論　文

State Building in Afghanistan
― Is the Taliban an Obstacle ? ―

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Introduction

After 13 years of fighting, the U.S.-led NATO forces formally ended their combat mission in Afghanistan on December 28, 2014, and a new follow-on NATO-led mission called Resolute Support was launched on January 1, 2015 to provide further training, advice and assistance for the Afghan security forces and institutions.

The U.S. military and government officials feel quite optimistic about Afghanistan's future[1]. Testifying before Congress on February 13, General John Campbell insisted that Afghanistan would not disintegrate once Americans left, and Senator Tim Kaine, D-Va., spoke about the "powerful narrative about the success in Afghanistan that we can apply around the globe." However, a U.N. report released on February 19 stood in stark contrast, stating that last year marked the worst on record for Afghan civilian casualties since the U.N. began keeping track of the numbers in 2009. According to the report, the civilian casualties last year reached 10,548, among whom 3,699 were killed and 6,849 were injured, an increase of 22 percent compared to 2013 (UNAMA 2015).

By raising the question why the security situation in Afghanistan has not been improved but worsened instead after more than decade long efforts of state building, this paper focuses on the strategies and operations of the Taliban which has been considered as a major obstacle to the state building in Afghanistan. Chapter 1 shapes the analytical frameworks through an overview of current literature on state building. Chapter 2 examines social context of Afghanistan by outlining some key factors which caused many of the problems today and the resurgence of the Taliban in particular. Chapter 3 investigates the strategies and operations of the Taliban in different periods of time. Chapter 4 assesses the state building policies and practices in Afghanistan, and finds out remaining problems and reasons for the failure.

Analytical Frameworks: Defining State Building

Over the last decade, state building has become one of the most important areas of policy discussion in the international arena. While there is no firm consensus on precisely what defines state building, there is a

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broad agreement on what constitute the primary issues of concern among different approaches, which include historical background of international engagement in state building, objectives of state building strategies, and approaches to successful state building.

State Weakness and State Building: A Historical Background

The contemporary agenda for state building has developed since the end of the Cold War when the need for state building was created and perceived in response to the collapse of the bipolar order and emergence of some fragile or weak states. As described in various literatures, the key characteristics of these states include the presence of weak institutions and governance systems, and a fundamental lack of leadership, state capacity and/or political will to fulfil essential state functions such as penetrating society, regulating social relationships, extracting resources, and appropriating or using resources in determined ways, especially in terms of providing basic services to the poor（Menocal 2010; Migdal 1988）.

However, what we are trying to understand here is how state weakness has been transformed into a global problem and moreover, became an issue for humanitarian intervention. In the context of globalization, there seems to be two driving concerns. Firstly, fragile or failed states are more prone to violent conflict, and fail to stimulate human development for their citizens which impede progress towards the Millennium Development Goals（MDGs）（Brabant 2010）. Secondly, "the weak or failed states are the source of many of the world's most serious problems, from poverty to AIDS to drugs to terrorism"（Fukuyama 2004: ix）, which directly threaten the security and wellbeing of populations within the territories of the states and wider regional and global security.

Especially in the wake of 9/11, state weakness has become a real strategic challenge to the globe in terms of exporting instability, crime and terror, from which international actors have gained some sort of legitimacy to intervene in the domestic affairs of those states. As a result, the policies and practices of state building get closely interlinked with the security concerns of the international assistance actors, which in turn helped to create a simplified view of what state building is imagined to be both theoretically and in practice.

Objectives of State Building

Creating sustainable peace

As articulated in OECD Principles（2007）, states are fragile when state structures lack political will and/or capacity to provide the basic functions needed for poverty reduction, development and to safeguard the security and human rights of their populations. This fragility is often – although not necessarily -- associated with conflict, which is both a cause and an effect of fragility（Ingram 2010）. Post-conflict society is the start point of peace building（Yamada 2003: 55）, and state building in conflict-driven society firstly aims at peace building, which means to end violent conflicts and create conditions for sustainable peace.

Enhancing state capacity

Focus on sustainability has prevented interventionists from pulling out of post-conflict situations straight after the cessation of violence. Instead, they have been engaged in the follow-up state building activities. Thus, in its simplest formulation, state building refers to "the process through which states enhance their ability to function" according to Whaites (2008: 4). Menocal (2010: 4) elaborates more in detail by arguing that state building is a set of actions undertaken by national and/or international actors to establish, reform and strengthen state institutions where these have been seriously eroded or are missing.

Building state-society relations

As the concept of state building evolved considerably over time, greater attention was paid to the social context of states. From this perspective, state building is not just a technical process of restoring state institutions and building state capacity, but also a set of social reforms tailored to the local context. Migdal (2001), for example, emphasizes the inherent links between the state and society and outlines how each impacts the other. OECD Principles (2007) also stress the importance of state-society relations in state building, "international engagement will need to be concerted, sustained, and focused on building the relationship between state and society." Thus, the social contract between state and its citizens, illustrated first by Rousseau in Age of Enlightenment, is central to the discourse on state building. Just as captured simply but pertinently in an OECD definition (2008), state building is "an endogenous process to enhance capacity, institutions and legitimacy of the state driven by state-society relations."

Approaches to Successful State Building

As discussed above, the objectives of state building are to create sustainable peace, enhance state capacity and build state-society relations. In achieving these goals, corresponding approaches are required, such as reforms in security sectors, institutionalization of government, and localization of ownership, among which the third is of ultimate significance, and is also the reason for failed state building practices.

Peace building: security sector reforms (SSR)

In post-conflict situations, peace building is identified by Barnett et al. (2007: 49) in three dimensions -- stability creation, restoration of state institutions, and addressing the socioeconomic dimensions of conflict. Among these three dimensions, only the first one is directly related to post-conflict peace-restoring activities. These activities involve both short-term physical projects that discourage the combatants from returning to war, such as disarmament, demobilization, reintegration (DDR) programs, and long-term security sector reform, including reforms in police, military and customs sectors, border protection and arm control.

Democracy building: institutionalization of state capacity

There has been very little debate in the literature over what type of state the international community should try to build, for the normative assumption is that a state is a liberal market democracy spread over a defined geographic territory (Marquette & Beswick 2011). In this interpretation, state building is actually about the reproduction and imposition of western models, "the reconstruction of 'Westphalian' frame works of state sovereignty; the liberal framework of individual rights and winner-takes-all elections; and neoliberal free market economic programs" (Chandler 2010: 22).

Nonetheless, this liberal approach has been accused of neo-imperialism because it reflects the hegemonic values and the political, economic and geo-strategic interests of western states rather than the needs of poor countries. Moreover, good governance has been a way of bypassing the state's links to society, for it leaves little room for state institutions to develop them (Chandler 2006). As a result, the importance of local ownership has been put forward by various authors.

State-society relations building: localization of ownership

Localization of ownership in state building aims to tailor state building strategies to the particular local context, and restrict the role of international community to an extremely limited one. Although there is little practical advice about how to do this, it is still possible to capture the key approach to local ownership, which is to work with the citizens.

As mentioned in the discussion of state building objectives, the social contract between state and its citizens is central to state building. In theory, it means the individual surrendering personal sovereignty to the collective state in exchange for the maintenance of social order through rule of law. In practice, social contract involves the legitimacy of government and the participation of the citizens. In order to establish social contract, the state needs to provide its citizens with legitimate local leadership behind which wider society can mobilize, and meanwhile, the citizens are required to fully participate in the political process of the state. State building is therefore "founded on political processes to negotiate state-society relations and power relationships among elites and social groups" (OECD 2008).

Historical Overview: Social Context of Afghanistan

Many of the problems in Afghanistan today, such as insurgency, corruption, ethnic rivalry, religious extremism, economic dependence, and government incapability are as much embedded in the political history and social context of Afghanistan as they are linked to the security factors and broader regional and global developments. Accordingly, state building in Afghanistan requires an understanding of and a respect for such historical and social context. Discussion in this section therefore will outline the factors which make Afghanistan unique and the international actors should pay attention to.

Ethnic Diversity

There is no statistical data on ethnicity in Afghanistan available currently, for ethnic groups in Afghanistan are largely relative, variable and dynamic in character. The only official figure is identified in its 2004 constitution, which recognizes 14 ethnic groups: Pashtun, Tajik, Hazara, Uzbek, Baloch, Turkmen, Nuristani, Pamiri, Arab, Gujar, Brahui, Qizilbash and Aimaq. Each group constitutes the majority in one or more regions of Afghanistan: Pashtuns in the south and east, Tajiks in the northeast and west, Hazaras in the center, and Uzbeks in the northwest.

Among them, Pashtuns have been the dominant ethnic group since mid-eighteenth century, as most of the leaders came from this group, with the exceptions of two Tajiks: the King Habibullah Kalakani who rulled Afghanistan for 9 months in 1929, and the President Burhanudin Rabbani who led Afghan government from 1992 to 2001. Other ethnic groups with relatively large population include: Tajiks（33%）, Hazaras（11%）and Uzbeks（9%）, which are quite influential in politics of modern Afghanistan（Asia Foundation 2014）.

The ethnic diversity and Pashtun dominance aside, ethnicity was a neither strong nor destructive factor in Afghan politics before the Saur Revolution in 1978. A sort of political balance evolved among various groups, and all of them had allocated spaces within the hierarchical system（Goudarzi 1999）. However, the war in Afghanistan since 1970s vastly changed this balance of power and strengthened that of non-Pashtuns, who seek adequate representation in both central and local administrations. As a result, the political struggle between Pashtuns and non-Pashtuns, the Tajiks in particular, has been enormously intensified, and as a byproduct of this prolonged war, the ethnic-lined factionalism was also strengthened, which is still largely impacting security and politics in Afghanistan currently.

Tribal Dynamics

The term "tribes" in the context of Afghanistan refers specifically to Pashtun tribes, which are said by Spain to "have developed the world's largest tribal society"（1963: 17）. Local folklore has it that all Pushtuns are descendants of one common ancestor, but no reliable source is available at present. Among all the Pashtuns tribes, the two largest tribal groups are Durrani and Ghilzai, which have been mutually hostile over the history.

While claiming a common ancestor, language – Pashto, and religion – Sunni Islam, there is little political cohesiveness among Pashtuns. They generally rule themselves in their separate tribes through councils composed of the leading men of each family, which is called jirga in Pashto. Moreover, deliberations in jirga are settled by a consensus rather than a vote, which would create clear winners and losers and result in violent conflict between them. This is one of the explanations for why Pashtuns could not benefit from democracy.

The somewhat defining feature of the Pashtun culture is Pashtunwali（Abbas 2014 18-20）, a set of traditional principles and guidelines that Pashtuns follow. The first is melmastia, signifying hospitality and respect for all guests, regardless of race, religion. The sanctuary given by the Taliban to Osama bin Laden, to

some extent, is a conduct of this principle of Pashtunwali. Another main feature of Pashtunwali is zemaka, which inspires Pashtuns to defend their land and property against intruders and to consider this as a binding obligation. The presence of foreign troops and aid workers in Afghanistan since 2001 is considered as an invasion, not only by the Taliban, by also by larger Pashtun populations.

Religious Interactions

The official religion in Afghanistan is Islam, which is practiced by over 99% of its citizens. Sunni Islam makes up 80% of the total population while the remaining 19% is Shias and about 1% practices other religions such as Sikhism, Hinduism and Christianity.

On political level, religion is often associated with ethnic issues. Of the two branches of Islam, Shia is practiced by Hazaras with the exception of a small group who are Sunnis, the Qizilbashes, and a few Pashtuns of the eastern tribes. The rest of the Muslims in Afghanistan are Sunnis. Historically, the Hazaras have suffered from discrimination against them by Pashtuns, in terms of being used as slaves and servants, and isolated in barren locale of Hazarajat (Magnus & Naby 1998). They were also particular targets of persecution by the Taliban, with 5000 or 6000 Hazaras were killed in August, 1998 (Rashid 2000: 17-18).

Another political interpretation of Islam in Afghanistan is the usage of Islamic terminologies "jihad" and "mujahideen" in politics. "Jihad" derives from Koranic Arabic and was translated in English as "holy war". Through the history of Afghanistan, jihad has been used as a rallying cry against both non-Muslims (colonists and invaders) and Muslims (such as Shias) considered enemies. "Mujahid" (or "mujahideen" in plural), which means "holy warriors", is a byproduct of Afghan war against the Soviet Union. During the war, various mujahidden allied along ethnic, tribal and religious lines to fight the invaders, and resulted in factionalism after the Soviets withdrew, and the emergence of the Taliban movement, an extreme interpretation and practice of Islam.

Locality Indications

Afghanistan's geographic location has had a profound impact on the country's history and politics. Located at the crossroads of south and central Asia, Afghanistan has played the role of buffer state between the Russian and British empires in 19th century – the so called "Great Game", then between the Soviet Union and British India in 20th century, and finally, until 1992, between the Soviet and western blocs. Therefore, external intervention is inevitable for Afghanistan, yet it is called "graveyard of empires" (Jones 2010), which is easy to influence but hard to domain.

Internally, the importance of location is reflected in the identity and loyalty of Afghans. As mentioned above, each ethnic group constitutes the majority in one or more of Afghanistan's regions. Most individuals' primary loyalty is local – to kin, village, valley, or region, and as a result, there is little political cohesiveness

within large ethnic groups, except when faced with an enemy ethnic group (Barfield 2010). Especially among non-Pashtuns, shared location makes them display more solidarity with one another than they do with their ethnic compatriots from other parts of the country. It explains the reason for lack of national identity and loyalty to central government among Afghans.

The emergence and development of "sub-national administration" could also be attributed to the locality. The divide-and-rule policy stressed by the British in 19th century and practiced by kings and governments since then, laid the foundation of sub-national administration in Afghanistan. In 1967, it was used again through creating more non-Pashtun provinces and ultimately mobilized communities against each other (Riaz 2011: 2). Armed militias or warlords have thus become an integral part of this sub-national administration and a perpetual source of instability and conflict. They matched each other in strength and foreign support but none of them had nationwide presence, which resulted in the bloody civil war and the Taliban takeover of regime.

The Taliban's Transforms: Changes of its Strategies and Operations

Observers and analysts never had a unified view of the Taliban movement, and even its members failed to tell a consistent story. Although it is not possible to define the Taliban in a unique way, we may acquire some insights from its strategies and operations in deferent periods of the Taliban movement. Over the decades, the Taliban has experienced transforms from a mujahideen group to the governing body of Afghanistan, and finally to an insurgent group. Its policies and operations have changed as well accordingly.

1994-1996: A Mujahideen Group

Following the withdrawal of Soviet troops and the collapse of Communist regime in Afghanistan, a brutal civil war raged between the mujahideen factions as their leaders vied for the top political position in Kabul. Ethnic, sectarian, tribal and historical dynamics as well as local rivalries were also at play in their intensified conflicts. A war-torn country with a divided leadership, a ruined infrastructure and degraded economy presented ordinary Afghans with little hope.

The Taliban, predominantly Pashtuns in membership, led by Mullah Mohammed Omar, arose as a mujahideen group trying to restore order in Afghanistan. In 1994, a group of "Talib" (or Taliban in plural) – Islamic students from a local madrasas (Islamic religious school), set up a checkpoint in the village of Hawz-i-Mudat, near Kandahar. Their goal was very specific and limited then, which was to "clear the street of the rogue commanders and checkpoints" (Zaeef 2010: 62). With public support in terms of free food, and abundant ammunition provided by Pakistan, they managed to establish control over the broader Kandahar area in a matter of weeks, and 70% of Afghan territory by September, 1996.

Taliban's success came in various shapes. Arguably, the Taliban's Pashtun identity helped them to sweep through Pashtun areas relatively easily, and the fighting became intense only when the Taliban moved into non-

Pashtun districts. Most of the Taliban's recruits came from Pashtun tribal areas and throughout the country as it grew. Nevertheless, when it came to building alliances, the Taliban was quite pragmatic regardless of ethnic affiliation. For instance, the famous Tajik general Mohammed Shah Massoud, the notorious Uzbek warlord Abdul Rashid Dotum and Shia Hazara leader Karim Khalili once collaborated with the Taliban. Pakistan's support and Saudi fund were also very crucial.

Opposition to the Taliban were also quite strong, most of which came from the old mujahideen groups, and in particular, ones led by Burhanuddin Rabbani and Gulbuddin Hekmatyar. After the Taliban's takeover of Kabul, they retreated to the northeastern areas of Afghanistan, and formed a new coalition called "Northern Alliance" to fight against the Taliban. Dostum's Uzbek militia, Khalili's Hazara fighters, and a few other smaller mujahideen groups also joined the Northern Alliance later.

1996-2001: The Ruling Body

In September, 1996, with control over nearly 70% of Afghan territory, the Taliban established the new administrative structure of the "Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan" in Kabul. Although recognized by only three countries as legitimate authority of Afghanistan, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates, the Taliban did exist as a de facto ruling body of Afghanistan for five years, and succeeded in controlling 90% of Afghan territory by 2001. Rest of the states' diplomatic recognition went to the Northern Alliance.

After its establishment of the regime, the Taliban focused on only two things, the military campaign against the Northern Alliance and the imposition of sharia law (Abbas 2014). The latter was a mixture of tribalism in terms of Pashtunwali, male chauvinism in the shape of forcing women into seclusion, and illiteracy as a result of discourage in education. Following the Pashtunwali norm of provision of sanctuary, the Taliban remained committed to standing by bin Laden and Al-Qaeda. They also fostered a political dislike of music, entertainment and trimmed beard. Another indication of Taliban's Islamic rule was the governing of both central and local administrations by mullahs, who were appointed as the military commanders of their areas of control as well. Among all the offenses the Taliban committed, the wholesale massacre of Hazaras in 1998 and 2000 and the destruction of the Buddha statues at Bamian in 2001 damaged Taliban credentials beyond repair.

Despite the Taliban regime's draconian policies and their increasingly negative image around the world, the regime maintained a significant degree of support among the Pashtun population. It was, according to analysts, due to their Pashtun-oriented policies (Crews & Tarzi 2008), and the ability to mobilize the Pashtuns (Sinno 2008). Cole (2008: 118) added that the Taliban did more than simply impose Pashtun customs, and that they also adopted some key motifs from high modernism and their power depended on modern tools, such as the state, radio, mass spectacle, tank corps, and machine guns mounted on Toyotas.

2001-Present: An Insurgent Group

After the collapse of the Taliban regime, the general cadres simply switched sides or fled into the mountains. A few former high-ranking officials decided to reach out to Hamid Karzai to offer their withdrawal from political life in return for immunity from prosecution (Abbas 2014: 81). However, Karzai refused their offer unsurprisingly, which tragically resulted in the involvement of these members in the Taliban resurgence. Mullah Omar himself, crossed the border into Pakistan, where his location remains unknown.

In December 2002, report surfaced the Taliban activities of suicide attacks attempting to disrupt post-Taliban reconstruction process, which forced the world to reopen the Taliban Chapter (Tarzi 2008: 285). By 2005, there had been strong indications of a Taliban revival in Afghanistan, for government officials and institutions had been frequently attacked during the Presidential election campaign. Particularly since 2007, the Taliban has expanded territorial control in the Pashtun-dominated areas and its capacity to mount attacks on U.S. bases across Afghanistan, which made its revival no secret for both U.S. and Afghans.

The revived Taliban was quite different from it was before in many aspects[2]. The Improvised Explosive Device (IED) technology imported from Iraq and the tactic of suicide bombing were frequently used in their attacks, and Kabul became a major target for such attacks. Adjustments to their outreach were also made, in terms of embracing some tools such as music, photography and television they banned in 1996-2001 for their propaganda goals. Another important change was the establishment of "Quetta Shura", the senior leadership and consultative body of the Taliban, which has significant control over its insurgent operations in southern Afghanistan (Tribal Analysis Center 2009).

However, the resurgence did not emerge as a cohesive group, but spilt into several factions with differentiated viewpoints (Giustozzi 2012). The predominant or "mainstream Taliban" view argues for the expulsion of Westerners from Afghanistan. Another viewpoint, which represents one of the ideological groups of so called "neo-Taliban", is more radical and is inclined to utilize indiscriminate terror tactics and cooperate with foreign jihadist elements. The other group of neo-Taliban seems to have gone back to their traditional Pashtun roots and is trying to become a voice not only for Pashtuns, but also for traditionalist Muslims in Afghanistan (Tarzi 2008: 306). There is also a more moderate tendency, not yet organized as a faction, favorable to negotiations, whose size is difficult to gauge but seems significant. Some leaders at the national and local level allegedly belong to this tendency, including Mullah Baradar, Mullah Omar's Deputy.

State Building in Afghanistan: Achievements and Failures of International Actors

The international engagement in state building of Afghanistan dates back to the aftermath of the 9/11 terrorist attacks. In November-December, a conference aiming at deliberating the future of Afghanistan was held in Bonn, with presence of various leaders from international community and representatives of different Afghan factions. After nine days of bargaining and negotiating, the Bonn Agreement was signed on December

5, which opened a prelude to post-conflict state building in Afghanistan. Through an overview of international state building in Afghanistan, this section will find out the reasons for the failure.

Policies and Practices of International State Building in Afghanistan

As discussed in the first chapter, state building involves security sector reforms（SSR）, institutionalization of state capacity and localization of ownership. Analysis of international state building in Afghanistan is accordingly in line with these three variables. It should be noted that economic liberalization is also an important part of democracy building, but it will not be covered here, for the focus of this paper is mainly on security and political dimensions.

Peace building: security sector reform（SSR）

State building in Afghanistan starts with the UN-mandated International Security Assistance Force（ISAF）mission. ISAF, constituted in January, 2002, and been under NATO command since August, 2003, took the responsibility for security across the country in terms of conducting security sector reform（SSR）. Its primary objective was to enable the Afghan government to provide effective security across the country and develop new Afghan security forces to ensure Afghanistan would never again become a safe haven for terrorists[3].

In spring 2002, Afghan SSR processes were launched at a G8 donors' meeting in Geneva. A multi-sectored donor support scheme was developed and the SSR agenda was divided into five pillars, each to be overseen by a lead-donor nation. The U.S. lead military reform（Afghan National Army）, Germany planed police reform（Afghan National Police）, the United Kingdom lead counter-narcotics activities, Italy oversaw judicial reform, and Japan lead DDR of the ex-combatants. NATO took on training responsibility of the Afghan National Security Forces（ANSF）[4], which aimed to train and monitor ANSF. The target year of 2014 was set for Afghanistan to take full responsibility of national security at the 2010 NATO summit in Lisbon, and confirmed by the Chicago Summit in May 2012.

By 2013, the strength of ANSF has increased greatly, with membership of 183,000 in ANA and 151,000 in ANP（NATO 2013）. As the U.S.-lead NATO forces officially ended their combat mission last December, the ANSF has taken the lead in commanding. However, the level of violence and civilian casualties still remains significantly high, and even NATO estimates suggest that 200 of the 399 Afghan districts are sympathetic to, or controlled by anti-government forces and 32 out of 34 Afghan provinces have shadow Taliban governors（Riaz 2011: 5-6）.

Democracy building: elections and concentrated government institutions

The political process of state building in Afghanistan was initiated with the signing of Bonn Agreement. It aimed to establish "a broad-based, gender-sensitive, multi-ethnic and fully representative government" in

Afghanistan, and then leave it to Afghans to "freely determine their own political future in accordance with the principles of Islam, democracy, pluralism and social justice" (Bonn Agreement 2001). The elections in particular and the formulation of democratic institutions are considered as the core of this political process

Elections in Afghanistan have often been touted as a successful story with five elections held in the last ten years. Before the first election held in 2004, the ground work had been laid by the Interim Authority governing for an initial period of six months, and the follow-on Transitional Government. In order to establish a broad represented government that would share power among various ethnic groups, former mujahideen warlords with different ethnic affiliations were accommodated in the government in key positions of power, and some of them even competed fiercely in the Presidential elections. At the same time, significant groups were excluded – the Taliban and Hizb-I Islami (Hekmatyar).

In the formulation of state institutions, centralization of political power is of great importance. This was suggested by the organizers of the Bonn conference in 2001 and codified in the 2004 Afghan constitution as well, by which all the executive, legislative and judicial authority was vested in the national government. As a result, this made Kabul responsible for the policy, budget, and revenue generation through administrating 34 provinces and 398 districts (Abbas 2014: 87-88). However, this strongly concentrated political arrangement could hardly be efficient, for Kabul was overburdened and districts were powerless and ineffectual, which was seen by the Taliban as an opportunity to gain some political space in local level.

Failure in Building State-Society Relations: An Explanation for the Taliban Revival

As discussed above, many of the problems in Afghanistan today have their roots in the social context of the country. Thus, any effort to solve these problems should be tailored to that particular social context. However, in the post-Taliban settings, order has been enforced by international forces and citizens are mere recipients rather than the driving force. The Bonn Agreement, designed to determine the process for state building in Afghanistan, was significantly shaped by the needs of the Bush Administration's War on Terror rather than stemming organically from the political balances in Afghanistan. These political balances involve ones among diverse ethnic groups, and between national government and local administrations, which were ignored by international actors in their state building efforts in Afghanistan.

Political balance among ethnic groups

The tactic of international policymakers in dealing with ethnic issues is always to favour one (ones) over another (others), in terms of equipping and financing various ethnic-lined mujahideen groups during Afghan jihad. For example, the U.S. supported Peshawar-based Sunni/Pashtun mujahideen groups to fight against the Soviet Union. Pakistan favoured Hekmatyar's Hezb-e-Islam at first, yet chose to aid the Taliban later. Iran backed the Shia mujahideen groups because of the same religious belief. During the Taliban regime, most of

the states' aid went to the Northern Alliance except for Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates. As a result, the differentiation of Afghan society was aggravated. This policy continued in the Operation Enduring Freedom action and its aftermath. The reliance of the U.S.-led OEF on the warlords of the Northern Alliance rendered their involvement in the new government inevitable.

The most disruptive policy of the U.S. was to exclude the Taliban from Afghan politics. One of the aims set up in Bonn Agreement was to establish a broad-based government with full representation. However, only four Afghan groups were invited to the Bonn Process: the Northern Alliance, the Rome Group (representing the former King, Mohammed Zahir Shah), the Cyprus Group (allegedly Iranian back), and the Peshawar Group (primarily Pashtuns). The absence of key warring factions led commenter to question its legitimacy. Most importantly of all, it limited Pashtun political participation in the transitional phase, and thereby alienated a key constituency. All these evidences above fueled the Taliban's resurgence and resulted in the instability of Afghanistan.

Political balance between national government and local administrations

Afghanistan is a mountainous country with a tradition of tribal autonomy, ethnic rivalry, and strong sub-national administrations, and a unity form of government is the last thing it needed. The political process of state building did formalize a centralized pattern of governance, which simply failed to address the country's diversity.

This centralized governance depended heavily on a presidential mode of government and therefore on a single individual – who would be sympathetic to the U.S.'s demands and could act as a reliable interlocutor. The power base of this individual was often limited to his own ethnic group, locality and to his tribe more specifically. The President was given important powers of appointment, while the Parliament was kept weak.

In a cultural context, highly centralized political arrangement was seen as intrusive. Districts which were established as a basic administrative unit had no direct budgeting provision, making them unable to function effectively, and leaving vacant the position that recorded land and deeds, which was a prime driver of conflict among tribes who had property disputes (Abbas, 2014). Another impact was on political participation of local citizens in terms of being undermined, and the legitimacy of central government was questioned as well because of its lack of adequate representation. Again, it was some situation that the Taliban could utilize.

Conclusion

Undoubtedly, the Taliban is a major obstacle to the state building in Afghanistan, but it didn't become an insurgent group overnight. Its emergence is a result of political history and social context of Afghanistan. The capability of the Taliban to hinder the reconstruction process is deeply rooted in its policies and operations in different periods of time, and also contributed to the failure of international actors in state building of Afghanistan, in terms of ignoring social context and local ownership of Afghanistan in state building.

Notes

⑴ These evidences were reported in several news, see: Cora Currier, "2014 was Deadliest Year for Civilians in Afghanistan," The Intercept, February 19, 2014. Available at: https://firstlook.org /theintercept/2015/02/18/2014-deadliest-year-civilians-afghanistan/; Cora Currier, "Top U.S. General in Afghanistan Provides on 'Options' for Slowing Troops Withdrawal," The Intercept, February 13, 2014. Available at: https://firstlook.org/theintercept/2015/02 /12/top-us-general-afghanistan-provides- options-slowing-troop-withdrawal/.

⑵ Changes in the strategies and operations of the Taliban since 2002 were reported in some news, see: Hassan Abbas, "A New Face for the Taliban," Asia Times, May 24, 2007. Available at: http://www.atimes.com/atimes/South_Asia/IE24Df02. html; "Ahmed Rashid Offers an Update on the Taliban," Nigarishat Publisher, February 17, 2010. Available at: http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=123777455.

⑶ The objectives of ISAF were described in "ISAF's Mission in Afghanistan (2001-2014)", available at: http://www.nato. int/cps/en/natohq/topics_69366.htm. (Last updated on January 13, 2015)

⑷ Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) is made up of five forces: Afghan National Army (ANA), Afghan National Police (ANP), Afghan Uniform Police (AUP), Afghan Border Police (ABP) and Afghan Highway Police (AHP). See the website of British Army: http://www.army.mod.uk/operations-deployments/22813.aspx.

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