakistan and reunite after a short break. Thus, for the past 20 years, Pakistan has taken a cautious, contradictory stance and fears an uncertain future for Afghanistan. Indeed, Pakistan claims that it should play a middle ground between external and internal parties and promote a negotiated settlement. Authorities in Islamabad claim that any mediated solution can only succeed if owned and carried by Afghans themselves, with significant external players supporting them. (Muhammad Idrees, 2020, p. 20). As well as, it also has Taliban control. If Pakistan played a positive role, Afghanistan would be secure.

In conclusion, following two decades, the situation in the world, the region and Afghanistan has taken a new direction and promises peace and political stability. At the heart of these changes are major economic projects and competition for control of regional and global economic markets. This evolution, if properly managed by the government, politicians outside the government, political parties, civil society activists and the general public of Afghanistan, in order to establish peace and stability in the



country, could be the end of the 40-year war in Afghanistan. Therefore, if the above-Mentioned countries work diligently and play a vital role in the Afghan peace process, it is not far-fetched that Afghanistan will witness a stable peace because regional and global security depends on Afghanistan's security.

## 2. Challenges to the Afghan Peace Process

Although the Afghan peace process has been underway for some time, the process has two phases: peace talks between the United States and the Taliban, which eventually signed an agreement. The second is the Afghan government and the Taliban Peace talks have begun.

But the peace process has faced several challenges at the national and international level. At the national level, such as Afghanistan's 2019 elections, the Taliban's failure to live up to its promises, women's rights, differences of opinion, the issue of constitutional law, the case of republic and emirate, and so on, as well as at international level the challenges are the competition of India and Pakistan in Afghanistan, Pakistan's proxy war, the Taliban-Al Qaeda relationship, and the Durand Line issue, etc. would try to analyze each problem in detail.

### 2.1 Challenges to the Afghan Peace Process at national level.

#### 2.1.1 Afghanistan's 2019 presidential election

The issue that will challenge the Afghan peace process is the Afghanistan's 2019 September presidential election. On the one hand the election of the 2019 year is not without controversy, but the other hand, the winners will try to stay in power. Let's take a brief look at this process. When nearly five months after the election, Dr. Ashraf Ghani has announced as a president by presidential election of Afghanistan, which saw a low turnout due to threats of violence and questions about electoral fraud. Dr. Ghani received 50.64 percent of the vote, and Dr. Abdullah Abdullah received 39.52 percent of the vote, according to the Independent Election Commission (IEC), so Dr. Ghani is the winner of the election (ALJAZEERA, 2020).

But a dispute arose between the two sides over this election, and both candidates declared victory; they were both threatening the other; indeed, the power was ultimately split between them on the cause of the country's future. Afghanistan's two presidential candidates are now working together. (BBC, 2020). Dr. Ashraf Ghani and his competitor Abdullah Abdullah have agreed to share power, putting an end to months of political instability. Dr. Ghani will remain on as a president, and both of them will appoint an equal number of ministers. And Dr. Abdullah will have lead peace dialogs with the Taliban if they ever get underway. The agreement reached in Kabul, Afghanistan's capital, is hoped to enable maintain the power balance that existed before the disputed presidential election last year, between Mr. Ghani and Dr. Abdullah- who both claimed won elections in September (BBC, 2020).

When the final results were announced at that time the US and the Taliban were negotiating. Since the Taliban were ousted from power in Afghanistan in 2001, it has been battling US-led NATO forces, appear to be on the verge of launching a seven-day "violence reduction" as a precursor to a peace settlement to end the US's longest war. The US has demanded a truce before a final peace agreement can be signed. The

agreement also calls for negotiations between Kabul's government and the Taliban. So far, the militant group has declined to communicate with the Western-backed government; they call it the "puppet regime of the United States." It has also denied Ghani's victory and has called the election a "fraud" in a statement (ALJAZEERA, 2020).

Such a contested election result would be risky enough for Afghanistan in "normal" times. However, it is crucial for a broad political agreement ahead of expected intra-Afghan peace negotiations. Months of silence on the supposedly already-nominated 15-member Kabul negotiating team's names had stoked fears that Ghani was attempting to monopolize the Kabul negotiating team. Even though Afghan law does not specify a minimum turnout requirement and only requires a candidate to receive 50% of the vote to be declared the first-round winner, Ghani's mandate seems shakier than ever, with his razor-thin margin and the possibility of a second parallel government (in addition to the Taleban's) (AfghanistanAnalystsNetwork, 2020).

In conclusion could analyze: If we look at the above controversy overpower, so the 2019's election is an obstacle to the upcoming peace process, because the winner of the election will try to stay in power for five years and somehow extend his term in office, on the other hand the Taliban are looking for Provisional Government and were trying to remove Dr. Ashraf Ghani from power. But, Dr. Ashraf Ghani and his team have repeatedly stated in press conferences that they will only hand over power to the other side based on elections. Thus, these conflicting issues are a challenge for the peace process between the Taliban and the Afghan government.

### 2.1.2 Occasional breaches of commitments by the Taliban

This is one of the key issues that will complicate the Afghan peace process. Sometimes the Taliban have been accused of violating the agreement with the United States. There is some evidence to prove this issue. The chairman of Afghanistan's High Council, Dr. Abdullah Abdullah, said that some of the 5,000 Taliban prisoners which the government released as a condition for peace talks, had to restart their war against Kabul. I am aware that some of them have returned to the frontline, which is a breach of their previous agreement, Abdullah said during an online meeting with the US Council on Foreign Relations. According to him, the two sides' talks in Doha have started on a positive note, and the delegations get to know each other (France24, 2020).

However, the degree of violence in Afghanistan has not decreased, and Dr. Abdullah has called on the US, which sparked the peace process by striking a deal with the Taliban on its own, as well as Pakistan, which has maintained relations with the insurgents, to force them to accept a cease-fire. Sadly, the level of violence has been high and unacceptably for the afghan residence so far, Abdullah said. I reiterate my call for all partners with control over the Taliban, including the Taliban, to press the point. For the first time since 2008, I will intend to visit Pakistan in the coming days (France24, 2020).

On the other hand, The Taliban's deal with the US requires them to take anti-terrorism steps and reach a peaceful settlement with the Afghan government. Before

signing the agreement, the community initiated a week-long period of agreed-upon violence reduction across the country. However, Taliban attacks on Afghan forces resumed in the following days, prompting a US airstrike to defend government forces in one case. In public statements, the group has declared victory over a foreign occupation while also calling for continued struggle in Afghanistan to establish "an Islamic system." Observers also noticed that, although the agreement with the US did not include it, the group has refused to expressly condemn al-Qaeda in the same way that it has ISIS. The situation appears bleak when combined with contradictory statements from the U.S. However, it does not appear that the group has breached the publicly available text of the US-Taliban agreement so far, which does not necessitate the continuation of the violence reduction from February 22 to February 29. Critics overlook the military fact that the Taliban were unlikely to be coerced into greater compromises than those reached in the agreement. Terrorism has always been the Taliban's main tool against the Afghan government. Regrettably, Intra-Afghan talks are unlikely to begin and advance under a full ceasefire, as has been the case in many other peace processes worldwide (CrisisGroup, 2020).

Some analysts say the Taliban have escalated the violence because they don't have a unified leadership: Internally, the Taliban insurgency has split into at least four groups: Quetta Shura, Mashhad Shura, Shura of the North, and Rasool Shura. Because of this division, the Taliban's numerous shuras have a great deal of regional autonomy. Even though the Quetta Shura is the Taliban's main leadership council, none of the three shuras accept the Quetta Shura's authority. In reality, the Rasool Shura and the Quetta Shura were at odds between 2015 and 2017 (Zaki, 2018, p. 14), in this case, they will continue their fights and not obey the agreement.

However, But the Taliban claim that we are committed to diplomacy, and we have not broken the agreement, The Taliban have been steadfast in their pursuit of a diplomatic settlement to Afghanistan's war, although much of their behavior and rhetoric tends to raise eyebrows. However, putting the Taliban's ability to compromise seriously to the test is nothing to be gained. Everything could be achieved, not least the chance to reduce bloodshed in the world's deadliest battle. However, neither the Taliban nor the Afghan government has made sufficient preparations for negotiations; both sides are missing key negotiating positions and a clear vision for a stable Afghanistan. Both sides have a corrosive loss of confidence in their adversaries (CrisisGroup, 2020). To strengthen these discussions, practical steps should be taken' chances of progress, including those previously outlined by Crisis Group, but, even as problems and doubts emerge from both sides, the main element will be a persistent desire to look for common ground (CrisisGroup, 2020).

To conclude, during various negotiations with the Taliban in recent, the question has been raised as to why the Taliban breached their commitment? For example, with the release of 5,000 Taliban prisoners, some have gone to the front lines of wars. In some places, the war against the Taliban shows us that this group has breached its commitments. Indeed, breaking the peace agreement by the Taliban will undermine future peace. And it is one of the challengeable issues for the Afghan peace process and would affect it. As well as, based on the above evidence, breaking the agreement

by the Taliban would not be good news for the Afghan peace process. The international community, Afghan peoples and the Afghan government are urging the Taliban to live up to their promises and stop killing civilians.

### 2.1.3 The issue of constitution

This will also be one of the hot topics in the Afghan peace talks. A list of topics that both sides wanted to discuss during the talks on December 15, 2020, was published by some media outlets. The Taliban's top priorities are an "Islamic system of government" and changes to the country's constitutional order, while the Afghan government's top priority is a comprehensive ceasefire. The Afghan government is considering amending the country's constitution, which was adopted in 2004; however, it has been reluctant to discuss constitutional amendments at this time. So, in the end, both sides have expressed opposing viewpoints, any long-term compromise would necessitate substantial constitutional change.

It's unclear if such constitutional arrangements would be implemented. Cracks have already appeared over several contentious constitutional issues, most notably the Afghan state's doctrines and its alliance with Islam. The Taliban have opposed the government structure which have defined by the 2004 Constitution, they have told, an "Islamic Republic" that embraces democratic methods of government selection. In exchange, the Afghan government has stated that any plans for a Taliban-style "Islamic Emirate" would be rejected.

It is important to point out some important parts of the Afghan constitution. Afghan constitution writers have always supported the idea that the state must follow Islam; however, they have almost always disagreed about which type of Islam should be promoted by a constitution or who should confirm that state acts are in line with it. As differences over Islam threatened to hinder progress on less divisive issues, the framers of the Constitution wisely decided to postpone responses to these questions until a less conflict-ridden period in the future. Only when increment list techniques were used were effective Afghan constitutions drafted. (for example, vague language, apparently contradictory provisions, and the use of "by-law" deferrals) (Vianello, 2021, p. 2). The constitution's future scheme, government framework, security forces, and power-sharing.

In terms of the constitution, there are many inconsistencies among the government and Taliban, which the Taliban says it is not Islamic and was taken from the secular system; on the other hand, the government claims that it is a holistic constitution that covers all sectors and is based on Islamic rules. There are also power-sharing issues before a peace agreement is reached to rule the country (Sultan, *Afghan Peace Deal: Challenges and Opportunities*, 2020, pp. 6-7). Both sides have differing claims about the constitution, the Afghan government is trying to get it amended, but the Taliban deny it.

At the conclusion, could analyze: although the constitution of 2004 also respects Islam, as well the current constitution of Afghanistan is considered one of the most

modern laws in the region; in this law, the structure of the state, the rights of the citizens, the type of government, the National Assembly, the judiciary and many other issues are well placed. But the Taliban rejected it; the questions have been raised as to why the Taliban rejected it? Are the Taliban willing to the amendment of the 2004 constitution? So the issue will be a significant obstacle to reaching a peace deal with the Taliban. And it is one of the challenging issues during the Afghan Government and Taliban peace talks.

#### 2.1.4 The Issue of the Islamic republic and Emirate

One of the hottest and most fundamental issues is the Republic and the Emirate issue, which will raise controversy in the Afghan peace process. The Islamic Emirate's and Islamic Republic's political structures employ conflicting values. The constitutional coalition's various elements have stated that they aim to uphold and protect the Islamic Republic's framework. They disagree on specific fundamental values and are split partially along ethnic lines over reforms to encourage power-sharing. Try to fully understand both systems and then point out the conflict between the two sides.

First explain the structure of the republic in Afghanistan, Based on the Islamic Republic's constitution of 2004, "Afghanistan shall be an Islamic Republic, independent, unitary and indivisible state" (Afghanistan, 2004, p. 1). So, the republic is a form of government in which the president is elected by popular vote, and the nation elects its representatives and officials directly or indirectly. The Afghan constitution is clear on this; National sovereignty [milli hakimiyyat] in Afghanistan shall belong to the nation, exhibited directly and through its elected representatives, The nation of Afghanistan is composed of all individuals who possess the citizenship of Afghanistan. The nation of Afghanistan shall be comprised of Pashtun, Tajik, Hazara, Uzbek, Turkman, Baluch, Pachaie, Nuristani, Aymaq, Arab, Qirghiz, Qizilbash, Gujur, Brahwui and other tribes. The word Afghan shall apply to every citizen of Afghanistan. No individual of the nation of Afghanistan shall be deprived of citizenship. The citizenship and asylum related matters shall be regulated by law. (Afghanistan, 2004, pp. 1-2). This is what distinguishes the nation from monarchies and theocracies. Within the structures of both Islamic and international law, the constitution institutionalizes political compromises on the allocation of power among ethno linguistic communities, social groups and strata, races, and jurisprudence schools (faiths). The creation of an order founded on the "people's will" and "democracy," which is transliterated from the English in both the Persian and Pashto texts, is one of the aims of the constitution's prologue.

As well as, The Islamic Republic's legislative framework dealt with a wide variety of racial, sectarian, and religious questions in an attempt to find a consensus on the nation's concept, reflecting the plurality of its backers. The rebalancing had to consider several assertions, resulting in a unique constitution in expressly acknowledging Afghanistan's ethnic diversity (Afghanistan, 2004).

The second step would explain the Emirate of Taliban. For the first time, a group of Islamic scholars gathered in 1998 which belong to the Taliban to draft a constitution, but they never adopted or published it. The draft was leaked to the media in 2005 with an introduction claiming that the Supreme Shura had ratified it in June of that year, but there is no evidence that it was ever introduced. According to public comments from the Taliban and sources interviewed by the reporter, the draft does not represent their current negotiating positions; Nonetheless, it did articulate the views of some powerful jurisprudence in the movement at the time of its publication, and it is discussed in greater detail following. The monograph *Obedience to the Amir (Etat Amir)*, which Mullah Omar endorsed and circulated between 1998 and 2001, is one work that partially explained the Taliban's official doctrine (Semple, 2015). The Taliban Cultural Commission published, *what did the Islamic Emirate Give Us? A collection of past political articles and papers* will be published in June–July 2020. Taken together, these three texts offer an outline of Taliban-endorsed governance concepts. “The system of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan is founded on the Quranic Verse (6:57), ‘Judgment [decision, rule: al-hukm] belongs only to God,’” based on the Article 2 of the Taliban constitutional draft. The sentence's subject, the Arabic word *hukm*, is derived from the same Arabic root as the word [*hakimiyya*], which is used in Article 4 of the current constitution. “[*Kalima la ilah ilalah*]” is the verse quoted by Islamists as the foundation for their revolutionary principle. (There is nothing other than God's sovereignty). Since the sharia contains God's strategy for sovereignty, the Taliban draft constitution declares in article 5 that “the Islamic sharia is the only source of legislation [*taqin*].” It elevates *ulama* who demonstrate piety (*taqwa*) and are educated in the understanding and implementation of sharia [*tasfir wa tatbiq*] by jurisprudence [*fiqh*].

According to the Taliban's proposed constitution, the highest-ranking *ulama* will be chosen by the *amir al-mu'minin*. Many of the high-ranking officials will be Sunni Muslims who adhere to the Hanafi sect. While Taliban theory condemns any kind of party preference, in practice, appointments and policies have mirrored the movement's ethnic and tribal makeup, and the structure lacks any representational or other mechanisms to counteract this propensity. Ethnicity or plurality are not included in the Taliban draft constitution or *Obedience to the Amir*. The only mention of these topics in the draft constitution is in article 11, which lists Pashto and Dari as Afghanistan's “official languages.” (Rubin, 2020)

However, The Taliban have been much more forthright about what they condemn than they have been about what they promote. They claim to have fought to end international “occupation” and create an “Islamic order” in their official statement (*nizam*). They have never said explicitly that reestablishing the “Islamic Emirate” is a priority, though some have hinted that they could consider a name change to “Islamic State,” for example. Regardless of the name, they continue to support many of the governance values that formed the emirate (OWION, 2020).

Finally, the systems of governance on both sides have very different. In contrast, the Afghan government has reiterated its commitment to hold peace talks within the current constitutional framework. But the Taliban has been rejected, and the Taliban have claimed the Emirate. Given the differences between the two systems, both sides

need to be flexible. The Taliban can go beyond the Emirate's claim, and the government has to make a lot of reforms in its system, which would take a long time in this scenario. It is one of the most challenging issues to the Afghan peace process.

### 2.1.5 The rights of women

As women's rights have been violated in Afghanistan at various times in history, this time women will also demand their rights in peace talks, if women's rights are not taken into account, So the international community will put pressure on both sides of the peace process, and Afghan women will fight hard for their rights. For Afghan women, this is a time of both fear and hope and a vital need for the international community to support their tough rights. The US-Taliban agreement signed on February 29 could pave the way for peace. However, in this point, there are serious challenges to women's rights. The US-Taliban agreement focuses on the withdrawal of foreign troops and the prevention of Taliban support for global terrorist attacks. It also sets the stage for “intra-Afghan” talks to begin on March 10 between the Taliban, the Afghan government, and other sectors. However, the rights of women were not part of the Feb. 29 agreement. Women's rights, as well as other problems relating to human rights, political systems, and power-sharing, should be resolved through the subsequent intra-Afghan negotiations, according to Zalmay Khalilzad, the lead US representative for the Afghan peace process. Activists have expressed their dissatisfaction with this situation (Barr, 2020).

So let's discuss the violence of women's rights in different eras. Firstly would discuss, have the afghan government violated women's rights? According to The Diplomat, both the Taliban and the Afghan government are careless with women's rights; the Afghan government has to invest more in the country's women's future. A young Afghan woman laid dead on the ground in wide daylight two days before the Persian New Year, her face soaked in blood. She was lynched by a crowd of men in the capital, not on the outskirts of the State. On March 19, 2015, Farkhunda Malikzada was battered to death in Kabul's heart, not far from the president's residence. Her killers were like kids playing with a bag of flour on the concrete; it's the talk of a witness to the New York Times. The crowd pelted her with kicks, stones, and sticks. They then drove a car over her and set her on fire in front of a dozen police officers. After five years, the Afghan government has failed to get any of the suspects to justice. The government has failed to support the rights of women (Azizi, 2020).

As well as, have the Taliban violated women's rights? The Taliban are also incredibly misogynistic. Their regime, which lasted from 1996 to 2001, was infamous for refusing women and girls access to education, denying them jobs, freedom of speech, and subjecting them to violence such as public flogging or stoning. In the years since the Taliban's rhetoric and actions have mellowed a little, Some Taliban commanders have agreed to allow girls to attend primary schools, usually due to public pressure. While a Taliban leader wrote in February, We would find a way to create an Islamic society in which all Afghans have equal rights and where women's rights,



including the right to education and the right to work, are protected. Skeptics pointed out the comma excluding women from equal treatment, as well as the Taliban's claim that women had all rights "granted by Islam" from 1996 to 2001 (Barr, 2020).

But some organizations and civil society activists have taken some steps to support women's rights, Afghan women's human rights activists have begun the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence, an ongoing worldwide movement that runs from November 25 to December 10 – International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. The campaign recognizes women human rights defenders worldwide who fight gender inequality and advocate for women's rights. According to the report, governments are urged to deter, investigate, and prosecute violence against women and girls. Amnesty International and Afghan women's human rights activists have teamed up to share their inspiring stories when Afghan women's rights are in grave danger of being sold off in a peace settlement with the Taliban. Women's success is beginning to reverse their near-total isolation in the past, demonstrating how important they are to the country's future, but there is still much more work to be done. Any peace agreement must commit to protecting the progress already achieved and furthering Afghan women's rights (International, 2020).

Finally, for years, Afghan women have found the peace process and peace building to be a contentious and challenging problem. Women's presence in culture and government institutions has been noticeably minimal since the 1960s. On the other hand, Afghan women have historically been the most marginalized Afghan society members; they would play a significant part in the peace talks. So, Every Afghan man and woman wishes to live in peace after being stripped of their rights and independence for more than four decades due to war. At this time, women's access to their most basic social and legal rights was either severely restricted or non-existent. People now want to live in a democratic society where they can exercise all of their political, religious, civil, and economic rights and carry out their civic duties without fear or coercion (Ghafoori, 2020, p. 47).

Based on the above information, could analyze that: the issue of women's rights is one of the key issues, Because the international community and the Independent Human Rights Commission are concerned about this issue in Afghanistan, in fact, throughout history, women's rights have been violated in Afghan society, Even in the present times, The Afghan government has also failed to respect women's rights, On the other hand, the critical issue is that women's rights have been violated in Afghan society By the Taliban, as there is no indication that the Taliban could reverse its women's policy, the issue will be a significant obstacle to reaching a peace deal with the Taliban. As well as, there were many restrictions on women during the Taliban regime, and the women did not enjoy several freedoms such as the current government. The Taliban have renewed their commitment to protecting women's rights within the Islamic framework; indeed, the issue is one of the most challenging issues in the ongoing Afghan peace process.

In addition to the above valuable reasons, some experts claimed there are more reasons that could challenge the Afghan peace process.

Firstly, opposing of the visions; it's also one of the issues that will create problems in the Afghan peace process. Because there are deep differences between the Afghan government and the Taliban ideas. However, while both parties have stressed their commitment to the talks, their expectations for the country's future are vastly different. The chairman of the High Council for National Reconciliation and the head of the Afghan government's delegation in Doha, Dr. Abdullah Abdullah, stressed the importance of respecting democratic principles, but the Taliban might have other thoughts. From 1996 to 2001, they were in power and instituted an ultra-radical Islamic theocracy. Since then, the campaign has gone a long way, and some of its practices have been toned down, but they remain committed to what they term a "true Islamic system." The Taliban stressed the importance of this Islamic system being "inclusive," but the party has yet to define what this entails or where they are willing to negotiate (Amiry, 2020).

Also, Freedom of speech and a time-limited election are two democratic components. The majority of people, mainly women, are concerned that if the Taliban retakes power, our democratic rights, which are enshrined in the constitution, will be violated. They are constructing an Islamic Emirate structure, and there will be no elections under a set time. (Sultan, Afghan Peace Deal: Challenges and Opportunities, 2020, pp. 6-7).

Furthermore, none of the two visions represent the majority of Afghanistan's citizens' views. Though the Taliban's harsh implementation of Ultra-radical theory runs counter to conventional Afghan traditions and convictions, it is a necessary evil; the international community's introduction of Western democratic principles to the world in 2001 has also struggled to establish a firm foothold in the country's rural parts. It would be impossible to reach a consensus that is acceptable to all delegations and the rest of the people (Minatti, 2021).

Indeed, in my opinion, Opinion conflict is one of the other problems, as the Afghani government is appreciating and defending their last two decades' achievements, and on the other hand, the Taliban are against Democracy, and they are supporting Islamic Radicalism theory, as well they are not willing to follow democratic issues; indeed the conflict between these two opinions is also a challenge to the Afghan peace process.

Secondly, the issue of Afghan police and the rule of law; This will be also one of the obstacle issue in the Afghan peace talks, as the recruitment of these police will be a difficult task in the future government structure, as the Taliban have repeatedly said that these police are unacceptable to us. As well as there is a lack of reliable data on the degree to which Afghanistan has a working rule of law. However, certain courts and parts of the legal system are inoperable. Corruption and power brokers have a significant effect on law enforcement and legal cases at all levels, and that courts in a variety of places and districts – like the District of Columbia – are ineffective. Even though no accurate maps or thorough assessments of the severity of the problems, those under Taliban jurisdiction seem to exist. What is clear is that the Afghan National Police and Afghan Local Police are currently struggling with major corruption and political power problems, according to LIG and SIGAR sources. And some reform

efforts have not adequately trained them to be successful in either paramilitary or law enforcement operations.

A credible source writes on the unprofessionalism of the Afghan police: The challenges Different elements of the Afghan police force are on the scene. As stated by OSD and SIGAR, the national and local police are not adequately trained and prepared for the paramilitary role they are forced to play – a role that could prove just as difficult in enforcing any peace settlement. Despite a long sequence of reform attempts, the Ministry of the Interior appears to have major issues. The police face the same attrition issues as the army, and corruption remains widespread. These problems are abundantly evident in the following excerpts from recent OSD 1125 and SIGAR news, as well as outside analysis on corruption (Cordesman, 2019, pp. 37-48).

In conclusion, the lack of the rule of law and the police's weakness could be considered obstacles to the Afghan peace process in the future. Because the weaknesses and problems of the legal system and the involvement of the Afghan police in corruption are one of the difficult issues in peace talks among the government of Afghanistan and the Taliban, Some of the Taliban's leaders, Shir Mohammad Abass stanikzai in particular, have said that our fighters will replace the Afghan security forces because they are made up of our rivals, but there has been a great debate over his remarks. He refuted it afterward. And there are still problems of power-sharing as the peace process gets to who rules it. It would probably challenge the Afghan peace process.

## 2.2 Challenges to the Afghan Peace Process at International level

### 2.2.1 India-Pakistan competition in Afghanistan

This is one of the issue that will not leave the Afghan peace process ineffective, as India and Pakistan are trying to have their choice government in Afghanistan for protect their interests. So Pakistan and India have long been rivals in Afghanistan. However, the rivalry between India and Pakistan predates during the Hamid Karzai government. Since the British colonial empire in South Asia was disbanded in 1947, both states have maintained relations with various Afghan governments. So both countries have returned to their rivalries in Afghanistan.

Let's take a brief look at India's activities in Afghanistan. India's Central Asian foreign policy was once regarded as "directionless." India has also built an array of economic, diplomatic, and military resources in search of a more concerted policy in the region since 2000, especially since the end of 2001. This is in stark contrast to Pakistan's meager construction assistance to Kabul. The numerical importance of India's aid to Afghanistan much bests Pakistan's. Whether this is due to the disparity of economic conditions between the two nations. India has invested \$750 million in the war-torn world on construction projects in terms of foreign support. It has pledged to invest up to \$1.6 billion so far, making it the country's sixth-biggest bilateral donor. 15 It attempted to foster goodwill in Afghanistan by providing a series of low-cost, tailored help. Also, they promised to assist with the rebuilding of Ariana, Afghanistan's

national airline. Despite a shortfall of its fleet, it donated three Airbus 300 airplanes to Ariana in 2002 and also have offered to train Afghan commercial pilots, as well as, India builds some fundamental projects such as Salma Dim, International cricket grounds in Kandahar and Nangarhar, As well as, while India has so far refrained from establishing a formal military presence in Afghanistan, Abdul Rahim Wardak Afghanistan's defense minister, has visited New Delhi in April 2008 and met with his Indian counterpart, A.K. Antony, to talk about the possibility of military collaboration, Wardak also paid a visit to the 15th Corps headquarters of the Indian Army in Srinagar. Wardak is also thought to be seeking India's help in preserving Soviet-era helicopter gunships (Howenstein, 2009, pp. 127-140).

On the other hand, Pakistan also has its own goals and activities in Afghanistan. Many Pakistani political observers believe Pakistan's policy of aiding the Taliban is a response to friendly ties between the Afghan government and India and the threat Pakistan perceives from Indian meddling in its eastern neighbor's affairs. Regarding Ahmed Rashid, The Pakistani army was alarmed by the fact that the Karzai administration, was controlled by anti-Pakistan and pro-India forces (Rashid, 2009). Pervez Musharraf, Pakistan's President from 2001 to 2008, revealed in a 2015 interview with the Guardian, Pakistan tried to overthrow the Afghan government by helping the Taliban as a proxy force Karzai had aided India in stabbing Pakistan in the back. (Boone, 2015).

Indeed, India is attempting to prevent the re-establishment of any kind of Taliban rule in the country, as well as, India wants to establish long-term diplomatic and economic relations with a secure, common, and pro-Indian government in Afghanistan so that it can bound Pakistan and grow strong strategic and economic ties with Central Asia's energy-rich countries. Pakistan's reservations over India's presence in Afghanistan, are one of its "legitimate interests," according to Barnett Rubin. If Pakistan's wishes for its military presence in Afghanistan are obsolete or not, Islamabad sees itself as being surrounded by hostile powers, with China being its only peaceful friend. In several ways, Pakistan appears to be treating India's presence in Afghanistan with the same gravity, as well as, the same unanswered questions about the country's historically hazy national identity as it does the Kashmir issue (Howenstein, 2009, pp. 127-140).

As a result, Pakistani officials are concerned about the close relations between Afghanistan and India, and it is a threat to Pakistan's territorial integrity and security, and they have always tried to undermine India-Afghanistan relations. Indeed, both countries are trying to protect their national interests and accept their demands on influential groups. So, it's also a challengeable issue to Afghan peace.

### 2.2.2 Pakistan's proxy war in Afghanistan

The forces have used the proxy war to support their national security and long-term needs without engaging them. The general pattern is for a powerful nation to back a state or even a non-state player with mutually beneficial interests in a specific region or zone. Dwight Eisenhower famously said that proxy war is the cheapest insurance

you can find, for it allows one to achieve one's national goals with the least amount of money. However, the past proxy wars are littered with crippling moral implications and challenges to peace and prosperity in the proxy war theater. Furthermore, it can pull the power through an endless stream of conflagration at a high human and material expense. It can come at a cost to the power in terms of prestige deficits and a lack of power aura.

It's essential to review Afghanistan's Cold War past. During the Cold War between the US and the Soviet Union in the 1980s and early 1990s, Afghanistan was seen as a proxy battleground. One might contend that America won the war (as opposed to the Soviet Union or Afghanistan). Pakistan and India were dragged into the Cold War conflict by the United States and the Soviet Union. India secretly supported the Soviet Union, as it had done in many other regions. The US and the mujahedeen used Pakistan and its intelligence service as a go-between. When the Soviet forces left in 1989, Pakistan continued to help the insurgents. Pakistan is now attempting to heal the rift that has existed since the Afghan and Pakistani regimes found themselves on opposing sides. As a result, the proxy war begins with a new cast of characters (school, 2020).

So in this proxy war Pakistan was a key ally of the Taliban government before 9/11 and has continued to back Taliban insurgents since then. Though Pakistani officials have denied funding the separatist movement on several occasions, there is overwhelming evidence that the Taliban continue to receive haven as well as military and financial assistance in Pakistan. Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) has managed to harbor and protect Taliban and al Qaeda leaders and members even though it claimed to be an ally of the US in the war on terror. Ahmed Rashid, a well-known Pakistani author, wrote the book *Descent into Chaos: On Pakistan's double playing with the Taliban*, the author of "The US and the Disaster in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Central Asia" writes that Many Pakistanis realized that Musharraf's support for the US-led war in Afghanistan was not the expected political U-turn that would end the army's long-standing support for Radical Islamists, but rather a diplomatic step to appease the US a year after 9/11 (Rashid, 2009)

Without military and financial assistance, as well as practically unhindered access to sanctuaries in Pakistan, the Taliban would have been completely vanquished or at the very least severely incapacitated fifteen years after the Taliban regime collapsed. Taliban have been able to use these resources in Pakistan not due to the Pakistani government's incompetence or lack of interest but due to its complete cooperation and direct participation. According to Ahmad Rashid, after the Taliban regime fell apart, the ISI adopted a two-track strategy of defending the Taliban and handing over al Qaeda Arabs and other non-Afghans to the US to retain dominance among the Taliban and Afghan Pashtuns (Rashid, 2009). The ISI's position in preparing and coordinating terrorist attacks carried out by the Haqqani Network, a Taliban group that is operationally autonomous, has become even more influential (Perlez, 2011).

Based on interviews with several former Taliban commanders, Matt Waldman of Harvard's Carr Centre for Human Rights published a study in 2010 claiming that the ISI "arranges, sustains, and strongly influences" the insurgents and that the ISI is also

represented as participants or spectators on the Taliban supreme leadership council, the Quetta Shura (William Dalrymple, 2010).

There have been signs in the past that Pakistan has secretly had full ties to the Taliban. US President Barack Obama and other American officials have urged, Pakistani leaders to take somber military action against Taliban and al Qaeda which have activity in their country (REUTERS, 2010). Despite US drone strikes within Pakistan, including the murder of Taliban leader Mullah Akhtar Mansour in Baluchistan, Pakistan's stand against the Taliban has remained unmoved. When Akhtar Mansour was assassinated, he was returning from a trip to Iran with a Pakistani passport. According to several accounts, Akhtar Mansour had businesses in the Gulf States and had traveled to Russia using his Pakistani passport and other countries (Guardin, 2016).

In conclusion, Pakistan is also trying to keep going its proxy war in Afghanistan to protect its political, economic, commercial, and other interests. Therefore, they try to pressure their influential groups to maintain full or at least majority of power. According to Afghanistan's current situation, this action seems complicated, which will hamper the Afghan peace process that will eventually lead to Pakistan's continuing proxy war in Afghanistan. Pakistan's continued support and cooperation with the Taliban show us that Pakistan's interests are at stake.

### 2.2.3 Taliban and Al-Qaida Close Relation

Relations between the Taliban and al-Qaeda cannot be ignored because when the Taliban established their emirate in Afghanistan, some members of al-Qaeda came to Afghanistan and settled there. The Taliban is a Radical Islamic party that controlled Afghanistan from 1996 to 2001 when deposed by a US-led invasion for sheltering al Qaeda and Osama bin Laden.

The Taliban and al-Qaeda had close ties since the creation of the Taliban, when the Taliban was established in the early 1990s by an Afghan mujahideen, or Islamic rebels, who had fought against the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan (1979–89). They were followed by Talib, a younger man who had been studying in madrassas. However, According to documents recovered during the US raid in Pakistan that killed Osama bin Laden, the al Qaeda leader prioritized crushing the Afghan government and its NATO allies as a prelude to extending the conflict to other areas of the region. According to the general strategy drafted by Jihad leaders, the first Jihadi goal is to establish an Islamic Emirate in Afghanistan; its development will serve as a mechanism for implementing Islamic Sharia law in the remaining regions and countries. We are your soldiers, and we are with you heart and soul in supporting the religion of God Almighty, bin Laden writes in a text titled “to Emir Al-Mo'mineen,” which is most likely a letter sent to Mullah Omar (DNI).

However, the Taliban and the United States recently signed an agreement, they are agreed to remove all American forces from Afghanistan by next summer, provided the Taliban guaranteed that terrorist organizations such as al-Qaeda could not use Afghan territories to plan foreign strikes. But despite the agreement, some

commanders of taliban say it is difficult for us to break ties with al-Qaeda. According to the BBC, the Taliban promised al-Qaeda that the two sides will remain allies in the run-up to the US deal. The UN's Islamic State, Al-Qaeda, and Taliban Monitoring Team, led by Edmund Fitton-Brown, claims that. The Taliban spoke with al-Qaeda daily and at a high level, assuring them that they would honor their historical links. Mr. Fitton-Brown expressed his thoughts. He said, the deal reached with the US had "not concretely" changed the relationship among al-Qaeda and the Taliban. Al-Qaeda is deeply enmeshed with the Taliban, and they conduct a significant amount of combat and training operations with them (Kermani, 2020).

But the official of Taliban rejected it, the NBC-News has reported: The Taliban insist on following through on their agreement with the United States. They promised to hold peace talks with their adversaries in the Afghan government to remove the US and other NATO soldiers. The agreement helps the Taliban give a direct message to anyone who would jeopardize the US's security and its allies in Afghanistan that they have no place in the country. It forbids collaboration with such organizations. Terrorist organizations are prohibited from "recruiting, training, and fundraising" by the Taliban, and the rebels are prohibited from hosting such groups. The Taliban formally claim that there are no terrorist groups in Afghanistan and that Al Qaeda members left the country after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, and the resulting US-led invasion. Foreign governments and international experts, dismiss the point as demonstrably inaccurate, As well as Secretary of United States Mike Pompeo said on March 1 that the Taliban had broken their ties with terrorist groups and decided to cooperate with us to force Al Qaeda to leave the region. On the other hand, According to former US leaders, the Taliban and Al Qaeda have had long-standing links. (By Dan De Luce, 2021).

If look to the above-mentioned information it can be analyzed that the deep link between the Taliban and Al Qaeda has created a lot of problems for the west. It should also be made clear that the relationship between al-Qaeda and the Taliban is unbreakable and that both sides are working for a specific goal, so the United States is trying to get the Taliban to cut ties with al-Qaeda, and the United States will The Taliban are convinced that your relationship is a major obstacle to the Afghan peace process.

But on the other hand, if the Taliban completely cut ties with al-Qaeda and disassociated itself from it, there is a fear that a new group will emerge to continue its war in Afghanistan. This scenario will not leave the Afghan peace process ineffective.

#### 2.2.4 The issue of the Durand line

As Pakistan has a significant role in the peace process, Afghanistan and Pakistan have long been at loggerheads over Durand Line, Pakistan will try to put pressure on the United States and its allies to accept the Durand Line as a formal line, but this is unacceptable to the Afghan government and the Afghan Taliban. To illustrate this

point, firstly, it's important to briefly look at the historical background of the Durand Line.

However, Sir Mortimer Durand, the British colonial government of India's foreign minister, convinced Abdur Rahman, the Afghan amir, to approve a boundary between Afghanistan and British India in exchange for a subsidy in 1893. This line, which eventually stretched 1,519 miles, had the immediate effect of separating some small territories formerly controlled by Afghan amirs from Afghan influence. It also unfairly split the region's Pashtun population into British India and Afghanistan. The Pashtuns occupied a large area stretching from the Peshawar Valley in the east, to Kabul in the west, and from Qandahar and the Helmand Valley in the south, to Quetta in the north. Since the mid-eighteenth century, Pashtuns have ruled Afghanistan, and Afghan amirs have always portrayed themselves as the ancient rulers of all Pashtuns, even though they do not rule over them. During the nineteenth century, the words "Afghan" and "Pashtun" were often interchanged. The Afghans saw the Durand Line as unconstitutional because of long-established relations (political, economic, and cultural) among the numerous regional Pashtun populations. Even though Afghanistan had struggled to assert its political jurisdiction over most territories now under British jurisdiction, this was accomplished (Barfield, 2007, p. 2).

As well as, The Durand Line, which separates Afghanistan and Pakistan, was drawn in 1893, when the British Empire invaded India and dominated Afghanistan's foreign policy. The Pashtun population living in the area is divided by an undefined line drawn from Afghanistan's northeastern boundary with China to its southwestern border with Iran. Although Pakistan try to accept this line as the formal boundary between the two countries, Afghanistan has rejected its legal status since its freedom in 1919. Furthermore, tribal tribes on both sides have traditionally protested attempts to demarcate the frontier and impose border controls (Rahi, 2014).

Still, the Durand line issue is alive; following the Indo-Pakistan partition scheme's declaration on June 3, 1947, Afghanistan questioned the Durand Boundry. The Afghan government established an autonomous Pashtunistan movement in the Northwest Territories, which demanded freedom. Pakistan's response was to harden its stance on the territories. Pakistan significantly expanded its military presence in the country in 1948. The intervention prompted Afghan King Zahir Shah to demand that the Durand Line be abandoned, and the country's territories are returned. On July 26, 1949, Kabul summoned an Afghan tribal assembly (a Loya Jirga), which voted unanimously in favor of the tribal areas' secession from Pakistan. The Loya Jirga then continued to unilaterally revoke all treaties concluded by previous Afghan governments with the British-India government, along with the Durand Agreement, effectively declaring that the Afghan government does not accept the Durand Line as a valid boundary between Afghanistan and Pakistan. Although this proclamation received no foreign support, the Afghan government's condemnation of it has remained constant for the last 65 years, regardless of the regimes in force. Mohammad Daoud Khan had become President after overthrowing his cousin King Zahir Shah. The Durand Line's recognition remained a non-negotiable issue for him as a staunch supporter of the Pashtunistan movement. Although he mellowed down from his earlier



role as Afghanistan's President due to US scrutiny, he declined to ratify the Durand Line. Even; after the Saur Revolution and the subsequent Soviet invasion, neither of Afghanistan's Communist governments supported the Durand Line (Biswas, 2013, p. 18).

At various times in history, Pakistan has tried to accept the Durand Line as the official border with the Afghan rulers, fortunately this attempt has repeatedly failed. After the collapse of the previous communist regime, Pakistan hoped that the Islamist leaders it had supported in their anti-Soviet campaign would be able to settle the Durand Line problem. Burhanuddin Rabbani and Ahmad Shah Massoud, who played a key role in creating the Islamic State of Afghanistan on 1992 in Peshawar, declined to recognize the Durand Line as the international boundary, much to Pakistan's dismay. Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, a Hizbe Islami commander who had declined to sign the Peshawar Accord, was then backed by Pakistan to take on Rabbani's government. As it became apparent that Hekmatyar's forces would be unable to destabilize Rabbani's government or compel him to recognize the Durand Line, Pakistan left Hekmatyar in favor of the Taliban (Biswas, 2013, pp. 18-19).

By 1996, the Taliban had taken possession of 90% of Afghanistan's territory, forming Afghanistan's Islamic Emirate. As well, the Taliban declined to address the Durand Line. As well as, the Karzai government rejects to acknowledge the Durand Line between Afghanistan and Pakistan as boundary. (DAWN, 2012). The Afghan government retaliated by declaring that the Durand Line's position is of historical significance to the Afghan nation. As a result, someone's argument regarding this line's legal status was rejected and dismissed by the Afghan government (BusinessLine, 2012).

Joseph V. Micallef writes in a Huffington Post report about the relevance of the Durand Line for Pakistan and Afghanistan: For the better part of a century, the Durand Line boundaries' validity has tainted Afghan-Pakistani ties. The loss of half of Afghanistan's traditional Pashtun lands split the country's main tribal grouping. Furthermore, the fall of Baluchistan rendered the province landlocked, with no way to reach the Arabian Sea or the Indian Ocean other than from Pakistani territories. The Durand Line is a matter of life and death for Pakistan. The region in question accounts for about 60% of its current territorial territory (Micallef, 2017).

As a result, Pakistani authorities suspect that a solid and stable Afghanistan that does not respect the Durand Line and has good relations with India will help separatist movements in Baluchistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, a significant threat to Pakistan's territorial integrity. To avoid such a situation from ever occurring, Pakistan's military establishment has backed militant groups battling the Afghan regime, transforming border regions with Afghanistan into breeding grounds for extremist Jihadists partially controlled by Pakistan (Boone, 2015).

In conclusion, the Durand Line is also one of the other issues that have been the conflict between Afghanistan and Pakistan for a long time; Pakistan has always tried to introduce this line as an international border. Still, they have always faced the Afghan's government ignorance and have denied the allegation and have considered this issue as the power and the authority of both sides people.

So, Pakistan is trying to use this opportunity and pressure the United States to accept this line as an international border, which seems to be rejected by the Afghan government and the Afghan Taliban. This collapse poses a challenge to the Afghan peace process, as Pakistan also positively influences the afghan peace process.

## Conclusion

As a result, in this research the following goal and objectives are achieved. When the United States invaded Afghanistan on 9/11, the regime of Taliban was overthrown, but after two years Taliban gathered again and started war against the United States and Afghan government. However, after several years of war in Afghanistan, the efforts to start peace talks with the Taliban had begun during Karzai's government, but Taliban rejected the offer of peace talks. The peace talks heated up during Dr. Ashraf Ghani's ruling time. Although, Taliban initially refused to negotiate with the Afghan government, calling it a US puppet government. The peace talks started in two stages; the first stage was between Taliban and USA, and they signed a peace agreement on 29-Feb-2020 in Doha, Qatar. The main points of this agreement were: The release of Taliban prisoners, reduction in violence and pave the way for intra-afghan peace talks. The second stage of the peace talks is between the Afghan government and Afghan Taliban that they have appointed their representatives and arrived in Doha, Qatar. The negotiations between the two sides are currently at the beginning stage, and both sides have not yet begun talks on key issues.

Furthermore, some regional and international actors are involved the Afghan peace process, especially Iran. With, whom it shares cultural, political, and religious links and also it has strong ties to the Northern Alliance and Taliban hardliners that led them to have deep roots in Afghan society. So, they are working on a hedging strategy towards Afghanistan. However, Iran is on a different position towards peace in Afghanistan, stability in the region is in the interest of all countries. This stability also changes the balance of economic markets in favor of Afghanistan and the issue of water with Afghanistan. Meanwhile, Tehran has connections with the Taliban and Afghan government. On the other side, Iran has clear indications that after the withdrawal of America, the Taliban will be empowered. Iran is keen to bring peace to Afghanistan. The peace deal is a ray of hope for a peaceful and stable Afghanistan, but a lot of work has to be done.

Beside Iran, other regional and international actors also have roles in the Afghan peace process. For instance, Russia, Pakistan, and China. Because, they believe that peace in Afghanistan is a regional need. This belief is inspired by economical phenomena. Pakistan is also showing interest to peace in Afghanistan for obvious economic reasons, but with serious regards to Durand line. Pakistan has taken cautious, contradictory positions and fears of Afghanistan's uncertain future. Indeed, Pakistan claims that they play a middle ground role between external and internal parties. Russia sees a significant difference between the Taliban and other armed groups in the area (particularly ISIS). The Taliban ideology is only seen in Afghanistan and is restricted to the country. While other armed groups (even Uzbek groups) do not believe in local doctrines, they think global. For these reasons, they will easily pose a danger to any country's national security. So Russia is trying to bring peace in Afghanistan so that the Taliban fight ISIS and other terrorist groups. On the other hand, China needs to bring peace and stability to Afghanistan. That, has done a lot in this regard. They initiated

the QCG series of four-way meetings. These meetings were inconclusive. China considers both economic and political issues in the region. So they are observing the security situation in Afghanistan, and are concerned about the rapid opening of ISIS to northern Afghanistan. To prevent terrorists from entering China, Beijing has proposed building a border brigade in Badakhshan. Also, they will support the Afghan forces to fight against terrorists. In this regard, to safeguard its macroeconomic ventures from threats such as ISIS, and applying the multibillion-dollar project (one road, one belt) which connects China to the rest of the world. Also India has always look positive to Afghanistan as a true friend, particularly the Afghan government. India builds some fundamental projects such as Salma Dam, International cricket grounds in Kandahar and Nangarhar, And India has so far refrained from establishing a formal military presence in Afghanistan. India's initiative aided both countries in their efforts to get closer. And India has a vital role in the Afghan peace process.

On the other hand , the Afghan peace process faces several challenges nationally and internationally; At the national level, such as the issue of republic and emirate, the Taliban's violation of the US-Taliban peace agreement, the issue of the constitution, the 2019 presidential election, women's rights, differences of opinion, the issue of the Afghan police and the rule of law, as well as at the international level, such as Taliban-Qaeda ties, India-Pakistan rivalry, Pakistan's proxy war, and the Durand Line.

Consequently, it is recommend to conduct researches on other issues, which would be challengeable for the Afghan peace process, such as the role of youth, drugs, and so on.

#### Recommendations:

##### To the Afghan Government:

- Accelerate the peace process and try to reach a reasonable conclusion through diplomatic means with the other side.
- If the peace process is credible and no more wars break out, then there is the chance of an interim government, hopefully not to be rejected and put an end to this tragedy.
- The debate on republicanism should not be overemphasized either, as the debate here is about building and advancing government mechanisms. A high-level council in Iran advises the head of government on important issues, so there is no harm in having such a council.
- Pay more attention to women's rights, and do not neglect them in the peace process.
- Have reciprocal and national relations with countries of the region, especially with Pakistan and India.
- Use all possible means to prevent Pakistan's proxy wars.
- Keep the position according to the Durand Line as clear as ever.

To the Afghan Taliban:

- The Taliban must abide by the terms of the peace agreement with the United States, which means not releasing prisoners to the front lines and reducing fighting.
- As Afghanistan's 1382 constitution is the best in the region, the Taliban should not reject it completely but should propose modifications and amendments to certain articles.
- Pay more attention to women's rights, and do not neglect them in the peace process.
- Don't emphasize the word emirate because the formation of governments is not a problem, but textually, Islamic law should have prevailed basically in Afghanistan.
- Efforts should be made to completely free itself from the influence of the region's countries so that the peace process can reach a faster and better outcome.

To the regional and international actors:

- A strong regional and international consensus is needed for Afghan peace.
- If we look at the intra-Afghan peace process, so there is a need for a third country to mediate.
- The countries of the region and Global superpowers must work hard for Afghan peace to secure the region.
- If Iran would like to increase its influence, it should make more economic investments in Afghanistan.

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## Analytical note

**The author of the project: Mohammad Sadiq Harifal**

**Supervisor: Professor Dr. Taissiya Marmontova.**

<b>The idea of the project</b>	Challenges of the Afghan Peace Process
<b>Problem situation (case)</b>	<p>The most basic and diplomatic way to end the war in every country of the world is peace. Nations of the world, which have fought many civil wars, have been forced to return to peace and have seen their happiness in peace. Unfortunately, Afghanistan has also witnessed decades of fierce warfare, which has damaged the country's politics, economy, business, and so on.... Moreover, its people are victims of this war and ultimately disrupted the country's entire system. After a few decades of war, world, region, and Afghanistan have taken new directions and promises towards peace and political stability.</p> <p>Peace efforts have recently begun, which is the only way to come out of war, but they face with many challenges.</p> <p><b>Research Problem:</b></p> <p>There are some researches about Afghan Peace process, but they did not mentioned the challenges specifically in national and international levels. As well as, the researchers mentioned few challenges; therefore, it's necessary to do a research</p>

	<p>that can describes a huge number of challenges about the Afghan peace process, Specially in national and international level.</p>
<p><b>Available solutions to this problem</b></p>	<p>For the solution of this problem, the National, Regional and international actors should do the following tasks with responsibility.</p> <p>To the Afghan Government:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accelerate the peace process and try to reach a reasonable conclusion through diplomatic means with the other side.</li> <li>• If the peace process is credible and no more wars break out, then there is the chance of an interim government, hopefully not to be rejected and put an end to this tragedy.</li> <li>• The debate on republicanism should not be overemphasized either, as the debate here is about building and advancing government mechanisms. A high-level council in Iran advises the head of government on important issues, so there is no harm in having such a council.</li> <li>• Pay more attention to women's rights, and do not neglect them in the peace process.</li> <li>• Have reciprocal and national relations with countries of the region, especially with Pakistan and India.</li> <li>• Use all possible means to prevent Pakistan's proxy wars.</li> <li>• Keep the position according to the Durand Line as clear as ever.</li> </ul> <p>To the Afghan Taliban:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Taliban must abide by the terms of the peace agreement with the United States, which means not releasing</li> </ul>

prisoners to the front lines and reducing fighting.

- As Afghanistan's 1382 constitution is the best in the region, the Taliban should not reject it completely but should propose modifications and amendments to certain articles.
- Pay more attention to women's rights, and do not neglect them in the peace process.
- Don't emphasize the word emirate because the formation of governments is not a problem, but textually, Islamic law should have prevailed basically in Afghanistan.
- Efforts should be made to completely free itself from the influence of the region's countries so that the peace process can reach a faster and better outcome.

To the regional and international actors:

- A strong regional and international consensus is needed for Afghan peace.
- If we look at the intra-Afghan peace process, so there is a need for a third country to mediate.
- The countries of the region and Global superpowers must work hard for Afghan peace to secure the region.
- If Iran would like to increase its influence, it should make more economic investments in Afghanistan.
- .

**Advantages:**

- Afghanistan will finally end the war and there will be peace country-wide.
- National unity of the tribes will be conducted in the country.
- The political, economic, social and environmental situations will become better.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As Afghanistan is the heart of the Central Asia so the strategic location of Afghanistan will be best managed for the regional economic relations.</li> <li>• Afghanistan will be out of the list of poor countries.</li> </ul> <p><b>Disadvantages:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementation of some of the solutions may take much time.</li> <li>• The implementation of all the solution may not take place to be implemented well.</li> <li>• As in the peace process new recommendation from the both sides happened so some of the solutions may lose its value of the implementation.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Proposed solution to this problem</b></p>	<p>In this research project proposed solution are written according to the Afghan peace process, regional and international role in the Afghan peace process; especially Iran, documents of related to the Afghan peace process challenges.</p> <p><b>Opportunities :</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The interest of some countries in the Afghan peace process, such as Qatar, Russia, China, Turkey, and so on.</li> <li>• The desire and full cooperation of the Afghan people for afghan peace process.</li> <li>• As Afghanistan is the heart of the Central Asia so due to the strategic location of Afghanistan the regional countries and the world will managed their economic relations through Afghanistan, and it would be opportunity.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Afghanistan will witness a stable peace because regional and global security depends on Afghanistan's security</li> <li>• For making a good situation for the political, economic, social and environmental these solutions gives good result.</li> </ul> <p>Risks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Iran does not want Afghanistan to be connected with any of the world's economic market; on the other hand, stability in Afghanistan means the ability of controlling its water resources, saffron farms, and other agricultural products.</li> <li>• Pakistan is also trying to keep going its proxy war in Afghanistan to protect its political, economic, commercial, and other interests</li> <li>• This is possible that the implementation of some of the solutions may take much time.</li> <li>• The implementation of all the solution may not be implemented.</li> <li>• According to the political situation of Afghanistan, as in the peace process new recommendation from the both sides happened so some of the solutions may lose its value of the implementation.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Expected Result</b></p>	<p>Expected results:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Challenges at national and international levels for the Afghan peace process will be sake out.</li> <li>5. The stages of the Afghan peace process will be determined.</li> <li>6. The impact of Iran and other national and international actors' role will be</li> </ol>

	<p>described on the Afghan peace process.</p> <p>This research aims to study about the afghan peace process from the start till now, the role of regional and international actors, especially Iran which plays an important role. Also, challenges to the afghan peace process at the national and international levels.</p>
<p><b>Literature</b></p>	<p>I have used around 100 sources in this research such as book, Article, newsletter and so on....</p> <p>Abdul Qadir Sediqi, R. J. (2019). <i>Afghanistan's Taliban meets Chinese government in Beijing</i>. Reuters. Retrieved January 25, 2021, from <a href="https://www.reuters.com/article/us-afghanistan-taliban-china/afghanistans-taliban-meets-chinese-government-in-beijing-idUSKBN1W70I3">https://www.reuters.com/article/us-afghanistan-taliban-china/afghanistans-taliban-meets-chinese-government-in-beijing-idUSKBN1W70I3</a></p> <p>Afghanistan, I. R. (2004). <i>Afghan Constitution</i>. Retrieved March 6, 2021, from <a href="https://president.gov.af/en/afghan-constitution-2/">https://president.gov.af/en/afghan-constitution-2/</a></p> <p>AfghanistanAnalystsNetwork. (2020). <i>Afghanistan's 2019 Elections (30): Final results... and parallel governments?</i> Retrieved January 14, 2021, from <a href="https://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/en/reports/political-landscape/afghanistans-2019-elections-30-final-results-and-parallel-governments/">https://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/en/reports/political-landscape/afghanistans-2019-elections-30-final-results-and-parallel-governments/</a></p> <p>Afghanistan-Analysts-Network. (2020). <i>To Release, Or Not To Release? Legal questions around Ghani's consultative loya jirga on Taleban prisoners</i>. Retrieved Jan 15, 2021, from <a href="https://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/en/reports/war-and-peace/to-release-or-not-to-release-legal-questions-around-ghanis-">https://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/en/reports/war-and-peace/to-release-or-not-to-release-legal-questions-around-ghanis-</a></p>

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Not: And so on..... all of them in my thesis