

Retrospective and Contemporary Analysis of the Formation of Afghan Statehood

Rustam R. Rashidov

Tashkent State Institute of Oriental Studies, Uzbekistan

Abstract: The study of the formation of the Afghan state and the current circumstances of the Afghan state are of great interest to many researchers. This article attempts to uncover the factors influencing the formation of the Afghan state and its development as statehood. Apart from historical factors, including territorial and geographic, religious, ethno-tribal, at the current time, such factors as the military-political institutions and external influences require particular attention. It is important to highlight that the influence of historical factors has not lost its essence in the current life of the Afghan state; however in the modern world such factors has remained in the past. By studying the factors influencing the formation of the Afghan state, the author comes to the conclusion that, in the future, the impact of ethno-tribal and external factors will not weaken, on the contrary, it is anticipated, that in the future this influence might still grow.

Keywords: Afghan statehood, territorial-geographic, ethno-tribal, religious and external factors, totalitarianism of party, installation of authoritarian regime, consensus of political rivals.

Introduction

Nowadays it is a well known fact that events occurring in and around Afghanistan are in the center of attention of the world

community. According to most researchers' views, Afghanistan has acquired international significance in the last quarter of the 20th century and it has been considered as a territory where the geopolitical interests of great powers collided. However, having analyzed views on this issue in depth, it is important to say that Afghanistan received international attention more than two centuries ago and thus became the target of various pressures, influences and interferences into its internal affairs. Even in such conditions, Afghanistan was able to maintain its statehood without losing its independence, however, due to the different external and internal factors, the foundations of Afghan statehood slightly eroded and each of such factors left negative consequences on further deformation of Afghan state.

The basis of modern Afghan statehood goes back to Durrani Empire founded by Ahmadshah Abdali (1747 – 1773) in new historical era and this state is regarded as a military-political structure which set up the milestone of modern Afghan statehood. This state included the whole territory of modern Afghanistan and Pakistan, a bunch of cities of Khorasan historical region (such as Mashhad, Sabzevar, Shirvan, Kalat, Tabas, Quchan) and Sistan region of modern Iran, territories of Kashmir and Jammu and cities of Amritsar, Srinagar of India, overall more than two million square kilometers (Gankovskiy, 1958).

The emergence of Ahmadshah Durrani's state was a historical event which was required by the conditions of those times and it is important to note that this can be evaluated not as a mere accidental event, but historical demand and the natural consequence of the existence and rise of powerful Afghan tribes (Aristov, 1898). Nevertheless, considering the Durrani Empire as a powerful military and political structure is a difficult task, which has its certain reasons and impacting factors.

Studying, analyzing and monitoring the historical and current factors influencing the formation the Afghan statehood are of great essence.

Territorial-geographic Factor

The territory of modern Afghanistan has a sophisticated natural-geographic structure. This is reflected in Afghanistan's position as a set of numerous regions and territories with different geographic environments.

Due to the fact that Hindu Kush mountain system is situated in the middle of Afghanistan, the country's territory is divided into a number of parts. Furthermore, the fact that Afghanistan's terrain has a mountainous relief resulted in the isolation of different parts of the country from one another and led to unstable relationships between central and local governments, as well as to the explosion of separatist mood in intense conditions.

It is obvious that historically there were states and state-like structures in Afghanistan, such as Ancient Bactria in the northern part, Margiana in the north-western parts (on the oasis of Murghab river), Drangiana (later Sistan) in the south-western parts (on the oasis of Helmand river), Areia in modern Herat, Arachosia in the surroundings of Kandahar, Gandhara in Kabul and its surroundings (Gankovskiy, 1982).

There were some states which were able to temporarily conquer and control the whole territory of modern Afghanistan, but this did not last long, which could be explained by the difficulty in governing and controlling different parts and territories.

In the history of Afghan statehood the importance of geographic factor rose dramatically in the middle of the 19th century and at the beginning of the 20th century and in this period the issue of Afghanistan's territory brought about sensitive tensions between Great Britain and Tsarist Russia (Dacosta, 1891).

Especially, after turning India into its colony, the British Empire started being suspicious of Russia, but what brought the British Empire a constant relief was the fact if Russia attacked Afghanistan in order to invade India they would come across the Afghanistan's geographical

barriers. However, Afghanistan's such geographic inconvenient position became the main reason for Britain's three unsuccessful aggressive attempts into Afghanistan.

British administration was able to reach the signing of Russian-Afghan agreement of 1887 on border delimitation between Russia's Central Asian colonies (Sykes, 1940) and Afghanistan. By this action, the fate of northern regions, which were alien to Afghan society (Afghan Turkistan or Southern Turkistan, Badakhshan and Herat), were to associate by Afghan government.

As is widely known, in 1893 the Durand Line Agreement, which would separate the British India and Amir Abdur Rahman's (1880-1901) lands, was signed. The Durand Line Agreement was named after British India's Foreign Secretary Sir Henry Mortimer Durand (1850-1924) who created the project which was later implemented to separate the British India's and Amir Abdur Rahman's lands. The border which was defined as a result of this agreement is also called "the Durand Line" and nowadays this border line defines the international border between Afghanistan and Pakistan. (Lambah, 2011).

Afghan historian Said Kasim Rishtiya emphasizes that acquisition of eastern Afghan lands by the British as a result of the signing of Durand Agreement is still "an untreated wound on Afghan statehood's body" (Rishtiya, 1958). In response to the claims of Afghanistan for the areas left on the right side of the Durand line, namely city of Peshawar, Waziristan and other several areas where Pashtuns live, the British administration motivated Afghan government to join the areas in the north of the country and strengthen its governance there. These activities of the British, first of all, were intended to prevent Tsarist Russia from having a direct border with British India, secondly, this was to play a role of compensation for the lands separated from Afghanistan and joined into British India as a result of Durand Line.

Aforementioned international norms defined the external borders of Afghan state and these are the modern borders of Afghanistan. Afghan

government had to form and implement a centralized government inside these borders. From this point of view, Amir Abdur Rahman began uniting the country which had been dispersed after the second Anglo-Afghan war (1878-1880) and also united Herat, Kandahar, Hazarajat and Kafiristan under his sphere of influence (Mahomed Khan, 1900). Kafiristan is a historical region situated in the north-east of the country. As it was a far and mountainous region, its inhabitants did not convert to Islam. After Kafiristan was brought under state control, its residents were forced to convert to Islam and the region was called Nooristan, meaning “land of light” (Muhammad, 1912/13 – 1914/15; Romodin 1990).

Former Soviet Union’s military intervention into Afghanistan in the last quarter of the 20th century and their ineffective activities on Afghan land were also because of the inconvenience of territorial-geographic factor. Afghan’s partisan war in small groups against Soviet army, who had been adapted to fighting on the large war theatres, moreover, the impossibility of controlling the mountainous and desert border areas between Pakistan and Afghanistan with 2,400 km length and approximately 1,000 km long Iran-Afghanistan border in mainly desert zones were one of the main reasons for the Soviet army’s failure.

In fact, the territorial-geographic factor has not lost its significance in modern state building process of Afghanistan. In future, the integration of different regions and parts of the country as one single state will be a strong motivation for the complete formation of Afghan statehood.

Religion (Islamic) Factor

Historically, Afghanistan was a land where several religions were present. While, in ancient times inhabitants of the country practised Zoroastrism, Christianity and Buddhism as their religion, from the second part of the 7th century Islam began spreading in the territory of the modern Afghanistan (Gankovskiy, 1982).

Islamic influence in Afghanistan's state and society significantly rose during the reign of one of the Durrani rulers – Dost Mohammad (1826-1838, 1842-1863). The first Anglo-Afghan war (1838-1841), which occurred during his rule, considerably eroded the basis of Afghan statehood and the state was dispersed. Under such circumstances Dost Mohammad abdicated the *shah* title and received the *amir* title. By such actions, he intended to declare *jihad* (sacred war) against Sikhs who seized the Peshawar city. Taking into consideration the fact that the right to declare the “sacred war” belonging only to the independent ruler of Muslim country, Dost Mohammad received *amir* title (*amir al-mumineen* – commander of the Muslims, Muslims leader) from the clergymen and religious leaders of Kabul. This implies that he could later carry out his rule over the whole Muslim community of the country (Mohan, 1846).

In the history of Afghan statehood, attempts to decrease the role of religion, such as a careless attitude towards the role and importance of religion, were observed during the rule of king Amanullah (1919-1929) and Soviet surrogate party, People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) (1978-1992) and consequently, such actions resulted in the abdication of Amanullah from the throne (Sikoev, 2006) and the failure of PDPA (Muboriz, 1999).

In 1996 Taliban military-political movement, who were the supporters of ultra-radical Islam seized the power in Afghanistan. The country was renamed the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan and the leader of Taliban Mullah Mohammad Omar was declared the head of state – *amir* (Dorransoro, 2005).

Taliban completely relied on the strict interpretation of Islam in their domestic and foreign policy and thus government affairs were carried out only from religious point of view. This led to the utter backwardness of Afghanistan, adverse living conditions of people, complete isolation from world community which had a significantly

adverse effect on the country, as a result of which Afghanistan was thrown to decades backward in terms of development.

During the Taliban rule, special religious police, known as “*al-Amr bil-Ma’ruf val-Nahiy ‘an il-Munkir*” (doing only the allowed but avoiding the prohibited deeds), was set up in order to strictly control citizens’ daily activities and this organization became a specific mechanism of social supervision (Dorrnsoro, 2005). This organization was set up as a detached ministry on a state scale with more than 3000 staff and it can be discoursed as a reimplementation of the functions of the state official known as *muhtasib* in middle ages Muslim countries. The muhtasib gave Islamic law an immediate presence in public space and was an important face of the law in society.

Taliban’s religious police set up a strict order on citizens’ appearance, according to which males had to have long beard and short hair, while women had to cover their complete bodies with yashmaks known as “burqa” (Carlisle, 2010), were not allowed to leave their house alone and if there was a need to do so women had to leave the house under the supervision of their close relatives.

Celebrating the Muslim New Year – Navruz, which had been celebrated for centuries, conducting different public shows and festivals, picnics were totally banned by Taliban. Television affairs were brought to an end, composing and listening to music, drawing the picture of people and different animals and keeping them were also declared unlawful. Each citizen’s house was searched for music cassettes, different fine arts samples and any kind of books with pictures and were later confiscated and destroyed.

Furthermore, provision of haven by Taliban government for Usama Ben Laden-led international terroristic group – Al-Qaeda turned Afghanistan into a shelter for terrorists, religious fundamentalists and extremists. Imprisonment of international organizations’ staff in Afghanistan, by Taliban with the accusation that they propagated people for Christianity, forcing Hindus people to wear wracked clothes in order

to distinguish them from others and also the destruction of Buddha statues in Bamyān (6th and 7th century A.D.) (Sikoev, 2004) demonstrate the total relentless attitude of Taliban towards other religions.

After 9/11 events, modern state-building process began in Afghanistan and taking the Islam's position in Afghan statehood into account Afghanistan renamed Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. According to the newly adopted constitution, no state law or act may contrast with Islamic laws and standards and representatives of other religions are free in faith and can practise their religious traditions within the framework of state laws (Constitution, 2004).

Ethno-tribal Factor

Tribal and kinship relationships should be underlined as a factor, which has had a great influence in Afghan statehood's history. Tribal and kinship relationships, which are inherent to the primitive society or at least to feudalism in most states' history, can be observed in Afghanistan's modern history and in the process of modern state-building. However, in Afghanistan's case, tribalism should be underscored not as a positive, but totally negative factor for the formation and development of statehood.

According to the Russian scientist I. Reysner, tribal and kinship relationships began eroding in 13th century in Afghanistan (Reysner, 1954). But it would not be an exaggeration to claim that this has been an ongoing process until these days. Although feudalism came into existence and was abolished and manufacturing relationships emerged in this long period, tribal system has had its influence not only on Afghan society, but also on its government system.

Ahmadshah Durrani's empire can be shown as a large state which was based on tribal relationships in Afghanistan's territory (Gankovskiy, 1958). Durrani state was founded in order to promote the interests of tribal chiefs and *khans*. *Khan* is a ruler, monarch who ruled

the number of Middle Asian countries in middle ages. This term was used in late middle ages in Afghanistan to refer to the local rulers and tribal chiefs (Elphinstone, 1842).

Having seized the power, Ahmadshah ordered to call his own Abdali tribe as “Durr-i-Durran” (“pearl of pearls” among many tribes, in short Durrani tribe) (Bellew, 1880). In the formation of Afghan statehood, the following Durrani clans played a significant role.

Sadozai was one Durrani clan (Muhammad, 1912/13 – 1914/15) and their rule lasted from Ahmadshah Durrani until the first Anglo-Afghan war (1838-1842) (Romodin, 1990).

After the first Anglo-Afghan war, the representative of another Durrani clan which was known as Barakzai, Dost Muhammad came to power, so Barakzais remained in power till the 1930s.

Afterwards another Durrani clan – Muhammadzais, to be more precise their members – Muhammad Nadirshah (1929-1933) and Muhammad Zahirshah (1933-1973) ruled the country.

Attention is drawn to the fact that in majority of Durrani's rule, a special policy was implemented, in which chief government positions were divided among representatives of leading clan and kin leaders. For example, the positions of prime minister and *devan begi*, the minister of finance, were given to Bamizai family of Durrani tribe's Popolzai kin (Gankovskiy, 1958). Likewise, important government duties were also allocated to Iskhakzai, Muhammadzai and Barakzai families of Durrani tribe. By such policy, chief rulers, on the one hand, tried to keep the balance among clans and families, on the other hand, the loyalty of tribal leaders to the central government was intended.

While analyzing the process of modern Afghan statehood, it should be emphasized that tribal relationships rose onto higher – national-ethnic level. This is seen in determination of other ethnic groups living in Afghanistan – Tajiks, Uzbeks, Hazaras being involved in governing, promoting and safeguarding their own interests and as a

result, this aspiration inherently led to the collision of interests and the aggravation of inter-ethnic relationships.

The Factor of Political and Military Organizations

The emergence of a number of socio-political groups and movements with their own political views in the modern history of Afghanistan, namely in the 1960s, is worth paying a special attention. “Vish zalmiyon” (Awakened youth) and other groups and movements, which were set up on its basis and were as well in antagonist position toward central government can be shown as an example.

People’s Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) should be noted as a socio-political organization, which was very active in the political arena of Afghanistan, but left its negative traces on country’s modern history of statehood. PDPA was founded in 1965, its general secretary was Nur Muhammad Taraki and his deputy was Babrak Karmal. In 1967, PDPA was divided into two opposing factions – “Khalq” (headed by Nur Muhammad Taraki) and “Parcham” (headed by Babrak Karmal) (Feifer, 2008).

On April 27, 1978 as a result of a coup, Muhammad Davud’s regime collapsed in Kabul and PDPA, the supporter of the better cooperation with the Soviet Union, came to power (Maley, 2002). After the coup, the official name of Afghanistan became Democratic Republic of Afghanistan and Afghanistan’s development in a socialist way was announced. The Leader of PDPA’s “Khalq” faction Nur Muhammad Taraki was declared Prime Minister (PM), while “Parcham” faction’s leader Babrak Kamral became deputy PM and also all ministry positions in the government were divided between the two factions’ members (Maley, 2002).

Unreasoned agrarian reforms by Nur Muhammad Taraki’s government and strong anti-religious policy implemented under pressure by former Soviet Union led to the rise of dissatisfaction among people

and these circumstances were a strong impetus for the emergence of religious opposition inside the country.

Although the activity of political parties except PDPA was banned after the April Revolution, PDPA lacked the unanimity itself and the government led by this party was unstable. As a result of the division in July 1978, the members of “Khalq” faction of PDPA totally seized power and decided to purge “Parcham” members from senior positions by sending them to diplomatic posts abroad, meanwhile, some of them were arrested or executed. Moreover, the government crisis in September and October 1979 and the seizure of power by Hafizullah Amin, the “Khalq” faction’s leader Nur Muhammad Taraki’s deputy, reveal the disagreement inside “Khalq” faction. As a result of this coup, the leader of the Revolutionary Committee of Democratic Republic of Afghanistan Nur Muhammad Taraki was arrested and executed by H. Amin on October 8, 1979 (Korgun, 2004).

On December 27, 1979, Soviet troops began active military operations in Afghanistan. The initial results of these acts by Soviet troops were the attack on Amin’s residence in Kabul and his liquidation. Afterwards, Babrak Karmal, who had been deputy Secretary General of PDPA and had later been sent to Czechoslovakia as an ambassador as a result of intragroup struggle, was declared Secretary General of PDPA Central Committee and president of Revolutionary Council (Arunova, 1981).

The period when PDPA was active in political arena of the country can be mentioned as the period when there was a combined totalitarianism of the party and the state. Party elites obtained all the leading authorities to rule the state and society and they were divided into opposing factions and groups.

The accumulation of a number of serious problems in governance and energetic activities of the opposition as a result of the support by external forces made PDPA leaders further seize the levers of

governance. Such negative developments consequently led to the installation of authoritarian regime.

the primitive society or at the unsuccessful attempts of PDPA to take Afghanistan out of difficult socio-economic condition in the country led to the civil war.

In 1992, the regime of PDPA collapsed and *Mujahedeen* (Islamic warriors) seized power. Mujahedeen also were a unity of numerous socio-political organizations (Islamic Unity of Afghanistan Mujahedeen) (Tulyaganova, 2004). However, the lack of practice and experience in governance and also internal disagreements among mujahedeen led to the exacerbation of the civil war in another form. This civil war brought about the division of the country by leading Mujahedeen organizations which later on turned into political-military organizations with private military structures – tanzims (Bhatia and Sedra, 2008). Tanzims emerged as a result of absence of central government and mistrust of local forces toward the central forces, which de jure controlled the government.

Struggle for power and disagreements among political clans turned into “a war of all against all” and this war lasted till the seizure of power by Taliban. Subsequently, central government system in Afghanistan was completely destroyed, fragmentation process of government intensified and this ended with the emergence of pseudo-states in separate areas of the country. The maintenance of political disorder in Afghanistan became the reason for the emergence of views in scientific and political circles, according to which there was a need to change the form of state structure, more specifically, from unitary to federative (Khamagaev, 2003; Mohmand, 2009-2010).

Having analyzed Mujahedeen rule, it becomes apparent that Afghanistan was actually divided into “*small estates*” in this period. The reason for applying the term “small estates” is that an authoritarian person or a warlord, who controls the specific area administers supreme power and ruled it in any order, while political-military

organization (*tanzim*) led by a warlord carried out government tasks (Pejcinova, 2006). Actually, it is not by chance that in such circumstances, the emergence of such terms as “Dostumistan”, referred to northern regions under Dostum’s rule (Balkh, with its center in Mazari-Sharif, Jawzjan, Faryab, and Kunduz regions) (Rotar, 2014) and “Masudistan”, referred to north-eastern provinces under Masud’s rule (“Akhmad Shakh Masud i ego jizn.” n. d.) were used in political sphere.

After the process of modern state formation began, activities of different socio-political groups were allowed and appropriate normative-legal foundation was created. Normative foundations for involvement of different socio-political groups – political parties and public organizations in country’s socio-political life, moreover their participation in elections for representative bodies were guaranteed in the newly adopted Constitution and in state acts adopted in its base, such as “Political Parties Law” and “Electoral Law”.

Of the socio-political organizations functioning in Afghanistan, political parties take a leading role and thus a thorough study is important on such leading political parties participating in the process of the formation of modern state. In 2005, there were more than 80 political parties in Afghanistan (Iskandarov, 2006), while in 2009 registered political parties rose to 108 (NDI, 2010).

Furthermore, attitude towards different former military-political structures and military units under warlords’ command has also changed. For instance, within the framework of “Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration” project (Maley, 2006), which was carried out till 2005 some of military units of warlords were submitted into Afghan army, more than 63,000 militants from some military units were disarmed and more than 53,000 of them were supported to adapt to peaceful life (Bhatia and Sedra, 2008). Moreover, such projects as “Heavy Weapons Cantonment” – HWC and “Disbandment of Illegal Armed Groups” – DIAG played a significant role in ending the activities of different illegal and non-governmental military groups in Afghanistan.

To be more precise, these projects were launched to stop the activities of more than 1,800 groups with 129,000 armed people who had formerly been considered local police force, (Bhatia and Sedra, 2008).

External Factor

Each state tries to be independent in pursuing its domestic and foreign policy and to adapt its own policy independently. However, as it was observed in history not every state is able to reach such intentions.

Considering the British Empire's policy in subduing Afghanistan, it can be noticed that the from 19th century to the first half of the 20th century attempts to impact on the ruler of Afghanistan, its government and to interfere in internal affairs of Afghanistan, including the deprivation from the right of conducting the foreign policy independently were made.

The British who were defeated in First Anglo-Afghan war in 1839-1842, didn't stop interfering into internal affairs of Afghanistan and conducted military intervention, which resulted in the Second Anglo-Afghan war in 1878-1880 (Forbes, 1892).

Even though the British were destructively defeated due to the uprising against Muhammad Yakub Khan, who remained in power for eight month with the help of the British (Khalfin, 1959), and Abdurrahman-led ruling dynasty's activities, they managed to slightly restrict the independence of Afghan government and to influence on Abdurrahman (1880-1901). The continuation of this policy (British interference in internal affairs of the country) conducted by the British and its zenith was the signing of Durand Line agreement in 1893, as a result of which vast areas, where a range of Eastern Afghan tribes lived, were handed over to the possession of the British India.

It is worth noting that besides Abdurrahman, who was forced to sign the agreement, none of the other rulers and governments recognized the Durand Line agreement.

Although Afghanistan's borders were changed by force because of such historical circumstances in the 19th century, its negative outcome is apparent today – in the 21st century and this factor directly impacts the following issues:

- The issue of regional security provision;
- Relationships between Afghanistan and Pakistan;
- Struggle against remainders of “Taliban” and Al-Qaeda group.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s of the last century, two world super powers – former Soviet Union and USA used Afghanistan as a buffer zone and interfered into its internal affairs, as a result of which Afghanistan turned into a dispersed and demolished country (Belokrenitskiy, 2001). Indeed, the fact that their activities played a significantly negative role in Afghanistan's history is well known nowadays.

In the early 1990s having an access to Central Asia through Afghanistan acquired unprecedented importance and the fact that political powers loyal to Pakistan coming to power in Afghanistan also became important. After the Soviet Union collapsed, the availability of large capacities and abilities of independent Central Asian states (source of cheap raw materials, a huge market for industrial goods, big hydrocarbon projects, and transit possibilities) made Pakistan get an access to this perspective region as soon as possible. The lack of achievements in its Afghan policy line and inability to reconcile warring parties in Afghanistan and moreover, the establishment of good relationships by Rabbani government with Pakistan's long-standing rivals – Russia, Iran and India urged Pakistan to implement a new project to control Afghan state by creating a new government from 1994. In this regard, a huge number of afghan students of Pakistani religious schools, who became useless after the *mujahedeen's* acquisition of power in

Afghanistan in 1992 was a favorable condition for official Islamabad. Thus, “Taliban” movement emerged and their activities were mainly controlled by Pakistan.

The external political influence on the formation of new Afghan statehood and the cases of interference into internal affairs of Afghanistan should also be noticed.

After the 9/11 events, when there was a necessity to transform the government in Afghanistan, the US government had a significant role in H. Karzay’s accession of power, who was unknown in political arena of Afghanistan, instead of the representatives of Northern Alliance, that was active in the overthrow of “Taliban” government. Afterwards the US government supported Karzay in every possible way, more specifically, by allocating 104 billion dollars for projects related to the formation of modern state institutions and provision of their activities, projects on socio-economic infrastructure building (Williams, 2014) and other 686 billion dollars on the implementation of military operations and provision of security in Afghanistan (Belasco, 2014).

For Karzay who won the presidential elections in 2004, winning the 2009 elections was a daunting task. The delay of election process, setting the second tour due to a request by the US, the accusations of Karzay by the supporters of former minister of foreign affairs Abdullah Abdullah meant that external forces wanted to pressurize Karzay by doing so. Such pressures toward Karzay did not stop after the elections, on the contrary, western states required the followings on forming the new government and setting its policy:

- The US administration issued the ultimatum that the president of Afghanistan reformed the government and struggled against corruption within 6 months;

- Prime Minister of Great Britain Gordon Brown has called Afghanistan a corrupt country and announced his unwillingness to see the warlords in Karzai's new government;

– Minister of foreign affairs of France Bernar Kushner called Karzay as “a man of the West” and official Paris insisted that the main rival of Karzay in the election – Abdullah Abdullah should be given a position of minister with wide powers in new government.

– UN Secretary General’s special representative on Afghanistan Kay Eide offered some recommendations on curbing corruption and forming government lineup (Tarin, 2009).

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan emphasized that such statements by western states and the special representative of UN were apparent interference into Afghanistan’s internal affairs and called them to respect the sovereignty of the state and the will of people.

Having understood the negative impact of external factors at the end of his second presidential term, H. Karzay criticized the policy of western states for several times.

Power transition from one president to the other based on democratic principles as a result of presidential election in 2014 was a remarkable event in the country’s history. However, unlawful actions and accusations of widespread fraud by candidates during the election process and delay of announcement of election results had unfavorable effect on general process. Especially, the claims of the two main political rivals – Abdullah Abdullah and Ashraf Ghani over winning the election earlier than the outcome of results, which led to misunderstandings, were later resolved through intermediary of the USA (Katzman, 2015), which indeed requires a special attention.

The USA, which assumes responsibility in democratic processes in Afghanistan, played a crucial role in tackling disputes and as a result of negotiations the rival parties achieved so called “power-sharing” agreement. According to it, Ashraf Ghani was recognized the winner and was inaugurated as the president of the country (Nordland, 2014). Though, for Abdullah a new post – Chief Executive Officer – CEO was created in the government and its political status was enshrined in special decree of the president. Hence, as soon as Ghani was inaugurated as the

president of Afghanistan he signed the decree introducing amendments to the article 50 of the Constitution, according to which new government post – head of the executive (*rais-e ejra'iya*) was set up (Ruttig, 2015).

The post which was especially set up for Abdullah is mainly called as “Chief Executive Officer” in English language sources. It is worth mentioning that this term is primarily used in business structures, not in state governance. Nonetheless, it is underlined that CEO has all functions and powers that belong to Prime Minister. The council of Minister, a separate structure from the government, consists of the Chief Executive, his two deputies and ministers. This establishment holds weekly meetings led by the CEO. Besides, CEO and his two deputies are given seats in the Council of National Security (Ruttig, 2015).

It goes without saying that it is a positive result that two rival parties which participated in the elections were able to reach the peace through consensus. However, the fact that the declaration by Abdullah about this agreement before final official results were announced (Clark, 2014) brought about several views on this issue.

First of all, it is very suspicious that Abdullah who gained noticeably more votes in the first round (IEC, 2014) collected fewer votes in the second round.

Secondly, external forces, especially the USA had a significant role in reaching the consensus between two main political rivals in Afghanistan. It is quite possible that State Secretary John Kerry during his two visits to Afghanistan had separate meeting with them (U.S. State Department, 2014) and called upon for consensus, and even promised the further support by US in their future career. That is why, we can say that rival parties reached the consensus as they did not want to lose the US support and were keen on keeping their political influence in the country.

Third, as widespread election frauds were observed during the presidential election in 2014, the Central Election Commission of Afghanistan delayed the announcement date of results (Clark, 2014). Under such circumstances Abdullah's position about the agreement and

recognizing Ghani as winner was due to the fact that he was aware of historical events when antagonism between political rivals resulted in the complete crisis of the state. Moreover, it was important that having realized this, Abdullah agreed that he would be given the post of Prime Minister in the future and by this would have an opportunity to maintain his influence in the country's political arena.

Considering the external factor's influence on Afghan statehood, comparative analysis of British, former Soviet and nowadays US policy and positions toward Afghanistan would be very useful.

Table 1.

Leading states	Period of active policy toward Afghanistan	Opposing forces	
		Internal	External
Great Britain	From the second quarter of the 19 th century till the 1920s	Some Afghan rulers (Dost Muhammad, Shir Ali Khan, Muhammad Afzal Khan, Ayub Khan, Amanullah); Pashtun tribes	Partly Tsarist Russia
Soviet Union	From 1970s to early 1990s	Mujahedeen	Several Western states led by the USA; Muslim Countries (Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, UAE and others)
USA	1st phase. 1980s	PDPA government	Soviet Union
	2nd phase. From the beginning of the 21 st century till now	Taliban, "Al-Qaeda" and a range of other extremist groups	—

The British Empire was suspicious of Tsarist Russia throughout the 19th century for its possessions in India (Dacosta, 1891) and though it was defeated in three wars against Afghan state, the British made attempts to stop Russia inside Central Asia.

The main reason of former Soviet Union's unsuccessful policy toward Afghanistan can be characterized by an external factor, more specifically, the US led Western and Muslim countries support of mujahedeen.

The period of active US policy toward Afghanistan is the period after 9/11 events (fourteen years). This period is longer than combined period of Soviet Union's active combat missions in Afghanistan (from 27 December 1979 till 15 February 1989) (Tanner, 2002) and Soviet influence period (from 15 February 1989 till the end of 1991), overall twelve years period.

Another factor of Soviet and US positions may be analyzed through the following comparison. Earlier, it was mentioned that the main internal force against Soviet Union was mujahedeen and the external factor was US led countries, and that external factor was the main reason of Soviet failure in Afghan. Having analyzed the modern US policy in Afghanistan, we can conclude that the US activities are mainly opposed by some internal forces in Afghanistan, and there is no external force (a specific state) that is opposing the US policy in Afghanistan. So the United States should have already reached achievements in its own strategy toward Afghanistan.

As we trace current statehood condition in Afghanistan, aforementioned factors indicate that although there has been the gradual elimination of negative influence over statehood pillars, certain factors leading to a sudden destabilisation of internal political situation still remain. In this sense, the relation between the president Ashraf Ghani and the CEO Abdullah Abdullah requires special attention. Those two authorities should work in collaboration and mutual understanding against any kind of outside and inside attempts to influence, provoke and

destroy their relation. Obviously, the mutual consensus between those two politicians through the US project implies that the US and other leading states have hopeful interests to conduct stability in Afghanistan. However, existing activity and threats of Taliban and other extremist groups is still a major concern for this fragile-prone government.

Conclusion

It is generally known that, among the factors that contributed to the formation and development of old and modern statehood in Afghanistan, it is highly unlikely to find 'the development of productive forces' factor which had become a must-have benchmark for the development of western countries. Because for a fragmented state like Afghanistan, there are still weak components for the unitary territory, unitary market and etc which is the main factor leading the country to future prosperity.

Analysing the history of Afghan statehood enables us to state that there has been the clash of various related factors that deny each other. For instance, under the rule of PDPA attitude towards Islam was very negative, while Islamic factor has played an immense role in life of Afghans and still today it possesses a huge position not only in Afghan society, but also in Afghan statehood.

During the rule of mujahedeen in Afghanistan (1992-1996), they were not capable of creating mutual consensus and agreement, thus leaving the state fragmented and fragile. To be exact, Afghanistan was torn into tiny political administrative units ruled by mujahedeen and warlords. Those leaders paid attention that their activity must be based on Islamic rule and religion would have to play to mask their dictating process. Inability to stop the wars and conduct peace, and most importantly not being able to create state-centralized country by those powers gave the possibility of shaping very radical military political power – Taliban movements.

Under the control of Taliban, ethnic tensions have reached to a peak level. Although Islam maintains the idea of the union of all Muslims regardless of ethnicity and nationality, the attempts for the supremacy of Pashtuns and discriminate other ethnicities by Taliban have brought high tensions to current interethnic clashes. Moreover, Taliban's other attempts to create particular military-theocratic state has given an adverse impact on Afghan statehood. That is why, it is more appropriate to interpret the period of Taliban as an attempt of military group to make a control over the Afghan society and state, rather than the main part in Afghan statehood.

Since the first creation of Afghan statehood in the mid 18th century, the statehood did not disappear despite internal and external factors as time passed, but those factors have each had an impact to change and diminish the basics of the Afghan statehood, ultimately making it more fragmented and fragile.

At present time, as there have been many theoretical and practical attempts for shaping contemporary statehood in Afghanistan, all necessary factors related to particular Afghan statehood should be taken into account and their negative aspects must be avoided.

Highly evaluating participating role of foreign actors in current process in Afghanistan, it is also necessary to avoid negative consequences as a result of mistakes by foreign states, as it affects positively to strengthen Afghan government and eventually to stop Afghan problem.

Analysis of Afghanistan presidential elections in 2014 suggests that the US again played the role of moderator and successfully encouraged two political sides to make consensus. Consensus between those two leading players in Afghan political theatre can be evaluated as a small, but important project in US strategy towards Afghanistan. How far successful this project will be is the question of time in the future.

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